Epicurean Worldview, Personal Identity, and Creating Community

Post by “Martin” of January 20, 2022 at 8:00 AM

> Quote from smoothiekiwi
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> Well, but the theory that "the world only consists of atoms and void" is false (waves), that the "universe is infinite" (it only expands really fast, but it has a border), that the multitude of atoms is infinite (we've only a few types of quarks and bosons), etc..... so I wouldn't call EP coherent by today's standards. Sadly.

I am not sad  :

Some of Epicurus' statements on physics do not match reality as we model it today and are therefore obsolete. It is part of the history of science that older theories get replaced by better ones. That does not take anything away from the merit of the obsolete theories.

Moreover, EP is still coherent in itself despite that some of its statements on physics are obsolete. None of the conclusions derived for the philosophy depend on the obsolete parts.

Another perspective to look at it is to not take the statements literally to have to match modern science but just to describe the analogies between them and modern science.

Or we can consider them as analogous to those unrealistic idealizations which we use today sometimes as physical models because they combine mathematical simplicity with sufficient accuracy. E.g., the universe is much larger than a human can travel in his lifetime. Therefore, it is a good approximation to call the universe infinite in size.

Waves are complementary to particles and are therefore rather a refinement than something that exists completely without particles. Taking this into account and by assigning physical properties to the void, there are still just particles and void from a very basic perspective.

As of now, we have no experimental base to claim for sure that the universe is not infinite. We have a horizon beyond which we cannot see but that horizon expands with the speed of light. The furthest away parts of the universe which are now still within the horizon seem to move beyond it to be never seen again because of the apparent expansion of space.