

Episode One Hundred Twenty-Two - Letter to Herodotus 10 - What it Means to "Exist" - Properties and Qualities

Post by "Cassius" of May 20, 2022 at 7:31 AM

So to repeat several observations that seem to be very important:

(1) Only atoms have "eternal and unchanging properties." [Thus there are no eternal Platonic forms or Aristotelian "essences" that give existence to things.] Void itself is also eternal and unchanging, but only has the one property of giving space for atoms to exist and move in. Atoms and void exist because we can infer their existence through sensation about things (bodies) that we do sense.

(2) Bodies are composed of atoms and void from which arises "emergent qualities." These qualities are determined by "events" - the combinations of the properties of the atoms and the circumstances around them and under which they combine. These events and the emergent qualities they produce are not eternal and unchanging, but they do exist, and continue to exist so long as the circumstances that produced them remain the same. And key comment from Lucretius 418 as to how essential it is to acknowledge this, and how nothing else can make sense unless we accept what is right in front of us: *"That there is body common sense will show; this as a fundamental truth must be allowed, or there is nothing we can fix as certain in our pursuit of hidden things, by which to find the Truth, or prove it when 'tis found."*

(3) We live and experience sensation in the world of "events" which produce "emergent qualities" which do exist so long as the circumstances that produced them remain the same. Our world is real to us and is all that we have, despite the fact that at root everything emerges from atoms and void.

(4) None of this which is being discussed is "unfortunate" or a "mishap" or "accidental" in the modern English sense. All of this is the basis for the nature of things, for which the proper attitude is: **"Thanks be to blessed Nature because she has made what is necessary easy to supply, and what is not easy unnecessary."** U469 Johannes Stobaeus, *Anthology*, XVII.23