

What Would Epicurus Think of the Big Bang?

Post by "Cassius" of January 14, 2024 at 6:38 PM

[Quote from Don](#)

In modern physics, they're not saying "nothing comes from nothing" either. Their confusing shorthand provocative layman's "nothing" is just the quantum fields permeating all of space. The idea of the cosmos - our observable universe - coming out of a quantum fluctuation... similar to what some cosmologists posit is the ultimate fate of our cosmos (NOT the universe remember) an unimaginable number of billions and trillions of years in the future - strikes me as elegant. The new cosmos and our current one doesn't/ didn't come from nothing. It was birthed from the very existing underlying structure of the infinite universe.

Just watched it and Don's summary is good. Bottom line of his talk is that the latest theories don't talk in terms of "particles" anymore but rather "fields" - though as the lecturer demonstrates, it's easy to fall back into using the word particle because of the way fields tend to clump together. But in the end whether particle or field, most fair-minded people I think would consider a field to be "something," and thus as Don says the cosmos doesn't come from nothing, but from the underlying structure of the infinite universe.

All of which leaves the biggest questions that Epicurus wanted to address, such as whether there is something outside of "this observable universe" that these physicists are talking about (something which implicitly might be "god") totally unanswered. That larger question is at least as important to our daily lives as it is to get a better understanding of fields.

To be clear again I really enjoy watching presentations like this given by people who are obviously enthusiastic about them. But there's a line between this and philosophy that makes the latter a better contender for "Queen of the Sciences."

It seems to me that Epicurus had a great respect for "science" in the way that this lecturer is pursuing it, but he also kept it in perspective as not sufficient for determining how to live one's life. That seems to me to be the right balance.