

Episode 237 - Cicero's OTNOTG - 12 - Isonomia And The Implications of Infinity

Post by “Cassius” of July 11, 2024 at 7:41 AM

Also very probably related, Lucretius Book 2, Bailey:

[522] And since I have taught this much, I will hasten to link on a truth which holds to it and wins belief from it, that the first-beginnings of things, which are formed with a shape like to one another, are in number infinite. For since the difference of forms is limited, it must needs be that those which are alike are unlimited, or else that the sum of matter is created limited, which I have proved not to be, showing in my verses that the tiny bodies of matter from everlasting always keep up the sum of things, as the team of blows is harnessed on unbroken on every side.

[532] For in that you see that certain animals are more rare, and perceive that nature is less fruitful in them, yet in another quarter and spot, in some distant lands, there may be many in that kind, and so the tale is made up; even as in the race of four-footed beasts we see that elephants with their snaky hands come first of all, by whose many thousands India is embattled with a bulwark of ivory, so that no way can be found into its inner parts: so great is the multitude of those beasts, whereof we see but a very few samples.

[541] But still, let me grant this too, let there be, if you will, some one thing unique, alone in the body of its birth, to which there is not a fellow in the whole wide world; yet unless there is an unlimited stock of matter, from which it might be conceived and brought to birth, it will not be able to be created, nor, after that, to grow on and be nourished.

And here from book three is where Lucretius mentions the possibility that our atoms might in the future come together again as they are now placed:

[843] And even if the nature of mind and the power of soul has feeling, after it has been rent asunder from our body, yet it is naught to us, who are made one by the mating and marriage of body and soul. Nor, if time should gather together our substance after our decease and bring it back again as it is now placed, if once more the light of life should be vouchsafed to us, yet, even were that done, it would not concern us at all, when once the remembrance of our former selves were snapped in twain. And even now we care not at all for the selves that we once were, not at all are we touched by any torturing pain for them. For when you look back over all the lapse of immeasurable time that now is gone, and think how manifold are the motions of matter, you could easily believe this too, that these same seeds, whereof we now are made, have often been placed in the same order as they are now; and yet we cannot recall that in our mind's memory; for in between lies a break in life, and all the motions have wandered everywhere far astray from sense.