

Key Citations - The Universe As Infinite In Space - Many Worlds With Life

Post by "Cassius" of July 15, 2024 at 4:34 PM

[Quote from Godfrey](#)

Then there's Nietzsche's eternal recurrence. I'm not too familiar with it, but it seems to me that this was just a thought experiment and not a serious proposal of the way things are. But I could be wrong on that.

Yes apparently there is a question as to whether he believed this himself or not. And some quick googling links "eternal recurrence" to the STOICS, of whom he generally disapproved, so that's another mark against it. It seems that the Stoic version may have been based on their ideas of fate/necessity, so they may have seen it as inevitable from that point of view, which Epicurus would reject. We need a lot more detail on both Nietzsche's version and the Stoic version.

[Quote from kochieko](#)

But you might end up with infinite multiverses too, all with different laws of physics, so infinity is the limit!

Whenever I hear "multiverse" my blood runs cold, especially with references to "different laws of physics." Apparently "multiverse" needs closer definition too, and anyone who wants to explore that is welcome, but it's not likely to be me. I am firmly in the camp that "universe" should be taken to mean "all that exists" - and if that's what the word means then fine, but I see no reason to change the traditional meaning of "everything." But the "different laws of physics" is a showstopper too, from an Epicurean perspective, it seems to me. Sure different circumstances lead to different outcomes, but that's different circumstances, not different "laws of physics."

At the moment I am thinking that:

1 - "Infinity on the downside" (infinite divisibility) is a total dead end. That kind of thinking leads to the "it's impossible to walk across the room" which we observe to be nonsense.

At the opposite extreme, on the "up-side":

2 - Infinity meaning "different laws of physics" and "anything goes" and anything is possible" is also a non-starter. By definition this is postulating something that we have never seen, and for which we have no evidence, and you might as well start postulating pink elephants on the other side of the moon, and supernatural gods. All that is a total non-starter in Epicurean terms.

The most interesting questions to me seem to be along the lines stated above, including:

1. Whether infinity means that any combination of atoms which *is* possible does in fact happen,
2. Whether any combination which does happen, happens and infinite number of times.
3. Whether the swerve of the atom, or something like irrational numbers / fractals / fibonacci sequences, should make us expect that "classes" of "like" events will happen an infinite number of times, like snowflakes or grains of sand, but that recurrence in IDENTICAL ways should not be expected.

These are basic questions that would have occurred to Epicurus, and the texts maybe already indicate in fact *did* occur to Epicurus, and which we can use to shed light on how to reconstruct our interpretation of what Epicurus in fact taught.