

Must All Things That Have A Beginning Have An End?

Post by "Cassius" of May 1, 2025 at 10:58 AM

Thanks for those responses. I can see from a logical point of view that change implies that what was there before is no longer the same, but I am not sure that the quotes we have are saying that there "must" be an end to a compound thing that has come into being.

For example what Don has quoted which says "out of which composite bodies arise and *into which they are dissolved*" --- as to the part about things arising from the atoms, we deduce that the things we see "must" have arisen from the atoms because of the arguments that Lucretius goes through about the existence of atoms being required to explain the starting point of each thing (from the eternal atoms).

But I am not sure that we have the same degree of argument that the thing which has arisen "must" eventually be broken up - or do we?

I seem to remember that there is a section in Lucretius about disruption being caused from blows from outside, but I don't recall a statement that says that at some point the blows from outside - which are sufficiently overcome while the being is growing or in good health - cannot be warded off indefinitely.

In this current episode of the podcast we are seeing Cicero say in regard to the stoics that their position on the soul surviving death is lacking because the Stoics admit that the soul does survive death for at least a period of time, and as Cicero said, the main hurdle is getting to the point where the soul can survive for any length of time outside the body, and the question of "how long" it can survive is secondary.

Here, the "how long" question is front and center, and we know that some bodies survive for much longer periods of time than others do. So the real question is whether there is a "force of necessity" that requires that a thing that has come into being "must" be destroyed over some length of time in the future.

I see a difference in saying "all things must arise from atoms" (which I think is sufficiently proven by the logical argument) and "all things must be destroyed back into their constituent atoms" (which I don't think is clearly stated or necessitated by the atomic theory as best I can tell).

And let me be clear that I'm not accusing Epicurus or Lucretius of inconsistency - I am looking into whether we are reading into Epicurus a Platonic-like rule of necessity that Cicero thinks makes sense, but which is not inherently part of the atomic theory.

As anecdotal input, I don't recall that either DeWitt or Diskin Clay considered "all things that come together must break apart" as one of the core ideas in physics when they assembled their speculative list of twelve most important physics ideas. (I'll check back on Clay's version).

Edit: As to Clay's version, these are his ten primary compiled from comparing Herodotus to Lucretius:

1. Nothing comes into being out of nothing. 38.8—39.1 I 145-150, 159-160 ~
2. Nothing is reduced to nothing. _ 39.1-2 I 215-218, 237
3. The universe always was as it is and always will be. 39.2—5 II 294-307; V 359--363
4. The universe is made up of bodies and void. 39.6-40.2 I 418-428
5. Bodies are atoms and their compounds.40.7—9 I 488-486
6. The universe is infinite. 41.6—10 I 958-964, 1001
- '7. Atoms are infinite in number and space extends without limit. 41.11—42.4 I 1008-1020
8. Atoms of similar shape are infinite in number, but the variety of their shapes is indefinite, not infinite. 42.10—43.4 II 522-527
9. Atomic motion is constant and of two kinds. 43.5-44.1 II 95-102 (I 952)
10. Atoms share only three of the characteristics of sensible things: shape, weight, mass. 54.3—6 II 748-752