

Question Re Thermodynamics And Deductive Reasoning v. Empiricism

Post by “Martin” of October 4, 2019 at 11:11 AM

Here is my slightly adapted comment from the thread on FB:

Essentially, I agree with Cassius' comments.

1. It does not matter for the philosophy whether Epicurus' postulate of an eternal universe is false if taken literally.

From ancient times until about 1920, models postulating an eternal universe were compatible with the evidence, although the universe would eventually become void of life because of the 2nd law of thermodynamics.

Epicurus' eternal universe avoided a lot of questions to which only speculative answers could have been given.

Einstein himself constructed a model for a stable, on large scales homogeneous universe, which could be eternal. But soon after, new evidence ruled out his stable universe.

Using those of the current models which are best supported by evidence (which excludes multiverse(s) for now), the universe started from something close to the big bang and before that, time did not exist either. The universe will expand into eternity but it seems there is no way around the extinction of all lifeforms.

2. There are some possibilities to interpret Epicurus' eternal universe in a way that it still holds if not taken literally. E.g. the universe has already been in existence far longer than mankind and is likely to still exist for much longer than us who are currently alive. So, postulating an eternal universe is a fairly accurate approximation as far as our pleasure is concerned.

3. Cosmology seems to stand out from other branches of physics in a unique way: Acceptable physical models in the other branches usually have no contradictions in themselves and do not contradict basic physical principles within their range of applicability. But so far, there is no cosmological model without fundamental contradictions in the physics.

4. Even the most rudimentary type of philosophy with the least assumptions, scientism, still does make assumptions to become in any way useful.

EP goes way beyond scientism and therefore makes more assumptions. Although EP is based on physics, it does not follow conclusively from empirically tested physics.

We here support EP because we perceive it as the most convincing philosophy, in particular because it does not resort to the supernatural and because it is useful for planning and living our lives.