

Epicurus, gods and God

Post by "Cassius" of October 16, 2019 at 6:09 PM

[Quote from Godfrey](#)

According to DeWitt, Epicurus never described the gods as "immortal" but as "incorruptible". He goes on to say:

I agree this is murky, but this is one of those areas where I think DeWitt's training as a classical language expert, rather than primarily a philosopher, may give him the edge over other expert/translators. But this ambiguity is definitely in the category of unclear, and as even DeWitt admits later Epicureans apparently did call them "immortal."

i would really like to ask Epicurus, "So you are saying they are deathless. Does that mean on the other end that they were never "born" either, or are you saying that over time they developed the ability to maintain their deathlessness?"

Which would be more consistent with the rest of the theory? I suspect that since eternity stretches backward infinitely without beginning, Epicurus would have been reluctant to say "there were never any deathless gods until point XX" which might mean that Epicurus would take the position that "deathless" gods have "always" existed as a class, if not individually.

Now we are talking angels dancing on pins, but i do think it helps understand a theory to consider how it might be taken to logical conclusions. I am pretty confident that Epicurus was saying that "life" as a "class" (not individual living things) have "always" existed somewhere in the universe (and probably a boundless number of places).

In an eternal and uncreated universe in which atoms combine over and over in accord with their properties, I am doubting that Epicurus would have seen a "first life" at any one single place in the universe. And so if life is evolving and "perfecting itself an infinite number of times and places, then that process of beings learning to become deathless would have also repeated itself and endless number of times.

Note: i am aware that in general, but not in detail) that the mormons take a similar position to their "gods." Which is why I gather current Mormons like Mitt Romney think that they can become gods of their own planets, I gather. Someone can correct my mormon theology if I am grossly wrong, and of course that has little relevance here, expect maybe to the extent that whoever the creative theologians of early mormonism were (Joseph Smith himself?) it seems logical to be suspicious that they might have been reading some Lucretius. 😊