

Infinity and the Expanding Universe

Post by "Don" of July 25, 2020 at 12:12 AM

Good point, [Cassius](#) , on the necessity of some scientific literacy for everyone. You seem to also be making an argument for the need for some critical thinking skills which I also agree with wholeheartedly.

One thing that struck me just now (literally, just before I saw your post and replied) was that this feeds back into my earlier query about Epicurean attitudes to multiple explanations. On our current thread's topic here, there are multiple explanations (at least 4) for different multiverse theories. All appear to have parts of real possible approaches for getting at the real nature of reality. But we **can't** know for sure at this point, and that's okay. I can accept a possible multiverse and wait for more evidence of study to hone that idea. Just like the causes of lightning or earthquakes to Epicurus or Lucretius. They **couldn't** know for sure (no instruments, no theory of plate tectonics, etc.), but they thought about it, came up with multiple plausible (to them) fully-natural explanations, and decided to live under those parameters but be open to more study or evidence of it came along.

One of the things that attracted me to Epicureanism is that, from my perspective, it can incorporate an idea like the multiverse or evolution or the possibility of alien life or other science with barely a shrug. "That's very interesting," Epicurus says, and goes on about his writing. I don't think many systems of thought can do that. Concepts like the Atonement (What happens if there's aliens? Can they be saved too?) or evolution can tie Christian theology into knots! Epicureanism can look at those (aliens, evolution, etc.) and go, "Yep. No problem." Even classical Stoics saw the Logos at work in the universe. Epicureans didn't. They saw atoms and void and random movement. The fact that we have seen particles and anti-particles pop into and out of existence through energy changes of the quantum fields in particle accelerators doesn't affect the overall worldview of Epicurus one bit. There are fundamental physical building blocks of the universe. Whether you call them "atoms and void" or something else, the universe is built of matter without divine intervention. And even if "gods" exist, Epicurus demonstrated they have no concern over what we do nor could they have built the universe. That is incompatible with blessedness and happiness.

That's one of my reasons for finding Epicurus's philosophy compelling and worthy of study for myself.