

Stoic Objections to Epicurean Doctrine on Infinity of The Universe

Post by "Cassius" of September 1, 2020 at 5:46 AM

i haven't had time to read the paper yet and probably won't in the near future, so with that caveat I have two preliminary comments:

I suspect you are correct Don and he is distorting the doctrine. Sounds like an extreme variation the "[all sensations are true](#)" argument which Dewitt deals with, applied to attack the idea that we should not eliminate possibilities until there is evidence on which to do so.

Also, I think this article and the background probably helps show how the infinite universe argument was not so much a "knowledge for the sake of knowledge" debate as it was an example of logical fencing, originating with the Platonists et al, who were using their logic to persuade others toward a theocentric universe model. Given that playing field the Epicurean position was probably always intended more as an antidote to theism than anything else.

I think we are seeing a thread here that the real crux of many matters is this "methods of inference" question, turning on the question of what is the proper perspective to take when the evidence of our senses seems to us to be insufficient to establish the level of certainty we would prefer.

In such cases do we allow ourselves to follow "logic contrary to some evidence and to the experience here we can refer to by analogy" or do we "wait" and in the meantime accept that multiple possibilities may be true.

If in fact the Epicureans said "are true" rather than "may be true" (and I question that) then this must have been another example of a nonstandard definition of the word "true" just like they used "god" in a way that to us seems nonstandard.

We should not judge the Epicureans according to our own technology or according to our own definitions.