

Time in Epicurus, Lucretius, and Aristotle

Post by “Don” of September 4, 2023 at 8:55 AM

[Physics by Aristotle](#)

I just came across this mention of Aristotle's ideas on time in Physics 4:10-14 and thought I saw some parallels with Epicurus and Lucretius. Or, if not parallels, Aristotle providing a jumping off point for an Epicurean rebuttal.

For example, Epicurus in the *Herodotus*:

Quote

[72] "There is another thing which we must consider carefully. We must not investigate time as we do the other accidents which we investigate in a subject, namely, by referring them to the preconceptions envisaged in our minds ; but we must take into account the plain fact itself, in virtue of which we speak of time as long or short, linking to it in intimate connexion this attribute of duration.¹⁰⁶We need not adopt any fresh terms as preferable, but should employ the usual expressions about it. Nor need we predicate anything else of time, as if this something else contained the same essence as is contained in the proper meaning of the word `time' (for this also is done by some). We must chiefly reflect upon that to which we attach this peculiar character of time, and by which we measure it. [73] No further proof is required : we have only to reflect that we attach the attribute of time to days and nights and their parts, and likewise to feelings of pleasure and pain and to neutral states, to states of movement and states of rest, conceiving a peculiar accident of these to be this very characteristic which we express by the word `time.' [He says this both in the second book "On Nature" and in the Larger Epitome.]

Both Epicurus and Aristotle talk about time in relation to motion.

Do I remember that Lucretius discussed time somewhere?

Anyway, food for thought.

Post by “Don” of September 4, 2023 at 9:54 AM

Quote

and likewise to feelings of pleasure and pain and to neutral states

This line caught me by surprise! Is Epicurus endorsing the idea of "neutral states" in addition to pleasure and pain?! As always, back to the books!

The phrase here is:

ῶσαύτως δὲ καὶ τοῖς πάθεσι καὶ ταῖς ἀπαθείαις.

So πάθεσι (pathesi) and ἀπαθείαις (apatheiais). We're all familiar with the pathē, they are two: pleasure and pain. But what about the second word?

[Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, ἀπάθ-εια](#)

My initial take is that he's using it as the opposite of pathē, but I'm holding off on the significance. I do not think he's advocating for three states because that goes against everything in the canonics. The most basic definition is "want of sensation" literally "no feeling" so maybe he's using it as a synonym for ἀναίσθητεῖ (see [PD02](#))?

As an aside, the next phrase is καὶ κινήσεσι (kinēsesi) καὶ στάσεσιν (stasesin) which dovetails nicely with kinetic and katastematic pleasures.

Post by “Joshua” of September 4, 2023 at 10:50 AM

Post

[RE: Episode One Hundred Twenty - Letter to Herodotus 09 - Epicurus' Rejection of Infinite Divisibility](#)

Also: Torquatus section on Mathematics and Geometry (very brief):

[...]

And;

Infinite mathematical detail at the subatomic scale;

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fractal>



Joshua

May 1, 2022 at 9:00 AM

This is one episode of the podcast where we discussed Parmenides and Zeno of Elea on the proposition that motion is impossible as expressed by [Zeno's Paradox](#).

At about the 5:41 mark Cassius starts the conversation.

Lucretius on time from Book I;

Then, too, time in itself does not exist.

From things themselves our senses comprehend [460]

what has been accomplished in the past,

what is present now, then what will follow

afterwards. We must concede that no one

has a sense of time in and of itself,

apart from things in motion or at rest.

What's more, when people claim "the ravishment

of Tyndareus' daughter" or "the rout 650

of Trojan races in the war" are real,

we must take care they do not compel us

to say perhaps that in and of themselves

these things exist, when time, which cannot now

be summoned back, has carried away

men of that generation, those for whom

events like these were merely accidents.(18)

One could say that whatever things are done

are accidents—in one case of the Trojans, [470]

in another of the place itself. Furthermore, 660

if there was no material stuff in things
and no place or space in which all actions
happen, then Helen's beauty would never
have lit the fire of love which then blazed through
the Phrygian chest of Paris, igniting
the glorious struggles of that savage war,
nor would the wooden horse have secretly
delivered in the night those sons of Greece
born from its belly and then set on fire
the citadel of Troy. Thus, you can see 670
that each event has no being—does not,
in any fundamental way, exist
the way that corporeal matter does,
nor can we describe it as existing [480]
in the same way as empty space—instead
you can with justice label all events
accidents of the body and the place
where each of them occurs.

Post by “Joshua” of September 4, 2023 at 11:05 AM

[Ode on a Grecian Urn](#) by John Keats is also good on this point, and he may have had some of these ideas in mind when he wrote it.

Quote

Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave

Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal yet, do not grieve;
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

Display More

Post by “Don” of September 4, 2023 at 11:44 AM

Would that we had Book 10 of On Nature! It obviously was a long treatment on the study of time, and the fragments are tantalizing. For example:

[DCLP/Trismegistos 59744 = LDAB 848](#)

Col.2

... given that, far from even being able to conceive that time could never exist, one sees quite the contrary immediately that it necessarily conceives time as something [like this]...

(4 (37-13)... going into..., we distinguish the short time and the long time [by reasoning] which is not different, but all that...

[VS. 3, fig. 3, 1: (37.17)] ... we [have unceasingly] the representation of the days and the nights which makes us conceive, with regard to them, a length by which to measure each movement. [In fact,] we do not consent to time itself being measured by these precisely, as (if it were made up) of days and nights

[Frg. 9, 1: (37.31)] ... and time is a representation capable of measuring all movement, and which is measured in magnitude [by means of] movement] the most common ... (4 (37-34))...they use [such ways of expressing themselves. But what is certain is that never again have the public executors at least, who are blind from birth, bringing time to this succession of days and nights...

Col. 4. : ...and never [prior] observations will inevitably imply that it [fails me. And] yet, [we have seen it, whenever the study bears on time, it is to these that it [refers]; and it is in them, it seems to me, that the emotions] and the representations coming from the totality [are distinctly grasped], to stick to these ways of expressing oneself [about nature...



Post by “Cassius” of September 4, 2023 at 12:47 PM

"This line caught me by surprise! Is Epicurus endorsing the idea of "neutral states" in addition to pleasure and pain?! As always, back to the books"

Thanks for pointing that out and yes we need to address it!

Post by “Cassius” of September 4, 2023 at 1:02 PM

I agree first search is of the Greek words so I look forward to what you find.

If needed as a second thought, I might suggest that since the topic is awareness of time, it would make sense to point out that time does not stop just because we are unconscious of it, and some variation of unconsciousness might be viewed as "neutral."

Post by “Don” of September 4, 2023 at 3:16 PM

So:

ὡσαύτως δὲ καὶ τοῖς πάθεσι καὶ ταῖς ἀπαθείαις,...

"And likewise (applied) to both the πάθεσι and to the ἀπαθείαις"

but note the dative plural definite articles so it seems he's talking about those which... or the (plural things) to which the duration of time is applied in common speech using "the usual expressions."

τοῖς πάθεσι is the neuter dative plural of πάθος "that which happens" (ie, how we experience things)

ταῖς ἀπαθείαις is the feminine dative plural of ἀπάθεια "no feeling"

ἀπάθεια was/is the ideal of the Stoics, the control over ones passions. But I see no reason to think Epicurus would have been using ταῖς ἀπαθείαις in that Stoic sense.

He's using those as examples of things to which we apply the "usual expressions" of the duration of time.

So, I do NOT agree with Hicks translation implying Epicurus was using this phrase to talk about pleasure, pain and a "neutral" state, but I'm still puzzling through what Epicurus was meaning.

PS. Edit: Technically, I suppose it could refer to those experiencing/feeling things and those not experiencing/feeling things (those who are dead), but that seems a little far fetched. It could also mean those experiences/feelings themselves and those things not consciously experienced, but that too send stretching it.

Post by “Cassius” of September 4, 2023 at 3:24 PM

I guess we have Yonge and Mench to compare let me see when I get to a computer

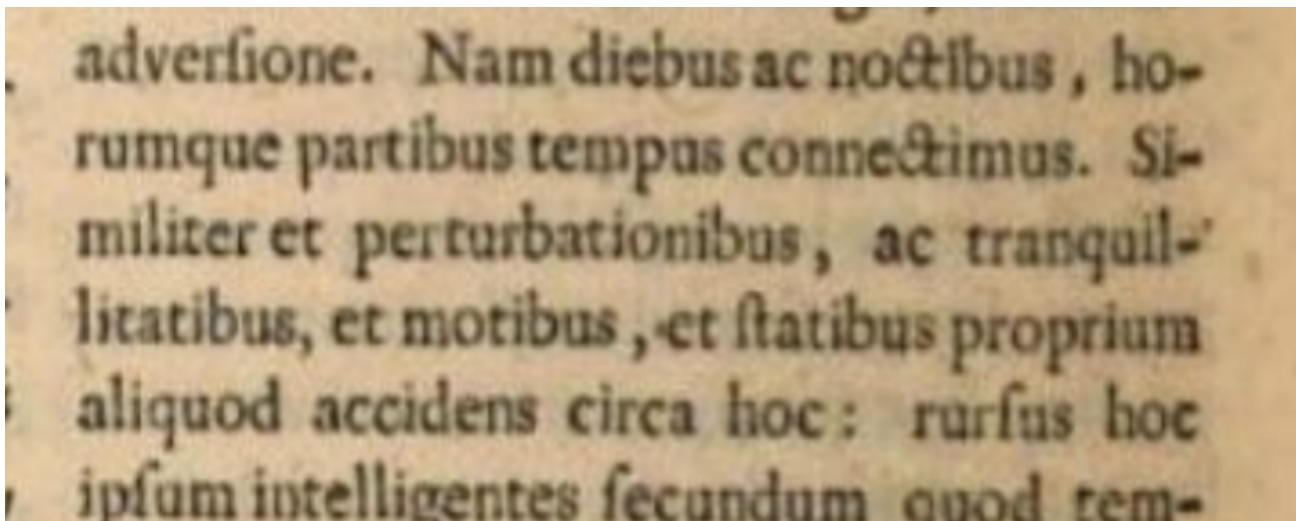
Post by “Don” of September 4, 2023 at 3:48 PM

Yonge:

It is, in fact, evident, that we speak of time as composed of days and nights, and parts of days and nights; passiveness and impassibility, movement and repose, are equally comprised in time.

That's not very helpful 😊

Post by “Don” of September 4, 2023 at 4:55 PM



The 1691/92 Greek/Latin edition translated that phrase as:

Similiter et perturbationibus ac tranquillitatibus,...

[Charlton T. Lewis, Charles Short, A Latin Dictionary, perturbātiō](#)

[Charlton T. Lewis, Charles Short, A Latin Dictionary, tranquillitas](#)

So, maybe the import for Epicurus is to hammer home the dichotomy, not of pleasure/pain vs some neutral state (which would be opposed to his philosophy) but rather the active emotions vs tranquility? Which is echoed in the next couplet with motion and states?

Post by “Cassius” of September 4, 2023 at 5:04 PM

[Quote from Don](#)

passiveness and impassibility, movement and repose, are equally comprised in time.

Don why would Epicurus not simply be talking about the movement of the atoms (either in isolation or in bodies, bodies being the big deal), with no reference to human feeling at that point. If the point of time is that the atoms are changing place, that might make sense (?)

Post by “Don” of September 4, 2023 at 6:02 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

[Quote from Don](#)

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Oh, I see no reason to think Epicurus is primarily talking about the motion of the atoms. He's talking about "the usual expressions" everyone uses about time. Right before the words in question, he's talking about night and day and their parts. I think he's talking about things on the macro level and not the micro level of atoms.

For ease of access, I'm going to copy that section about time from the *Herodotus* here again:

Quote from Epicurus from his letter to Herodotus

[72] "There is another thing which we must consider carefully. We must not investigate time as we do the other accidents which we investigate in a subject, namely, by referring them to the preconceptions envisaged in our minds ; but we must take into account the plain fact itself, in virtue of which we speak of time as long or short, linking to it in intimate connexion this attribute of duration.¹⁰⁶We need not adopt any fresh terms as preferable, but should employ the usual expressions about it. Nor need we predicate anything else of time, as if this something else contained the same essence as is contained in the proper meaning of the word `time' (for this also is done by some). We must chiefly reflect upon that to which we attach this peculiar character of time, and by which we measure it. [73] No further proof is required : we have only to reflect that we attach the attribute of time to days and nights and their parts, and likewise to feelings of pleasure and pain and to neutral states, to states of movement and states of rest, conceiving a peculiar accident of these to be this very characteristic which we express by the word `time.'

Nowhere in that section does he bring up atoms or atomic motion. He's talking about our experience of time in the real world and our "intimate connexion" to it as a duration, long or short. At the end he goes over three things to which "we attach the attribute of time"

1. to days and nights and their parts

1. ταῖς ἡμέραις καὶ ταῖς νυξὶ συμπλέκομεν καὶ τοῖς τούτων μέρεσιν

2. to "feelings of pleasure and pain" and to "neutral states" (Hicks inadequate translation)
 1. καὶ τοῖς πάθεσι καὶ ταῖς ἀπαθείαις
3. to states of movement and states of rest (again, Hicks inadequate translation)
 1. καὶ κινήσεσι καὶ στάσεσιν

As for 2, I see no problem *somehow* having it refer to feelings like anger, etc. "I was angry for a short time."

I also maintain that 3's καὶ κινήσεσι καὶ στάσεσιν refers to kinetic and katastematic pleasure. He doesn't necessarily *need* to be referring to them (rather simply motion and rest in a general sense), but the similarities are enough for me to bring it up.

Post by "Don" of September 4, 2023 at 7:19 PM

Note: Joshua's Lucretius excerpt echoes 3 above:

Lucretius:

We must concede that no one
has a sense of time in and of itself,
apart from things in motion or at rest.

Epicurus:

καὶ κινήσεσι καὶ στάσεσιν

"both things in motion and those at rest"

Post by "Eikadistes" of September 4, 2023 at 8:53 PM

Philodemus seems to suggest that *time* is, among other things, a preconception: "For the **All** [...] is thought of, just as *Time* [*chrónos*] is defined, as being a naturally formed generic conception [*prólepsin*]" (Philodemus, *On Piety*, Col. 66.3-6)

Post by “Don” of September 4, 2023 at 9:53 PM

That's a good find!

[Quote from Nate](#)

Philodemus seems to suggest that *time* is, among other things, a preconception: “For the **All** [...] is thought of, just as *Time* [*chrónos*] is defined, as being a naturally formed generic conception [*prólepsin*]” (Philodemus, *On Piety*, Col. 66.3-6)

I thought time was one of the things specifically excluded from having a prolepsis.

[DL 10.72] “There is another thing which we must consider carefully. We must not investigate time as we do the other accidents which we investigate in a subject, namely, by referring them to the preconceptions (προλήψεις) envisaged in our minds”

The way Epicurus describes it sounds like we bypass any “preconception”: “we must take into account the plain fact itself... linking to it in intimate connexion this attribute of duration.”

Post by “Don” of September 4, 2023 at 10:48 PM

Following up on [Eikadistes](#)'s find in *On Piety*, here's the commentary that goes along with that:

Quote

Lines 1885-6: here the fact that the gods exist in the first instance as conceptualized by humans is illustrated by comparison to the ontological status of time, which according to Epicurus is not even a per se entity {but rather an accident or attribute of other entities), yet is not in consequence any less real. Rather, it is in an epiphenomenon of our thinking about certain occurrences in relation to other events and objects. For the status of time as an accidental property of things see Epic. *Ad Herod.* 68-73; Demetrius of Laconia ap. Sext. *Emp. Adv. math.* 10.219-27, where time is styled an “accident of accidents”; *Lucr.* I. 459-63.

We've been looking at the letter to Herodotus and [Joshua](#) is the one who noted the Lucretius quote cited there. I haven't put my finger on the Sextus citation yet.

Post by “Don” of September 4, 2023 at 11:09 PM

Got it:

as self-existent.

Epicurus, as **Demetrius** the Laconian interprets 219 him, declares that time is “ a symptom of symptoms,^b accompanying days and nights and hours and affections and non-affections and motions and rests.” For all these are symptoms attached to things, and as accompanying all these time may naturally be called “ a symptom of symptoms.” For in general—to go 220 back a little, for the reader following of our exposition—some existent things are self-existent, while others are viewed as attached to such as are self-existent. And such things as substances (like body and void) are self-existent ; and such as are viewed

^a In the Stoic logic “ Something ” (τό τι) was the highest universal (*summum genus*); see *Introd.* Vol. I. p. xxvi. For “ expression ” (*i.e.* “ meaning ” of a term, or the subjective idea which it excites) *cf.* *P.H.* ii. 81, *Adv. Log.* ii. 12.

^b *Cf.* § 81 *supra* ; *P.H.* iii. 137. “ Symptom ” (or “ concurrence ”) nearly = “ attribute ” or “ property ”, *cf.* § 221.

properties. And of these properties some are 221
separable from the objects whereto they belong,
while others 'are naturally separated from them.^a
Inseparable, for instance, from the things whereto
they belong are the resistance ^b of body and the non-
resistance of void ; for body can never be conceived 222
as without resistance, or void without non-resistance ;
but each has a property that is eternal, the one
resistance, the other non-resistance. But not in-
separable from the things whereto they belong are
such properties as motion and rest. For such bodies 223
as are composite are neither in restless motion con-
tinually nor continually motionless, but have at one
time the property of motion, at another that of rest,
although the atom, when it is by itself, is in perpetual
motion. For it must collide either with a void or
with a body ; and if it collides with a void, it passes
through this because of its non-resistance ; but if
with a body, it moves back from this by way of re-
bound, because of its resistance.—Thus these things 224
are “ symptoms ” which time accompanies—I mean
day and night and hour and affections and non-affec-
tions and motions and rests. For day and night are
symptoms of the surrounding air, of which day is a
property due to the illumination from the sun, while
night results from the privation of the illumination
from the sun. And hour again, being a part either 225
of day or of night, is a symptom of the air, like day
and night. And time extends parallel to every day
and every night and hour ; and for this reason a day
or a night is called long or short, as we pass over the

* Such “ properties ” are (in logical phrase) “ accidents.”

^b Or “ solidity,” *cf.* § 239 ; *P.H.* iii. 39.

time which is a property thereof. The affections, too, and non-affections are either pains or pleasures, and on this account are not substances but symptoms of those who are affected either pleurably or painfully, and not timeless symptoms. And besides these, 226 motion and also rest are, as we have already established,^a symptoms of bodies and not without time; for certainly we measure by time the quickness and slowness of motion, and the greater or less amount of rest. Well then, from this it is plain that Epicurus 227 thinks that time is incorporeal, but not in the same sort of way as do the Stoics; for whereas they, as has been said, supposed that time is an incorporeal thing conceived as self-existent, Epicurus supposed it to be a property of certain things.

Such were the views of these men; but Plato— 228 and, as some say, Aristotle ^b—declared that “time is the number of the prior and posterior in motion”; and Strato the physicist—and, as others say, Aristotle—that it is “the measure of motion and rest.”

Post by “Cassius” of September 5, 2023 at 7:44 AM

So are gods totally real to us in the same way that color and time are totally real to us? (If so, is that deriving from (a) dreams of them (b) anticipations of them, or (c) both? Because Epicurus said that we need to consider dreams as “real,” if I remember correctly, and presumably anticipations are “real” in this sense too?)

I cannot help but think about these issues in the context of David Sedley's comments on Epicurus being against radical atomic reductionism. I need to find those comments again. (Here they are)

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Post by “Eikadistes” of September 5, 2023 at 2:43 PM

I further reflect that, if *Time* is not to be seen as a preconception as Philodemus suggests, but occupies a unique role in being neither a *first body*, nor a *compound body*, nor a *quality of a body*, then it seems to suggest that (anticipating the modern intuitions of Einstein), *time* must therefore be equivalent to the only thing in Epicurus' system that is neither a *first body*, nor a *compound body*, nor a *quality of a body*: what remains seems to be *Void*.

Post by “Don” of September 5, 2023 at 2:56 PM

I get the sense that time in Epicurus's system is a "quality of a quality," not a thing unto itself.

Post by “Eikadistes” of September 5, 2023 at 3:25 PM

[Quote from Don](#)

I get the sense that time in Epicurus's system is a "quality of a quality," not a thing unto itself.

That sounds eerily like *Void*, not a *thing*, unto *itself*, but a conceptual object of the mind, nonetheless.

Post by “Don” of September 5, 2023 at 4:14 PM

I think void is a thing, or at least the absence of a thing. It is the "thing" through which atoms move. I don't see equating time with void. If anything, time is a descriptor of a descriptor. It is a way of talking about the duration of a quality, a quality of a quality.

Post by “Cassius” of September 5, 2023 at 5:31 PM

I am with the "quality of qualities" interpretation, so far. If I recall we often see "accident of accidents" but I dislike that term "accident" as it implies things that I do not think are consistent with what Epicurus is saying. The "eventum" in Lucretius sounds better to me, and would imply an "event of events" which like "quality of qualities" seems to make more sense to me, just like you can combine colors (which I think are qualities) and get new colors (which would seem like qualities of qualities).

I think I remember (?) Lucretius going on about void having no other qualities whatsoever except the ability to yield/give place to matter. Now it's the combination of matter and void that produces bodies and motion, but I can't see void alone giving rise to anything else.

In a sense I see all bodies as being qualities, and bodies coming into larger bodies is the chain all the way up from molecules to mountains. So "qualities of qualities" might not be something unusual, but might actually be the normal expression.

It seems to me the related difficult issue is the "properties" question, where they say that for example you can't separate wetness from water. It makes sense to me to label things we interact with as qualities of bodies and qualities of qualities, but the question of where to draw the line between properties and non-properties probably requires further explanation as to how it relates to words. Probably as to physical things like water it is a distinction founded in a physical phenomena that doesn't matter what word we use to describe it.

Post by "Don" of September 5, 2023 at 6:18 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

"accident of accidents"

I know it sounds weird, but it's just an old definition of accident:

"Any property, fact, or relation that is the result of chance or is nonessential or nonsubstantive."

[Quote from Cassius](#)

In a sense I see all bodies as being qualities, and bodies coming into larger bodies is the chain all the way up from molecules to mountains. So "qualities of qualities" might not be something unusual, but might actually be the normal expression.

I can't get behind that. Bodies have qualities. They can be defined by their qualities. Their qualities can be qualified by other qualities, like time. But bodies are not qualities.

For example:

An apple is a body.

A quality of the apple is its being red.

Red does not exist apart from red things.

When an apple is unripe, it has the quality green.

It is green until it ripens.

The quality green can be qualified by time in that "it has the quality green for x amount of time until it turns red"

Edit: see also https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Accident_...%29?wprov=sfla1

Now, this being said, I think [Cassius](#) 's primary issue with "accident" as a translation being problematic is that it could be misunderstood by the casual reader to imply chance, luck, or fortune as in common parlance. I do think that could be an issue. It is a philosophical jargon word per that Wikipedia article.

Post by "Cassius" of September 6, 2023 at 9:42 AM

[Quote from Don](#)

Edit: see also https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Accident_...%29?wprov=sfla1

Now, this being said, I think Cassius 's primary issue with "accident" as a translation being problematic is that it could be misunderstood by the casual reader to imply chance, luck, or fortune as in common parlance. I do think that could be an issue. It is a philosophical jargon word per that Wikipedia article.

Yes that is exactly the point.

In the mechanical aspects of the universe, things are not "accidental/fortuitous" in the sense that the exact same combinations of the same atoms in the same way at the same places will accidentally/fortuitously produce different results - they produce repeatable and reliable results, and that is why we see the regularity in the universe. The word "accident" can imply

that the result could be otherwise for unknowable factors, and I would say that that is why Lucretius uses the word "eventum," "Event" at least today has more of an expected quality to it than does accidental. "Today's events will include and eclipse of the sun" means something different than "Today there will accidentally be an eclipse of the sun." It is not at all an accident that there will be an eclipse today, and based on what Epicurus says in the letter to Herodotus things like eclipses have been mechanically set in motion since the time the "world" came into being. Now no doubt there are also some truly "accidental" things, but those are more where the swerve ends up allowing for free will in living things, not in the billiard-ball functioning of much of the universe. If the swerve made all things totally unpredictable and if that is what we infer from the word "accidental" then the whole physics would be destroyed because nothing could ever be predicted. This aspect of the difference between words like chance and fortune etc is discussed in detail in the AA Long article I swear by on this topic: "Chance and Natural Law in Epicureanism."

And relevant to our recent discussions of Cicero, Long points out that of all of Cicero's many criticisms of Epicurus, Cicero never argued that the swerve destroys the regularity of the physics. From the absence of this argument Long concludes that Cicero declined to include it because everyone (including Cicero) understood that Epicurus did not consider the workings of the universe to be "accidental." The universe isn't "intentional" or "intelligent" but it's not "accidental" either.

This is the frequently out-of-tune Bailey using "accident"

Quote

[B-1:449] For all things that have a name, you will find either properties linked to these two things or you will see them to be their accidents. That is a property which in no case can be sundered or separated without the fatal disunion of the thing, as is weight to rocks, heat to fire, moisture to water, touch to all bodies, intangibility to the void. On the other hand, slavery, poverty, riches, liberty, war, concord, and other things by whose coming and going the nature of things abides untouched, these we are used, as is natural, to call accidents. Even so time exists not by itself, but from actual things comes a feeling, what was brought to a close in time past, then what is present now, and further what is going to be hereafter. And it must be avowed that no man feels time by itself apart from the motion or quiet rest of things.

This is Brown 1743 wavering but clearly preferring "event":

Quote

[449] All other things you'll find essential conjuncts, or else the events or accidents of these. I call essential conjunct what's so joined to a thing that it cannot, without fatal violence, be forced or parted from it; is weight to stones, to fire heat, moisture to the Sea, touch to all bodies, and not to be touched essential is to void. But, on the contrary, Bondage, Liberty, Riches, Poverty, War, Concord, or the like, which not affect the nature of the thing, but when they come or go, the thing remains entire; these, as it is fit we should, we call Events. Time, likewise, of itself is nothing; our sense collects from things themselves what has been done long since, the thing that present is, and what's to come. For no one, we must own, ever thought of Time distinct from things in motion or at rest.

And this is Lucretius' Latin using "eventa":

Nam quae cumque cluent, aut his coniuncta duabus
rebus ea invenies aut horum eventa videbis. 450
coniunctum est id quod nusquam sine perniciosa
discidio potis est seiungi seque gregari,
pondus uti saxi, calor ignis, liquor aquae,
tactus corporibus cunctis, intactus inani.
servitium contra paupertas divitiaeque, 455
libertas bellum concordia cetera quorum
adventu manet incolumis natura abituque,
haec soliti sumus, ut par est, eventa vocare.
tempus item per se non est, sed rebus ab ipsis
consequitur sensus, transactum quid sit in aevo, 460
tum quae res instet, quid porro deinde sequatur;
nec per se quemquam tempus sentire fatendumst
semotum ab rerum motu placidaque quiete.

I gather the word "accidens" exists too and maybe it appears in some other parts of the texts, but here where the key issue is being discussed the word appears to be eventum.

Also, given Brown 1743's word choice here, this is why I like to check that translation for comparisons, because this edition arguably seems to me to be sometimes more "in tune" with tone or word choice that Epicurus might have used given a broad view of all the texts.

Post by "Cassius" of September 6, 2023 at 1:50 PM

Also on this point, from very early in the thread:

[Quote from Don](#)

This line caught me by surprise! Is Epicurus endorsing the idea of "neutral states" in addition to pleasure and pain?! As always, back to the books!

Another clear statement that Epicurus held there to be no third or neutral state between pleasure and pain -- at least as to those who are conscious. This is the position we see being hammered over and over and over by Torquatus and explicitly falling on Cicero's deaf (or stubborn) ears:

Quote from Torquatus in Cicero's On Ends, Book One, Section XI

For just as the mere removal of annoyance brings with it the realization of pleasure, whenever hunger and thirst have been banished by food and drink, so in every case the banishment of pain ensures its replacement by pleasure. Therefore Epicurus refused to allow that there is any middle term between pain and pleasure; what was thought by some to be a middle term, the absence of all pain, was not only itself pleasure, but the highest pleasure possible. *Surely any one who is conscious of his own condition must needs be either in a state of pleasure or in a state of pain.*

Post by “Godfrey” of September 6, 2023 at 2:44 PM

"...conscious of his own condition..." in the italicized part of the quote from Torquatus above is so critical to really understanding the lack of a neutral state. It's so easy to think that you're in a neutral state, but paying closer attention invariably reveals subtle pleasure or pain that you were oblivious to. It then becomes a question as to whether the gap between the feelings is infinitely divisible in order to arrive at a point that could be a verifiable neutral state. If there is such a point, I imagine that it's beyond human perception and therefore pretty much useless.