

Ancient Epicurean worldview (classes of compounds of atoms)

Post by “TauPhi” of September 2, 2024 at 2:44 PM

A few of the recent conversations got me thinking and as a result a new perspective on ancient Epicurean worldview emerged in my mind. I'm curious how viable you think the perspective is, my dear EpicureanFriends.

Firstly, the required Epicurean foundations:

- 1) The universe is infinite. (both is geometry and duration)
- 2) Atoms and void are infinite (atoms in quantity (but not quality!) and duration, the void in geometry and duration)
- 3) Compounds of atoms are finite in quality (there are limits to what can exist due to quality limits of the atoms), duration (they decompose over time) and quality (they are bound to the worlds they create and freed again from the worlds when disintegrated into individual atoms). Examples of compounds: a flower, a planet, a TauPhi.

Secondly, few conclusions I drew from Epicurean physics that I hope don't violate any Epicurean doctrines:

- 1) Passing of time is irrelevant to what is infinite but relevant to what is finite (time might not even exist to what is infinite but the safer conclusion will suffice here).
- 2) Epicurean worlds are bubbles of finite amount of compounds of atoms. Each bubble contains a fraction of realised reality (of what is possible in the universe).
- 3) There are infinite amount of such bubbles in the universe, they are completely independent of each other (compounds of atoms cannot pass from one world to another) and they all contain some fractions of realised reality.
- 4) I call these fractions of realised reality: classes of compounds of atoms. (class of flowers, class of planets, class of TauPhis).
- 5) Classes are infinite in quantity (all that can exist must come to existence infinite numbers of times on infinite Epicurean worlds in the infinite universe). Classes are infinite in duration (they exist always, infinite amount of times). The only limits classes have is the limit of quality (as atoms themselves are limited in quality - what can exist in the universe is limited by possible arrangement of limited types of atoms).

From the above, the crucial is to keep in mind the nature of time, compounds and classes of compounds. Is it possible that the Epicureans came up with something like what follows?

Every class is godlike in nature. Classes are immortal (they exist always) and blessed (they can't experience passage of time due to their infinity in duration and therefore cannot be disturbed in their blessedness). Separation from other bubbles (the collapse into a singular Epicurean world) removes all infinite 'class' proprieties from compounds of atoms and give them singular, distinctive existence as perishable compounds of atoms that can experience time until they reach complete disintegration.

This perspective, more or less, elevates some of the problems I personally have with the Epicurean philosophy:

1) Gods. They no longer have to be something to aspire to (idealistic view) or some super advanced species bending the laws of mortality through technology (realistic view). Gods are neither. They are classes of things that exist infinitely in the universe. The class of TauPhies is godlike. It doesn't make me personally a god at all, however. I am TauPhi that is simply the singular manifestation of what is possible in this world. I don't have a bird's-eye view, nor experience, of the class of TauPhies (or any other class for that matter). All I have is a worm's-eye view, and experience, of the compounds of atoms called TauPhi. All the infinite TauPhies out there are incapable of experiencing the class of TauPhies, the continuity breaks within a singular world and there's no way for any individual TauPhi to become a god whereas the class of TauPhies don't have any choice but to be godlike forever.

2) The principle of isonomia. The balance of things in the universe is preserved. Even if there are no immortal things in any of the infinite worlds that can be experienced directly from worm's-eye view, there's equal amount of immortal classes of things from bird's-eye perspective of the universe.

3) I always liked the 'discontinuity' passage in Lucretius. Especially 'immortal death' and 'mortal life' in book 3 (line 869). I always thought of it as a nice poetic description but now I think 'immortal death' (*mors immortalis*) taking 'mortal life' (*mortalis vita*) can be literal description of Epicurean physics. Please read lines 843-869 in book 3 for the context.

This post is getting way too long. Please mind that the above is not my personal worldview. I just tried to glue the pieces of what was transmitted to our times with my limited reasoning and recreate a possible worldview of ancient Epicureans. Let me know what you think about this attempt.

Post by “Cassius” of September 2, 2024 at 5:49 PM

In addition to whatever comments follow, for those of us who can be with us tonight in our "First Monday" meeting, I suggest we consider this a topic of discussion,