

Points on Our Confidence in The Nature of Bodies, Void and Time

Post by "Cassius" of July 4, 2018 at 5:12 PM

This passage from Book 1 of Lucretius stretches the usable size of a graphic, but contains several key points, and it is helpful to read several translations to make the points easier to understand. Here we see the reasoning behind the Epicurean conclusion that there can be nothing outside the real world - neither supernatural gods nor concepts of "virtue" or morality - which have a real existence of their own - meaning it is nonsense to speculate that such things exist. The chain of reasoning is:

1) The only tool we have to recognize the existence of bodies - things that have reality - is sensation. Unless we can have confidence in our senses to reveal to us the reality of bodies directly in front of us, it is useless to look to "reasoning" to establish the reality of anything that might be distant or hidden from us.

2) The tool we use to recognize the existence of things that are distant or hidden, such as the void, which cannot be touched or sensed, is deductive reasoning. We have confidence that void exists because we observe with our senses that bodies move, and from this we conclude that there must be empty space or void through which those objects move.

3) We also conclude through deductive reasoning that besides bodies and void there is nothing - no third kind of existence. There are two arguments for this:

A - Anything that we consider to exist must have a physical presence (must be capable of being touched). If it has a physical presence then the thing is a part of the universe of bodies. If a thing does not have a physical presence (cannot be touched) then it must be considered as part of the void.

B - Anything that we consider to exist must either act upon something or be acted on by other things, or it must be a space in which things can exist and actions take place in it. But nothing can act or be acted on unless it have a body, and nothing can provide space for actions to occur except the void. Therefore anything that exists must be part of the material universe or part of the void.

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several key points, and it is helpful to read several translations to make the points easier to understand. Here i the reasoning behind the Epicurean conclusion that nothing outside the real world - neither supernatural gods nor concepts of "virtue" or morality - have a real or eternal existence of their own. The chain of reasoning is: it seems to be changing or unchanging, derives from bodies and void.

5) We also conclude that time has no independent existence. Time is only something we



The graphic is high resolution, so if it can't be expanded to readable size on your opening screen, it can be saved and viewed in any image viewer.