

THE DOCTORAL DISSERTATION OF KARL MARX AND THE CONCEPT OF THE
FREEDOM IN EPICURUS

YAĞMUR AYÇA ÖZCANLI

YEDİTEPE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
ISTANBUL, 2023

THE DOCTORAL DISSERTATION OF KARL MARX AND THE CONCEPT OF THE
FREEDOM IN EPICURUS

BY

YAĞMUR AYÇA ÖZCANLI

PROF. DR. SAFFET BABÜR

DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER

IN

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

YEDİTEPE UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

ISTANBUL, 2023

PLAGIARISM

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

03,03,2023

Name, Last Name: Yağmur Ayça Özcanlı

ABSTRACT

The present dissertation is an attempt to examine the path to the concept of freedom in Epicurus' philosophy. This attempt will be based on Karl Marx's doctoral dissertation, *The Difference Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature*. Throughout the thesis, the critiques of Epicurus by various philosophers and Marx's ideas against these critiques will be evaluated to learn Epicurus' view of nature in the finest detail and to see how he prepared the foundation for freedom. Subsequently, Epicurus' own writings will be studied in an attempt to uncover his entire philosophy. Epicurus, who abolished the necessity of the prevailing laws of nature with the concept of deviation, adapted the same method to the field of morality. Through repulsion, atoms encounter each other after deviation. The falling of the atom in a straight line gives it its materiality, and its deviation gives the atom its form. Then, materiality and form are synthesized with repulsion. This case of repulsion is the initial state of self-consciousness. Finally, he also focuses on the issues of fate, death, and fear of God and provides us with an explanation of how people can find peace in their souls.

Keywords: freedom; deviation; necessity; chance; fate; repulsion; self-consciousness

ÖZET

Bu tezde, Epikouros'un felsefesindeki özgürlük kavramına giden yol incelenecektir. Bunu yaparken, Karl Marx'ın doktora tezi olan *Demokritos ile Epikouros'un Doğa Felsefelerindeki Ayrım* isimli eserinden hareket edilecektir. Tez içerisinde birçok düşünürün Epikouros eleştirilerini ve Marx'ın bu eleştirilere karşı fikirlerini değerlendirerek, Epikouros'un doğa görüşünü en ince ayrıntılarıyla öğrenmemiz ve özgürlük konusuna nasıl bir temel hazırladığını görmemiz sağlanacaktır. Devamında ise Epikouros'un kendisine ait yazıları incelenerek tüm felsefesini ortaya koymak amaçlanmaktadır. Doğada egemen olan doğa yasalarındaki zorunluluğu sapma kavramıyla ortadan kaldıran Epikouros, aynı durumu ahlak alanına da adapte etmiştir. Atomlar, sapmadan sonra itme ile birbiriyle karşılaşır. Atomun düz çizgi halinde aşağıya düşmesi onun maddeselliğini, sapma ise atomun biçimini verir. İtme ile de maddesellik ve biçim sentezlenir. Bu itme durumu, kendilik bilincinin ilk halidir. Sonuç olarak, kader, ölüm ve Tanrı korkusu konularına da değinerek, kişilerin ruhlarında nasıl sükuneti bulacaklarını anlatmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: özgürlük; sapma; zorunluluk; rastlantı; kader; itme; kendilik bilinci

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PLAGIARISM	i
ABSTRACT	ii
ÖZET	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iv
1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE DEMOCRITEAN AND EPICUREAN PHILOSOPHIES OF NATURE.....	4
2.1. Difference Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophies of Nature in General	4
2.1.1. The Subject of The Study	4
2.1.2. Difficulties Concerning the Identity of Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature.....	5
2.2. Difference Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophies of Nature in.....	10
Detail	10
2.2.1. The Declination of the Atom from the Straight Line.....	11
2.2.2. The Qualities of the Atoms	14
2.2.3. Indivisible Principles–Fundamental Substances and Indivisible Elements	17
2.2.4. Time	20
2.2.5. The Meteors	23
2.3 Appendix Critique of Plutarch’s Polemic Against the Theology of Epicurus	27
2.3.1. Individual Immortality. On Religious Feudalism. The Hell of the Populace	27
2.3.2. Fear and the Being Beyond.....	29
2.3.3. Cult and the Individual.....	29
2.3.4. Providence and the Degraded God	29
3. LETTERS	31
3.1. Letter to Menoeceus	31
3.2 Letter to Herodotus.....	34

4. CONCLUSION.....	36
REFERENCES.....	40



1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this thesis is to discuss Epicurus' views on free will, which are thought to be based on his philosophy of nature; because Epicurus' concept of freedom is fundamentally based on his model of the universe. The best way to make clear his understanding of physics is to compare it with Democritus's understanding of physics. Although many thinkers believe that the atomic doctrines of Democritus and Epicurus are the same or that the only difference is the deviation in atoms, this is a controversial issue. Karl Marx's doctoral dissertation is the most significant source that allows us to explore this debate. While Marx was writing his dissertation, he benefited from the ideas of several philosophers such as Aristotle, Cicero, Diogenes Laertius, Hegel, Holbach, Hume, Kant, Lucretius, Plutarch, Simplicius, Seneca, Schelling, Sextus Empiricus and Leibniz. In light of these works, we see that the criticisms directed towards Epicurus were mainly from the Stoics and Roman philosophers. In later periods, the most prominent criticism seemed to come from Leibniz. What had been shared by the mentioned criticisms was that Epicurus' understanding of physics had been stolen from Democritus.

Marx, however, made a distinction between Democritus' and Epicurus' philosophies of nature, based on Diogenes Laertius and Simplicius. He examined these distinctions both in general and in a detailed way. By relying on these sources and directly quoting Epicurus' works, he supported his views and highlighted the parallelism between Epicurus' view of nature and his view of human beings. After these distinctions and views made by Marx are revealed in this dissertation, the points of intersection between Marx's solutions and Epicurus' works will be discussed through direct references to the texts of Epicurus.

Hence, the thesis attempts not only a detailed presentation of the content of Marx's thesis but also to reveal Epicurus' view of humanity. Based on Marx's thesis, we see differences in Democritus' and Epicurus' views on nature, both in general and in detail. One of the general distinctions is related to how Democritus perceives the real world. There are contradictions in his views on this matter. For him, the world we perceive with our senses is the only real object we have. However, this world is detached from its principle. The reason for his thinking is that he considers atoms and void as the true reality and everything else as a mere illusion. Therefore, the world we perceive with our senses, which is the only real object, is actually different from its principle; it is not related to atoms. On the other hand, for Epicurus, everything we perceive through our senses gives us the truth. According to him, the concepts

in our minds are also present thanks to sensory perception, and it is impossible to eliminate sensory perception.

Another general distinction is that while Democritus uses the strict necessity in natural sciences as a way of thinking about reality, Epicurus' way of thinking is based on chance. Later, we will see that the issue of deviation in the movements of atoms is related to this notion of chance. The subject of the movements of atoms is the most important and detailed distinction that separates the physics of Epicurus and Democritus. This is because the concept of freedom in Epicurus' philosophy is based on the notion of deviation in atom movements. Before getting into this topic, it is necessary to look at other detailed distinctions. One of these distinctions is their views on the qualities of atoms. Adding qualities to atoms contradicts their existence. Therefore, Epicurus first exposes the material side of atoms by attributing qualities and then offers determinations that will make the concept of atoms valid by eliminating these qualities. Democritus, on the other hand, does not address these contradictions at all. He sees the qualities as related to appearances, not atoms. In other words, Democritus refers to the material aspect of atoms by seeing them in relation to the visible world, while Epicurus refers to the contradiction between matter and essence. Here, Epicurus makes a distinction between the indivisible element and the indivisible principle. According to him, the visible world is formed by the repulsion of qualified atoms. The qualified atom is an indivisible element, which is its appearance and is incomplete. The indivisible principle is the atom that stands in the void. Epicurus tries to eliminate the contradiction regarding qualities by making a distinction between the indivisible element and the indivisible principle in atoms. These philosophers have different views on time and celestial bodies. There are strong connections between Epicurus' ideas about celestial bodies, particularly meteors, and his moral views. According to him, people sanctify celestial bodies and consider them happy, but they also subject them to contradictory demands, which creates doubt and causes the human soul to tremble. However, for Epicurus, the key to a happy and virtuous life is pleasure, which teaches the ataraxy of the soul. Epicurus does not use the system in his understanding of physics here. For him, celestial bodies are not bound by any rules. They carry many possibilities within themselves and can be explained in many different ways. Seeing the reasons for celestial bodies will eliminate the fear in humans. Sensory perception is sufficient to see these reasons.

When it comes to the subject of atom movement, we see that for both thinkers, atoms have the movements of falling and repulsion in a straight line. Epicurus adds deviation to these two

movements present in Democritus' thought. According to Epicurus, a straight-line fall is not sufficient for the atom to create beings. The straight-line fall motion is only the materiality of the atom. In order for the atom to achieve its own existence and create beings, it must deviate from the straight-line fall motion. There must be a deviation motion for the atom to encounter and be pushed back by other atoms. In the case of deviation, the atom is only concerned with other atoms, and it must be in connection with other atoms to fulfil itself. With deviation, the form of the atom appears, not just its materiality. Finally, matter and form reconcile with repulsion. Repulsion is self-consciousness. Self-consciousness is the person determining their own life with their own will. In the falling motion, the falling atom is devoid of individuality and subject to unchanging necessity in nature, while with the repulsion motion achieved through deviation, the concept of the atom gains its own existence. Deviation here is a mental state. It does not occur in a certain place or time. Therefore, by definition, the atom is free. Humans are also free beings as a part of nature.

After summarizing Epicurus' understanding of physics through a comparison with Democritus, his concept of freedom becomes more apparent in his letters. His letter to Herodotus sheds light on his understanding of physics, while his letter to Menoeceus is a more useful source for understanding his moral philosophy. In the letter to Menoeceus, he argues that the fundamental goal of humans is to avoid pain and find pleasure. In this context, pleasure is not physical, unlike Aristippus' notion of pleasure. For Epicurus, pleasure is finding tranquillity in the soul and avoiding physical pain. As we see in his theory of meteors in physics and in Plutarch's criticism, sanctifying the celestial bodies instead of understanding them through sensory perception, holding the gods responsible for everything that happens, as perceived by the majority, not only eliminates free will but also creates in humans a fear of the gods, fate, and death. However, just like everything else in nature, individuals are also free. Like atoms that can escape the necessary laws of nature and gain individuality through a mental movement, individuals also have a chance to break free from the necessity of fate through their own free will. While this occurs abstractly in nature, it becomes a concrete reality in the realm of ethics.

2. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE DEMOCRITEAN AND EPICUREAN PHILOSOPHIES OF NATURE

This section is based on Marx' doctoral dissertation. First, the subject of the study is determined by touching on the general difference between Democritus', and Epicurus' philosophies of nature and the views of other philosophers on the ideas of these two thinkers on natural sciences are mentioned. Then, the difference between the philosophies of Democritus and Epicurus on natural sciences are examined in detail. In these details, the motions and the qualities of the atoms, celestial bodies and the concept of time are addressed.

2.1. Difference Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophies of Nature in General

In this section, first, the subject of the study is determined in relation to Marx' views on the general different between Democritus and Epicurus' philosophies of nature. Afterwards, the ideas of the thinkers who mention the similarities and differences between these two names' philosophies of nature are put forward, and how Marx interprets these views are shown.

2.1.1. The Subject of The Study

When giving an outline of his study, Marx states that the Alexandrian Philosophy schools have a subjectivist form by evaluating them based on previous philosophical views and trying to manifest where their roots come from. Here Marx reveals how philosophy was perceived in the times of these philosophers to show the similarities and differences between Democritus' and Epicurus' philosophies of nature.

According to Marx, the history of objective philosophy is thought to have ended with Aristotle in Greece. In fact, all schools of the Hellenistic period are regarded as additions which are not interested in previous philosophies and disrespect these views. These philosophical perspectives are associated with Neoplatonism one-sidedly and within the frame of a specific purpose. However, Marx's inference is that if the history of Greek Philosophy had ended with Aristotle, nothing remarkable would have happened (Marx, 1841,p.1).

It is seen that post-Aristotelian philosophies do not adhere to the philosophies of Aristotle and Plato despite all their inclusiveness but have recourse much further back; to the Socratic school for ethics and to the philosophers of nature for physics.

Philosophical systems before Aristotle are significant and captivating for the content. Still, the post-Aristotelian philosophical systems—the schools of the Hellenistic period in particular—are more relevant and intriguing for the subjective form. However, this subjective form which serves as the spiritual carrier for philosophy, has faded because of its metaphysical explanations. This subjective form is about how the world formed by atoms is perceived. The atom causes a contradiction through its qualities. Here, the subject of whether the visible is related to the atoms or not makes us perceive the world in either an objective or a subjective way (Marx, 1841,p.2).

According to Marx, identifying Democritean and Epicurean physics and indicating only the arbitrary vagaries in the atoms as a difference is an old and entrenched prejudice. Differences in appearance with respect to individual cases will be shown here, although very implicitly.

2.1.2. Difficulties Concerning the Identity of Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature

In this chapter, the reasons why Democritus attaches more importance to natural sciences and turns to that field and why Epicurus despises natural sciences and remains within the field of philosophy are presented. The ideas underlying the different perceptions of the visible world as subjective and objective of both philosophers are revealed. At the same time, referring to the ways of thinking of Democritus and Epicurus on beings provides a way for us to understand their philosophies better.

First of all, we must look at the connection between Democritus and Epicurus' views on nature superficially. Marx lays out all the views on the physics of Democritus and Epicurus in full detail. It's seen that many philosophers heavily criticize Epicurus and accuse him of copying his ideas from Democritus. Much later, it will be understood that these views are unfounded. Because these philosophers either have not fully understood Epicurus or have attributed the opinions of others to him.

In Diogenes Laertius's work, Posidonius the Stoic, Nicolaus, and Sotion accuse Epicurus of plagiarizing Aristippus' teaching on pleasure and Democritus' on atoms. Cicero says in his work *On the Ends of Good and Evil* that most of Epicurus's physics belongs to Democritus,

and he makes things worse whenever he says something different from Democritus or wants to correct him. Although Cicero accuses Epicurus of corrupting Democritus' doctrine here, he credits him for his will to improve that doctrine and his power to recognize its deficiencies.

However, the general view of Plutarch is that Epicurus had taken the wrong from the whole Greek philosophy and had never understood the truth. He states that Epicurus is fond of inconsistency and, what is worse. It is indicated in the work *On the Doctrines of the Philosophers* that Epicurus philosophizes, emulating Democritus. Clement of Alexandria, a Father of the Church, criticizes Epicurean philosophy because he denies The Foreknowledge of God of Paul the Apostle. Sextus Empiricus passes completely irrelevant sentences he has taken from Homer and Epicharmus off as the essential origins of Epicurean philosophy. It is seen that the subsequent authors represent Epicurus as someone who plagiarizes some things from Democritus. All these thinkers concur that Epicurus adapted Democritus' physics (Marx, 1841,p.4).

We witness many things that show the similarity between Democritus' and Epicurus' physics. For example, their conceptions of the atoms and the void are identical. For both, the atom is the indivisible, unchanging, infinite element that forms everything. Again, for both, there is the void necessary for these atoms to move. However, we see an unessential difference when we individually examine the determinations. This is a difference in the concept of will. According to Marx's thesis; although Democritus and Epicurus teach the same doctrine in the same manner, they are fundamentally opposed to each other concerning the accuracy, certainty, the use of knowledge, and the connection between thought and reality (Marx, 1841,p.6).

It is difficult to ascertain the views on the accuracy and certainty of human knowledge in Democritean philosophy. Because either contradictory information is given or the views of Democritus contradict each other. According to Aristotle's work *On the Soul*, Democritus believed that the soul and the mind were indistinguishable. However, in his work *Metaphysics*, it is stated that Democritus argues that nothing is true, or the truth of things is ambiguous for us. Here, there seems to be a contradiction because the question of "if what is seen is the truth, how can the truth be ambiguous?" arises. However, as he accepts reasonability as sensation and sensation as physical alteration, he must assert that what presents itself to our senses must be considered valid.

According to Marx, ambiguity arises when what is seen and true become different. Diogenes Laertius reports that Democritus is a sceptic. A very similar deduction is also included in Sextus Empiricus. Democritus's self-contradictory ideas, scepticism, and uncertain attitude are only revealed about how the connection between the world that is apparent to our senses and the atoms is established (Marx, 1841,p.6).

Sensuous appearance does not belong to the atoms themselves as it is not objective appearance but subjective semblance. Diogenes Laertius reports that according to Democritus, the true principles are the atoms and the void, and everything else is only an opinion. In his work *Simplicius*, he emphasizes Democritus's idea that each thing does not consist of many atoms, but rather appears to become a unity through the combination of atoms. Therefore, it is necessary to perceive the small principles invisible to the sensuous eye through reason. Hence, they are called ideas. However, on the other hand, the sensuous appearance is the only true object, and the sensuous perception is rationality. However, this truth is a moving and changing phenomenon.

Nevertheless, the fact that the phenomenon is the truth is also contradictory. Thus, sometimes one side and sometimes the other side is made subjective or objective. While this contradiction is divided into two worlds, it seems to be kept apart alternately. Democritus transforms sensuous reality into a subjective semblance as a result. This contradiction, forbidden in the world of objects, is present in self-consciousness, where the sensuous perception and the concept of the atom stand in opposition. Democritus is, therefore, unable to avoid this antinomy.

When we look at Epicurus, we see that he adopts the idea that the wise man must know with conviction. Because he says that the wise man must act with conviction, not doubt, all senses provide us with the truth, and nothing can refute sensuous perception. Likewise, since the concept depends on sensuous perception, it cannot be refuted. Since sensuous perception is Epicurus's standard, objective appearance corresponds to perception (Marx, 1841,p.7).

The contrast in the theoretical viewpoints of Democritus and Epicurus regarding the certitude of knowledge and truth regarding objects is evident in the different scientific pursuits and practices they employed. For Democritus, the true world full of content is the world of sensuous perception. As it is separated from principle and left to exist on its own reality, this world is a mere subjective appearance, but it still has its own value as a real object. Therefore, Democritus starts conducting experimental research. We see that he is more

active in positive sciences because he is dissatisfied with philosophy. According to Cicero, Democritus is a person with extensive knowledge. We witness that Democritus has been to many parts of the world to gather information and research due to his desire to know and his dissatisfaction with philosophical knowledge. The knowledge that Democritus considers true lacks content, and the knowledge that gives him content is far from the truth. The ancient myths could be just stories, but they are true stories since they show the contradiction of his being.

When we look at Epicurus, we see a different figure. He finds bliss and satisfaction in philosophy. He supports the idea that philosophy liberates the person and that serving philosophy itself is freedom. Consequently, he states that anyone can philosophize, and being too young or old is not an obstacle. Unlike Democritus, Epicurus looks down on positive sciences because they contribute nothing to true perfection (Marx, 1841,p.8).

While Democritus travels half of the world and tries to gather information from the intellectuals there, Epicurus leaves Athens only a few times, and these are only to visit friends. Since Epicurus had no teachers, he is self-taught and proud of it. Finally, while Democritus blinds himself, doubtful of knowledge, Epicurus takes a warm bath when he feels that the hour of death is approaching, calls for pure wine, and recommends his friends adhere to philosophy.

Finally, it is necessary to look at the relationship of thought to being in the philosophies of Democritus and Epicurus and the way of thinking that reveals the connection between these. Necessity, according to Democritus, is a way of thinking related to the truth. Now let us look at opinions of this way of thinking of Democritus. According to Aristotle, Democritus links everything to necessity. Diogenes Laertius's writings also shows that necessity in Democritus's thought is the vortex of atoms which is the source of everything. Plutarch has a more precise view in his work *Sentiments of the Philosophers*; "According to Democritus, necessity is fate, justice, providence, and the creator of the world. However, the substance of this necessity is the opposite forms of matter, the movement, and the impulse of matter."¹ A similar view draws attention in Stobaeus and Eusebius; according to Democritus, people attribute events to chance as a sign of their confusion (Marx, 1841,p.9).

1.Marx, K. (1841), *The Difference Between in the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophies of Nature*,p.9

When we look at Epicurus, we see that he does not give place to the concept of necessity and that some things depend on chance, and others depend on will. Chance is constantly changing. It is much better to follow the myths of ancient gods rather than surrender to the inevitable fate of natural sciences. Because while natural sciences leave us an inexorable necessity, myths provide hope for forgiveness only if we show respect to the gods. However, the chance is not God as the multitude believes. There are paths to freedom everywhere. Living in necessity is not a necessity. It is necessary to thank the gods that no one is bound by necessity.

In Cicero's work *On the Nature of the Gods*, Epicurean Velleius criticizes the Stoic philosophy, which holds that everything depends on fate, and states that Epicurus has saved and liberated us. Although it is asserted that Democritus also incorporates the notion of chance, it is not Democritus who has used this concept, but Simplicius has ascribed it to him. Simplicius says that Democritus provide a reason for the creation of the world, but it seems like he attributes its creation to chance. Here, it is about form, not content. Eusebius refers to a contradiction here. Because it is said that Democritus gives a divine meaning to chance, he claims that everything is formed through chance, but still, what he says loses its meaning as he excludes the same chance from human life and the field of experiment.

The concept of necessity for Democritus becomes the same as chance the moment the divine and universal begin. In summary, Democritus uses necessity and Epicurus uses chance in contrast to one another. In infinite nature, necessity manifests as a relative necessity. We can derive relative necessity from real possibility, and real possibility serves as an explanation for relative necessity. According to Simplicius, although Democritus is thought to have used chance regarding the creation of the world, he is trying to say that chance is not the cause of anything in individual cases. On the contrary, it depends on another cause (Marx, 1841,p.9).

However, according to Epicurus, the chance is a reality with a value of possibility. However, the abstract possibility is not a real possibility. Because real possibility tries to justify the reality and necessity of its own object. In the end, the abstract possibility is about the subject, not the object. The object just needs to be conceivable and possible. What is abstractly possible and conceivable does not prevent thinking subject. Since here the connection does not relate to the object as an object, it is not important whether the possibility is real or not.

If we look at Stobaeus, Epicurus opposes the one-sided method of explanation based on what is proven by reason and is a real possibility. In Epicurean philosophy, one can find the idea that explanation will not contradict sensuous perception since abstract possibility will be free from contradiction. Finally, Epicurus admits that his explanation method is focused solely on maintaining the consistency of self-consciousness rather than on acquiring knowledge about nature itself. (Marx, 1841,p.10)

In conclusion, as a sceptic philosopher, Democritus applies his thinking to empirical science as he views the world of senses as a subjective semblance. Accordingly, he puts forward the unrest of travelling the world and learning everywhere. On the other hand, Epicurus considers the sensuous world as an objective appearance as a dogmatic philosopher and stays away from the field of experiment. Therefore, he puts forward the serenity of the self-satisfied subject and integrates it with the independence that reveals knowledge based on an inner principle. However, the contradictory situations start to stand out much more. The reason for this contradiction is that Democritus tries to understand the actual existence of the object by examining the sensuous world depending on the perception of necessity. On the other hand, Epicurus thinks that chance is everywhere and his explanation method helps to nullify all the objective reality found in nature!

2.2. Difference Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophies of Nature in Detail

Here, the differences in the philosophy of Epicurus and Democritus regarding the movements and qualities of atoms, the distinction between indivisible elements and indivisible principles within atoms, and the concepts of time and meteors will be demonstrated. The topic of deviation in atom movements helps us better understand the concept of freedom, while Epicurus' distinction between indivisible elements and principles helps eliminate the contradictory situation that arises when qualities are ascribed to atoms. His views on meteors, on the other hand, provide the groundwork for eliminating the sense of fear that shakes the soul in the moral realm.

2.2.1. The Declination of the Atom from the Straight Line

The subject discussed in this section is the views of Democritus and Epicurus on the motions of atoms. Here what differentiates Epicurus from Democritus is his mentioning of the declination in atoms. Even though Epicurus is exposed to criticism about declination, he opens a door that will shape the concepts in his philosophy. The idea of the declination of the atoms from the straight line is the law of atoms, and this declination happens only through repulsion. Therefore, although the idea of declination is a crucial determination that differentiates these two philosophers from each other, we here witness that repulsion is more valued. For repulsion carries within itself the materiality of the fall in a straight line and also the shape that emerges with the deviation. In other words, repulsion is the first form of self-consciousness, and the concept of the atom is realized in repulsion.

The shared views of Democritus and Epicurus on the atoms are the motion of declination in a straight line and the repulsion of the many atoms. The point where Epicurus differentiates from Democritus is his view on the declination of the atom from the straight line. Cicero makes a joke about Epicurus, particularly about the subject of declination, in his work *On the Nature of Gods*. According to Epicurus, the atoms fall downwards as a straight line naturally due to their weight. According to Cicero, Epicurus makes up the subject of deviation when he realizes that all atoms fall downwards means they cannot meet each other. Again, in another section, Cicero argues that Epicurus refers to the subject of deviation to eliminate the necessary motion of the falling of atoms and to oppose Democritus (Marx, 1841,p.13).

Pierre Bayle supports almost the same view in his work, *Historical and Critical Dictionary*. According to him, Democritus's theory conceded only the motion of weight and reflection. However, Epicurus knew that if the atoms had fallen downwards along straight lines with equal speed, they could have never met each other, and the world would not have been created that way. Therefore, Epicurus claims that the atoms deviate from the straight line to both explain the meetings of the atoms and to say that freedom arises from here.

We see a contradiction in the views of Cicero and Bayle. According to them, Epicurus uses the notion of atom declination to describe repulsion and freedom, yet atoms cannot come together without declination. Consequently, it is not necessary to explain freedom in terms of declination since, as we see in Lucretius, the opposite of freedom begins with the determination of the atoms and their forced meeting. However, if the atoms come together in the absence of declination, then the explanation of repulsion becomes unnecessary. The

contradiction arises if the reasons for the declination of the atoms from a straight line in the views of Cicero and Bayle are understood superficially and out of context.

If Epicurus shows the materiality of the atom as its motion along a straight line, its declination from the straight line provides his explanation of form of the atom. These opposing determinations are therefore seen as directly opposing motions. Cicero objects to Epicurus by saying that it is necessary to give specific assignments to the atoms at the beginning about which must travel directly forward and which must move in an oblique direction. The basis of this objection is that these two momentums in the concept of the atom are conceived as motions that must conform to different individuals (Marx, 1841,p.15).

Since Epicurus understands this contradiction very well, he tries to represent the declination as imperceptible as possible. “It occurs neither in a particular place nor at a particular time, in a space as small as possible.” (Marx, 1841,p.16).

Cicero criticizes the occurrence of atoms without a cause. However, the physical cause, he asserts puts the declination of the atom within a determination area. In these circumstances, the atom cannot be considered fully formed until it undergoes the determination of declination. So, to ask what causes this determination is to ask what causes the atom to become a principle. For someone who believes that the atom is the root of all existence, this is an entirely pointless question.

On the other hand, Bayle asserts that Epicurus should have developed a spiritual principle rather than the idea of declination. However, only a word is gained with “the soul” of the atom whereas the real soul of the atom, the concept of abstract individuality arises in the declination. The reason for Bayle’s criticism is the fact that he trusts Augustine who thinks that Democritus attributed a spiritual principle to the atom. The declination of the atom from the straight line is a subject that goes throughout the whole Epicurean philosophy. Therefore, this declination is not an accidental determination (Marx, 1841,p.17).

The atom frees itself from its relative existence, the straight line, by swerving away from it. In the same way, the Epicurean philosophy swerves away from the restrictive “being”, the moment when the independence of the concept of abstract individuality is to be put forward in its existence. The purpose of our actions is abstracting, ataraxy, and avoiding pain. What is called good is the flight from evil, and what is called pleasure is to avoid pain. If abstract individuality manifests in its independence and freedom, the being swerved away from itself

is all being. For this reason, the gods swerve away from the world, do not deal with it, and live outside it (Marx, 1841,p.18).

The gods of Epicurus, like human beings, live in peace, lend no ear to supplications, and people show them respect not for any gain but for their beauty and majesty. These gods are not fiction made up by Epicurus; they are the Elastic Gods of Greek Art who existed. However, they still scoff at Epicurus's gods (Marx, 1841,p.19).

As a result of the declination of the atom, this consequence arises; the atom separates itself from the opposite being and moves in a different direction. The negation of all relations to the other must be realized and established. This can occur only when the existence related to it is nothing but itself, that is when an atom is a multitude of atoms. The Law of the Atom must be realized by what Lucretius refers to as the declination—the repulsion of numerous atoms. As each determination is presented as a particular determination, a third movement of repulsion is introduced in addition to the previous two. The idea of Lucretius that if the atoms were not to decline, it would have been impossible for them to meet and collide, and therefore the world would have never been formed is so true. Since there are no other objects but atoms, they can only be related to one another. This relative existence is their first motion in the falling in a straight line. Therefore, they can only meet when they decline from a straight line. Regarding material fragmentation, this is unrelated.

For the immediately existing individuality to happen in accordance with the concept, the other thing must also confront it in the form of immediate existence and must be related to the other which is itself. Man ceases to be a product of nature if only when what he is related to is a human being who is unique. For the subject to become its own real subject, it must have crushed within itself the powers of pure nature and desire. Repulsion corresponds with self-consciousness as it is the initial stage of self-consciousness, which is perceived as abstract individuality that exists immediately. Abstract individuality is the pure form of the atom. It is the immediate thing that does not need any substance to exist (Marx, 1841,p.19).

The concept of the atom occurs in the case of repulsion. This concept is opposed to the abstract matter as well as abstract form. Because what it is related to is atoms but other atoms. If one's relationship with one's is like a relationship with another person, this personal relationship of one is material. In other words, in the repulsion of the atoms, their materiality in their fall in a straight line and the form-determination revealed with declination unite (Marx, 1841,p.20).

For Epicurus, what is necessary for the realization of the concept of the atom, is an enforced motion, while it is the act of necessity for Democritus. Democritus recognizes the vortex produced by atoms colliding and repelling one another as the necessary substance. He simply perceives the physical aspect, the fragmentation, and the change in repulsion as a result, not the conceptual state in which the motion itself is put as determination. The primary bodies supposedly moved in the void and the infinite according to Leucippus and Democritus. Aristotle argues against them. If each element is forced to move by the other, each must have a natural motion other than the forced one. The initial motion must be natural rather than forced. Or else, this situation becomes a process that goes on to infinity. While Democritus sees only material existence in repulsion, Epicurus is the first thinker to comprehend the true essence of repulsion, including its sensory manifestation, even in its sensory form. Therefore, Epicurus uses concrete forms of repulsion. Covenant in the political form and friendship in the social form are the most valued forms of repulsion (Marx, 1841,p.21).

As can be seen, falling in a straight line is a relative existence. The swerve of the atom from this relative existence is only possible by declination. The situation of the meeting by declining from the straight line is not material as Democritus has thought, but an essential situation.

2.2.2. The Qualities of the Atoms

While the contradiction between the concept and existence, that is, essence and the visible world, constitutes the philosophy of Epicurus, Democritus does not refer to this contradiction and does not consider the properties in relation to the atoms. According to Epicurus, the property is variable, but the atom does not change. Therefore, possessing qualities contradicts the concept of the atom. However, to attribute properties to atoms is still necessary. Due to the fact that several repelling atoms separated by sensuous space must be instantaneously distinct from one another and from their essential components, that is, they must possess qualities.

The contradiction that interests Epicurus is this; the atom acquires its existence through the qualities that contradict itself. It arises as an externalized existence different from its essence. For this reason, the moment he posits quality to the atom, he destroys the solidity of the material side of it. Besides, he puts forward determinations that remove these qualities in their own domain and confirm the concept of the atom. Because of this, he establishes all

properties in a self-contradictory way. On the other hand, Democritus neither takes into account the qualities concerning atoms nor refers to the contradiction between concept and existence. On the contrary, he speaks of all qualities concerning the concrete nature which must be constructed from them. However, these are just unproven propositions related to explaining visible diversity. Therefore, the concept of the atom has nothing to do with them.

According to the work *On the Doctrines of the Philosophers*, Democritus asserts that atoms have only two qualities; size and shape. Epicurus adds a third quality to size and shape; weight. There are very similar opinions in *preparation for the Gospel*. However, on the contrary, Aristotle adds different weights for the atoms to Democritus in the first book of *On Generation and Corruption*. In the first book of *On the Heavens*, he does not address whether Democritus gives weight to atoms or not. If we base the discussion on Aristotle's opinions, it is understood that weight is not seen as a property of the atom by Democritus (Marx, 1841,p.22).

According to Democritus, the characteristics of the atoms are not tied to the atom itself, but rather to how differences arise in the world of appearances. For him, weight is not a fundamental property of atoms. The size itself is also not an essential characteristic but an accidental quality given to atoms together with the figure. Only the diversity of figures concerns Democritus, as nothing is contained in shape, position, or arrangement. Epicurus, however, thinks that the atom inherently contains differences in weight, size, and shape when combined. For him, arrangement, position, and size are distinctions related to something else. While for Democritus, there are only determinations accepted to explain the world of appearances, for Epicurus, these determinations present the magnitude of the principle (Marx, 1841,p.23).

When we look at the qualities of the atom in Epicurus's theory, we first see the subject of size. Nonetheless, size is also negated because the atoms cannot carry every size. While this size is negated, it is necessary to call them only small because to call them the minimum would be a spatial determination. While Epicurus was chiefly interested in contradiction, Democritus avoided contradiction and did not pay attention to it.

In Epicurus's thought, the shape of an atom is its second quality. However, the concept of the atom is also in conflict with shape. Therefore, it is necessary to assume the opposite. Abstract individuality is equality in abstract form. Therefore, it has no shape. For this reason, despite not being independently infinite, the disparities between the shapes of the atoms

cannot be limited. The shapes that permit differentiation in the atoms are few and finite. That is, there are not many different shapes as atoms. However, Democritus's theory reveals an infinite number of figures. Assuming that each atom possessed a particular shape would necessitate the existence of atoms of infinite size due to the infinite variation that would exist among them. For Epicurus, the third and last quality is weight. Matter possesses, by weight, the ideal individuality that forms the primary determination of the atom. The atom must have weight if it is to be introduced into the world of presentation (Marx, 1841,p.23).

However, weight, just like shape, stands in contradiction to the atom's concept. It is because weight is the ideal point representing matter's individuality as it exists outside of itself. Nevertheless, the atom itself is designed to embody individuality. That is why, for Epicurus, weight exists as a different weight. The atoms themselves are actual centers of gravity. Weight ceases to exist just because it is different from the other, and it is ascribed to the atoms with its quality. For the disappearance of the determination of weight to be understood, atoms must be thought of as many only in relation to the void, not in their differences from one another. For this reason, although the atoms differ in mass and shape, they move at equal speed in empty space. That's why Epicurus applies weight only in repulsion and compositions that occur with repulsion. This is the explanation behind the claim that weight is attributed to the clusters of atoms rather than to the individual atoms themselves (Marx, 1841,p.24).

The consideration of the qualities of the atom and the consideration of the declination leads us to the same result. Democritus has only maintained the material side, and his assertions are for the empirical world. There is no realization of the principal in him. Epicurus has referred to the apparent contradiction between existence and essence in the concept of the atom and has made way for the science of atomistics.

As can be seen, Democritus attributes the qualities of form and size to the atom. However, for him, these qualities are not the conceptual qualities of the atom. They are only related to the differences in the world of appearance. However, Epicurus attributes the qualities of shape, size, and weight to the atom. For him, even though these qualities contradict the concept of the atom, they are still differences that the atom contains within itself.

2.2.3. Indivisible Principles–Fundamental Substances and Indivisible Elements

When Schaubach studies Epicurus, it is revealed that Epicurus perceives atoms as the second element. On the other hand, even though Marx thinks that ascribing qualities to elementary particles and indivisible elements are not easy, he still states that this must happen. What he disregards is the assertion that the atoms are of two species. When he looks at the determinations made about the concept of infinity for Epicurus, he thinks that all are possible. When the atoms and the void are determined, the infinite occurs.

According to Schaubach, Epicurus goes along with Aristotle and makes a distinction between indivisible principles-fundamental substances and indivisible elements. These atoms do not occupy space and can be known through reason. They are indivisible things not because of their size, but rather because they cannot be divided within space. Based on this assertion, it must be assumed that Epicurus did not attribute the atoms to any spatial characteristics. However, according to Marx, this is a wrong idea. Because if something is indivisible in space, it must necessarily exist within space and cannot be independent of spatial relation. In the letter to Herodotus, we see that size and shape are attributed to atoms along with weight. As a result, Schaubach considers the atoms as second species that consist of the others but still can be regarded as the elementary particles of the bodies (Marx, 1841,p.25).

When Marx examines the part that Schaubach has cited from Diogenes Laertius in detail, he draws this conclusion; Epicurus tells Pythocles the doctrine of meteors, which is different from all other doctrines, that is, everything is body and void, and these are indivisible elements. However, according to Marx, there is no evidence to suggest that a second species of the atom is mentioned here. For him, it is understood that the connection between that everything is the body and the non-corporeal body and that there exist elements that are indivisible is a distinction between the body and indivisible elements. That is, the body is the first kind of atom in contrast to indivisible elements. Yet, it is not a must to accept this. The body, as opposed to the void, is corporeal. For this reason, the void is also considered independent of the body. The word body means both the atoms and the compound bodies.

The letter to Herodotus states that the entire universe is a body. Some of the bodies are compounds, some are the components that compose these compounds, while others are unchangeable and indivisible. Therefore, these main tenets must be the indivisible and

corporeal nature of the bodies. According to Marx, Epicurus speaks first of only the corporeal apart from the void and then of the particular body, that is, the atoms.

Stoics make a distinction between principle and element. This distinction is also found in Aristotle, but there are some areas where he sees these words the same. In his work *Metaphysics*, he says that the element denotes the atom. In the same work, he states that Democritus and Leucippus call the fullness and void the element. In many works, we see that properties determined by transcending themselves are ascribed to the atoms themselves. (Marx, 1841,p.25).

In Eusebius's work *Preparation for the Gospel*, it is included that Epicurus admits that the atoms cannot be perceived, but he says that they have a distinct shape which is cognizable by reason. On the other hand, according to Marx, if it is contradictory to ascribe spatial qualities to the bodies perceived only by reason, then it is a greater contradiction that the spatial qualities themselves can only be perceived by reason (Marx, 1841,p.26).

Schaubach cites some passages from Stobaeus to justify his assertions. When we look at these passages, it is seen that Epicurus states that primary bodies are uncomplicated, but compound bodies possess weight. In the work of *On the Doctrines of the Philosophers*, we see that the indivisible elements are referred to as a specific type of atom. According to Marx, we cannot deduce from these chapters the idea that the original atoms are independent of weight, shape, and size. In these chapters, weight is mentioned as a different quality of indivisible principles-fundamental substances and indivisible elements. However, we have witnessed before that this weight is applied only in repulsion and in conglomerations formed in relation to it.

According to Marx, it is not easy to pass from indivisible principles-fundamental substances to indivisible elements and attribute properties to them. Nevertheless, he does not oppose this distinction. He disputes the existence of two different types of atoms. There exist rather multiple different determinations of the same type. For him, Epicurus likes introducing the different determinations of a concept as distinct independent existences and every determination takes the isolated individuality form. Marx finds three meanings in Epicurus's concept of infinity. For him, in Epicurus's theory, the notion of infinity is not a specific substance or something apart from the atoms and the void. It is an accidental determination of the atom and the void.

For Epicurus, first infinity expresses a characteristic shared by the atoms and the void. The infinite variety of the atoms means the infinite regarding the infinity of the world and the infinite size of the void. According to the information given by Plutarch, another thing meant by infinity is the multiplicity of atoms. What is placed in opposition to the void is not the atom but the infinitely many atoms. On the other hand, in Simplicius' view, infinity has the meaning of unlimited void which opposes the atoms determined in-itself, and limited by-itself. For Marx, these meanings were the sole plausible understandings of atomistics. Nevertheless, it is made independent as a particular existence and set up alongside the principles as if it were a particular nature in which their determination is expressed (Marx, 1841,p.26).

According to him, whether Epicurus has shown the determination in which the atom is made the indivisible element as the independent and original kind of atom, or whether Metrodorus, the student of Epicurus, has transformed the different determination into a different state of existence, in any case, we must assign the independence of distinct states to the subjective atomistic consciousness. Their distinction cannot be perceived by granting a different form of existence to different determinations. While for Democritus the atom is only a material substance, Epicurus divides it into principle and element.

The contradiction between existence and essence, that is, between matter and form, which exists in the concept of the atom, is put into the atom itself together with qualities. The atom is alienated from its own concept through its qualities but, in the meantime, completes its own construction. The world is formed with the repulsion and conglomeration of the qualified atoms. The contradiction in the conception of the atom happens most harshly when moving from the realm of essence to the realm of appearance. Because the atom is conceptually the independent and necessary form of nature, this independent form is the formless substrate of the world.

Although atoms are the substance of nature, the unceasing destruction of the world of appearance does not have an end. The atom is always at the bottom even the new appearances are formed. If atoms are considered as pure concepts, their existence must be empty space, in other words, annihilated nature. The atom descends to the material base as it moves forward in reality. However, it gains only indifferent and external forms on this material basis. It can never exist in being. This is an inevitable outcome. If the atom is regarded as a form of abstract individuality rather than an idealizing and pervading power, it can actuate diversity.

Abstract individuality is not freedom existing in being, it is freedom from being. Individuality loses its own property in this element and becomes material. Therefore, the atom either avoids the light or whenever it does not, sinks down to the material basis. The atom only exists in the void on its own. Thus, the death of nature becomes its immortal substance.

The distinction between the philosophies of Democritus and Epicurus is as follows; Democritus objectifies the atom only as a state, while, on the other hand, Epicurus grasps the contradiction and objectifies it. That is, he distinguishes the atom as being the foundation of appearance as its element, and as the principle when it exists in the void. The difference between the philosophies of both thinkers is the same as their differences in the world of the atom and the void. Only the conceptually alienated and complete atom may give rise to the world of appearance because the complete atom is the one that has qualities (Marx, 1841,p.27).

As can be seen, we can grasp this contradiction which Democritus has never mentioned but which constitutes the philosophy of Epicurus in the transition from the concept of essence to the world of appearance. This contradiction is ascribed to the atom itself together with the qualities. Even though the atom is now something other than itself, it also completes its reality.

2.2.4.Time

Although both Democritus and Epicurus have shared ideas about the subject of time on some points, they also make different explanations. For Democritus, time is not that important. It is apart from the atom, and does not have a beginning. For this reason, his views are on negating time. Because according to Marx, excluding time from the world of essence will exclude human beings from this world, so he disagrees with Democritus. For Epicurus, time, change, the form of appearance, the sensuous world, and sensuous perception are the same thing and time becomes a form of appearance when excluded from the world of essence. That is, for him, time is the reflection of appearance in itself. According to Marx, time exists in the world of appearance, but its concept is in the world of essence. While for Marx, composition exists as a concept, for Democritus, it is the only form of nature of appearance. For Democritus, essence and appearance are blended, but when considered in terms of concept, they separate from each other and descend to subjective semblance, and time consumes appearance.

According to Marx, time must remain outside the concept of the atom, that is, its world of essence. Because matter only becomes independent and infinite as long as it is abstracted from the temporal state. This idea is also the same in the thoughts of Democritus and Epicurus. However, there are different views on how time is removed from the world of the atom and where it is transferred.

According to Democritus, time is not significant and necessary for the system. The reason why he explains time is to abolish it. Time is determined as eternal, and the temporal thing that Aristotle and Simplicius state gets separated from the atom. Time itself proves that not everything needs to have a moment of beginning.

If the imagining intellect cannot perceive the independence of the substance, it questions its temporal existence. It abolishes its concept by making substance temporal and time substantial. Because time which has become independent, cannot be temporal. From another point of view, we see that this solution is not enough. Because when time goes out of its world of essence, the person who philosophizes becomes self-conscious but has no relation with the world (Marx, 1841,p.28).

Epicurus shows a different approach. When time leaves its realm of essence, it transforms into an independent form of appearance. Time is determined as an accident of the accident. What is called an accident is only the change of the substance. The accident of the accident, on the other hand, is the change as change. As Lucretius has stated, the pure form of appearance is time.

According to Marx, while the passive form of concrete nature is composition, its active form is time. When he analyses composition regarding its existence, then the atom is present beyond composition, in the void, in the imagination. When, on the other hand, he analyses the atom regarding its concept, the composition is either non-existent or it merely exists in an imagination that is subjective. Because composition is a relationship in which the atoms that are far from mutual interest have no relationship to each other to the same degree. However, time is the real form that separates appearance from essence. The notion of the composition represents the material aspect of the atoms and nature composed of the atoms. Time, in contrast, is what exists in the world of appearance, what its concept is in the world of essence.

According to these determinations, first, Epicurus makes the contradiction between matter and form a feature of the nature of appearance. This way, nature emerges as the image of the essence, that is, the atom. This happens when time, in contrast to space, is actively posited

against the passive form of appearance. Second, for Epicurus, this alienation in the reality of appearance is the alienation of the essence. For Democritus, on the other hand, the true form that represents the nature of appearance is the composition. In him, appearance is not meant to indicate an appearance different from essence in itself. Essence is blended with appearance. On the other hand, according to its concept, the essence is totally separate from appearance and enters the subjective semblance. The composition is indifferent and material in its essential foundation. However, time constantly consumes appearance and presents it as a dependency and inessential. Finally, Epicurus believed, time is the reflection of appearance in itself. Therefore, the world of appearance is asserted to be objective. Although the atom, its basis, can only be understood by reason, sensation becomes the objective criteria of the concrete nature (Marx, 1841,p.28).

Since time is the abstract form of sensation, it becomes necessary for Epicurus to determine it as a separate existence within nature. The reflection of the appearance which forms the notion of time of the sensuous world has its separate existence in its conscious sensuousness. Human sensuousness is embodied time which is the existing reflection of the sensuous world in itself (Marx, 1841,p.29).

According to Marx, in the letter to Herodotus, the reflection of sensuous perception in itself is the origin of time, as well as time itself. Therefore, analogy must not define time, and nothing must be ascribed to it. It is enough to keep the energy in the sensuous perception. Because it is time itself that is reflected in sensuous perception itself, and it is unnecessary to go beyond it.

Nonetheless, in the writings of Lucretius, Sextus Empiricus, and Stobaeus, on the other hand, time is defined as the accident of the accident. For this reason, the reflection of the accidents in sensuous perception and their own reflections are determined to be the same thing. The images that Democritus mentions become more consistent through this connection between time and sensuousness. According to the information in Diogenes Laertius, images are forms that bring objects into appearance. Constantly streaming from the images, these object forms appear to the senses, and, this way, bring the objects into appearance. For this reason, to see, to hear, and to smell is seeing, hearing, and smelling nature. This causes a contradiction in Democritus's view. Because for him, appearance is only subjective. In Epicurus's thought, on the other hand, this consequence is a necessity. Because for him, the embodied time regarding the world of appearance is sensuousness. As mentioned in

Lucretius, objects appear to the senses, and then they pass away. Therefore, the temporality of the objects and their appearance to the senses are stated as one. Images constantly separate themselves from the objects and pass away.

The atom is the natural form of abstract and individual self-consciousness. On the other hand, sensuous nature is self-consciousness which is individual, objectified, and empirical. That is, senses are the only criteria in concrete nature. As a result, time emerges as a criterion of concrete nature. According to Epicurus, we can sense time as objective in the world of appearance. Since he has a subjectivist idea of appearance, this idea does not fit Democritus. Sensuous nature is concrete self-consciousness, whereas the atom constitutes the natural form of abstract self-consciousness (Marx, 1841,p.29).

2.2.5. The Meteors

In this section, we will consider how Epicurus evaluated meteors, celestial bodies, and their movements differently from the ancient thinkers. A look at ancient thought reveals that the states of meteors are always the same and they do not change. That is why the ancient thinkers accept and exalt the celestial bodies with a single explanation. For Epicurus, however, celestial bodies are irregular and not bound by any law. As an attribute of themselves, they contain many possibilities and can be explained in many ways. The inability to see the causes of these celestial bodies creates a sense of fear in people. While seeing the causes is only possible through our sensory perception.

According to Marx, Democritus' thoughts on astronomy are advanced for his time. However, these thoughts do not have a philosophical content, nor are they in connection with the field of experience and the atomic doctrine.

The examinations made here will be based on Epicurus' *Letter to Pythocles* and supported by *Letter to Herodotus*. That is because all chapters of *Letter to Pythocles*, except the last chapter, deal with the subject of celestial bodies. The final chapter contains some ethical considerations where moral rules are based on the theory of meteors. This was done on purpose by Epicurus.

The ideas put forward by Epicurus on astronomy stand in contrast to Democritus' views and all the views found in Greek philosophy. In Greek philosophy, the first nature-determined existence of the actual mind manifests itself in the system of celestial bodies. We already

know that the Greek philosophers sanctified celestial bodies. Marx thought that these philosophers actually worshipped their own minds in the person of celestial bodies.

For Marx, there are some myths that the ancients passed on to the later ones. Those myths state that celestial bodies are gods and that the divine encompasses all nature. In addition, other myths that are useful both for the improvement of human life and for persuading the majority have also been conveyed, for example, likening gods to humans and other creatures. This way, the gods were brought closer to humans (Marx, 1841,p.30).

However, in the work of Diogenes Laertius, we see that Epicurus takes a different approach. According to Epicurus, people regard celestial bodies as happy and eternal. Nevertheless, they attribute contradictory wishes and actions to these celestial bodies, leaving them in a questionable state. As a result, this situation causes the human spirit to be shaken. If celestial bodies had such qualities as being happy, indestructible, governing, and regulating, it should be thought that they could not have motions such as rising, setting, or deviating. Because these motions do not match the happiness imposed on them, on the contrary, they emerge with conditions such as weakness, fear, and need. Aristotle criticizes the ancients for thinking that they need Atlas' support for the sky. For Marx, Epicurus criticizes people who believe they need the sky. Epicurus thought that Atlas himself was the stupidity and superstition of human beings. This stupidity and superstition come from the titans (Marx, 1841,p.31).

According to Marx, as in the other natural sciences, the first aim in specific or general knowledge about meteors is ataraxy and safety, since human life needs firmness, not empty theories. Happiness is found in the knowledge of meteors. Not knowing the nature and causes of occurrences such as rising, setting, or deviating only leads to fear since these situations do not constitute in themselves a reason for happiness. The aim here is to place the theory of meteors on the same level as other sciences by denying the supposed precedence it has over them.

While the only explanations for problems such as ethics and the existence of indivisible elements correspond to phenomena, meteors do not have a simple cause and carry many categories of entities that respond to phenomena. In other words, meteors can be explained in many ways. Therefore, they differ specifically from the questions in other fields. Marx argues that to get rid of the fear regarding meteors, it is necessary to show the causes. This can be achieved by adhering to appearance, that is, to sensations. For this, it is necessary to apply an analogy (Marx, 1841,p.31).

These explanations will not only enable us to overcome fear but also deny unity and the absolute and immutable law regarding celestial bodies. Celestial bodies can sometimes behave in one way, and sometimes in another. These possibilities, independent of the law, are also a feature of their reality. Everything in celestial bodies is impermanent and unstable. The multiplicity of explanations will also eliminate the unity of the object.

For Aristotle and other Greek thinkers, the states of the celestial bodies are always the same. For this reason, they attribute immortality to them. For Marx, however, Epicurus claims the exact opposite of this. According to him, everything in the celestial body has many forms and is without rules. An infinite number of causes can explain everything in them.

Those who cling to one explanation and reject other explanations regard meteors as something eternal and divine. They fail to see where ataraxy becomes endangered as they futilely attempt to complete the impossible. They should be ignored. Therefore, according to Marx, Epicurus' conclusion is as follows; the consequence that celestial bodies are not eternal is a necessary one, since their eternity would break the ataraxy of self-consciousness (Marx, 1841,p.32).

Marx holds that all authors on Epicurus keep this teaching of Epicurus independent of his doctrine of physics and atoms. For these writers, it is sufficient for Epicurus to oppose the Stoics and astrology. However, Aristotle's *On the Heavens* reveals that their superstition was refuted when the celestial bodies were expressed as random combinations of atoms. The method used by Epicurus in his doctrine of meteors is different from the method he used in other fields of physics. The point to be noted here is where this distinction comes from in his thought (Marx, 1841,p.33).

With all these contradictions, Marx sees another serious one. The atom, in the form of independence, is matter; it is a complete weight. At the same time, the highest reality of weight is the celestial bodies. All the contradictions between the form and matter, which enabled the development of the atom, have disappeared in the celestial bodies and all the desired determinations have been realized in them. Celestial bodies are immortal and do not change. Their centre of gravity is within themselves, and their only action is motion. They depart from the straight line and form a string of repulsion and attraction. While they maintain their independence within this system, they also create time as the form of appearances attached to them. In fact, celestial bodies are atoms that have become a reality. According to Epicurus, the atom is related to the substantive unity of matter and is the carrier of nature as

an eternal foundation. He criticizes those who worship a nature containing the point of independent unity by bringing celestial bodies into earthly temporality. For Marx, this is the most significant contradiction in Epicurus' thought. However, he expresses consciously that he realizes that his previous system has collapsed here and that the method in his theory has changed.

The contradiction arising from the antinomy of essence and existence, that is, form and matter, which is included in Epicurus' whole philosophy of nature, has disappeared in celestial bodies. In the celestial bodies, matter gained its individuality and became independent by embracing the form. In the contradiction in the atomic world, the abstract individual self-consciousness became aware of its concrete nature. This abstract individual self-consciousness was the abstract form itself fighting the abstract matter. However, with the reconciliation of matter and form in celestial bodies, individual self-consciousness declares itself as the true principle and opposes nature, which has become independent. In other words, when matter gains its individuality and form, it ceases to be an abstract individuality and becomes concrete individuality. Thus, there is an objectified contradiction against abstract individuality consciousness in meteors. Abstract individual self-consciousness, Epicurus' true principle, cannot be hidden here for long and tries to abolish the reality of independent nature. Therefore, he criticises those who explain celestial bodies in a single way because the one is independent and necessary in-itself. Where nature expresses its self-consciousness and contradiction as atom and appearance, the subjectivity of the other appears only as the form of matter itself. Where it is independent, it reflects itself in itself. When Epicurus' principle is realized, it ceases to be the reality for Epicurus. When the individual self-consciousness is placed under the determination of nature, or when nature is placed under its determination, its existence ceases to exist. This is because the universal can only affirm its existence in free distinction. (Marx, 1841,p.34).

According to Marx, the most crucial point of Epicurean philosophy is manifested in his theory of meteors. Nothing can be eternal that eliminates the ataraxy of the individual self-consciousness. However, the celestial bodies undermine its ataraxy and equality with itself, for they are the existing universals. Therefore, nature becomes independent of them.

If abstract individual self-consciousness is introduced as an independent principle, science disappears only when individuality is not dominant in the nature of things. However, then, everything that belongs to the imaginative mind has collapsed in the face of human

consciousness. On the other hand, if self-consciousness, known under the form of abstract universality, becomes the independent principle, the way to a superstitious mystery deprived of freedom is opened. The most significant proof of this is the Stoic philosophy (Marx, 1841,p.35).

For Democritus, the atom is only a general objective expression of the empirical study of nature. Therefore, the atom is, for him purely and abstractly a hypothesis, the result of the field of experience. That is, it is not even the living principle of the field of experience. Naturally, this assumption cannot determine the true study of nature. However, Epicurus explained and completed the atomic doctrine with all its contradictions, with its conscious opposition to the universal, as the natural science regarding self-consciousness, which is the independent principle in the form of abstract individuality (Marx, 1841,p.35).

To sum up, Marx sees contradictions in Epicurus' theory of meteors. However, Epicurus is already aware of this and changes the system he uses in his natural philosophy here. All the contradictions in his natural philosophy disappear in his doctrine of meteors. For in the celestial system, matter encompasses form. This causes the individual self-consciousness to be against nature. Since meteors are existing universals, and universal things can manifest themselves in independent distinctions, self-consciousness should not be placed under nature.

2.3 Appendix Critique of Plutarch's Polemic Against the Theology of Epicurus

2.3.1. Individual Immortality. On Religious Feudalism. The Hell of the Populace

In this chapter, Marx criticizes Plutarch's opposition to Epicurus' theology. Unfortunately, since there are missing parts in the text, we cannot explore the ideas of all the people that Plutarch has categorized on the doctrine of immortality and Marx's criticisms against their ideas. However, we can find the thoughts of the unjust and the majority about being eternal and the criticisms made against those ideas in the text. The theology here is, of course, based on Greek mythology.

Plutarch first examines the connection of the unjust and evil-doers, then the masses and the ignorant, and finally the righteous and the wise, with the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. According to Marx, by making these distinctions, he shows that he did not really understand Epicurus, who looked at the essential significance of the human soul. For Marx, fear is a therapeutic tool for the unjust. Fear of the underworld is grounded in sensory

consciousness. To determine a man in fear equates him with an animal completely closed in a closet (Marx, 1841,p.36).

The masses, who have no fear of the underworld, overcame their fears for reasons such as the hope of immortality, the desire for existence, which is the greatest love, and the hope of pleasure and happiness based on the myths. When these people lose their loved ones, instead of disappearing, they want them to exist somewhere and continue their lives even under bad conditions. Instead of expressions like ‘he is lost’ or ‘he has perished’, they prefer to hear ones such as ‘the dead go somewhere else’, and ‘death is not annihilation, but a displacement of the soul’. Because for these people the present is of little importance. They neglect virtue and action, allowing the present to pass without enjoying it. They do not respect it, seeing it as temporary. In fact, the view that what we do not sense does not concern us does not remove the fear of death but provides evidence for it. For what nature fears is the destruction of the hope of immortality (Marx, 1841,p.37).

It was stated that someone who lost their relatives would prefer them to be somewhere instead of disappearing altogether. If only love existed here, the lost ones would be preserved purely in the heart. This existence is much higher than empirical existence, but here the situation is a little different. The person’s desire to confirm that their relatives are anywhere in the sensuous space, even if their situation is bad, is his/her desire to protect the consciousness of his/her empirical existence. Love is just a cover here. In fact, the oldest and most essential love is the love of self.

According to Marx, it is more appropriate for Plutarch to show change rather than disappearance altogether. However, the change here should not be a qualitative one. The unique ‘I’ must be preserved in its individual being. The word is simply a sensuous representation of what it is. The interposition of a fictional distance without changing the situation should not prevent the qualitative leap.

As can be seen, while the unjust and the evil-doers cling to fear, the ignorant majority overcome this fear due to certain human desires. Nevertheless, the problem here is not being able to accept being mortal. These people, who think that their loved ones still live in a sensuous world regardless of the circumstances, instead of disappearing, actually want to preserve the consciousness of their own concrete existence. This has nothing to do with loving the other, this is all about self-love (Marx, 1841,p.38).

2.3.2.Fear and the Being Beyond

Plutarch, in his work *That Epicurus Actually Makes a Pleasant Life Impossible*, states that much emphasis is placed on the subject of pleasure, but while the Epicurean doctrine removes fear and superstition, it does not emphasize the joy and grace coming from the gods at all. If people fear the gods, thinking that they are friendly to the good and hostile to the wicked, they justify this fear. These people are more peaceful than those who become fearful and regretful after having done evil.

Holbach, in his book *System of Nature*, says that the gods, who are described as powerful sovereigns, always evoke the feeling of fear in people. As soon as we hear the names of the gods, As soon as we hear the names of the gods, it reminds us of our own calamities or the calamities of our ancestors. According to him, because our ancestors feared the gods for thousands of years, we fear them too. When people rely on myths, they see that the actions of the gods are constantly changing there. When morality is based on the character of these gods, people do not know when to blame God, on themselves, or on someone else. For this reason, it is hazardous to think that there is an entity superior to nature that cannot be conceived by the human mind and to believe that everything must be sacrificed to it to be happy (Marx, 1841,p.39).

2.3.3.Cult and the Individual

According to Plutarch, when the soul believes that God is present and thinks of him, it banishes anxiety, pain, and fear and gets caught in love in pleasure. What gives pleasure, however, is not the abundance of wine or the smell of meat at festivals. It is the hope and belief that God is present with his wisdom and graciously accepts what is done.

2.3.4.Providence and the Degraded God

Plutarch thought that those who considered God to do nothing bad and not to be involved in evil lived in pleasure. He is good, and the good does not contain emotions such as jealousy, anger, or hatred. The task of the good is not to harm. However, anger is kept away from favour, and wrath from goodwill, by their very nature. Favour and goodwill belong to virtue and power, while anger and wrath belong to weakness and vice. Therefore, God does not bear

anger and pity together in himself. While it is in his nature to offer favour and help, it is not in his nature to cause anger and harm.

In his *Philosophical Letters on Dogmatism and Criticism*, Schelling states that the lack of intellect is not in not knowing an objective god, but in wanting to know him. In his essay *On the Ego as Principle of Philosophy*, he mentions the following statement; if god is thought of as the fundamental basis of our knowledge, he will enter our knowledge as an object. This means that it cannot be the final point on which the entire field of knowledge depends (Marx, 1841,p.40).

Here Marx touches on the issue of proving the existence of God. First, he mentions that Hegel refuted theological proof by turning it upside-down in his attempt to justify it. For Marx, proofs of the existence of god are mere tautologies. With the assertion of the ontological proof of god, ‘what I conceive for myself is true design for me’, all gods come into existence. In fact, god’s proofs also serve as evidence for human self-consciousness, of its explanations in logical terms. Self-consciousness exists immediately as long as it is a subject of thought.

As a result, every proof that aims to establish God’s existence essentially establishes the non-existence of God. The proof should have been the exact opposite of these claims. For example, ‘God exists because nature is badly designed’, or ‘God exists because the world is without reason’. Perhaps the existence of god is signified by the absence of reason (Marx, 1841,p.41).

3. LETTERS

In the letters Epicurus wrote to Menoeceus and Herodotus, his thoughts on both ethics and physics will be demonstrated. The connection between these two fields and how they prepare the ground for each other will be clearly revealed.

3.1. Letter to Menoeceus

At the beginning of his letter to his friend Menoeceus, Epicurus first states that people of all ages can and should study philosophy. That is because, according to him, engaging in philosophy is the key to happiness. It is a mistake to think it is too late or too soon to deal with philosophy. However, Epicurus also sees great value in learning everything on time because he thinks that all we have is in the present.

“Wherefore both when young and old a man must study philosophy, that as he grows old he may be young in blessings through the grateful recollection of what has been, and that in youth he may be old as well since he will know no fear of what is to come.”²

For Epicurus, believing in the immortality and happiness of gods is one of the fundamental conditions for living a good life. It is clear that the gods exist. However, the gods' design is not as the majority thinks it should be. That is because common opinion does not always give us the truth. Accordingly, for him, the actual irreligious are those who perceive the gods according to the designs of the majority. These people's ideas about gods are based solely on false assumptions. Due to these false assumptions, they attribute all good and bad events that happen to them to the gods.

Another condition for the good life is accustoming oneself to the view that death means nothing to us. We do not feel any emotion after we die. Good and bad things won't affect us anymore; therefore, there is no need to fear death. Nothing can frighten the person who understands that death is nothing to fear. Some people fear death not because it causes pain but because it is inevitable. Epicurus considers this foolish as there is no reason to be afraid when waiting for something that is not itself frightening. Some wish they were never born... Epicurus surely has something to say about them. According to him, people who believe in this should give up on life. If they do not, then they are just blithering. (Epicurus, 3rd century BC, p.34).

2.Epicurus,(BC), *Letter to Menoeceus*,p.1

“So death, the most terrifying of ills, is nothing to us since so long as we exist, death is not with us; but when death comes, then we do not exist. It does not then concern either the living or the dead, since for the former it is not, and the latter are no more.”³

For Epicurus, the majority both fear and yearn for death, consider it as a rest that comes after all the hardships of life. The wise one, however, embraces life and is not afraid of death. It is also important to understand that the future is not in our hands. However, that does not mean that it is completely out of our power. Therefore, we should neither be certain that what we expect will come nor should we worry that it will not. (Epicurus, 3rd century BC, p.36).

The two most important things that constitute a happy life are the tranquillity of the soul and the body. To have these, we must carefully examine our desires without a mistake. It is, of course, necessary to know from where these desires come. Some desires come from nature, and some others are empty desires. Some of the desires coming from nature are necessary, and some are merely natural.

Consequently, some of the necessary desires are for our happiness, some to protect our health, and some are just for us to be able to live. In fact, the reason for all our actions is to avoid pain and not fear. If we can reach this state, our souls will become tranquillized, and we won't try to cover what we think is missing. Seeking pleasure is both the beginning and the end of a happy life. People are born with pleasure, and pleasure is the good they have. Through pleasure, we know what to choose and what to avoid. It also allows us to estimate the value of the good deeds done. Here, Epicurus also mentions our sensations, which he trusts very much in his philosophy of nature too. For him, if we use our sensations to estimate the value of the good deeds done, we can reach conclusions through their scale (Epicurus, 3rd century BC, p.37).

These views of Epicurus do not advise chasing every pleasure or avoiding every pain. He basically holds that people should avoid pleasures that may eventually bring pain. In the same way, if there is a great pleasure at the end of a pain that we have endured for a long time, we consider these pains to take precedence over pleasures. For this reason, avoiding every pain is unnecessary, just as it is not worth chasing every pleasure. Here, Epicurus says that we must distinguish between beneficial and harmful.

Epicurus also touches on the subject of self-sufficiency. According to him, this is not a significant question as it is always necessary to settle for less. What matters is that a self-

3.Epicurus,(BC), *Letter to Menoeceus*,p.1

sufficient person can tolerate being content with little when he/she cannot have more (Epicurus, 3rd century BC, p.38).

“...those have the sweetest pleasure in luxury who least need it” A person who lives simply and at a low cost can bear the difficulties of life more easily. If one day he/she has the opportunity to taste pleasure, he/she will get the most pleasure from that experience. The pleasures that Epicurus speaks of are not material—drinking, eating, or sex life. He accuses those who attribute this to his philosophy of ignorance and malice. From his point of view, pleasure means not suffering in the body and being at peace in the soul. (Epicurus, 3rd century BC, p.38).

“When, therefore, we maintain that pleasure is the end, we do not mean the pleasures of profligates and those that consist in sensuality.”⁴

Epicurus, moderation is more valuable than philosophy, because moderation is the source of all virtues. Living a happy life is impossible unless we live honestly, wisely, and righteously. In the same manner, it is not possible to live such a life without being happy. It is impossible to separate virtues and happy life.

“For indeed who, think you, is a better man than he who holds reverent opinions concerning the gods, is always free from fear of death, and has reasoned out the end ordained by nature? He understands that the limit of good things is easy to fulfil and attain, whereas the course of ills is either short in time or slight in pain: he laughs at destiny, whom some have introduced as the mistress of all things.”⁵

Finally, we come across the concepts of necessity and chance mentioned in Epicurus’ philosophy of nature. We mentioned earlier that believing in what philosophers of nature call fate imposes necessity on us while believing in ancient gods always gives hope. The vast majority see chance as a beginning without a god or a foundation. A wise person, however, believes that chance does not bring good or evil to us but only provides the elements of good and evil. For him/her, it is much better for a right decision to bring failure because of chance than for a wrong decision to bring success because of chance (Epicurus, 3rd century BC, p.39).

4.Epicurus,(BC), *Letter to Menoeceus*,p.2

5.Epicurus,(BC), *Letter to Menoeceus*,p.2

Epicurus ends his letter by telling Menoikeus that he should constantly reflect on these writings, alone or with someone who thinks like him, so that he will be restless, neither asleep nor awake, and will live like a god among people.

“For a man who lives among immortal blessings is not like to a mortal being.”⁶

3.2 Letter to Herodotus

In his letter to Herodotus, Epicurus asserts that the information he will provide will serve as a solid foundation for those who study nature. He believes that having a general view is more important than having knowledge of specific details when it comes to understanding nature. For him, to achieve a deep understanding, all observations must be connected with simple expressions and concepts. If one can visualize an event beforehand, he/she is capable of conducting a good investigation of the universe (Epicurus, 3rd century BC, p.40).

According to Epicurus, we can perceive the objects that make up the universe through our sensory organs and imagine what we cannot perceive with our minds. He tries to show here that we can find out the void that is necessary for objects to move through thinking. Objects are made up of some compounds and the indivisible, unchanging, and infinite number of atoms that make up these compounds. The infinite number of atoms provides all the universe's changes. The universe is infinite in terms of both the number of objects and the size of the void.

“For if on the one hand the void were boundless, and the bodies limited in number, the bodies could not stay anywhere, but would be carried about and scattered through the infinite void, not having other bodies to support them and keep them in place by means of collisions.”⁷

Thus, the void is only something that allows objects to move and nothing can be done to it or by it. Atoms are constantly moving due to their qualities. As a result of these movements, some collide with each other. This occurrence lasts forever. Based on the idea that atoms are infinite and can go as far as possible, Epicurus posits that there are also infinite worlds. (Epicurus, 3rd century BC, p.44).

It also touches on how we see and think about shapes. There are continuous streams of images coming from real objects. These images are patterns that are the same in color and

6.Epicurus,(BC), *Letter to Menoeceus*,p.2

7.Epicurus,(BC), *Letter to Herodotus*,p.1

shape as the perceptions that our senses receive or our imagination allows. We can only see and think about these when they separate from real objects and penetrate us (Epicurus, 3rd century BC, p.47).

After addressing the subject of sight, he approaches the subject of hearing and smell similarly. Therefore, hearing is formed by any flow from an object that creates the hearing sensation.

“...when we emit our voice, causes at once a squeezing out of certain particles, which produce a stream of breath, of such a character as to afford us the sensation of hearing.”⁸

To be able to smell objects, they must emit particles suitable for our sense of smell.

Epicurus' views on the soul and body are as follows: consisting of tiny particles, soul is the main reason for our sensations. However, the soul still needs the body to have sensation. Because the body is like a protective case for the soul, the body cannot sense by itself and gains this ability with the soul that is born with it. When the soul departs, the body loses its sensation. The sensation continues while the soul remains in the body even if there are problems with some body parts. However, when the atomic mass of the body is completely dissolved, the sensory ability of the soul is lost (Epicurus, 3rd century BC, p.48).

In his letter, Epicurus finally discusses how people acquire and transmit knowledge. According to him, what motivates a person to know is a necessity and the things to be known themselves. Then the mind intervenes and explores nature, and discovers new knowledge. Each society has acquired feelings and created fantasies from objects according to the requirements of their nature. These societies have created terms with which they can easily and comfortably understand each other. Then, they have brought some terms for others to understand. These others, too, adopted these terms through reasoning, adding meaning according to their qualities.

8.Epicurus,(BC), *Letter to Herodotus*,p.2

4. CONCLUSION

Based on Diogenes Laertius and Simplicius, Marx distinguishes between Democritus' and Epicurus' philosophies of nature. Marx also points out contradictions in Democritus' philosophy of nature, based on Aristotle's writings. This contradiction, which Democritus never managed to escape, is about the question; "is the apparent the truth itself?".

When the writings of Aristotle, Diogenes Laertius, Plutarch, Stobaeus, and Eusebius are examined, we see that Democritus uses necessity and Epicurus uses chance as a way of thinking about reality. While Democritus turns to natural sciences as he examines the world we perceive with our sensuous perception with the principle of necessity, Epicurus turns away from necessity entirely and turns to chance. Because luck always contains hope. For this reason, he found happiness in philosophy, rather than natural sciences.

After this general distinction, Marx focuses on the specific distinction in Democritus' and Epicurus' philosophies of nature. This specific distinction concerns the motions of atoms. The views shared by Democritus and Epicurus on atoms are straight-line falling and repulsion. However, Epicurus also attributes the motion of deviation to the atoms.

Cicero and Bayle do not take Epicurus' idea of deviation seriously and criticize it. According to them, this idea of deviation is something Epicurus made up to strengthen his philosophy. However, Marx thinks that there is a contradiction in these criticisms. As we have seen, this idea of deviation is closely connected with the idea of free will.

Another difference is that while Democritus considers the repulsion in the atom as a material fragmentation and change, for Epicurus, repulsion is a conceptual state related to the essence. According to Epicurus, what is material is the falling of the atom in a straight line, while deviation explains the form of the atom.

Democritus and Epicurus also have different opinions on the qualities of the atom. In fact, all of the contradictions about qualities constitute the philosophy of Epicurus. In *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, we see that Democritus attributes the qualities of size and shape to atoms, while Epicurus attributes weight in addition to size and shape. Nevertheless, when we look at Aristotle, the atomic weight issue found in Democritus becomes blurred. Based on Aristotle, we can state that Democritus did not consider weight as a property of the atom.

Additionally, Democritus does not see any of the qualities as inherent qualities of the atoms. According to him, these qualities are accidental and related to the differentiation of the appearances of the world. In Epicurus, all qualities are inherent differences carried within the atom. These are conceptual qualities that the atom must have, even if they contradict the concept of the atom; because the quality is variable, the atom is unchangeable. The contradiction here is between the essence and the visible world. Epicurus closely deals with this contradiction in his philosophy. He arranges all the qualities in contradiction to make the concept of the atom valid. Democritus, on the other hand, does not mention this contradiction at all. Thus, while Democritus focuses on the material aspect of the atom, Epicurus focuses on the conflict between the concept and existence and deals with the essence of the atom. This is the conflict between matter and form. Marx finds both similarities and differences in the views of Democritus and Epicurus on time. For both, time must be outside the concept of the atom because for the physical world to be independent and infinite, it must be independent of time.

Democritus does not consider time important and aims to eliminate it. He thinks about time independently from atoms. For Epicurus, time is the very essence of the visible world, change, and sensory perception. According to him, time exists in the sensuous world but the concept of time resides in the world of essence. Epicurus believes that time is a form that allows us to distinguish essence from what we perceive with our sensory organs. In Democritus, essence and appearance are blended. Marx also makes comparisons in the matter of celestial bodies. Although he values Democritus' views, he argues that he does not have a philosophical perspective and is not interested in the atomic theory.

Based on the *Letter to Pythocles*, we see that Epicurus grounds his ethical principles in the doctrine of celestial bodies. He does not use the system he employs in his philosophy of nature in astronomy. Hence, we cannot see the contradictions that exist in his philosophy of nature in this field. The reason of this is that the form is included in the matter in the celestial system.

For Greek philosophers, celestial bodies are sacred. However, we do not see this idea in Epicurus. He criticizes others for exalting celestial bodies and continually attributing desires to them. Celestial bodies are lawless; they can be explained in many ways.

At the end of his thesis, Marx criticizes Plutarch for his attacks on Epicurus' Greek God concept. Here, first of all, the views of certain individuals on immortality are discussed.

Plutarch criticizes Epicurus on the matter of pleasure and claims that although his philosophy reduces some fears in man, it does not bring them closer to the gods. Marx supports Epicurus by referring to Holbach's view that the belief in God has caused fear in people for a long time. Finally, Marx concludes his thesis by discussing the views of Schelling and Hegel on God.

In his letter to Menoeceus, we see Epicurus' views on how a person should lead a good life. He first advises people of all ages to study philosophy, which is the key to happiness. Although he accepts the existence of gods, he is against the design of gods that the majority believes in. The incorrect design of gods leads people to attribute everything that happens to them to gods. Epicurus also mentions that death has no meaning in human life because we feel no sensation when death comes. We are not here when death is, and death is not here when we are.

The main goal of Epicurus's philosophy is to move closer to pleasure by avoiding pain and fear. People are born with an innate desire for pleasure. The pleasure he refers to is not material pleasure, but rather finding peace in the soul and avoiding physical pain. This does not mean that we should strive to achieve every pleasure, but instead we should avoid pleasures that result in pain and aim for pleasures that come from painful experiences. Pleasure is both goodness itself and enables us to grasp the value of goodness. By evaluating the value of goodness through our sensations and aiming for pleasure, we will find peace in our souls and bodies.

According to Epicurus, one should also learn to be self-sufficient. The aim here is not to encourage asceticism but rather to teach people to tolerate it when they cannot find what they need. Epicurus regards living a virtuous life and a happy life as the same thing. For him, it is impossible to live a happy life without virtue or to live a virtuous life without happiness. Epicurus also sheds light on the topics of necessity and chance, preferring to leave it up to the mercy of the old gods, rather than accepting the necessity claimed by philosophers of nature.

The Letter to Herodotus is about Epicurus' philosophy of nature. It provides information about the universe being composed of atoms, which are indivisible, unchanging, infinite in number, and constantly in motion. These atoms form objects through collisions resulting from their motion. The void allows atoms to move. The universe is infinite because the void and the atoms are both infinite.

According to Epicurus, seeing, hearing, and smelling are possible because of particles detached from objects which correspond to our senses of sight, hearing, and smell. What

enables this sensation is the soul. Despite any problems in our body, the sensory activity continues. However, for sensation to continue, the atoms that make up the body must not be completely destroyed.

In conclusion, Epicurus challenges necessity and fate in nature despite embracing an atomist viewpoint. He resolves the contradictions in his philosophy of nature and the issue of atom deviation in a manner consistent with his ethical philosophy. From Epicurus' perspective, atoms, space, and time are infinite. The atoms constantly fall downwards due to natural movements. It is not a determination of up and down or highest and lowest. The direction should be thought of as up or down depending on the situation of an object. The fall continues indefinitely. For objects to exist, the falling atoms must collide with each other as a result of deviation. The deviation is a detail that distinguishes Epicurus' and Democritus' physics from each other, although it is not the only difference. By mentioning deviation, Epicurus eliminates the necessary fall of the atoms and prepares a ground for the concept of free will.

The situation that resolves the seemingly conflicting situations in Epicurus' philosophy is that he does not take the movements of atoms as material, unlike Democritus. When taken as material, all the qualities he assigns to it contradict the concept of atoms itself. Deviation in the atom is essential, meaning it is not related to existential reality. Deviation occurs mentally and very ambiguously. The fact that atoms do something other than their natural motion by deviating suggests there is no solid necessity in nature. The absence of necessity frees us from the fate paradox. The individual has free will. This freedom is also conceptually manifested in the laws of nature.

The ambiguous feelings people have against fate, gods, and death cause them to have a restless spirit. It is absurd to fear the gods because they do not interfere with people's lives as happy entities. Gods do not hear people's prayers and wishes. Similarly, there is no need to fear death, because when death comes, we lose our sensory ability and we are no longer ourselves. Individuals who get away from these fears with these justifications can reach a state of ataraxy with a virtuous life. The background that makes all this possible is Epicurus' theory of deviation from his view of nature.

REFERENCES

Cicero, (2021), *Tanruların Doğası*, edited by Fafo Telatar and Gül Özaktürk, Ankara, Doğu Batı Publications.

Epicurus, (BC), *Letter to Herodotus*, Retrieved from

[https://users.manchester.edu/Facstaff/SSNaragon/Online/texts/316/Epicurus,%20Letter
Herodotus.pdf](https://users.manchester.edu/Facstaff/SSNaragon/Online/texts/316/Epicurus,%20Letter%20to%20Herodotus.pdf)

Epicurus, (BC), *Letter to Menoeceus*, Retrieved from

[https://users.manchester.edu/Facstaff/SSNaragon/Online/texts/316/Epicurus,%20Letter
Menoeceus.pdf](https://users.manchester.edu/Facstaff/SSNaragon/Online/texts/316/Epicurus,%20Letter%20to%20Menoeceus.pdf)

Epicurus (1962), *Mektuplar ve Maksimler*, edited by Hayrullah Örs, İstanbul, Remzi Bookstore.

Gülenç, K.(2016), *Marksizmden Ahlak Tartışmaları*, İstanbul, Tekin Publishing House.

Marx, K. (1841), *The Difference Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature*, Retrieved from <https://marxists.architexturez.net/archive/marx/works/1841/differences/ch01.htm>

Marx,K. (2000), *Demokritos ile Epikouros'un Felsefelerindeki Ayrım*, edited by Saffet Babür, Ankara, Ayraç Publishing.

Laertius, D. (1923), *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, edited by Charles Duke Yonge, London, George Bell & Sons.

Laertius, D. (2019), *Ünlü Filozofların Yaşamları ve Öğretileri*, edited by Candan Şentuna, İstanbul, Yapı Kredi Publications.

Leibniz, (1768), *Opera Omnia*, Geneva.

Lucretius, (1908), *On the Nature of Things*, edited by Hugh Andrew Johnstone Munro, London, George Bell & Sons.

Seneca, (2019), *Ahlak Mektupları*, edited by Türkan Uzel, İstanbul, Jaguar Publications.