

Episode One Hundred Twenty-Seven - Letter to Pythocles 02 - The Formation of "Worlds"

Post by "Godfrey" of June 24, 2022 at 2:45 PM

Quote from DeWitt via Cassius

By this time three aspects of the principles of isonomy have been brought forward: first, that in an infinite universe perfection is bound to exist as well as imperfection; that is, "that there must be some surpassing being, than which nothing is better"; second, that the number of these beings, the gods, cannot be less than the number of mortals; and third, that in the universe at large the forces of preservation always prevail over the forces of destruction.

I've had problems wrapping my head around isonomia from the first time I read DeWitt. Using this quote as a summary helps to analyze my concerns with the idea.

First aspect: at first it makes sense that in an infinite universe there would be perfection as well as imperfection. But on further thought, how is perfection defined? Isn't this a mental concept rather than something inherent in a material universe? If anything, I would consider the universe itself as perfect rather than some aspect of it. This leads me to a definition of perfection as a self-contained, self-perpetuating system, a definition which then leads back to the original question of the destruction of the world. And maybe this leads to the imperturbability of the [Epicurean gods](#) as well. But the key point in my mind is that perfection is a value judgment, and therefore has no place in describing a material universe.

The second aspect, that the number of gods must equal the number of mortals, makes absolutely no sense to me. Can someone explain this?

The third aspect seems to make sense to me, but I should read the conversation between [Martin](#) and [Marco](#) before I make up my mind.

Anybody have other thoughts or explanations about isonomia? I'm rather befuddled.