

# Episode 237 - Cicero's OTNOTG - 12 - Isonomia And The Implications of Infinity

Post by "Cassius" of July 13, 2024 at 3:13 PM

## [Quote from Godfrey](#)

More logically, I suspect that what he's really saying is that for everything natural there is something supernatural

I understand your concern in the post in general (I think) but I don't think that this would be a fair criticism of what is presented. I do think we can presume that Cicero is not taking the time to present the most complete Epicurean argument possible, because he doesn't agree with it, but I do not think that his Epicurean friends would allow him to cross a line to an absolute falsehood like that. Cicero well knows that no Epicurean would accept anything "supernatural," and it would have destroyed his credibility to his friends (to whom he was writing, not to us 2000 years later) to try to do so. He was writing to real people of his own time trying to save Rome, and to grossly misrepresent Epicurean philosophy on a factual point like that would not be consistent with his goal of being effective with his friends. They would simply dismissed him not as having a legitimate concern, but as "you don't know what you are talking about." Lawyers don't win cases in fair trials stating obvious mistruths that are easily disproven, and accusing Epicureans of believing in supernatural beings would never pass that kind of "smell test."

And as for the "immortal" part, that is exactly why DeWitt stresses that Epicurue' own writing is better viewed as "deathless" rather than immortal. Epicurue would not have allowed anything to be supernaturally immortal, and even in the mouth of Cicero and Epicurean argument cannot be fairly construed that way.

## [Quote from Godfrey](#)

lower how? Higher how? And how do you compare theoretical quantities in a spectrum?

I think that is exactly where "prolepsis" comes in. The mind is recognizing that certain things are of a type and belong in a spectrum, while other things are not of that type and are outside that spectrum, likely due to images and other sensory data building up genetically (over long time) into similar "patterns."

### [Quote from Godfrey](#)

Because Cicero (as Vellius) is comparing "an equal number" of mortals and immortals

Right now my best guesstimate on that is that of things that are possible, in an infinite and eternal universe, though in any locality some things are more common than others, there is -- at once or over time -- an infinite number of each and every possible thing, and "infinite number" is equal to "infinite number."

And I would say this is the path by which to unwind their path:

### [Quote from Letter To Pythocles](#)

And most of all give yourself up to the study of the beginnings and of infinity and of the things akin to them, and also of the criteria of truth and of the feelings, and of the purpose for which we reason out these things. For these points when they are thoroughly studied will most easily enable you to understand the causes of the details. But those who have not thoroughly taken these things to heart could not rightly study them in themselves, nor have they made their own the reason for observing them.