

# Episode 241 - Cicero's OTNOTG 16 - A Common Thread Between The Epicurean View Of "The Gods" and "The Good"

Post by "Don" of August 15, 2024 at 10:31 PM

## [Quote from Cassius](#)

My first thought is that "worlds" appears to refer to a "collection" of lots of objects like planets and stars (presumably) then I would take "world" to be the "collection" of things, and not indicative that it would be impossible for planets or even stars to exist "on their own" part from a "world-system."

Hmm... Can we first agree that a "world" - in the Epicurean sense - refers to the word *κόσμος* (kosmos)? That seems to be the usual referent of the English translation "world" in the texts. If so, yes, I would fully agree that it is a "collection" of objects; however, those objects are in an "ordered" arrangement with a planet, stars and wandering stars (what we call "planets"), etc., all enclosed in an ordered pocket of the universe (The All). They all work together in the world-system. I don't see anywhere in the texts that talk about a "planet" forming outside of a kosmos.

A scholion to the letter to Herodotus does talk about different shaped "worlds":

## Quote

[74] "And further, we must not suppose that the *worlds* (*κόσμους kosmous*) have necessarily one and the same shape. [On the contrary, in the twelfth book "On Nature" he himself says that the shapes of the worlds differ, some being spherical, some oval, others again of shapes different from these. They do not, however, admit of every shape. Nor are they living beings which have been separated from the *infinite* (*ἀπείρου apeirou*).]

So the shapes of the kosmoi/worlds can differ; they're not all spherical.. but they are all kosmoi.

He also talks about the infinity of worlds in 45:

## Quote

"Moreover, there is an infinite number of *worlds* (*κόσμοι kosmoi*), some like this world, others unlike it. For the atoms being infinite in number, as has just been proved, are borne ever further in their course. For the atoms out of which a *world* (*κόσμος kosmos*)

might arise, or by which a world might be formed, have not all been expended on one world or a finite number of worlds, whether like or unlike this one. Hence there will be nothing to hinder *an infinity of worlds* (τὴν ἀπειρίαν τῶν κόσμων *ten apeirian ton kosmon*).

There is no such thing as a star or planet outside of a kosmos/world-system. 88-91 are directly relevant to the current conversation:

#### Quote

"A world (Κόσμος kosmos) is a circumscribed portion of the universe, which contains stars and earth and all other visible things, cut off from the infinite, and terminating [and terminating in a boundary which may be either thick or thin, a boundary whose dissolution will bring about the wreck of all within it] in an exterior which may either revolve or be at rest, and be round or triangular or of any other shape whatever. All these alternatives are possible : they are contradicted by none of the facts in this world, in which an extremity can nowhere be discerned.

[89] "That there is an infinite number of such worlds (κόσμοι kosmoi) can be perceived, and that such a world (κόσμος kosmos) may arise in a world (κόσμῳ kosmoi) or in one of the intermundia (μετακοσμίῳ metakosmioi) (by which term we mean the spaces between worlds (κόσμων kosmon)) in a tolerably empty space and not, as some maintain, in a vast space perfectly clear and void. It arises when certain suitable seeds rush in from a single world or intermundium, or from several, and undergo gradual additions or articulations or changes of place, it may be, and waterings from appropriate sources, until they are matured and firmly settled in so far as the foundations laid can receive them. [90] For it is *not* enough that there should be an aggregation or a vortex in the empty space in which a world may arise, as the necessitarians hold, and may grow until it collide with another, as one of the so-called physicists says. For this is in conflict with facts.

[91] "The sun and moon and the stars generally were **not** of independent origin and later absorbed within our world, [such parts of it at least as serve at all for its defence] ; but they at once began to take form and grow [and so too did earth and sea] by the accretions and whirling motions of certain substances of finest texture, of the nature either of wind or fire, or of both ; for thus sense itself suggests.

So, the sun, moon, and stars (NOTE: No mention of "planet" other than the one on which the beings - human beings in this case - stand) arise as a whole system. The kosmos works as a whole, arises as a whole. It can form within another world or in the intermundia, but the kosmos coalesces and bodies form within the kosmos. There are no suns, moons, or stars independent of a kosmos in which to form.