

# Declaration Of Rights Of Epicureans To Freedom of Religion - Cassius' Declaration of August 20, 2021

Post by “Eikadistes” of August 20, 2021 at 5:12 PM

I caution against presenting *Venus* to non-Epicureans as our go-to expression of *divinity*. I don't think that *Venus* is a *completely* inappropriate teaching tool, but using *Venus* as our prototype will inevitably lead to misinterpretation.

In accordance with Epicurus' insistence on frank speech, I think we should use materialistic language to express the notion of *divinity* as *the gods*. Philodemus' innumerable, extra-terrestrial animals who have cultivated an incorruptible state of pleasure seem more coherent with Epicurus' teachings than does Lucretius' symbolic hymn. Presenting *any one personality* as the Epicurean expression of *divinity* might lead to the common misconceptions of the masses that Epicurus warns against in his *Letter To Menoeceus*. For example, a Christian might assume that Epicureans either worship *Venus* as a personal savior, or assume that we see *Venus the Creatrix* as pre-dating the natural world.

Invoking *the gods* instead of *Venus* serves to prevent a few common misconceptions.

(1) While pleasure is universal, the means by which pleasure is realized is unique to each animal. *This* god may pursue a different path to pleasure than *that* god. No *one God* offers a path that can be prescribed as a universal panacea.

(2) Students of our tradition do not **need** to rely on metaphors to understand *divinity*. Most forms of idealism tend to abuse the use of ambiguous metaphors to obscure their contradictions. Our philosophy is not *limited* to metaphors.

(3) *Venus* is a culturally-contextualized personality from ancient Rome (or Aphrodite in Ancient Greece); therein, *Venus* isn't nearly as accessible to a contemporary audience as is *Mother Nature*, to exemplify a more viable metaphor.

(4) *Venus* as a symbol of life and fertility invokes images of verdant field, succulent fruit, and life as it is on Earth. *The gods* may be silicon-based lifeforms who breathe methane, or something even more unexpected.

(5) While Lucretius is one of our primary sources of information, he wrote exclusively in poetic verse, and we have an extra layer of interpretation to even understand what *Venus* symbolizes. That's a burden on new students.

As a general expression of our philosophy, the use of mythic personification is an invitation to misinterpret a philosophy that has been radically misinterpreted throughout history, particularly by self-proclaimed Epicureans, like the Italian Humanists who synthesized Epicurean physics

with faith in their Christ. If we are to invoke a *primary divinity* at all, I would suggest using the contemporary metaphor of *Mother Nature*. Even better, I think it best to avoid using metaphors as much as possible when referring to *divinity*, and, instead, privilege the phrase "*the gods*".