

Thoughts on Reverence, Awe, and Epicurean Piety

Post by “Godfrey” of October 29, 2020 at 4:12 PM

Great questions [Don](#) !

The generative force could easily and incorrectly be renamed the Generative Force (or simply The Force 😊). Obviously I'm still grappling with this, and there's probably a better word or phrase for what I'm trying to describe. It is a purely materialist process. It is how life originally evolved out of inert material, what causes plants to sprout and grow, flowers to bloom and to open and close with the cycle of the sun. It is energy from the sun providing fuel for life. It's whatever it is that takes place when an egg and a sperm develop into a baby. So yes, it has the characteristics of Venus as Lucretius was talking about, but I wouldn't personify it in that way. To a large extent it can be described scientifically, and I wouldn't attribute anything beyond the verifiable to it. "It" isn't even a good word as "it" is, I think more accurately, a series of processes. Where "it" can become an object of piety is exactly where "it" intersects with our individual pleasure, particularly in ways that lead us to experience reverence and awe.

I don't suggest adapting other religions' practices as a rule, for the reasons I mentioned previously. But I have attended Christian services to enjoy the architecture or the music and I can see early Epicureans doing something similar by attending the festivals. So I can understand on some level what was happening historically. But related to what you point out, Greek society was based on city-states and is entirely different from the mega-culture we now live in. I think we need to focus on "studying, understanding and basking in" pleasure and philosophy in like minded company, frankly I don't know how we could productively adapt contemporary communal religious practice of whatever persuasion to EP.