

# Episode 256 - Epicurean Gods: Real, Or Ideal Thought Constructs?

Post by “Cassius” of November 18, 2024 at 2:05 PM

Welcome to Episode 256 of Lucretius Today. This is a podcast dedicated to the poet Lucretius, who wrote "On The Nature of Things," the most complete presentation of Epicurean philosophy left to us from the ancient world.

**Each week we walk you through the Epicurean texts, and we discuss how Epicurean philosophy can apply to you today. If you find the Epicurean worldview attractive, we invite you to join us in the study of Epicurus at [EpicureanFriends.com](https://www.epicureanfriends.com), where we discuss this and all of our podcast episodes.**

This week, now that we have completed Book 1 of Cicero's "On the Nature of The Gods," we are going to complete our series on the [Epicurean gods](#) by addressing a common question: Did Epicurus think that his gods had real physical existence?

## Today's Text

We are bridging over from the following contained at the very end of Book One of On The Nature of The Gods:

XLIV. ...

But Epicurus, you say, has written a book concerning sanctity. A trifling performance by a man whose wit is not so remarkable in it, as the unrestrained license of writing which he has permitted himself; for what sanctity can there be if the Gods take no care of human affairs? Or how can that nature be called animated which neither regards nor performs anything? Therefore our friend Posidonius has well observed, in his fifth book of the Nature of the Gods, that Epicurus believed there were no Gods, and that what he had said about the immortal Gods was only said from a desire to avoid unpopularity. He could not be so weak as to imagine that the Deity has only the outward features of a simple mortal, without any real solidity; that he has all the members of a man, without the least power to use them—a certain unsubstantial pellucid being, neither favorable nor beneficial to any one, neither regarding nor doing anything. There can be no such being in nature; and as Epicurus said this plainly, he allows the Gods in words, and destroys them in fact; and if the Deity is truly such a being that he shows no favor, no benevolence to mankind, away with him! For why should I entreat him to be propitious? He can be propitious to none, since, as you say, all his favor and benevolence are the effects of imbecility.

<https://www.spreaker.com/episode/63019014>

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**Post by “Cassius” of November 23, 2024 at 8:38 PM**

In preparation for this episodes I put together a page of notes about the Realist v Idealist question in a format which may be useful even in a preliminary form.

Here's a link where it can be found:

[Lucretius Today Podcast - Epicurean Gods: Real Or Ideal?](#)

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**Post by “Eikadistes” of November 24, 2024 at 3:28 AM**

*Sweet Dreams or Space Ghosts?* The Saga continues!

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**Post by “Cassius” of November 26, 2024 at 5:31 PM**

Lucretius Today Episode 256 is now available: "[Epicurean Gods](#): Real, or Ideal Thought Constructs?"

<https://www.spreaker.com/episode/63019014>