

Thinking About Epicurean Viewpoints Such As The Eternal / Infinite Universe, And How To Discuss Them

Post by "Cassius" of January 11, 2021 at 9:32 AM

Don I think you make a great point -- we need to be absolutely clear about what we mean by science. And frankly in most discussions I don't think people are at all clear as to what they mean, and they include all sorts of things that are dubious in the picture when they say things like "Science says....". As far as I am concerned that is very poor phrasing, and there is no such thing as "science saying something" -- only particular scientists saying particular things. I am much more comfortable with words like "knowledge" or "wisdom" or "facts" or "truth" (such as included in the definitions below) than I am with "science." The implications and limitations of words like "knowledge" and "truth" are more familiar to us, but it seems that all someone today has to say is "science says" and they think they have won any argument. In every case I am going to want to know who are the scientists being referenced and exactly what it is they are maintaining to be true.

In fact I would go so far to say that the sentence "Science says that the universe is 14 billion years old" is about as meaningless as "Religion says that the universe is 5000 years old." I want to know the details of who is making the assertion, and on what it is based, before I would accept either assertion. The last thing we should want would be for the word "science" to become a term of intimidation by authority, like the word "religion" or the word "virtue."

I would therefore be very suspicious of a term such as philo-science, and I do think that there is a reason for thinking that there is a "scientism" issue going on in the world today as part of what we are dealing with. And I think that Epicurus dealt with exactly the same question, which is an undercurrent to what we are talking about -- he too was concerned about the limits of those who make claims based on authority of all kinds, rather than on things that we can clearly observe and consider to be established "facts."

science [sahy-uhns] [SHOW IPA](#)

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noun

- 1 a branch of knowledge or study dealing with a body of facts or truths systematically arranged and showing the operation of general laws:
the mathematical sciences.
- 2 systematic knowledge of the physical or material world gained through observation and experimentation.
- 3 any of the branches of natural or [physical science](#).
- 4 systematized knowledge in general.
- 5 knowledge, as of facts or principles; knowledge gained by systematic study.
- 6 a particular branch of knowledge.

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