

# Did Epicurus really oversell the power of science to diminish anxiety?

Post by “Eikadistes” of February 14, 2023 at 9:40 AM

I am responding without reading the context surrounding that quote, so I apologize if this is not a direct response.

I think that Epicurus' promotion of rational, non-mystical thinking is *most* necessary for those enmeshed in a powerfully anti-science environment. We observed this during the Italian Renaissance and Revolutionary France: the dissonance Lucretius offered *inspired* the founders of modern science and provided a lighthouse in a religious storm.

That observation may seem much *less* poignant to we, contemporary, urban people, enmeshed in a power grid of modernity. Even Christians who "claim" to have adopted the Christianity that Jesus taught still walk around with computers in their pockets that were invented by disbelievers on the principle of particle physics.

In a way, we are all Epicurean, whether or not reactionary minds are willing to recognize their own context. When Nietzsche said "God Is Dead", he didn't mean, "Atheists Have Killed the Sacred Spirit of the Christians", he meant, "Our medieval mythology has dried-up like a drippy puddle in this, the Summer of Science".

The observation that the Sun is not a conscious deity is also a pretty mundane observation for modern peoples, but only because we were already taught this information. If the majority of American adults were still confused about the basic operations of the sun, this observation would prophetic, threatening, inspiring, and life-changing.

Ultimately, though, whether we are introducing Atomism to a culture that sees shades of infinitely divisible elements, or Heliocentrism to a Geocentric culture, or telling a gay kid in rural Mississippi in 2023 that his feelings are totally natural, it is people who have been neglected scientifically who benefit *most* from these things.

I guess my thesis is this: Science might seem "oversold" in cultures that are already scientific, but a culture like Afghanistan under the Taliban, for example, **DESPERATELY** needs a Lucretian revolution of thought. Flat-Earthers might not believe in satellites in outer space ... but they sure do use them a lot when they make phone calls.