

Philodemus On Piety

Post by “Eikadistes” of March 20, 2022 at 12:17 PM

I'm getting more comfortable getting away from the *"specially-privileged extra-terrestrials"* idea of *"the gods"* and beginning to see how *"god"* works as *"each person's individualized concept of the best version of the ideal person"*.

I propose that the Epicurean framework recognizes that (a) extra-terrestrials must exist in an infinite universe, (b) some of those extra-terrestrials would be human-like, (c) some of those human-like extra-terrestrials would be awesome, (d) some of those awesome, human-like extra-terrestrials could have already been accurately envisioned by at least one person, (e) all such deities can, and, perhaps, do, exist (*so long as they are not assigned supernatural qualities*).

At the same time, even in a conceptually finite universe with limited beings, it would not invalidate each human's *"god"* as their *"ideal character"*, a useful tool for human moral development. However, the Epicurean universe *is* infinite.

I am not as comfortable with the suggestion (what I'm going to call the "Radio Analogy") that knowledge of the gods is being inadvertently transmitted from the gods to the *receiver* that is the human mind in the form of weird particles. Humans would idealize regardless of whether or not the subjects of their ideals exist outside of the mind, and those idealizations (given that they do not contradict the reality of nature) can be used for moral development.

Perhaps that might be a grounding qualification, sort of a blanket generalization for all religious traditions: we might say, "their deity is real *if* it can be conceptualized as a distant, yet specially-privileged extraterrestrial". "God" can be assumed to be real as long as "God" is not supposed to have created the universe nor act in the human drama.

I've been looking through a biased lens, as a critic to my dominant culture. Our Abrahamic religions, at least, support creationism and immanence, and as a critic, my orientation, relative to our language, is, theologically, a-, or anti-. Ancient theology is difficult to understand through this lens. "God" begins to make a lot more sense to me if I accept that we all have our own, internalized idealizations of perfect character, and that The Creator is mistaken epitaph of god.