

What fears does modern science remove, as Epicurean physics did in antiquity?

Post by “Robert” of June 4, 2025 at 1:03 PM

Agree, this is an interesting question! Here' my lunch-hour take:

Science has contributed by being able to explain more and more phenomena that, in the past, people might have been inclined to attribute to gods. The more explanatory power science has, the less room there is for supernatural explanations. There is simply less and less for the gods to do.

As an example, in diagnosing certain mental disorders, we can look at the functioning of the amygdala, or whether or not someone has sustained a frontal lobe injury, whereas 500 years ago folks might have claimed possession by spirits (good or evil).

In other words, modern science hasn't changed the basic principles underlying the Epicurean approach, but it has expanded the applicability--and, in so doing, made the competing supernaturalist approaches less plausible.

It might also help prevent relapses of the kind Lucretius mentions in Book 5 of DRM...at least, one can hope so!