

# Making Epicurean Canonics Understandable

Post by "Cassius" of October 30, 2020 at 7:36 PM

## [Quote from Susan Hill](#)

There is clearly a huge epistemological concern on how one can approach fields of human knowledge and experience that cannot be measured by the usual tools of science. There seems to be a debate over whether anything can be known except by the scientific method.

For example, and on one of the most important examples, related to but separate from divinity: "Life After Death."

No one has ever reliably been shown to have "been there and come back to testify about it." Depending on your definition of "scientific" there is in fact no "scientific" proof of life after death, to my understanding anyway. If we line up 1000 scientists, I would expect 1000 of them to agree that there is no scientific proof of it.

But "1000 scientists say so" is not sufficient proof for very many good people. We can say that they ought to be better educated, or read some physics books, and that's definitely true - they should. But most of us have to deal with people who want to say:

- 1 - No one has ever been there so we don't know.
- 2 - YOU have never died and come back, so YOU don't know.
- 3 - There are all sorts of reports from people I trust who say that they have had "near-death" experiences.
- 4 - Plato had some really great arguments about recollection from past lives being the basis of the way we think.
- 5 - it seems that most cultures over the centuries have had some form of the view of life after death, so like the 50,000 Frenchmen, they can't all be wrong, can they?
- 6 - And lots more I don't have the creativity to list.

I am firmly convinced with DeWitt that Epicurus was attempting to create a "[Philosophy for the Millions](#)" and I personally think that's a highly worthwhile goal. People who live their lives in fear of hell can have those lives greatly improved, and reduce their tendency to cut our heads off, if they can be persuaded not to worry about heaven and hell. That's a highly desirable goal, and it comes down to discussing issues of evidence like we're talking about now.

Even if we didn't live in a world of propaganda wars where almost everything has been politicized to the point where nobody trusts anybody any more, I do believe that there are legitimate questions that face even the most educated of us, just like they face the less educated with greater force.

As best I understand it, there is no god and no "bright line" reason to accept any particular standard of proof as "certain" -- and that's in large part because we don't have a clear idea what "certain" means.

All of these issues are very important and very deep.