

# Simulacra, gods and the dead

Post by “Susan Hill” of November 14, 2020 at 8:36 AM

I don't recall where we find the original source, but from Wikipedia:

“Epicurus maintained that he and his followers knew that the gods exist because "our knowledge of them is a matter of clear and distinct perception", meaning that people can empirically sense their presences.[\[108\]](#) He did not mean that people can see the gods as physical objects, but rather that they can see visions of the gods sent from the remote regions of interstellar space in which they actually reside.[\[108\]](#)”

How should we understand this? Some people feel they have clear empirical perceptions of the divine, and many do not.

I found an analogy recently that I was thinking might apply. There is a condition called “amusia” that affects as much as 4% of the population. Such people are not able to recognize music, as such, let alone enjoy it. They do not recognize music as having any beauty of form, harmony, or emotional expression. It is not a pattern that expresses any kind of intelligence to them. Yet the rest of us cannot NOT recognize music, no matter how much an amusic might insist that it is just completely random noise. Nor would it be possible to teach an amusic to appreciate music.

So to return to the original question, what if you had a very “clear and distinct” perception of a ghost? This means you cannot convince yourself that you were hallucinating. I think beyond just writing it off by saying “Epicurus taught that there is no existence after death, therefore I saw nothing”, one could consider other possibilities. For example, there is the “Stone Tape” theory about hauntings that says that ghosts are actually “memory traces” left in the environment. That's one possibility that allows for the Epicurean no-life-after-death and no supernatural beings.

Just me throwing woo into things again, right? 😊