

Article On Issues As to The Existence of Life: Yates - "Fantasizing About The Origin Of Life"

Post by "Cassius" of September 8, 2025 at 1:57 PM

Hi Scott:

To me, these discussions are almost as interesting for what they say about the terminology as what they say about the science. What does "definitive answer" or "certainty" really mean? In order to say that anything is definitive do we have to stand in the shoes of a Plato in contact with ideal forms, or a supernatural god who can claim "I know the real answer because I created everything"?

I think the answer to both those is of course "no, we can't and shouldn't and don't claim such levels of authority." And in fact anyone who does claim them is a sham and a fraud.

On the other hand what we can talk in terms of is "confidence" give the observations that re possible and our logical reasoning based on those observations.

And what it appears that Epicurus has done is to take as starting point that the universe is eternal in time (nothing can come from nothing) and infinite in size (there can logically be no ultimate boundaries, and combine those with the observation that what we see here on earth is that nature never makes a single thing of kind, and that what happens here we would logically expect to happen wherever conditions are similar.

And from those and similar observations it's a hop skip and jump to conclude that there is really "nothing new under the sun," and that life as a category (not the same living things, but "life") has always existed throughout the universe.

At least for me, once I discard the fake standards of certainty suggested by religion and Platonists, I have no problem accepting Epicurus, line of reasoning, so I personally am as confident that "life" has always existed in the universe just as all other natural processes have existed, and will exist, forever.

Of course my confidence and a dollar will buy you a cup of coffee, but I think an approach similar to this is inherent once the problem of skepticism is identified for the self-contradictory nonsense that it really is. Sure there are lots of specifics that we don't have enough evidence to be confident about. Has life existed on Mars subsequent to its formation? That's a specific question where we can do nothing but weigh and balance the evidence as it changes, but the "universal" or "cosmic" scale is different, and generalizations about infinity and eternity are as logically compelled as just about anything can be -- at least enough that it is more rational to be confident that life does exist elsewhere than earth than it is to say that we are unique in the

universe.

I would argue that saying "I don't know, maybe life only exists here" is as good as laying down to be walked over by the religionists or Platonists on every other issue as well. So the issues of eternality and infinity of both the universe and of life within it seems about as good a place to start in standing up to those guys as anywhere else. And again regardless of what I think, that seems to have been Epicurus own approach.