

Circumstantial (Indirect) and Direct Evidence / Dogmatism vs Skepticism

Post by "DaveT" of March 7, 2026 at 2:46 PM

Sorry I missed the Wed. meeting this thread is discussing. With that in mind, knowing I may be addressing something tangential, I note several things in this thread that have made me think more deeply.

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

Quoting [Godfrey](#) It seems to me that multiple explanations are typically used by Epicurus to rule out the supernatural....

It also seems that multiple explanations can be used to support a theory by ruling out the competing theories....

It looks to me like [Godfrey](#) was saying there are two reasons a person may use multiple explanations to some topic; to *disprove* a point and to *make* a point.

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

Quoting [Cassius](#) "...the point is that is not always possible to be sure which of several explanations might be the right one, ... we aren't going to be dogmatic..." "But as to basic issues such as nothing coming or going to nothing, or no supernatural gods, or no life after death, the positive evidence is abundant to RULE OUT those possibilities, so we dogmatically assert their falsity.

The two approaches - dogmatically rejecting that which is NOT possible, and suspending judgment between those which ARE possible - go hand in hand.

Of course all of the explanations asserted **may all be false**, and therefore fall within the realm of speculation and therefore explaining *nothing* to either prove or to disprove another's speculation. \

But the second part does give me pause;

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

Quoting [Cassius](#) "But as to basic issues such as nothing coming or going to nothing, or no supernatural gods, or no life after death, the positive evidence is abundant to RULE OUT those possibilities, so we dogmatically assert their falsity."

I think the danger here in being comfortable with any sort of Epicurean dogma on physics is that while some of Epicurus' physics has proven more likely true than false, one must tread very lightly in attributing to him an omniscience akin to absolute knowledge. I see no evidence that there is life after death, and a great deal of evidence how humans invented numerous types of life after death throughout history to explain the unexplainable. I see no evidence that gods exist for the same reasons of contrary evidence about human nature. Indeed Epicurus believed in gods with no evidence of their existence. Correct?

And to follow up on this point, Epicurean theory about atoms was more a hypothesis, than a theory since he had no direct evidence of the truth of his statements, much of which parenthetically he learned from Democritus. True or false?

QUOTE from [Martin](#)

"The study of physics/nature may give us sufficient confidence about the non-interference of gods and no life after death that we get rid of fears about them. We should not wait until the evidence for this is conclusive because it will never be conclusive."

I agree with the focus of [Martin](#) above.

And I see this issue on each side who advocate for either theist v. atheist, atomism v. creationism, divine cause vs. nothing from nothing as never being conclusive by either side, either by direct or indirect (circumstantial) proof. THERE IS NO UNCHANGING TRUTH on these issues, only confidence or lack of confidence based on whatever evidence we've found.

What I mean is, the *Scientific Method* does not demand absolute proof raised to the level of dogma or certainty regardless that people take findings to be absolute. The word *Science* is derived from the Latin "to know" But *scientists*, those who search for knowledge of the natural world, do not claim to know anything *beyond a doubt*. Neither do they claim knowledge that is unchanging forever. They rely on newly discoverable evidence and the testing required to prove or disprove any particular occurrence in nature in order to arrive at a consensus of opinion. And that opinion only give a high degree of confidence rather than an absolute certainty.