

Circumstantial (Indirect) and Direct Evidence / Dogmatism vs Skepticism

Post by "Kalosyni" of March 6, 2026 at 7:51 AM

I am copying here into the main forum, a few posts which were recently made in reaction to a past Wednesday night Zoom meeting discussion:

[Godfrey](#) posted (on 03/05/26):

It occurred to me this morning in my fog of awakening that the practice of multiple explanations relates to the issue of skepticism v dogmatism.

It seems to me that multiple explanations are typically used by Epicurus to rule out the supernatural. Another way of looking at this is that they are used as a contrast to one particular theory, and that the explanations tend to be based on inferences from the available evidence.

It also seems that multiple explanations can be used to support a theory by ruling out the competing theories. In this case the "evidence based" explanations would be used to refute the many explanations, leaving one particular theory as the most probable.

I'm curious as to whether this has any relevance to our discussion last night....

[Cassius](#) posted:

I think so Godfrey. I would say that the point is that is not always possible to be sure which of several explanations might be the right one, so the multiple explanation approach reinforces that we aren't going to be dogmatic on a PARTICULAR solution when the evidence is insufficient. 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.

[Cassius](#) posted:

Also Godfrey I'd add that this is exactly what i see is the major reason for the Epicurean criticism of Socrates. if you think that physics can never lead you to any conclusions about the

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/4964-circumstantial-indirect-and-direct-evidence-dogmatism-vs-skepticism/?postID=38910#post38910>

nature of the universe or of gods or the existence of life after death, then there would be no reason to study it.

Some consider it to be a criticism of Epicurus that he didn't seem interested in putting science to "practical" use - he didn't pursue technology - but I'd say he thought he was putting science to its most practical use first - that of establishing whether we are free agents or playthings of the gods or Fate or Fortune. Technology is far secondary to those issues.

[Martin](#) posted:

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.
