

Re: What is Life?

Source: <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.bio.evolution/2005-06/msg00553.html>

- *From:* "Anthony Cerrato" <tcerrato@xxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Mon, 27 Jun 2005 01:44:12 -0400 (EDT)
-

<TomHendricks474@xxxxxx> wrote in message
[news:d9ksl6\\$233v\\$1@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:news:d9ksl6$233v$1@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx)

> g:
> It is difficult, I know, to look at a living cell today
and try to
>
> back up from it to a "first cell." That you are trying is
a good
>
> thing. Some of the difficulty lies in the fact -- or what
I am
>
> persuaded is a fact -- that we cannot have certainty
beyond
>
> some level as to what is going on in a living cell today.
That
>
> is, we cannot examine it closely enough to see what is
happening
>
> without disrupting what we are looking at (the
Schrödinger's cat
>
> dilemma).
> Tom:
> The question of the OOL is all uncertainty IMO. It's
definitely
> a new path. I don't think we should know for a certainty
yet.
> It's too early and there is too many paths yet to try
before
> we discover the correct one. Not knowing for certain now
> just means we don't know now. Later we may or may not.
> What is impossible today may become possible or even
> probable tomorrow. I tend to think we will learn how
> life began, and within our lifetimes.

Re: What is Life?

There are indeed too many paths to consider and I doubt there is a single unique one. This complexity problem is daunting, and it not only necessitates determining the complete list of parts and their function, but the myriad possible interactions between aal of them! I think it will take many human lifetimes to even catalog and outline _all_ the parts and functions of the simplest lifeforms, let alone potential interactions thereof (dependent also on where the line is drawn in defining "life".)

- > You are right to caution those of us with scenarios to make sure
- > we are explicit in stating the hypothesis side when
- > appropo and the fact side when studies are presented.
- > And civility always helps. Also perhaps this
- > saying – you can't reason with the unreasonable –
- > pertains at times LOL

Stating hypotheses with all necessary pertinent assumptions is the never–ending problem in all the sciences. Everyone fails in this from amateurs to Nobelists—it's one of the biggest problems in teaching I believe...clear, simple language in describing/ designing models, scenarios, and even metaphors, would certainly help also. I doubt it will change much in the near future. ...tonyC

• **References:**

◆ **What is Life?**

◇ *From:* TomHendricks474

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