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## UFO UpDates Mailing List

### Re: Zeta Notso Ridiculous

From: Loy Pressley <lpressle@webwide.net>  
Date: Sun, 14 Sep 1997 04:49:50 -0700  
Fwd Date: Mon, 15 Sep 1997 12:24:04 -0400  
Subject: Re: Zeta Notso Ridiculous

> To: UFO UpDates - Toronto <updates@globalserve.net>  
> From: Mark Cashman <mcashman@ix.netcom.com>  
> Subject: re: UFO UpDate: Re: Zeta Notso Ridiculous  
> Date: Wed, 10 Sep 1997 12:15:00 -0700

> > From: UFO UpDates - Toronto <updates@globalserve.net>, on 9/10/97 9:26 AM:  
> > Date: Wed, 10 Sep 1997 06:42:25 -0700  
> > From: Loy Pressley <lpressle@webwide.net>  
> > To: UFO UpDates - Toronto <updates@globalserve.net>  
> > Subject: Re: UFO UpDate: Re: Zeta Notso Ridiculous

<SNIP my comments>

First, I have no wish to incite an argument and if I have done so, I apologize! I agree totally with almost all of your comments. I have done a little studying myself (once had a burning urge to be a Biologist) and everything I've seen published agrees with what you say. However; I don't think that we know everything about everything...just because our science today puports to have absolute proof that something must be so doesn't mean that, in fact, it is so. It is just the best idea that we have at the time.

Suppose, for example, that it turns out in the end that the conditions we experience in this remote arm of an unremarkable galaxy where we live are not the same conditions that exists in other parts of the universe. Suppose that the speed of light isn't constant everywhere...if that turns out to be true it would certainly answer the current question of why we see stars that appear to be older than the universe itself. While there can be many other answers to this puzzle, it certainly shows that there is some kind of error in the way we are viewing the universe.

> Well, let me put it this way:

> Life as we know it requires at least two components:

In relation to my comments "as we know it" is the key term. What if life elsewhere is not the way we know it? Is there anything but us that says that life elsewhere has to be as we know it?

> 1) A self-reproducing polymer with sufficient variability to encode  
> for other polymers (DNA and RNA are the only ones of which I am aware)

> 2) Materials which can be used to make polymers and which can  
> through more or less direct routes, be manipulated by (1) (in our form  
> of life, these are amino acids, used to make proteins)

> Experiments have shown that amino acids can be formed under conditions  
> similar to the primitive earth, and, likewise, that proteins and fats can  
> form into hollow spheres called coacervates, which appear to be primitive  
> cell membranes. In addition there is some evidence that DNA or RNA  
> chains can form in certain moist environments, possibly with the catalytic

> effect of clay minerals.  
>  
> For the initial generation of life's chemical precursors then, we require  
>  
> 1) Water  
> 2) A temperature allowing free water but no so high as to disrupt  
> polymer or nucleic acid formation  
> 3) Various CHON compounds in the water  
> 4) Energy sufficient to stimulate the production of amino acids  
> (i.e. electrical or UV rays) but not so powerful as to disrupt same  
> 5) Whatever environments are necessary to form DNA / RNA,  
> with the same kinds of constraints (surfaces?)  
> 6) A reasonable pressure environment which allows water to  
> remain liquid  
>  
> Many of these same constraints are required for the continued functioning  
> of life, but some are more relaxed due to the ability of cells and masses of  
> cells to protect their internals from somewhat more hostile external  
> conditions.  
>  
> However, even organisms have limits to their heat, radiation, and pressure  
> tolerances.  
>  
> Now, it's fine to speculate on the possibility of other forms  
> of life, but even if based on some other combinations of chemicals,  
> not yet found by scientists, which have the requisite properties of  
> self-reproduction, polymer formation, etc. which would seem required  
> to create a solid, differentiated organism (and I stress that I am  
> not aware of any chemicals which are considered as candidates to  
> replace DNA / RNA in their roles as replicators), there are still  
> going to be some needs with regard to getting evolution started,  
> such as the ability of the chemicals to move in the environment,  
> which implies a liquid environment, temperature and pressure  
> conditions where chemical interactions are extremely likely and  
> where the products of such reactions will not immediately be  
> destroyed. Unlikely environments include the vacuum of space  
> or surfaces exposed to that vacuum, high energy / radiation  
> environments, etc.  
>  
> Also note that carbon compounds have specific properties which make them  
> widely useful in constructing living organisms, and those properties are not  
> shared by other chemicals. That's why organic chemistry is such a large  
> subject, even though it is only the chemistry of carbon compounds.

What are the properties of carbon compounds that are not shared by other chemicals?

Are these unique properties true under all conditions? What happens to chemistry when it evolves on a planet that is larger or smaller than earth, has a completely different atmosphere than earth, and orbits a binary or even a trinary star system in a matter of days or in hundreds of years? Would carbon compounds be the only compounds with those specific properties if they were on Jupiter? I don't think we have ever even seen the metallic hydrogen that is supposed to exist at Jupiter's core much less have any idea what happens to chemical compounds at the pressure and immense gravity there.

> Now this isn't prejudice, it's just science.

I think our science is prejudiced towards 'life as we know it'. Granted; not much progress can take place if we don't have a well anchored starting point and our science is about the best starting point we can have. But...our scientific principals may not hold up under all circumstances and we need to be aware of that and not be so attached to them that we are unwilling to change.

> To bring this back to UFOs, the case literature is quite clear  
> on the nature of the occupants. The vast majority are bilateral,  
> and bipedal, seem to be able to (at least with the use of  
> artificial aids) to tolerate our gravity, in some cases can  
> tolerate our air, use a spectral range similar to ours for vision,  
> and can even come in physical contact with earth organisms and  
> chemicals without suffering / causing violent allergic reactions.  
> These observations seem to largely leave out weird silicon life  
> forms, or organisms with wildly different biochemistries.

Agreed.

>  
> > Maybe because we evolved here we think that earthlike conditions are the  
> > only conditions able to support life. Who knows...it might not even be

> > possible to detect, much less communicate with 'life', that evolved  
> > under conditions unlike our own. Maybe we need to change our definition  
> > of what 'life' is. Is a virus alive? I think that one is still being  
> > argued.  
>  
> Well, a virus really inhabits a vague area between being alive and not being  
> alive. If there were no living organisms, however, there would be no way  
> for a virus to survive.  
>  
> Certainly there is no pressing reason to change our definition of life, but  
> if we find some weird silicon / sulfur millipede crawling around on Io, I have  
> no problem with engaging in such a reevaluation. But I suspect even then  
> it will not require us to change our definition of life, just our concepts of  
> biochemistry, and that's a lot less fundamental.

What is the currently accepted definition of life? I've read quite a few books and there seems to be a lot of disagreement among the experts as to what 'alive' really means.

Thanks, Mark, for the opportunity of replying.

>  
> -----  
> Mark Cashman, creator of the Temporal Doorway at  
> <http://www.geocities.com/~mcashman>  
> [http://www.infohaus.com/access/by-seller/The\\_Temporal\\_Doorway\\_Storefront](http://www.infohaus.com/access/by-seller/The_Temporal_Doorway_Storefront)  
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