

don't drink the water? don't eat the berries!!

The Whorl list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 06 May 1999

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/whorl/607>

Exported from an unofficial mirror of a public mailing list. Copyright in each message remains with the person who wrote it. Email addresses are obscured as `user at host`, the form the original archive published. This file was rebuilt from parsed fields rather than retained headers, so it is faithful in content but not byte-exact.

Greg Neyman — 06 May 1999, 00:53

While I find the probability-based arguments for the existence of biospheres on other planets to be fairly plausible, I see no reason to expect that their life-chemistry will be in any way compatible with ours.

you make a good point, Robert ... I don't know how it relates to robot rights, but ...

chances are that complex organic chemicals will be INCOMPATIBLE between planets ... if anyone has read Clarke's 2061, there was this scene where a giant fish on nearby Europa ate the carcass of a human ... 2 minuets later, it surfaced, vomited the carcass, thrashed around, and died ... chemical incompatibility to the toxic extreme.

but the basic nutrients will be there, stuff life amino acids and simple lipids ... there was this experiment conducted a few years ago ... a student created a proto-earth-like environment in a class tube ... methane/ammonia rich air ... UV and electrical (lightning) bombardment ... the next morning, he had simple organic chemical chains dripping from the electrodes ... chemicals that were compatible with earth life. further repeats yielded the EXACT same chemical yield ... assuming a habitable world would be the third or fourth rock out from a G type star (that's Sol's classification, right? or am I getting things screwed up again?) ... it would probably undergo similar formation/evolution, and have the same proto-environment ... that means ... the basic organic chemicals generated would be compatible with human processes ... all we'd have to do is seed the planet with organisms that would feed on those chemicals in the environment ... or heck ... humans can live on those chemicals alone ... it wouldn't be the most culinarily fulfilling life, but we'd live ... just don't eat the alien berries ...

no wait ... I have some ramble left in me yet ... Michael ... I don't see why terraforming robots necessarily need to be self aware ... anymore so than the pathfinder probe that's rusting on mars right now is "self-aware" ... the path finder probe was limitedly self-aware ... it knew it was the thing that was to respond to all instructions from earth ... and that's all the terraforming robots need to know ... they're the agents that will be enacting all implanted commands ... they maybe very complex commands, ones that demand a very sophisticated AI, but that doesn't necessarily demand sapience

until we meet again ... hat

/\ Greg Neyman Greg.Neyman at gte.net
____/________ http://home1.gte.net/web100to/
|HE HA|

*This is WHORL, for discussion of Gene Wolfe's Book of the Long Sun.