



Are We Alone?: Philosophical Implications Of The Discovery Of Extraterrestrial Life

By Paul Davies

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Scientists and governments are actively searching for signs of life in the universe. Will their efforts meet with success? Award-winning author Paul Davies, an eminent scientist who writes with the flair of a science fiction writer, explores the ramifications that the discovery of extraterrestrial life would have for our science, our religions, and our worldview in general.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

The authentic discovery of extraterrestrial life would usher in a scientific revolution on par with Copernicus or Darwin, says Paul Davies. Just as these ideas sparked religious and philosophical controversy when they were first offered, so would proof of life arising away from Earth. With this brief book (160 pages, including two appendices and an index), Davies tries to get ahead of the curve and begin to sort out the metaphysical mess before it happens. Many science fiction writers have preceded him, of course, but here the matter is plainly put. This is a very good introduction to a compelling subject.

From Publishers Weekly

This bite-size volume for the nonscientist reviews fact and speculation concerning the possible existence of extraterrestrial life. In the process, Davies (*The Mind of God*) explores metaphysical arguments and attitudes that would be affected by discovery of other life. A physicist, natural philosopher and winner of the 1995 Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion, he presents an approach that is broad and inquiring, not dogmatic. In clear and comfortable prose, he renders some deep thoughts in terms of simple, intuitive concepts, with many effective references to relevant theology, philosophy and science fiction as well as natural science. Contents include a sketch of NASA's current search program (SETI) and a survey of the vested viewpoints at risk. An intriguing chapter considers the nature of consciousness (distinguished from intelligence) as it may exist in the universe. Davies concludes that boundaries between religious and scientific facets of the topic may be illusory. Illustrations.

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From [Booklist](#)

As an answer to the title's profound question will transform the moral views of every person, physicist Davies has the widest possible readership for presenting the ramifications of the search for extraterrestrial intelligence, SETI. That he is among the most accessible of science writers doubles the attention this book deserves. Less about SETI's strategy for detecting alien radio signals, Davies' narrative mainly dwells on the origin of conscious life and the philosophical probability that it could arise anywhere else, given that life is a supernatural miracle; that its emergence on Earth was a fantastically improbable accident; and that it is a common outgrowth of the existence of the universe. Though steadfastly in favor of the third view, Davies describes the factors supporting the two competing theories in his chapter aptly named "Against Aliens." But if a message is received, how should humanity respond, with feelings of puniness or of exaltation? In this pithy setting of parameters, the library is guaranteed another high-demand title, boosted by the author's customary cogency and even companionability. *Gilbert Taylor*

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