

REACTIONS

Readers are invited to submit their reactions to the articles in our journal. Please address contributions to: ORIGINS, Geoscience Research Institute, 11060 Campus St., Loma Linda, California 92350 USA.

Re: Gibson: Did Life Begin in an “RNA World”? (ORIGINS 20:45-52)

The harsh reality is that in the annals of science, there are no reports of anyone converting a mixture of complex bio-organic substances (proteins, nucleic acids, lipids and polysaccharides, etc.) to living matter. Under the rules followed by scientists in every other field, this inability to produce living matter from non-living matter should disqualify everyone from claiming any “knowledge” on the subject of biogenesis.

A number of capable scientists have busied themselves for more than 40 years (counting from Dr. S. Miller’s famous experiment) with a parlor game called “chemical evolution.” The rules of this game is to come up with a plausible “primordial earth” scenario which will yield some or all of the biomolecules which are now found in living matter. The distinct impression is gained from reading the chemical evolutionary literature, that as soon as schemes to produce biopolymers are shown to actually work in the laboratory, under conditions postulated to have existed on a hypothetical primordial earth, the problem of the origin of life will be considered solved.

If a collection of biomolecules could, in fact, spring to life spontaneously, then the door would be open for postulating a chemical evolutionary origin of life. Since this is pure fantasy, it makes no difference which biomolecule(s) one supposes to have come into existence in a postulated primitive environment.

Nevertheless, textbooks, monographs, and symposia are filled with the latest in speculations about chemical evolution. Through decades of relentless repetition of this discredited theory, it has assumed the status of a dogma. Nowadays, typical discussions about the origin of life bypass the entire problem of origins, and discussions blithely proceed onto the homologies of the 16S ribosomal RNA sequences or of amino-acid sequences of common proteins among organisms. Apparently no one is interested in the fact that such topics could only have meaning if one already has living primordial organisms, which came into existence through chemical evolution.

So, sadly, articles such as Dr. Gibson’s will have to continue to be written until the scientific community at large will come to its collective senses, and admit that the chemical evolutionary approach to the origin of life was a dismal failure.

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