

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: Evard: A Candid Reevaluation (ORIGINS 11:101-102) and Javor: Life, An Evidence for Creation (ORIGINS 11:105-108).

Rene Evard's review of *The Mystery of Life's Origin: Reassessing Current Theories* gave a fair overview of the book by Thaxton, Bradley, and Olsen. But without reading it, one cannot appreciate the impact of the evidence they present for the improbability and impracticality of chemical evolution. It is always shaky business to argue from absence of evidence, or failure to achieve an effect. Yet that is essentially the status of chemical evolution presented by this book: failure to achieve effects that are congruent with one another within the scenario of chemical evolution.

Thaxton et al. are not pretending to have disproven the concepts of chemical evolution. Nor do they in the presentation of alternative solutions to the origin of life advance Special Creation as the only (proven) means. Rather, they present "a line of reasoning to show that Special Creation by a Creator beyond the cosmos is a *plausible* view of origin science" (p. 212 of their book, emphasis mine).

It is in this same spirit that G. T. Javor's lovely testament, "Life, An Evidence For Creation," asserts that "Our knowledge of life from the *evidence at hand* argues against the notion of nonliving matter organizing itself spontaneously into life forms under any conditions at any time" (emphasis mine). He poses similar questions to those explored by Thaxton et al. regarding the source of information and energy necessary for meaningful organization of biopolymers. And the conclusion, at present, is the same: we have no sufficient knowledge to show how living matter arises from nonliving.

Surely we who practice science will never be satisfied with a "God did it" attitude that squelches research. The quest for knowledge cannot be stopped, anymore than the premonition of misuse of a new discovery can stop its eventual disclosure. The problem is that we have no alternative but *plausible* arguments.

In our zest for synthesis we build models that contain our present level of understanding. As these prove inadequate the models are revised, or discarded and replaced altogether. But when a collection of models fit so poorly, as Thaxton et al. portray the case for chemical evolution, and the revisions of these models seem exhausted, then one is inclined to discard the models. If replacement is not forthcoming, the only choice left is a plausible argument, and it may be one whose source is outside of science! I believe this is the basic message of both Thaxton et al. and Javor.

This is not to say that research into the origin of life is unscientific or that it is founded on mere speculation. But that this kind of research must be satisfied to show what is not, rather than what is. By exhausting the capacity of scientific models, Thaxton et al. and Javor are saying that “God did it through Special Creation” is plausible.

I’m going to stick out my neck and say that valid scientific modeling may begin with this premise. If you cannot reject the null hypothesis, but neither can you accept any of the alternative hypotheses, then the null hypothesis becomes plausible. Such is the case for Special Creation in its role as null hypothesis

The Apostle Paul goes a step further and makes “God did it” an axiom. “For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, $\frac{1}{4}$ so that [we] are without excuse” (Romans 1:20). Axioms are self-evident statements, not subject to verification by the system of theorems deduced from them. By including the axiom (from outside science) the scientist who accepts the plausibility of Special Creation is acknowledging that within his science logical inconsistencies can arise that can be resolved only with premises that originate outside the system. (This is the scientific equivalent of Kurt Goedel’s theorem in mathematics.)

Thus we should press on with our modeling, both evolutionary and creationistic. The Special Creationist who includes Paul’s axiom in his thinking will have to show that its inclusion has not prejudiced his scientific objectivity. The evolutionist must recognize that the best he can hope to do is reject unworkable hypotheses. Both must be willing to acknowledge plausible explanations of life’s origin.

Edwin A. Karlow
Chairman, Department of Physics
Loma Linda University, Riverside, California

Re: News and Comments — The Louisiana Balanced-Treatment Act (ORIGINS 12:38-40).

On p 40, 4th paragraph from top of page, isn’t there an oxymoron (“religious and therefore unscientific”) in the judge’s pronouncement in his summary judgment? — “Balanced-Treatment Act a violation of the establishment clause because THE CONCEPTS OF CREATION AND A CREATOR ARE NECESSARILY RELIGIOUS AND THEREFORE UNSCIENTIFIC.” Aren’t religion and science both concerned with truth or pursuit of truth and should either side be permitted to pre-empt ground without laboratory proof, so it cannot even be explored by the other? It seems to me that it that is the case it should cut both ways.

Arthur A. Mickel, M.D.
Chico, California