Against All Odds

First Life

The concept that all the parts of the first living thing preexisted and its formation was simply a matter of spontaneous generation…is mathematical absurdity, not probability. All present approaches to the problem of the origin of life are either irrelevant or lead to a blind alley." [1]

John Keosian

Chemical evolution as envisioned by Big Bang theorists has yet to earn the unanimous endorsement of the science community. A reasonable scientific explanation as to how earth happens to house a privileged "habitable zone" has yet to survive the drawing board of speculative ideas. Now comes biological evolution's unprecedented leap of faith---first life creating itself from non-living matter.

The year Charles Darwin published Origin of Species (1859)
Louis Pasteur (1822-1895), proved *spontaneous generation*
of life from non-living matter to be unproven fiction.

Chemical and biological evolution, share at least two undistinguished credentials. Both represent unproven theories devised by human minds and both reject input from any intelligent source superior to the conjectured postulates of *Homo sapiens.*

So if nature can make something happen accidentally in deep time, by trial and error, and theorized by human minds, then why can't sophisticated humans replicate the process within a controlled, laboratory environment and create life in a lab from non-living, chemical compounds?

If life from unintelligent non-life could result theoretically from an accidental whim of nature, then why couldn't human intelligence be recruited to design and create a living cell by duplicating the secret of first life's launching pad?

The challenge beckoned audacious minds.

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Without the magnifying power of electronic microscopes, 19th century scientists dismissed living cells as *"structureless globules of protoplasm."*

Those presumed, simple, *"structureless globules of protoplasm"* opened eyes to unimagined complexity. What leaped into view through the lens of the electron microscope was a throbbing piece of molecular machinery, complete with a nucleus packed with genetic information---a variety of proteins, all wrapped snugly in a membrane, surrounded by a cell wall.

The *Mycoplasma,* a single-cell microorganism, the *"simplest known self-reproducing life form,"* carries 482 life-directing genes.[2] The chance of spontaneous generation producing the complete formula of molecules, amino acids, and proteins essential for a cell only one-tenth the size of *Mycoplasm hominis H. 39*, is less than one in $10^{340,000,000}$. [3]

So the stage was set for a scientific challenge pitting nature's random chance versus the design skills of mortal intelligence. Could something similar to *Mycoplasma* be reproduced in a lab under the auspices of sophisticated, scientific minds?

Stanley Miller and Harold Urey took up the challenge and stepped to the plate in 1952, intent on discovering the secrets of a living cell---only months before the DNA double helix string of information, housed in living cells, grabbed international headlines. This innovative duo shaped their experiment following a theoretical trail blazed by Russia's Alexander I. Oparin's and Britain's J.H.S. Haldane's attempt to rescue spontaneous generation ideology from history's dustbin of trashed ideas.

Adding intelligence to the formula struck at the heart of an experiment devised to authenticate impossible accident. So even if successful, intervention of human thought sabotaged the credibility of a process intended to authenticate the non-intelligent origin of first life on earth.

Amino acids, the building blocks linking cell proteins, have been synthesized in laboratory environments. But the creation of a full complement

of proteins essential to life, from laboratory-built amino acids, proved as futile as attempting to break the sonic barrier riding a broomstick.

There is more: Amino acids can't form in the presence of oxygen.

Bypassing this hurdle, the Oparin-Haldane hypothesis theorized earth's original atmosphere maybe consisted of carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, ammonia, methane, hydrogen and water vapor---but without oxygen.

Oparin-Haldane's scientific stretch supposed inorganic *"...chemicals combined to form organic compounds, such as amino acids, which in turn combined to form large, complex molecules, such as proteins, which aggregated to form an interconnecting network and a cell wall."* [4]

Applying this formula as a basis for manufacturing life in a laboratory, the Miller/Urey team attempted to create a reducing atmosphere by channeling a high-energy spark through methane, ammonia, and hydrogen gases and a circulating hot water vapor.

The process produced *"a small mass of black tar"* along with *"a condensed red liquid"* containing some amino acids. Still, the nagging problem persists: The experiment *"only works as long as oxygen is absent and certain critical ratios of hydrogen and carbon dioxide are maintained."* [5]

Subsequent experiments using ultraviolet radiation did successfully produce *"nineteen of the twenty biological amino acids and five nucleic acid bases of DNA and RNA."* [6]

Miller/Urey required an elaborate trail of happenstance, with each step having been unaccountably fostered in prebiotic soup. They counted on energy from lightning, earthquakes, volcanoes, and the sun's rays to trigger chemical reactions with atmospheric gases such as methane, ammonia, hydrogen, ethane and water vapors, converting them to amino acids, fatty acids and sugars.

Relying on this luck of the draw, they hoped these compounds could theoretically link up to form larger protein and DNA molecules, ultimately becoming *"the first true cell"* capable of *"metabolism, genetic coding, and the ability to reproduce"* when wrapped with a membrane. [7]

One public school text, relying on *"could have"* and a series of *"may haves,"* misled students with a string of imaginative speculations.

"Primitive earth may have had an atmosphere largely of hydrogen which was later lost to space. A secondary atmosphere may have included ammonia, methane, water, and hydrogen sulfide…Ultraviolet light from the sun, electrical storms, and decay of radioactive elements may have provided the energy to combine these molecules as sugars and amino acids.

"Amino acids could have combined to form proteins…" [8]

"May have" and *"could have"* don't disguise speculation.

Could lightning, heat from volcanoes and the sun's ultraviolet rays have *"…affected gases in the primitive earth's atmosphere and changed them into more complicated organic compounds…"* such as fatty acids, amino acids, sugars, and nucleotides? And subsequently *"accumulated in the ocean and then linked up with each other to form very complex molecules…"* such as lipids, peptides, carbohydrates, polynucleotides and eventually combined to form *"complex proteins?"* [9]

"Urey and Miller assumed that methane was plentiful in the early earth's conditions. If this is true, the sun's ultraviolet light would have caused hydrocarbons to form and absorb in the clay at the bottom of the ocean. The deposits from Precambrian periods should then contain significant hydrocarbons or remains of carbons, as well as some nitrogen containing compounds. None of these are present in these deposits." [10]

The composition of the atmosphere posed an insoluble dilemma: Without a reducing atmosphere, the Oparin-Haldane hypothesis for first life had no chance. But without oxygen, life on Planet Earth could not exist.

"…Oxygen is necessary to protect proteins and DNA from the sun…Living organisms [bacteria] and organic molecules [amino acids, proteins and DNA] need the protection from ultraviolet radiation provided by an ozone screen [which is derived from oxygen]." [11]

"…If even trace amounts of molecular oxygen were present, organic molecules could not be formed at all." [12]

"Since living organisms [bacteria] and organic molecules [amino acids, proteins] need the protection from ultraviolet radiation provided by an ozone layer [which is derived from oxygen] yet the presence of oxygen [in the atmosphere] prevents the development of such living systems and biological molecules [amino acids], this would constitute a catch-22 in the model." [13]

Oxygen is the critical component of today's atmosphere. Oxides in the rocks suggest oxygen was present also in ancient atmospheres. *"Iron oxide minerals have been found in Greenland, dating to 3.9 billions years ago. The presence of oxides suggests that oxygen was present at the time."* [14]

Overeager celebrants initially interpreted the result of Miller/Urey's experiment as a break-through in creating virtual life from non-life in a test tube. Realists recognized much less. Brilliant human minds hit the wall---over their heads in a realm reserved for *"Superior Rationality."*

The Miller-Urey experiment faced *"…withering criticism from chemists for ignoring the role of competing and destructive cross-reactions with chemical ions that would be expected in any hypothetical ocean or pond. These reactions would have tied up or terminated any growing polymer- chain."* [15]

The brilliant scientist team understood innovative human genius had failed to create life. Nor did they demonstrate the simplest living cell could have originated spontaneously from inorganic matter.

To this day, finite minds, capable of creating computers, have never successfully designed and built a living cell from non-living, chemical matter. *"We don't know how self-replicating life emerged from inanimate objects."* [16]

Evolution's recipe for first life on earth evades hot pursuit. The illusive formula continues to baffle astute theorists, who can't begin to replicate the simplest cell or to account for the source of genetic information packed into first life's DNA. By default, its left to Mother Nature's whims, Pappy Time's antiquity and a mysterious primeval soup to parent first life spontaneously---or more likely, input from an all-powerful, Supreme Creator.

Some in the science community kick the first-life can down the road by suggesting life survived the rigors and radiation of space travel and cruised triumphantly to earth after emerging from an unknown cosmic somewhere following the hypothetical Big Bang. However convenient a dodge of the ultimate issue, the idea comes burdened with a baggage overload.

How could any life form survive the life-threatening hazards of prolonged space travel? Furthermore, how did that cosmic, outer space first life manage to accidentally self-create its own organic being?

One imagined scenario credits atmospheric energy sources with forming organic compounds that are *"washed down by rain and accumulated in the primitive oceans until they reached the consistency of a hot dilute soup. According to this model, life appeared from the chemical reactions and transformations that took place in this prebiotic soup."* [17]

Still, scientific evidence of this conjectured magic elixir is a no-show. *"Prebiotic chemical soup, presumably a worldwide phenomenon, left no known trace in the geological record."* [18]

The never-happened spontaneous generation of life from chemical non-life comes burdened in the collateral fiction of the never-was *Ur-schleim*, an imaginary slime-like material existing deep in the ocean, allegedly the nursery for first life in a *"self-origination"* format.

Those so-called *"dawn rocks"* from Western Greenland, conventionally dated at 3.9 billion years before the present and reputedly the oldest known dated rocks on the planet, show nothing resembling prebiotic soup.

"Rocks of great antiquity have been examined…and in none of them has any trace of abiotically produced organic compounds been found… Considering the way the prebiotic soup is referred to in so many discussions of the origin of life as an already established reality, it comes as something of a

shock to realize that there is absolutely no positive evidence for its existence." [19]

Hubert Yockey dismisses primeval soup as a non-event.

"The origin of life by chance in a primeval soup is impossible in probability in the same way that a perpetual motion machine is impossible in probability." [20]

"The primeval soup is unobservable since, by the paradigm it was destroyed by the organisms from which it presumably emerged." [21]

Abiogenesis should be viewed as *"just a relic of the cosmology of the time it was invented…There is no evidence that a 'hot dilute soup' ever existed. In spite of this fact, adherents of this paradigm think it ought to have existed for philosophical or ideological reasons…Scientists are divided into segregated schools that do not even agree on the standards of scientific inquiry…"* [22]

With respect to the *"prebiotic soup theory of the origin of life…objective scientific principle of a search for the truth is replaced by the subjective aesthetic principle of a well-constructed story."* [22]

Theoretical physicist Robert Jastrow (1925-2008), founding director of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, introduced the faith factor in assessing the origin of first life on earth.

"Either life was created on the earth by the will of a being outside the grasp of scientific understanding, or it evolved on the planet spontaneously, through chemical reactions occurring in nonliving matter lying on the surface of the earth.

"The first theory…is a statement of faith in the power of a Supreme Being…The second theory is also an act of faith…assuming that the scientific view of the origin of life is correct, without having concrete evidence to support the belief." [23]

Amir D. Aczel rules out chance as a serious factor in the process.

"Chance alone is virtually impossible to have played a role, since...the odds against a universe with life and intelligence are at most one to a number that has 1 followed by 10 raised to the power 117 zeros (based on the requirements of only one of the parameters!)---the odds are so staggeringly high against our existence that even talking about probability and chance in this context is unproductive." [24]

University of Arizona evolutionist Paul Davies described evolution's anchor dilemma. *"Darwinian evolution can operate only if life of some sort already exists…Darwinism can offer absolutely no help in explaining that all-important first step: the origin of life."* [25]

Science writer and evolutionist, Gordy Slack, wrote: *"Evolution should be able to explain, in theory at least, all the way back to the very first organism that could replicate itself through biological or chemical processes…and what came before it…Right now, we are nowhere close."* [26]

Simon Morris, professor of evolutionary biology at Cambridge University, describes the dilemma as *"an ocean of ignorance."*

"Despite decades of experimentation, with accompanying shouts of 'breakthrough' or 'almost there,' we are still paddling on the edges of an ocean of ignorance." [27]

University of Manchester's professor of physics, Henry Lipson, concluded candidly, *"I think we must admit that the only acceptable explanation is creation. I know that this is anathema to physicists, as indeed it is to me, but we must not reject a theory that we do not like if the experimental evidence supports it."* [27]

Now comes the clincher!

If the first living thing on Planet Earth was a living cell, what did it eat? And where did its DNA come from? With no plant life to sustain it, and no DNA to dictate its design and direct its reproduction, how could it evolve?

"…Have you ever stopped to think about how that first living cell could have survived for even a millisecond? Unless its environment was perfectly suited to sustain that cell's life, it would have died in an instant. Unless the cell had necessary nutrients, it would likewise quickly perish. And unless it had the means to reproduce itself, that first living cell would be the last.

"Or, perhaps, hundreds of millions of years later, the second living cell would ooze out of a primordial soup of non-living chemicals … and once again die a millisecond later!" [28]

Approaching two centuries since Darwin first published his conjectures, science lacks a scintilla of evidence as to how first life created itself from inert, non-living matter. Without a scientific anchor upon which to build the theory, Darwin's horse lies dead at the starting gate.

In reality, evolution's starting gate doesn't exist! That dog won't hunt!

Organic life does not create itself from inorganic, non-living matter---not millions of years in the past! Not today!

Not ever!

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2---Jonathan Sarfati, "The Second Law of Thermodynamics: Answers to Critics," Answers in Genesis.org/docs/370 (2002b), cited by Burt Thompson & Brad Harrub, "15 Answers to John Rennie and *Scientific American's Nonsense*" (Montgomery, Alabama: Apologetics Press, Inc., 2002) 44.

3---Dean L. Overman, *A Case Against Accident and Self-Organization,* 63, 64.

4---Percival Davis, Dean H. Kenyon, and Charles B. Thaxton, Academic Editor, *Of Pandas and People* (Dallas: Haughton Publishing Company, 1993) 2.
5 ---Dean L. Overman, *A Case Against Accident and Self-Organization*, 40, 41.
6 ---Jonathan Sarfati, "The Second Law of Thermodynamics: Answers to Critics," Answers in Genesis.org (2002b), cited by Burt Thompson & Brad Harrub, "15 Answers to John Rennie & *Scientific American's Nonsense*" (Montgomery, Alabama: Apologetics Press, Inc.,2002) 44.
7---Michael Denton, *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis.* 296, 323.
8---Percival Davis, Dean H. Kenyon, and Charles B. Thaxton, 2, 3.
9---Ashby L. Camp, The Myth of Natural Origins (Tempe, AZ: Ktisisa Publishing, 1994) 31, 32.
10---Dean L. Overman, *A Case Against Accident and Self-Organization*, 45, 46.
11---Carl Werner, "Criticisms of the Stanley Miller Experiment." *Evolution: the Grand Experiment* (Green Forest, Arkansas: New Leaf Press, 2007) 207.
12---Thaxton, C., Bradley, W., Olsen, R., *The Mystery of Life's Origin: Reassessing Current Theories* (Dallas: Lewis and Stanley Publishers, 1984) 76, 77, as cited by Carl Werner, *Evolution: The Grand Experiment*, 249.
13---_____., *The Mystery of Life's Origin: Reassessing Current Theories* (Dallas: Lewis and Stanley Publishers, 1984) 81, see Carl Werner, *Evolution: The Grand Experiment*, 207.
14---Carl Werner, *Evolution: The Grand Experiment*, 207, referencing Thaxton, C., Bradley, W., Olsen, R., *The Mystery of Life's Origin: Reassessing Current Theories* (Dallas: Lewis and Stanley Publishers, 1984) 91. The reference to *"3.9 billion years"* is within the context of conventional time calibrations.
15---Hubert P. Yockey, *Information Theory and Molecular Biology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 235, 236, 238, and 335 as quoted by Overman, 48.
16---Amir D. Aczel, *Why Science Does Not Disprove God* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2014) 215.
17---Dean L. Overman, *A Case Against Accident and Self-Organization* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1997) 38. See Aleksander I. Oparin, *The Origin of Life* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1938).
18---Charles B. Thaxton, Walter L. Bradley and Roger L. Olsen, *The Mystery of Life's Origin* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1984) 182, 183, 185, quoted by Bert Thompson, 80.30—Denton, 261.
19---Michael Denton, *Evolution, A Theory in Crisis,* 261.
20---Hubert P. Yockey, *Information Theory and Molecular Biology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 257, quoted by Overman, 61, 62.
21---Larry A. Witham, *Where Darwin Meets the Bible* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2002) 129.
22---Gunter Wachtershauser, Letter to Editor, *Science*, 25 October 2002, vol. 298.
23---Robert Jastrow, *Until the Sun Dies* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1977) 62, 63 as quoted by Bert Thompson, *The Scientific Case for Creation*, 76.
24---Amir D. Aczel, *Why Science Does Not Disprove God*, 247.
25---*CreationMoments,cin,* "Evolutionists Still Clueless on Origin of Life," June 22, 2016, citing Paul Davies, *The Fifth Miracle: The Search for the Origin and Meaning of Life.* Precise quotes can be found in *Evolutionists Say the Oddest Things*, Lita Cosner, editor, pp. 43-46, Creation Book Publishers, 2015.
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