IMPACT #317

EVOLUTION IS BIOLOGICALLY IMPOSSIBLE

by Joseph Mastropaolo, Ph.D.*

Charles Darwin was daydreaming when he wrote that he could visualize "in some warm little pond," with all sorts of salts and electricity, the spontaneous generation of the first living cell.[1] Darwin's dream of the magical powers of salts and electricity may have come from his grandfather. Mary Shelley wrote of him in 1831 in her introduction to *Frankenstein*. "They talked of the experiments of Dr. Darwin . . . who preserved a piece of vermicelli in a glass case, till by some extraordinary means it began to move with voluntary motion." She goes on to speculate that galvanism (electricity) was the extraordinary means.[2] All theories need testing, so I bought some vermicelli pasta, kept it in salt water in a test tube for a month, and never saw any motion, voluntary or otherwise. I also used a tesla coil to conduct "galvanism" through it to a fluorescent bulb. The bulb lit and the vermicelli eventually began to cook, but never came to life.

"Darwin's bulldog," Thomas Huxley, had a vision of himself on the early earth as "a witness of the evolution of living protoplasm from non-living matter."[3] In Huxley's day, the cell was blissfully considered simply a blob of protoplasm. Huxley also may have read Mary Shelley's subtitle to Frankenstein, "The Modern Prometheus."[2] Prometheus was the Greek mythical Titan, who formed a man of clay, then animated it. This myth may be the earliest reference to abiogenesis, the animation of inorganic materials. In order not to leave that possibility untried, I fashioned a clay man and directed the tesla-coil spark over it to light the bulb. The clay man was not animated.

Evolutionists currently invoke the "primeval soup" to expand the "warm little pond" into a larger venue, the oceans. They aim to spontaneously generate the first cell so they must thicken the salt water with (take a breath) polysaccharides, lipids, amino acids, alpha helixes, polypeptide chains, assembled quaternary protein subunits, and nucleotides, all poised to self-combine into functional cellular structures, energy systems, long-chain proteins and nucleic acids.[4] Then during an electrical storm, just the

*Dr. Mastropaolo is an adjunct professor of physiology for the ICR Graduate School.

right mix of DNA, mRNA, ribosomes, cell membranes and enzymes are envisioned in the right place at the right time and the first cell is thunderbolted together and springs to life.[5] That marvelous first cell, the story goes, filled the oceans with progeny competing in incredible polysaccharide, lipid, amino acid, nucleotide, and cannibalistic feasts. The predators thereby thinned the soup to the watery oceans we have today while the prey escaped by mystically transmuting themselves into the current complex animals and plants, or perhaps vice versa because no one was there to record it. We are assured by the disciples of Darwin and Huxley that the "once upon a pond" story to obtain a blob of protoplasm is still sufficient for the spontaneous generation of the cell as we know it today. All demur when asked for evidence. All balk when asked to reverse-engineer a cell in the laboratory in spite of the fact that laboratories rival nature and reverse engineering is orders of magnitude easier than engineering an original design. One wonders why they balk if cell stuff is so easily self-generated and carbon molecules seem to have such an innate tendency to self-combine.

To test simply the alleged self-combining tendency of carbon, I placed one microliter of India (lampblack) ink in 27 ml. of distilled water. The ink streaked for the bottom of the test tube where it formed a dark haze which completely diffused to an even shade of gray in 14 hours. The carbon stayed diffused, not aggregated as when dropped on paper. At this simple level, there is no evidence that the "primeval soup" is anything but fanciful imagination.

In science, the burden of evidence is on the proposer of the theory. So although the evolutionists have the burden of providing evidence for their fanciful tales, they take no responsibility for a detailed account or for any evidence demonstrating feasibility. Contrarily, they go so far as to imply that anyone holding them to the normal requirements of science is feebleminded, deranged, or evil. For example, Professor Richard Dawkins has been quoted as saying, "It is absolutely safe to say that, if you meet somebody who claims not to believe in evolution, that person is ignorant, stupid, or insane (or wicked, but I'd rather not consider that)."[6] Instead of taking proper responsibility for the burden of evidence, the evolutionist propagandizes by the intimidation of name calling.

To set a better example, let us take up the evolutionist's burden of evidence to see where it leads. Our first observation is that apparently all functions in a living organism are based largely upon the structures of its proteins. The trail of the first cell therefore leads us to the microbiological geometry of amino acids and a search for the probability of creating a protein by mindless chance as specified by evolution. Hubert Yockey published a monograph on the microbiology, information theory, and mathematics necessary to accomplish that feat. Accordingly, the probability of evolving one molecule of iso-1-cytochrome c, a small protein common in plants and animals, is an astounding one chance in 2.3 times ten billion vigintillion. The magnitude of this impossibility may be appreciated by realizing that ten billion vigintillion is one followed by 75 zeros. Or to put it in evolutionary terms, if a random mutation is provided every second from the alleged birth of the universe, then to date that protein molecule would be only 43% of the way to completion. Yockey concluded, "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."[7]

Richard Dawkins implicitly agreed with Yockey by stating, "Suppose we want to suggest, for instance, that life began when both DNA and its protein-based replication machinery spontaneously chanced to come into existence. We can allow ourselves the luxury of such an extravagant theory, provided that the odds against this coincidence occurring on a planet do not exceed 100 billion billion to one."[8] The 100 billion billion is 10^{20}. So Dawkins' own criterion for impossible in probability, one chance in more than 10^{20}, has been exceeded by 50 orders of magnitude for only one molecule of one small protein. Now that Professor Dawkins has joined the ranks of non-believers in evolution, politesse forbids inquiring whether he considers himself "ignorant, stupid, insane, or wicked."

Let us proceed to criteria more stringent. For example, Borel stated that phenomena with very small probabilities do not occur. He settled arbitrarily on the probability of one chance in 10^{50} as that small probability. Again according to this more stringent criterion, we see that evolving one molecule of one protein would not occur by a wide margin, this time 25 orders of magnitude.[9]

Let us go further. According to Dembski, Borel did not adequately distinguish those highly improbable events properly attributed to chance from those properly attributed to something else and Borel did not clarify what concrete numerical values correspond to small probabilities. So Dembski repaired those deficiencies and formulated a criterion so stringent that it jolts the mind. He estimated 10^{80} elementary particles in the universe and asked how many times per second an event could occur. He found 10^{45}. He then calculated the number of seconds from the beginning of the universe to the present and for good measure multiplied by one billion for 10^{25} seconds in all. He thereby obtained 10^{80} x 10^{45} x $10^{25} = 10^{150}$ for his Law of Small Probability.[9]

I have not been able to find a criterion more stringent than Dembski's one chance in 10^{150}. Anything as rare as that probability had absolutely no possibility of happening by chance at any time by any conceivable specifying agent by any conceivable process throughout all of cosmic history. And if the specified event is not a regularity, as the origin of life is not, and if it is not chance, as Dembski's criterion and Yockey's probability may prove it is not, then it must have happened by design, the only remaining possibility.

Now to return to the probability of evolving one molecule of one protein as one chance in 10^{75}, we see that it does not satisfy Dembski's criterion of one chance in 10^{150}. The simultaneous availability of two molecules of one protein may satisfy the criterion, but they would be far from the necessary complement to create a living cell. For a minimal cell, 60,000 proteins of 100 different configurations would be needed.[5,10] If these raw materials could be evolved at the same time, and if they were not more complex on average to evolve than the iso-1-cytochrome c molecule, and if these proteins were stacked at the cell's construction site, then we may make a gross underestimation of what the chances would be to evolve that first cell. That probability is one chance in more than $10^{4,478,296}$, a number that numbs the mind because it has 4,478,296 zeros. If we consider one chance in 10^{150} as the standard for impossible, then the evolution of the first cell is more than $10^{4,478,146}$ times more impossible in probability than that standard.

Reproduction may be called a regularity because billions of people have witnessed billions of new individuals arising that way, and in no other way, for thousands of years. The origin of life was a unique event and certainly not a regularity. Therefore, according to mathematical logicians, the only possibilities left are that life either was generated by chance or by deliberate design. The standard for impossible events eliminated evolution so the only remaining possibility is that life was designed into existence. The probability of the correctness of this conclusion is the inverse of the probability that eliminated evolution, that is, $10^{4,478,296}$ chances to one.

Although the certainty of design has been demonstrated beyond doubt, science cannot identify the designer. Given a designer with the intelligence to construct a cell and all life forms, it is not logical that he would construct only one cell and leave the rest to chance. The only logical possibility is that the designer would design and build the entire structure, the entire biosphere, to specified perfection. That seems to be as far as science can go.

Life was designed. It did not evolve. The certainty of these conclusions is $10^{4,478,296}$ (1 followed by 4,478,296 zeros) to one. This evidence suggests a Designer who designed and built the entire biosphere and, for it to function, the entire universe. Primary and secondary sources from history properly provide additional information on the Designer because the biological sciences are not equal to that task.

References

1. Darwin, F., ed (1888) *The Life and Letters of Charles Darwin*, London: John Murray, vol. 3, p. 18.
2. Shelley, Mary W. (1831) *Frankenstein: or, The Modern Prometheus*, London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, Introduction, p. 9.
3. Huxley, Thomas H. (1870) "Biogenesis and Abiogenesis" in (1968) *Collected Essays of Thomas H. Huxley*, vol. 8, *Discourses Biological and Gelogical*, New York: Greenwood Press, p. 256.
4. Behe, Michael J. (1996) *Darwin's Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution*, New York: Touchstone, pp. 262–268.
5. Denton, Michael (1986) *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis*, Bethesda, Maryland: Adler & Adler, p. 263.
6. Johnson, Phillip E. (1993) *Darwin On Trial*, Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, p. 9.
7. Yockey, Hubert P. (1992) *Information Theory and Molecular Biology*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 255, 257.
8. Dawkins, Richard (1996) *The Blind Watchmaker: Why the Evidence of Evolution Reveals a Universe Without Design*, New York: W.W. Norton & Co., p. 146.
9. Dembski, William A. (1998) *The Design Inference: Eliminating Chance Through Small Probabilities*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 5,209,210.
10. Morowitz, H. J. (1966) "The Minimum Size of Cells" in *Principles of Biomolecular Organization*, eds. G.E.W. Wostenholme and M. O'Connor, London: J.A. Churchill, pp. 446–459.