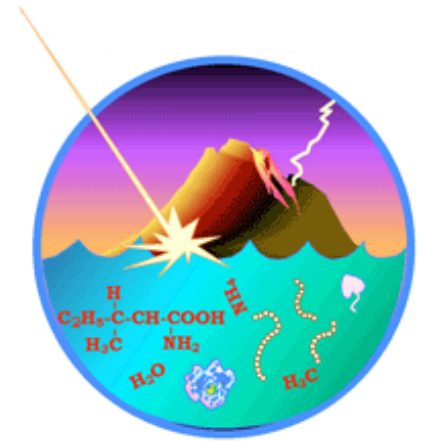


Abiogenesis: not so fast

Evolutionists, since Darwin, have based their assumption of a God-less origin of life on abiogenesis. That is, they hold life began from non-life. Now a professor of physics thinks he can show, not exactly how that happened, but that the universe *bound* it to happen. Even some of his fellow secular scientists find that hard to believe. But even they won't ask themselves an obvious question he missed.



Professor of abiogenesis?

Meet Jeremy L. England, Professor of Physics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Like Erwin Schrödinger [before](#) him, he knew living systems must stay organized, and organize certain chemicals they take in, even as their surroundings disorganize. Any closed or especially *isolated* system disorganizes over time. The Second Law of Thermodynamics tells us this. Scientists have a name for the “state property” that measures this disorganization. They call it “entropy,” from the Greek preposition “en-” meaning “within” and the noun “tropos” meaning a way of doing things or even a way of life. In other words, scientists say, “Systems disorganize because that’s the way things happen.”

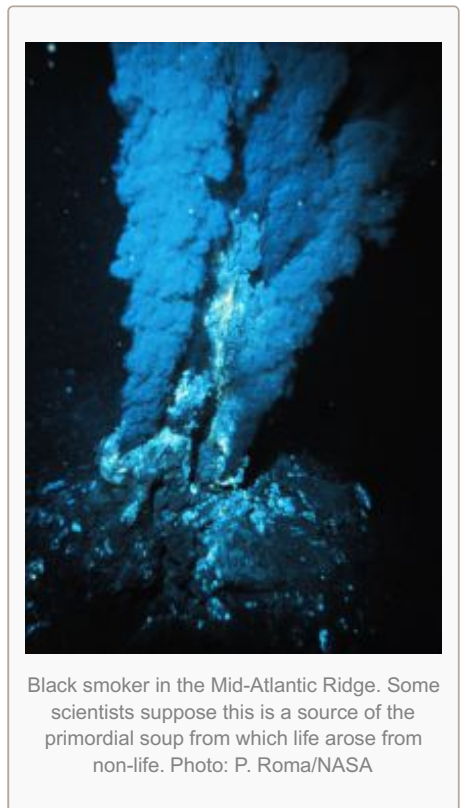
Before moving forward, let us define our terms. *System* means any group of things that *stand together*. Two things exist when one treats any system: the system itself, and the surroundings. *Isolated* systems do not exchange matter or energy with their surroundings. *Closed* systems may take energy from the surroundings, or give it back. *Open* systems may gain or lose energy, matter, or both.

Any living thing is an *open* system. The earth itself is also an open system. The sun shines on earth all the time, and comets and meteors fall into it.

Dr. England recognizes the first principle of what happens to energy: it wants to dissipate. And like any spilled liquid, it will follow the path of least resistance when dissipating. Dr. England suggests certain kinds of molecules, with a heat bath (either ocean or atmosphere) to surround them and an outside energy source (like the sun) to drive them, will *self-organize* to *create* that path of least resistance. Under the right circumstances, those molecules will then self-replicate.

Dr. England treated two kinds of problem in his paper: self-replicating nucleic acids, and bacterial cell division. Concerning nucleic acids, he concluded RNA, not DNA, formed first in the “primordial soup” (or “biological ylem”) out of which, as he supposes, life arose from non-life.

Dr. England [published](#) a detailed mathematical model and argument in the *Journal of Chemical Physics* nearly two years ago. (See also [here](#).) He also has lectured on the subject around the world. (The video shows him giving one of these lectures.) More recently, Natalie Wolchover at *Quanta* magazine interviewed England, and several of his supporters and critics, for [this](#) article. (*Scientific American* and *Business Insider* reprinted this article in the past week.)



Black smoker in the Mid-Atlantic Ridge. Some scientists suppose this is a source of the primordial soup from which life arose from non-life. Photo: P. Roma/NASA

Reaction

Everyone, supporter or critic, recognizes one thing above all. Jeremy England claims to have the secret of abiogenesis. Not only *did* it happen; Dr. England insists it *had* to happen. He specifically told Ms. Wolchover:

You start with a random clump of atoms, and if you shine light on it for long enough, it should not be so surprising that you get a plant.

He even said as rocks roll downhill, so life will *always* arise from non-life, under the right kind of sun and in the right kind of “heat bath.” To back up the idea, he pointed to other examples of highly organized objects in the wild. Most

notably, he pointed to snowflakes. But perhaps he would cite any kind of crystal or polymer as examples proving his point.

[Easy AdSense](#) by [Unreal](#)

He hasn't convinced everyone, as Ms. Wolchover found out. One critic pointed out England offers speculation, not experimental results. And the supporters of his work show, by their remarks, they *want* him to convince them. Or they want to convince *themselves* he has found the "Holy Grail" of evolutionism: the secret of abiogenesis. Some have proposed to test his ideas. But they want to test them on already living things. *No one proposes any experiment to see whether life would arise on its own by shining a light on a "random clump of atoms," as England described.*

Walter T. Brown, of the [Center for Scientific Creation](#), scoffed at England. In an e-mail today, he wrote,

This is one of the craziest ideas I have ever heard of. The obvious problems include: (a) life has irreducible complexity, and (b) the information content of DNA.

In other words: systems have more than matter and energy. They also have information. And *no system can self-inform*. Brown, in his work *In the Beginning: Compelling Evidence for Creation and the Flood*, has [listed](#) many propositions Dr. England must overcome. Among them: life comes from life, not from non-life. That might seem trivial. But: no one has ever observed anything as complex as a *protein* arise spontaneously even from an amino acid soup. (Nor has anyone yet found, on any celestial body, any form of life or can say without dispute came spontaneously from that body or other body other than earth.)

How scientific is this?

How complex is that "irreducible" part? Consider this: any molecular biologist or biochemist describes *four* kinds of structure of any protein:

1. Primary structure: the amino acid sequence.
2. Secondary structures: helical or pleated-sheet layouts these acid chains form from their first folding after something assembles the chain.
3. Tertiary structure: the relationships among these helices, pleated sheets, and other objects the chain can form.
4. Quaternary structures: one protein molecule rarely works alone, and often works closely with other proteins.

Even the primary structure requires information. A string of capital A's has very little information. But a sentence like

The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dog

has order, structure, and parts of speech. It also tells you something that happened, or sometimes asks you a question, gives you an order, or asks a favor of you.

Dr. England's theory must jump an even simpler obstacle. He proposed molecules would organize themselves in a way to dissipate energy more rapidly. If that were true, the molecules of a dam holding back river water in a lake, might open their own channels to let the water out! How useful would the dam be then? Why even bother building one?

Perhaps Dr. England has added to our understanding of the physics and thermodynamics of living things. Perhaps he

can show why some mutations might happen faster than others. He *cannot* show how something complex can “build itself” from simpler raw materials. Merely because a new way of organizing matter can pass energy more quickly, does *not* show the matter will *organize itself that way* if nothing, and no-Body, interferes with it.

[Reprinted](#) from [examiner.com](#)

[Public OpinionPoll Results](#)