

THE BUZZ ABOUT THE EVOLUTION CONSPIRACY

Lisa Shiel is consistently convincing in her new book, The Evolution Conspiracy, that Evolutionary Scientists have defined "facts" and "theory" to suit themselves and in a way that any other scientific field (such as physics, mathematics, biochemistry, etc.) would find completely inappropriate. That is, the Evolutionary Scientists have circumvented the true scientific method. The other thing that she points out is that it is not always appreciated that nearly all Evolutionary Scientists refuse to share their data for years and years, thus preventing effective evaluation of their results by other scientists.

**Dr. Quinton R. Rogers, Distinguished Professor Emeritus
Dept of Molecular Biosciences, School of Veterinary Medicine
University of California Davis**

This gem of a book sheds light on the current status of evolution as a scientific theory. Lisa A. Shiel examines the question from a strictly scientific point of view, carefully evaluating various categories of evidence, ranging from microbiology to paleontology. For the most part, the evidence fails to support the theory of evolution to the extent its supporters claim. The book is concise, lucid, and to the point. Although authoritative and well referenced, it is written in such a way as to be accessible to all levels of readers, from intelligent high school students to doctoral candidates at universities.

**Michael A. Cremo, Author
Forbidden Archeology, Human Devolution, etc.**

I agree with the author's points of view on the theory of evolution as discussed in Volume 1. Her discussion of the issues concerning evolution in relation to biology is solid even though her educational background is not in science. Her authorship of this book supports her contention that it doesn't take a degree in a certain field to understand and question the so-called concepts of evolution...I hope she will also investigate additional problems with the theory of evolution...when she writes volumes 2 and 3. Her book is easy to read and understand.

**Jacquelyn W. McClelland, PhD
Professor, North Carolina Cooperative Extension
North Carolina State University**

In an era of learned helplessness and deference to authority, Lisa shows interested non-specialists can comprehend evolution and discover for themselves where scientific theory is strong and where it needs some additional work.

**Tyler A. Kokjohn, PhD
Professor of Microbiology, Midwestern University**

THE EVOLUTION CONSPIRACY

Vol. 1

*Exposing Life's Inexplicable
Origins & the Cult of Darwin*

LISA A. SHIEL

FOREWORD BY TYLER A. KOKJOHN, PHD



Slipdown Mountain Publications LLC
Lake Linden, MI
Toll-Free: 1-866-341-3705

The Evolution Conspiracy, Vol I

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Cover Art & Interior Drawings by Kerrie Shiel

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ISBN: 978-1-934631-30-0

LCCN: 2009923141

First edition.

Manufactured in the United States.

Slipdown Mountain Publications

www.SlipdownMountain.com

1-866-341-3705

Publisher's Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Shiel, Lisa A.

The evolution conspiracy, vol. 1: exposing life's inexplicable origins and the cult of Darwin / Lisa A. Shiel ; foreword by Tyler A. Kokjohn, PhD.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN: 978-1-934631-30-0

1. Evolution (Biology). 2. Life—Origin. 3. Natural selection. 4. Human evolution. 5. Paleoanthropology. I. Kokjohn, Tyler A II. Title.

QH366.2 .S4952 2009

576.8—dc22

2009923141

*For everyone who dares
to think and question...*

and embrace the mystery.

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Foreword

One hundred and fifty years ago, Charles Darwin published *On the Origin of Species*, observations and speculations supporting his ideas of descent with modification—evolution. Evolving itself as new information emerged, Darwin's idea comprises a core component of modern biological science. Along the way, few scientific ideas have inspired as much heated debate and engendered such raw emotion.

When they think of evolution, most readers will likely recall the current debates over how this subject and competing explanations are taught in the public schools. But evolution encompasses far more than some seemingly arcane facts taught in biology classes and touches us all directly.

In early 2009, the world passed through an influenza pandemic scare. Noting a potentially lethal H5N1 bird influenza was burgeoning unchecked in Asia, authorities had long worried this virus would evolve to infect humans and produce a deadly pandemic. However, the viruses never got those memos, and a new H1N1 (swine) flu, with an apparently high fatality rate, emerged in Mexico. Scientists ascertained quickly the novel and complex genealogy of this new virus, but no one could say whether it would be an ordinary (although still nasty) influenza or something destined to evolve into a fearsome killer like the virus of 1918. Then again, it might simply disappear. Such is the state of our knowledge of influenza virus evolution and epidemiology.

Soon, all of us may be forced to answer questions regarding this new flu virus—perhaps some readers already have. No one can predict what evolution will cook up, and there is no guarantee that being immune to the original H1N1 virus will offer any protection against a new killer virus that has yet to appear. The ugly fact is that evolution can move at blinding speed in influenza viruses and, under the right conditions, could quickly render all drugs useless. The US government has been commendably proactive on this issue, but oversight by an informed citizenry is essential to ensure leaders make wise decisions and establish productive priorities.

Influenza is not the sole existential threat to humanity. Pathogens entirely new to medicine such as the coronavirus that caused SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) and human immunodeficiency viruses (HIV) have evolved and spread to menace the entire world. Anyone who eats, breathes or goes to a hospital is under some danger from constantly changing disease agents. The sad part is that we are often unwittingly helping these pathogens evolve into uncontrollable adversaries. Even if humans represent the apex of evolution, as Nobel laureate Joshua Lederberg noted, nothing guarantees our continued survival.

Lisa Shiel explores and dissects the explosive and complex subject of evolution, but readers are forewarned that she does so in a unique fashion. Neither enamored acolyte nor iconoclast bent on destruction, Lisa subjects the evidence to brutal assessments and translates often mysterious scientific jargon for her readers. In so doing she reveals that the basic ideas of evolutionary theory and the evidence on which they rest are not the sole purview of the scientific elite, but are accessible to those who will make an effort to understand. Her slant is provocative and undoubtedly will stimulate a good deal of debate.

Since Darwin, the debate over if and how evolution should be taught has itself evolved. Unfortunately, from a public relations standpoint, it is obvious that scientists have not always helped their cause. Although often presented as a perfected and complete theory, many aspects of evolution are not understood completely and are the subject of intense scientific investigation. These gaps provide attack points for proponents of competing ideas who have shifted the debate focus to battles over specific shortcomings that are then extrapolated in attempts to discredit evolution theory in its entirety. The contestants marshal impressive multitudes of supportive facts and argue stridently, leaving school board members and the public befuddled. Confronted with unfamiliar terms, conflicting data, perhaps even outright double-talk, it is natural to defer to trusted authority.

But which experts should we believe? Follow Lisa's advice and work like a scientist would in a perfect world—assume nothing, gather up the facts and give them a cold, hard evaluation.

Kick down the doors and think for yourself.

Tyler A. Kokjohn
Phoenix, Arizona
May 31, 2009

Tyler A Kokjohn is a professor of microbiology at Mdwestern University.

Preface

Evolution.

One word, deceptive in its simplicity, has transformed the way we look at ourselves and everything around us. Once thought of as unique, man has become one of the animals with no special claim on the planet. As children, few of us question what we learn in biology class about the origins of life and the position man holds in the hierarchy. Science textbooks present evolution as fact—indisputable, inevitable, and incomprehensible to everyone outside the exalted few with PhDs in the appropriate fields.

Scientists bank on the fact that most people, overwhelmed by evolutionary theories, will decide they lack the mental capacity or rigorous training to understand how evolution works. In a book about evolution written for a lay audience, the scientist-author will employ cartloads of big, impressive words interspersed with phrases like adaptive radiation, exaptation, descent with modification, and phenotypic plasticity. Those terms respectively allude to the process of several new species branching out from a single ancestor species, traits not attributable to natural selection, the inheritance of new traits, and changes in an organism's appearance set off by environmental conditions.

Every discipline spawns jargon as a verbal shorthand. In evolutionary science, the jargon both helps scientists keep control and dissuades laymen from asking

questions scientists would rather not answer. That's why this book promotes one key premise.

Anyone can understand evolution.

Once we comprehend the theory, we can spot the chinks in its facade. In spite of scientists' efforts to confuse the rest of us, people do question evolution. In a May 2008 Gallup poll, respondents who agreed humans evolved gradually outnumbered those who disagreed by a narrow margin of 50% to 44%. Of those who agreed, about 36% gave God credit for helping the process along. In a June 2007 Gallup poll a mere 18% of respondents believed wholeheartedly in evolution, with a full 35% calling evolution at best "probably true" (Gallup 2008). When pollsters asked respondents in the May 2008 poll whether God played any role in man's development, fully 84% said yes—with 53% believing God created humans no more than 10,000 years ago. Another 31% thought God aided human evolution over the course of millions of years. The choices for answering did not include an option for those who believe humans have existed for longer than 10,000 years without evolving.

In the 2008 poll, the pollsters substituted the word "developed" for evolved when asking participants what they believed. This leaves wiggle room for evolutionists to include people who believe man "developed" gradually in their count of evolution believers. But does "develop" automatically liken with "evolve" in everyone's mind? We may never know. Still, to have 44% of those polled disbelieve evolution and another 36% call it at best "probably" accurate suggests that in spite of scientists' efforts to convince us that we should believe everything they say because they have PhDs, average people can see the cracks in evolution's house.

Evolutionists focus their defensive efforts on creationist claims, giving the impression that nobody except religious zealots disputes evolution. Either God created man 10,000 years ago or every organism alive today evolved from a single cell produced by molecular magic. Evolutionists ridicule nonbelievers as fools, misled by blind faith in what the Bible says. They ignore the facts—that scores of intelligent people believe in Christianity, that people of other faiths eschew evolution too, and that plenty of others find answers somewhere in the gray area between religion and science. Even creationists span a spectrum of beliefs, from strict 10,000-year Creationism to the evolution-like variety.

I approach the subject from a different perspective. Instead of criticizing evolution in an effort to promote my personal beliefs, I've chosen to examine evolutionary theories and the evidence attached to them through a secular lens. I will also wipe the fog of scientific jargon from our vision. Anytime I invoke a scientific term, that word or phrase will appear in bold and an explanation will follow. Terms in bold also appear in the glossary at the end of the book.

Neither scientist nor cleric, creationist nor evolutionist, I write as a layman who has scoured the scientific journals, websites, and popular publications to expose the evidence and politics of evolution. In this book, the culmination of years of research, I aim to empower laymen everywhere.

Read. Think. Decide for yourself.



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1

Imagining Life's Origins

Life happened.

To know this we need only look around us at the staggering diversity and complexity of living things that inhabit our planet. Life exists. Exactly when did life emerge? Exactly how did an inorganic world become organic?

One day about 3.5 billion years ago, a bowl of primordial goop coalesced into living cells. A lifeless world became alive, teeming with single-celled bacteria. Those primitive life-forms would reign supreme for 3 billion years, until another magic moment occurred—the first single-celled rebel decided to split. Voila! Multicellular life was born.

This theory, known as the “primordial soup” or “organic soup” theory, appears in every biology textbook. On the surface, the theory sounds valid and plausible. Never mind the blank space gaping in the theory’s center, where a picture of the first life should be. No one can see the moment when life began; in fact, no one can tell when that moment occurred. Still, no scientist lets the unknowable nature of life’s origins keep him from talking as if we know what happened. If questioned, most scientists will say that we cannot know exactly how life began, therefore the question is meaningless.

Yet what is life?

The Definition of Life

We know what life is. We see it everywhere around us. Ask us to define life, however, and we stumble. Even scientists cannot agree on how to describe the characteristics of life. Some definitions given by scientists would fit a star! Since few people would want to include celestial objects in their definition of life, this situation leaves us with a problem. What differentiates life from nonliving matter?

A simple and popular definition describes living matter as anything that has the ability to **regenerate** (sustain itself), **replicate** (propagate its kind), and **evolve** (produce inherited changes). A more detailed description of living cells includes four key traits:

- ▷ A container, or **cell**;
- ▷ Active genetic material, or **DNA**
- ▷ Reproductive capacity
- ▷ A metabolism, to create energy from food

Right now scientists are working to create artificial cells, containers for the genetic and other materials found in natural cells. To qualify as a real cell, the artificial containers must have semi-permeable membranes to confine the required materials, keep out unwanted stuff, and allow needed materials to enter the cell. As yet, scientists have failed to achieve this milestone.

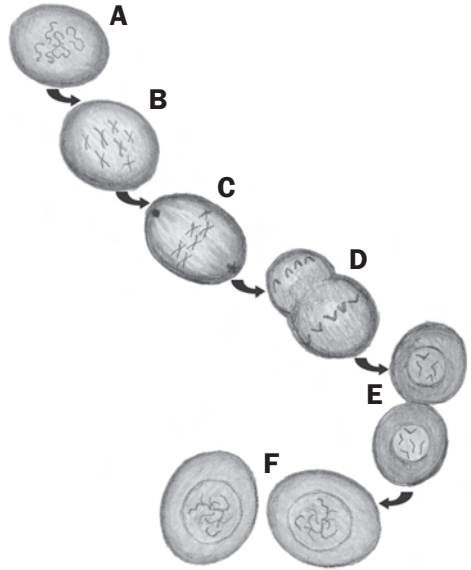
A cell needs genetic material to regulate its functions. Once a membrane-enclosed entity has been endowed with DNA and the ability to pass that DNA onto its offspring, it becomes a **protocell**. Before scientists can reach the second milestone of inserting DNA into the container, thus creating a protocell, they must achieve the first goal of manufacturing a membrane. Once they have inserted DNA, the scientists must find a way to both keep the cell alive and activate the genetic material. Inert DNA will do no good for a fledgling cell.

After conquering the first two obstacles, scientists must then hope the protocell will reproduce itself via **mitosis** (see fig. 1.1), the splitting of one cell into two. Finally the protocell must have a **metabolism**, a series of chemical reactions that yield energy without which the cell could never sustain itself. In a 2007 article in *USA Today*, Mark Bedau of ProtoLife—a company seeking to manufacture artificial cells—noted that once scientists make a cell, they will consider themselves lucky to keep it alive for an hour in a laboratory.

Life must have containers, DNA, reproduction, and metabolism. Yet this definition has failed to attain majority, much less unanimous, support within

Figure 1.1 Mitosis

Eukaryotic cells live in interphase (F), except when they undergo mitosis. The process of mitosis begins with prophase, in which the nucleus goes away and the chromosomes gather in coils (A) then break up into what look like double strands (B). Next up, the chromosomes migrate to the cell's midsection during metaphase (C). Anaphase (D) begins the separation, as the chromosomes split between the halves of the cell. Telophase (E) concludes the division, leaving two separate yet identical cells (F) each with a newly re-formed nucleus.



the scientific community. Inventor and futurist Ray Kurzweil leads the pack of proponents of **artificial intelligence**, the notion that machines will soon display humanlike intellect. When they do, Kurzweil believes machines will qualify as living beings, deserving of the same rights humans demand for each other.

Will machines become alive? They already have containers; think of the box that holds the guts of a computer. Machines can “metabolize” electricity into energy for themselves; metabolism refers to the processes by which new material gets absorbed into a body or converted into usable energy. Machines can reproduce themselves, in a way; robots on an assembly line can make other machines, meaning if robots become sentient they could decide to reproduce themselves. Machines don’t have genetic material—yet. If humans meld with machines in the manner some scientists want, then machines may receive the DNA they need to become alive.

When talking about the origins of life, most scientists restrict their definitions of living things to organic life. **Organic** refers to substances that contain carbon. Machines could still qualify under this definition, however, since the metals they consist of could be carbon based like our bodies.

Scientists currently working on creating “life” in the lab believe they are at most 10 years away from success in fabricating a cell container. Two decades ago scientists believed they’d have accomplished that goal in less than 20 years. The container goal, the first step in creating a living cell, eludes scientists. Most

laymen will underestimate the difficulty of the task because scientists downplay it. If scientists do someday fabricate a viable container, they must still figure out how to insert the stuff of life into the container and give the “cell” active genetic material that will imbue it with life.

And that’s just step two.

If scientists do create a living cell, the experiment will not have exposed how life began. They will have discovered but one possibility out of many. No one can prove how life began because of the second problem facing origins research.

We can’t see back to the beginning.

Genesis Theories

Astronomers have the Big Bang, the moment when nothingness exploded into everything-ness. Evolutionists have a big, invisible, silent bang.

When and why did inorganic molecules form organic life? When we say inorganic compounds transmuted into organic ones, we mean that somehow non-carbon substances bonded with carbon to form new compounds. Life on earth is carbon based; hence, for life to have emerged, the inorganic materials that abounded on primordial earth must have turned into organic substances. Sometime after that, organic molecules cozied up to one another and produced the very first cell. Scientists call the process of life emerging from nonliving materials **abiogenesis**.

That life does exist raises a myriad of questions. Ancient people told creation myths that explained life’s origins via the actions of a god or supernatural force. Today scientists scoff at the notion of divine intervention. Religious evolutionists concede God exists, but claim He only watches as evolution works its magic on the world. At the same time, evolutionists gloss over the moment when life began, assuming that it did begin via an unknown mechanism. The details, they say, are irrelevant.

Throughout history, though, people have struggled to part the curtain that hides from us the greatest mystery of all—life’s genesis.

Spontaneous Generation

Life from lifelessness.

That idea formed the core of the first popular theory about the origins of life. Known as **spontaneous generation**, the theory explained that life arises from lifeless matter via a mysterious and somewhat magical process. The theory may have originated in the 6th Century BC with the Greek philosopher Anaximander.

Glossary

- abiogenesis.** The process of life emerging from nonliving materials.
- abiogenic.** Not caused by living things. *Compare* **abiotic**.
- abiotic.** (1) Nonbiological. (2) Not containing or derived from living things. *Compare* **abiogenic**.
- adaptation.** The development of slightly different physical or genetic traits that make an organism better suited to its environment or lifestyle.
- adaptive radiation.** The process by which one species turns into many as they seek to occupy different niches in the environment.
- amino acids.** Organic compounds deemed a prerequisite for life.
- artificial intelligence.** Machines displaying humanlike intellect.
- artificial selection.** A process in which humans control the reproduction of another species to enhance desirable traits, as in dog breeds.
- base.** The foundational unit of nucleic acids. DNA contains the bases adenine, cytosine, guanine, and thymine. *See also* **nucleotide** and **nucleic acid**.
- base pair.** A pair of nucleotides that links the DNA double helix.
- binomial nomenclature.** The dual Latin names, such as *Homo sapiens*, given to species.
- biological species concept.** A model separating species based on the existing or potential ability of populations to interbreed. Often abbreviated *BSC*. *Compare* **morphological species concept**, **genetic species concept**, and **phylogenetic species concept**.
- cell.** (1) A container with a semi-permeable membrane. (2) The fundamental building block of all living things. *See also* **eukaryotic** and **prokaryotic**.
- chemotrophic.** Receiving nourishment from the assimilation of chemicals rather than organic matter. Energy is obtained without the influence of light. Also called chemoautotrophic. *Contrast* **photosynthesis**.

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