

My Response to Shapiro

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This is my response to an e-mail from Robert Shapiro:

RS.

I understand your points, but I believe there is a basic unstated premise in them that somehow chemicals want to eat or replicate – they want to get to us. The 'I' in origin. Also because life is conceived as so special (the anthropomorphic mistake) then it is hard to come about. I disagree with that. And I think to see the processes that led to life clearly, we must first not see it as special.

On my desk is salt and pepper. Does my salt want to eat (metabolism) does my pepper want to reproduce (replication). Of course that's absurd. In the same way there is no 'origin' of life. It never popped up in some chemical creationist moment. It was a RESPONSE to the forces that went before. And every step was a response to energy in the environment. When there was no energy, everything shut down. When there was energy chemicals changed and some chemical processes were promoted (the most stable) and some were destroyed (the least stable). Researchers are trying to find out what chemical responses to energy led to life processes.

If the responses made it less stable, it was destroyed. Only that which help stabilize remained, or was chemically selected.

Thus life is not an origin, but a chemical response that better suits those chemicals to their environment. No one can name any aspect of life that makes it less suited to its environment. No one can name anything that evolves to less stability, and less adaptation to its environment.

Life is not a fluke single event, it is the most stable reaction of chemicals to that environment (a complete 180 degree change of most thinking)

You then suggest the necessary energy sources as other than the sun. Yet that was the only constant energy cycle that provided both constancy – to build on, and variability to supply variations to allow for evolution. Also note how well nucleotides absorb UV – is that just a coincidence? Though you discount the bases at this early a stage

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and we disagree on that.

Any other energy source has this major problem. Life has to switch energy sources to photosynthesis. How much more reasonable to see life as always responding to the sun/uv/ energy source. Though how it did it is certainly unclear at this stage.

Nature seldom if ever does anything as vast as switching energy sources. And we have to trump it up at the beginning when life is most fragile and inchoate.

Every evolved step is just that – a small step. Nothing switches in such a vast way.

Other sources considered –

Lighting inconstant,

thermal vents sterilize,

radiation not the answer,

chemical energy – well my salt does want to eat! </HTML>

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