

DOES
EVOLUTION
EXPLAIN
EVERYTHING
ABOUT LIFE?



Answers from Ph.D. Scientists

Philip Bell (Contributing Editor)

Ph.D. Scientists:

Jonathan Sarfati | Pierre Jerlström | Robert Carter
David Catchpoole | Stuart Burgess | Tasman Walker
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Response to the *New Scientist* book,
“How Evolution Explains Everything About Life”

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First printing: 2020

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ISBN: 978-1-942773-79-5

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Editorial assistance: Donald Batten
Proof reading: Lucien Tuinstra and Gavin Cox
Cover design and layout by: Sarah Fretwell
Published by:



CREATION
BOOK PUBLISHERS

Creation Book Publishers, P.O. Box 350, Powder Springs, GA, 30127, USA.
Phone: 1-800-616-1264 · creationbookpublishers.com

CREATION.com

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Christian worldview and the creation/evolution issue.

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Introduction

By Philip Bell

This short book is a critical review of claims made by an expert panel of evolutionary scientists in the *New Scientist* ‘Instant Expert’ book, *How Evolution Explains Everything About Life: From Darwin’s brilliant idea to today’s epic theory*.¹ Those are massive claims, but can they be demonstrated? Well, by the end of the book, the *New Scientist* team feels sufficiently emboldened to conclude:

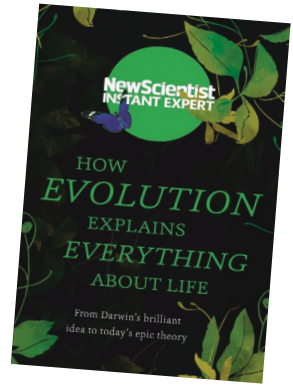


Fig. 1. Front cover of *How Evolution Explains Everything About Life* (2017)

“Innumerable examples of evolution in action can be seen all around us ... Evolution is as firmly established a scientific fact as the roundness of the Earth” (p. 245).

How often have you encountered such grandiose claims? The implication is that even to doubt big-picture evolution (molecules-to-man), certainly to critique evolution, is preposterous. It is as daft as insisting that the Earth is flat.

Imagine evolution as a grand pudding: the real proof of the pudding is in the eating. It is not sensible simply to rely on what the ‘pudding experts’ may tell you: ‘Oh it really is the very finest

of puddings, the combination of flavours and textures is simply superb. Cooked to perfection, it is quite mouth-watering. Once eaten, never forgotten. No bad aftertastes, easily digested, and reaches the parts that more inferior puddings cannot reach. Completely banishes hunger pangs, leaving you contented, without unpleasantly repeating on you later. Never did a more splendid pudding see the light of day!' Ah yes, but does it *really* live up to expectations? There's only one way to find out: eat some and test those mighty claims! Cut into it and sample the contents for yourself.

Similarly, to determine the sum and substance of *How Evolution Explains Everything About Life* (hereafter, HEEEEAL), we must examine what the experts are saying. Without doubt, the book contains useful discussion on evolutionary topics, but can its lofty claims be substantiated? The very examination itself is an excellent opportunity both to showcase some fascinating scientific findings and, we are confident, to demonstrate the superiority of the case for supernatural creation.

Experts go head-to-head

This *New Scientist* 'Instant Expert' book represents the joint efforts of ten writers, the overall editor Dr Alison George (biochemist), and a panel of Ph.D. experts: Dr Susan Blackmore (psychologist), Dr Peter Bowler (science historian), Professors Adrian Bird (geneticist), Lee Alan Dugatkin (biologist), Steve Jones (geneticist), Kevin Laland (evolutionary biologist), George Turner (zoologist), and David Sloan Wilson (biologist and anthropologist), and Dr John van Wyhe (Darwin and Wallace historian).²

Consequently, it seemed fitting to assemble a panel of expert Ph.D.s (biblical creationists) to tackle the subjects raised—much as was done for the book and documentary project *Evolution's Achilles' Heels*.³ A variety of audacious claims are made within the pages of HEEEEAL, along with some telling admissions. Our own ten experts have responded in the very areas which are pertinent to their qualifications and professional experience:

- Dr Jonathan Sarfati (physical chemist)
- Dr Pierre Jerlström (molecular biologist)
- Dr Robert Carter (marine biologist and geneticist)
- Dr David Catchpoole (plant physiologist)
- Prof Stuart Burgess (mechanical engineer and biomimeticist)
- Dr Tasman Walker (mechanical engineer and geologist)
- Dr Jim Mason (nuclear physicist)
- Dr Donald Batten (plant and agricultural scientist)
- Dr Peter Borger (molecular biologist)
- Dr Samuel Gan (molecular biologist).

Not all of CMI's panel of experts read the book in full but all were provided with the chapter outlines and the full context pertaining to the quotations upon which they were invited to comment (shown hereafter in GREEN boxes). Therefore, in formulating their replies, each expert was fully cognizant of the scope and thrust of the writer(s) whom they were critiquing. In what follows, the headings and sub-headings are mine (not borrowed from HEEEEAL) but are designed to capture the thrust of the quoted claims and admissions.

Audacious claims

Life's chemical origin was a cinch

A response by Dr Jonathan Sarfati

“The only thing we know for certain is that life must have popped into existence sometime between Earth’s formation 4.5 billion years ago and the appearance of the first undisputed fossils, about 3.4 billion years ago” (p. 69).

The above presupposes something they most certainly don't know for certain: that life evolved from non-living chemicals. This claim is called chemical *evolution*. However, it goes against what we do know about chemistry and information theory. So, arguments against chemical evolution are not appeals to ignorance, but about what really happens in chemistry.

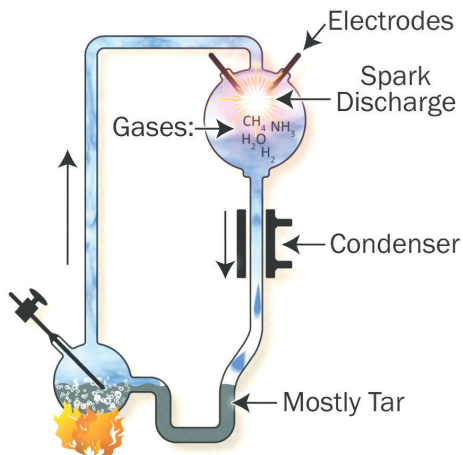


Fig. 2. Spark discharge apparatus used in the famous Miller-Urey experiments of the 1950s, designed to simulate chemical reactions on the putative 'early Earth'.