

*Letter*

## Life: a Defunct Scientific Theory?

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*Received: 02 January 2009; Published: 16 March 2009*

### Abstract

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The following is correspondence letter on the issue irreconcilabilities of attempts at a definition of life in the context of molecular evolution tables, sent from American chemical engineer Libb Thims to Russian physical chemist Georgi Gladyshev dated January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2009.

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### Letter

I am under the view, that the term 'life' is a defunct scientific theory.

You agree with me that the single atom is not alive. What about two atoms? What about three? Does a bound state of atoms have to have a certain movement to be considered alive? What if we heat a system of four atoms, do they suddenly become alive? What if we subject a system of atoms to both gravitational and electromagnetic forces, does that suddenly make them alive? What if the two forces act to move smaller atoms through the cavities of larger atoms on a cyclical basis, thus activating reactions in the process, does that make them alive? What if the two forces begin to arrange the atoms into hierarchies, and that smaller atoms and bundles of atoms begin to move between the hierarchies, does that make them alive? What if a structure of atoms, begin to turnover their internal atoms, with those of the surrounding space, on a cyclical basis, does that make it alive?

It is very obvious that one atom is not alive. It is very obvious that two atoms are not alive. It is very obvious that three atoms are not alive. It is very obvious that four atoms are not alive. If we

continue this logic onward, it should be very obvious that no matter how many atoms one adds to the argument that an atom or a structure made of two or more atoms cannot be alive.

It is my view that one cannot define an atom or two or more atoms structured as a bound state to be alive. The word itself and baggage of theory surrounding the word is meaningless. It is akin to the words: vitalism, élan vital, hylozoism, panpsychism, etc.

From the point of view of the molecular evolution table:

<http://www.eoht.info/page/Molecular+evolution+table>

According to current views, rows 1-10 are considered to be not alive, rows 11-28 are considered to be *alive*, and rows 30 and above are not alive.

Because of our anthropocentric biases, we continue to believe that we are unique among molecular structures, in that those much smaller or much bigger than us are not alive, whereas we are. It is a grave mistake to believe in this fallacy.

I am not quite sure what the alternative theory is; but from the point of view of atoms, molecules, and the logic of the chemistry textbook, the theory of the conception an atom, or two or more attached atoms, being alive is absurd. This is my view.

## Notes

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1. In the month prior to this, a buildup of tension had existed in the mind of Thims on the issue of the term “life”. In particular that (a) Russian physical chemist Georgi Gladyshev was trying to argue to Thims that his hierarchical thermodynamics theory “mandated life”, (b) that American chemical engineer Ted Erikson was trying to argue to Thims for a thermodynamic explanation of panpsychism, postulating that everything is alive (from the hydrogen atom to the universe), having a consciousness or awareness, and (c) that Indian chemical engineer DMR Sekhar was trying to argue to Thims that, based on the second law, DNA is self-acting, with a consciousness, via his theory of genopsych.
  2. See also: Brooks, Michael. (2008). *13 Things That Don't Make Sense: the Most Baffling Scientific Mysteries of Our Time* (ch. 5: “Life”, pgs. 69-82). Double Day.
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After the publication of the articles "Life: a Defunct Scientific Theory?" by Libb Thims [1], I tried to support his apparent good intentions. I made an observation that in science there is no such "the defunct theory of life". This was the beginning of a long correspondence between him and me, according to the said Libb Thims' discussions [2]. After a while I realized that this debate was inefficient and, in my opinion, was pointless. I stopped to present and add any comments to the discussions. However, I was hoping that Libb Thims would modify his views in favor of science. After reading... This theory states that all life sprouted from a complex RNA world. This is plausible, as RNA is far more self-regulating, if less efficient, than DNA. Simple Metabolism and Reactions. In contrast to the RNA theory, this approach suggests that the primordial soup simply continued to react with itself over time, producing more and more complex molecules, eventually yielding life. However, the new research from MIT is backed up by mathematical and scientific evidence. Only time and further research can truly tell if there really is any energy in these claims. As a Futurism reader, we invite you to join the Singularity Global Community, our parent company's forum to discuss futuristic science & technology with like-minded people from all over the world. It's free to join, sign up now!

phrenology (a defunct theory) -Marie Jean Pierre Flourens: Appalled by Gall's claim; conducted experiments to prove the theory wrong -Paul Broca: Able to show via a patient that damage to a specific part of the brain impaired a specific mental function, demonstrating that the brain and mind are closely linked. psychological life as a kind of blossoming spirit. In Summary. -Psychologists have often focused on patients with psychological disorders as a way of understanding human behavior. A scientific theory isn't just a theory, it's an idea that explains an observed phenomena in the best way we know how. It has passed rigorous testing and an extensive peer-review process. It has achieved the highest honor any idea can in a scientific field. Acknowledging an idea as a scientific theory is acknowledging it as the greatest thing that humans, through science, are capable of creating. For example, the theory of evolution is the best explanation of the observed phenomena of evolution. The current theory is Darwinian evolution through natural selection, and an enormous amount of evidence supports the theory. Top: defunct theory of life theorists. Bottom: first page of 16 Mar 2009 JHT article "Life: a Defunct Scientific Theory?", by American chemical engineer Libb Thims, a summary of a letter, originally sent to Russian physical chemist Georgi Gladyshev (02 Jan 2009), introducing the newly concluded view that the theory of "life", particularly in the context of molecular evolution tables (and attempts to decide which rows have). A full read of Crick's Hmolpedia article is requisite here, as he comes very close to the complete abandonment of the theory of life.