

Introducing "The Origin of Life"

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One of the finest lectures I (NE) have ever had the privilege to attend was given by Prof. Antonio Lazcano—editor of this present issue on “The Origin of Life.” I had known Antonio for many years as we shared the program as speakers on evolutionary biology in wonderful venues in Spain, Italy, and elsewhere.

But the lecture that I found the most compelling, the most riveting, was Prof. Lazcano’s bilingual tour-de-force at his home university in Mexico City just a few years ago. Seemingly without recourse to notes, and speaking sometimes in Spanish and then in English, Antonio Lazcano delivered an astonishingly brilliant speech on the history of scientific discovery and analysis bearing on the subject of the origin of life. It was that great presentation that led us to invite Prof. Lazcano to design and assemble this present issue of *E&O* focusing on the origin of life.

As readers will discover, authors (starting with Charles Darwin) have often made the distinction between studies of

the origin of life (clearly, in its essence, a chemical problem) and processes and patterns underlying the subsequent diversification of living systems into the forms of life as we know them today. Yet evolution is all about origins (as in “the origin of species”)—so the search for a naturalistic, material causal explanation for the origin of life on earth is in itself quintessentially a core scientific problem for the biological sciences and an integral aspect of the study of the history of life on earth, i.e., “evolution” in its broadest sense.

We are extremely grateful to Prof. Lazcano for his great efforts in assembling this wonderful collection of papers that summarizes where science stands in understanding the nature, processes, and events involved with the very origin of life. We are sure that our readership will find this issue to be the most compelling and useful review of the subject!

And stay tuned for exciting news about the future of *E&O* to be announced in our next issue!

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