

EST Reading

科技英语系列教材

科技英语阅读导读

A Guide to EST Reading

主编 韩孟奇

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上海交通大学出版社

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内 容 提 要

本书是《科技英语阅读》的配套辅导教材,共 15 单元,所选背景知识多为近年来的科技成果简介,而且提供了一些相关术语的解释及练习答案。同时为所选的 30 篇文章提供了参考译文,不仅便于读者加深对原文内容的理解,也为有志于科技英语翻译的学习者提供一个参照。

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前 言

本书是《科技英语阅读》的配套辅导教材,旨在为使用该教材的教师和读者提供相关背景知识、难点解析、练习答案及参考译文,可供教师和自学者选用。

本书所选背景知识多为近年来的科技成果综述,可帮助使用者了解与课文相关的知识,开阔视野。本书还提供了一些相关术语的解释,从而帮助使用者更好地理解相关学科。为方便读者,本书对部分难度较大的术语,除提供英文解析之外,还补充了汉语资料。练习答案可供教师检测学生的学习情况或供读者参考。

本书为所选的 30 篇文章都提供了参考译文,翻译尽量做到忠实、通顺、易懂。译文不仅便于读者加深对课文内容的理解,也为有志于科技英语翻译的学习者提供一个参照。

参加本书编写的人员如下:韩孟奇(第 3、10、11 单元),李琴(第 1、2、8、13 单元),贺宁(第 4、5、7 单元),王强(第 12、15 单元),王艳(第 9 单元),冯玲(第 14 单元),张瞳(第 6 单元)。全书由韩孟奇统校。

本书在编写过程中曾参考了如下网站,在此深表谢意。

<http://www.bowenwang.com.cn/>

<http://www.carjunky.com/>

<http://cn.tech.yahoo.com/070308/548/2oif4.html>

<http://en.wikipedia.org>

<http://www.renewableenergyworld.com/>

<http://www.shenmeshi.com/>

<http://stemcells.nih.gov/>

由于编者的水平有限,经验不足,本书难免存在不当之处,敬请相关专家和读者批评指正。

编 者

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Unit 1 Life Science

Text A

Human Cloning

Background Information

1. What is cloning?

Cloning is the creation of cells or whole animals using DNA from a single “parent”, bypassing the normal reproductive process. The clone has the same DNA as the parent.

克隆是英文“clone”一词的音译,是利用生物技术由无性生殖产生与原个体有完全相同基因组之后代的过程。科学家把人工遗传操作动物繁殖的过程称为克隆,这门生物技术称为克隆技术,克隆本身的含义是无性繁殖,即由同一个祖先细胞分裂繁殖而形成的纯细胞系,该细胞系中每个细胞的基因彼此相同。

克隆的英文“clone”源于希腊语的“klōn”(嫩枝)。在园艺学中,“clon”一词一直沿用到 20 世纪。后来有时在词尾加上“e”成为“clone”,以表明“o”的发音是长元音。近来随着这个概念及单词在大众生活中广泛使用,拼法已经局限使用“clone”。该词的中文译名在中国大陆音译为“克隆”,而在中国港台地区则多意译为“转殖”或“复制”。

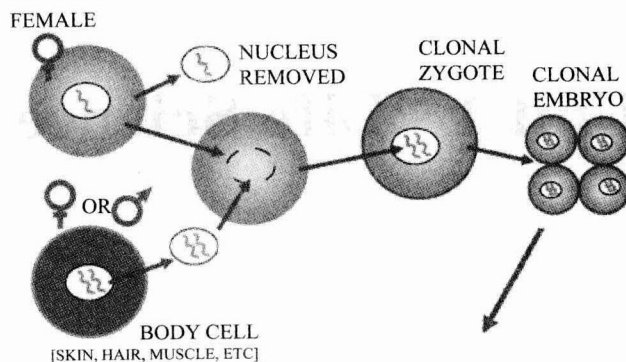
克隆通常是一种人工诱导的无性生殖方式或者自然的无性生殖方式(如植物)。一个克隆体就是一个多细胞生物在遗传上与另外一种生物完全一样。克隆可以是自然克隆,例如由无性生殖或是由于偶然的原因产生两个遗传上完全一样的个体(就像同卵双生一样)。但是,通常所说的克隆是指通过有意识的设计来产生完全一样的复制。

2. How are clones created?

The most common process takes DNA from one cell and puts in a hollowed-out egg. Chemicals and electricity are then used to encourage the new DNA to fuse with the egg and develop into an embryo. This technique is called nuclear replacement. This has the potential to create the clone of an adult organism as well as many clones at once.

3. The future of cloning

Research could give insight to origins of cancer and other cellular processes such as aging. Techniques could be used with nerve cells that do not regularly reproduce, and possibly help



Alzheimer or Parkinson's sufferers.

Nuclear replacement could help those with diseases that are inherited from mitochondria. The nucleus is removed from the diseased cell and placed into one with healthy mitochondria.

4. What is Dolly?

Dolly, a Finn Dorset sheep, was born on July 5th, 1996, at the Roslin Institute in Edinburgh, Scotland. Her birth, not revealed to the public until February 3rd, 1997, sparked controversy instantly, because Dolly was the world's first mammal to be cloned from an adult cell. Considered one of the most significant scientific breakthroughs ever, Dolly's birth and subsequent survival proved that adult cells can reprogram themselves into a new being.

5. Parkinson's disease

Parkinson's disease (also known as Parkinson disease or PD) is a degenerative disorder of the central nervous system that often impairs the sufferer's motor skills, speech, and other functions.

Parkinson's disease belongs to a group of conditions called movement disorders. It is characterized by muscle rigidity, tremor, a slowing of physical movement and, in extreme cases, a loss of physical movement. The primary symptoms are the results of decreased stimulation of the motor cortex by the basal ganglia, normally caused by the insufficient formation and action of dopamine, which is produced in the dopaminergic neurons of the brain. Secondary symptoms may include high level cognitive dysfunction and subtle language problems. PD is both chronic and progressive.

帕金森病是一种神经系统常见的多发性慢性、渐进性变性疾病,以“运动迟缓、肌强直、静止性震颤和姿势异常”四个主征为临床特点。因首先由英国内科医生詹姆斯·帕金森(James Parkinson)于1817年描述而得名,它与通常所说的“震颤麻痹综合征”是一回事。此病多发生于50~60岁以上的中老年人,但在遗传分型中也有家族性和少年性帕金森病。男性稍多于女性,发病率占全部病人的75%~80%。

6. Alzheimer's disease

It is a brain disorder named for German physician Alois Alzheimer, who first described it in 1906. Scientists have learned a great deal about Alzheimer's disease in the century since

Dr. Alzheimer first drew attention to it. Today we know that Alzheimer's is a progressive and fatal brain disease. As many as 5 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's disease. Alzheimer's destroys brain cells, causing problems with memory, thinking and behavior severe enough to affect work, lifelong hobbies or social life. Alzheimer's gets worse over time, and it is fatal. Today it is the sixth-leading cause of death in the United States.

It is the most common form of dementia, a general term for the loss of memory and other intellectual abilities serious enough to interfere with daily life. Vascular dementia, another common type of dementia, is caused by reduced blood flow to parts of the brain. In mixed dementia, Alzheimer's and vascular dementia occur together. It has no current cure. But treatments for symptoms, combined with the right services and support, can make life better for the millions of Americans living with Alzheimer's. We've learned most of what we know about Alzheimer's in the last 15 years. There is an accelerating worldwide effort under way to find better ways to treat the disease, delay its onset, or prevent it from developing. Learn more about recent progress in Alzheimer science and research funded by the Alzheimer's Association in the Research section.

阿尔茨海默病(Alzheimer's disease, 简称 AD), 又称早老性痴呆, 是一种常见的老年异质性脑神经退行性疾病, 以不可逆进行性记忆和认知功能丧失为主要临床特征, 是一种主要的早老性痴呆。AD 发病机制极其复杂, 属多病因、多阶段的慢性中枢神经疾病, 至今 AD 的发病机制尚未完全阐明。

Answers to the Exercises

I . Building up Your Word Power

- | | | | | |
|----------------|--------------|----------------|----------------|-------------|
| 1. somatic | 2. surrogate | 3. mutate | 4. therapeutic | 5. syndrome |
| 6. infertility | 7. uterus | 8. abnormality | 9. malfunction | 10. chronic |

II . Terms Matching

- | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|------|-------|
| 1. Q | 2. P | 3. H | 4. F | 5. I | 6. J | 7. C | 8. A | 9. D | 10. G |
| 11. B | 12. K | 13. L | 14. M | 15. E | 16. N | 17. O | | | |

III . Questions for Discussion

1. The announcement that a group of Scottish scientists had created a cloned sheep shocked the world in 1997 and in later years, the announcement of first cloned human will shock the world.
2. First, take the egg from a donor and remove the nucleus of the egg, creating an enucleated egg. A cell, which contains DNA, is then taken from the sheep which is to be cloned. The enucleated egg is then fused together with the cloning subject's cell using electricity. This creates an embryo, which is implanted into a surrogate sheep through *in vitro* fertilization.
3. Because human cloning has many advantages. First, cloning is seen as a possible way to aid some people who have severe medical problems. Then, others see cloning as a way to aid couples with infertility problems, but who want a child with at least one of the parent's biological

attributes. Another use for human cloning could be to bring deceased relatives back to life.

4. Cloning technology is still in its early stages, and nearly 98 percent of cloning efforts end in failure. The embryos are either not suitable for implanting into the uterus or they die sometime during gestation or shortly after birth. Those clones that do survive suffer from genetic abnormalities. Some clones have been born with defective hearts, lung problems, diabetes, blood vessel problems and malfunctioning immune systems.
5. In my opinion, human cloning will be realized sooner or later. Nowadays, scientists have cloned sheep, cattle and other animals. It will be only a matter of time before human clones come into being. For me, I don't agree because each person is different. Even if scientists can clone humans now, it's still not right for they don't have the right to clone a person. I don't think I would want to have a clone and it would be weird to have someone else exactly like you. Well, except for twins, but they are born naturally, not from some experiments.

IV. Multiple Choices

1. D 2. C 3. C 4. C 5. C 6. B 7. D 8. A 9. C 10. D

V. Sentence Translation

1. If human cloning proceeds, one method scientists can use is somatic cell nuclear transfer, which is the same procedure that was used to create Dolly, the sheep.
2. If the procedure is successful, then the surrogate mother will give birth to a baby that is a clone of the cloning subject at the end of a normal gestation period.
3. While it may take time for cloning to be fully accepted, therapeutic cloning will likely be the first step in that direction.
4. Others see cloning as a way to aid couples with infertility problems, but who want a child with at least one of the parent's biological attributes.
5. While laws are one deterrent to pursuing human cloning at this time, some scientists believe the technology is not ready to be tested on humans.

VI. Passage Translation

(见参考译文第5段)

[参考译文]

怎样克隆人

凯文·博萨

韩国科学家宣称已经通过克隆技术培育出人类胚胎,这或许会使医疗前景发生重大改变,因为人们可能采用治疗性克隆技术应对诸如帕金森综合征和阿尔茨海默病(又称早老性痴呆症)之类的疾病。

1 1997年,几位苏格兰科学家宣布他们克隆出一只名叫多利的绵羊,这引起举世震惊。很多人相信在未来10年内,我们会听到更加令人震惊的消息,即第一个克隆人的问世,因为韩国科学家已经通过克隆技术培育出人类胚胎干细胞。

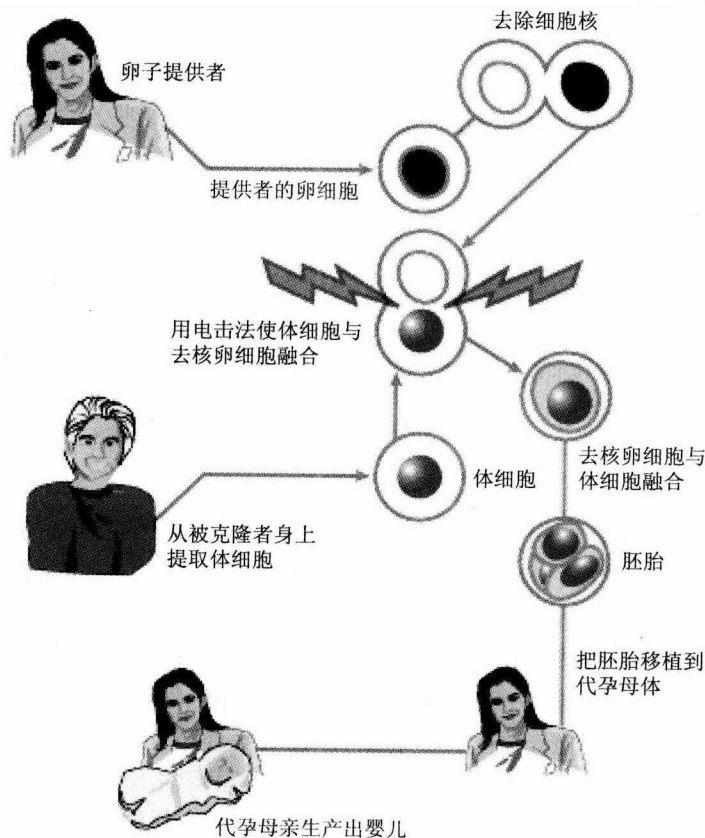
2 迄今,克隆人还只是出现在影视作品里,但科学的发展正使克隆人成为现实。我们已经克隆出绵羊、老鼠和奶牛,为什么不能克隆人呢?一些国家已经立法禁止克隆技术,但在很多国家仍然合法。

我、我本人和我的克隆体

3 2001年1月,由前肯塔基大学教授潘内约蒂斯·萨威斯和意大利研究员赛威里内·安蒂内领导的科学家研究小组宣布他们计划在未来两年内克隆出一个人。大约同时,《纽约邮报》报道了一对美国夫妇打算给位于拉斯维加斯的 Clonaid 公司支付 50 万美元,作为克隆其去世幼女的费用。

4 这些科学家有可能打着科学的幌子沽名钓誉。但不管他们的动机如何,我们有可能在未来10年的晚间新闻里看到克隆儿的问世。科学家们表明他们已经能够用目前的技术克隆动物,不过培育成胚胎并使之产出的概率很低。

5 如果克隆技术能够得以继续下去,科学家们可能采用的方法就是体细胞核移植,即培育多利羊所采用的方法。医生首先从供体上提取一个卵细胞,接着去除其细胞核,使之成为一个无核卵细胞。其次,再从被克隆者身上提取一个含有其DNA的细胞。然后,采用电击法,使去核卵细胞与被克隆者的细胞融合。通过这一过程就可培育出一胚胎。采用体外受精技术,将这一胚胎移植到代孕母亲的子宫内。若这一过程成功,代孕母亲足月后就可分娩出婴儿,即被试



者的克隆体。当然,成功率只有百分之一二。科学家们尝试了 277 次才培育出多利羊。看看下面的图表就能明白体细胞核移植的流程。

6 一些科学家认为人类克隆势不可挡,但为什么要克隆人类呢?原因是多方面的,我们就探讨其中一些吧。

克隆什么样的人?

7 克隆并不是指克隆整个人。克隆技术只是作为一种补救措施,用来帮助那些身患重症的人。克隆技术的一个潜在用途是作为人类的修复工具。换句话说,科学家可以克隆出我们的细胞,用以修复致病的突变的基因。2001 年 1 月,英国政府通过一些法令,允许克隆人类胚胎,用以治疗如帕金森综合征和早发性痴呆等疾病。

8 克隆技术为人们完全接受尚需时日,但用于治疗目的的克隆技术有可能为人们首先接受。在治疗性克隆技术中,科学家可利用人类的 DNA(脱氧核糖核酸)克隆出一个胚胎,但不是将此胚胎移入代孕母体,而是利用其细胞培育干细胞,治疗人类疾病。科学家利用干细胞培育人体器官,如心脏、肝脏和皮肤,也可用于培育神经细胞治疗早发性痴呆、帕金森或雷特综合征。

9 下面是治疗性克隆技术的工作原理:

- 从病人身上提取 DNA。
- 然后将 DNA 注入提供者的已去核的卵子中。
- 卵子像正常受精卵那样分裂并形成胚胎。
- 从胚胎中去除干细胞。
- 由这些干细胞培育组织或器官,用于治疗病人。

10 有人把克隆技术看做不育夫妇的补救措施,利用该技术生出的孩子至少含有不育夫妇的一种生物学特性。萨威斯和安蒂内说他们的研究目的就是帮助这些不育夫妇。萨威斯说已经有数百对夫妇在等待这项服务,并愿为此支付大约 5 万美元。这个研究组的人员说,这项补救措施的程序包括把不育男性的细胞注入一个卵子,然后把这个卵子注入女性子宫。他们孩子的相貌将与父亲相同。

11 人类克隆技术的另一个用途可能是让去世的亲属“起死回生”。想象一下,利用你曾祖母的 DNA 培育出一个她的克隆体。当然,这样做会引起许多伦理问题,但这扇伦理之门可能不久就要打开了。一对美国夫妇将给 Clonaid 公司支付 50 万美元,让该公司利用其去世女儿的皮肤细胞把其女儿克隆出来。

要不要克隆

12 克隆技术的反对者仍在拷问那个备受争议的科学问题:“能做就该做吗?”在技术上越接近人类克隆,这种争议就越激烈。克隆技术可能带来诸多好处,但反对者声称其带来的危害也一样多。另一个问题是怎样规范克隆程序。

13 美国的联邦法律还没有禁止克隆技术,但有几个州通过了禁止克隆的法律。美国食品药品监督管理局(FDA)也宣称:在美国任何人试图克隆人类应首先得到允许。在日本,克隆人是犯罪,要处以 10 年监禁。英国允许克隆人类胚胎,但正着手通过立法禁止克隆整个人体。

14 目前对于克隆人类来说,法律是一道屏障,一些科学家相信不会用人类做实验来检验这项技术。伊恩·多利羊的其中一个缔造者说,克隆人类是不负责任的犯罪行为,因为克隆技术尚

处于早期阶段,将近 98% 的克隆试验以失败而告终。克隆的胚胎要么不适合移植到子宫内,要么在妊娠中或出生后不久夭折。

15 那些幸存下的克隆体备受基因变异之苦。一些克隆体生下来就患有先天性心脏病、肺病、糖尿病、血管疾病以及免疫系统功能不良。其中一个著名的例子是一只克隆羊生下来就患有慢性过度换气,这是动脉畸形导致的肺病。

16 克隆技术的反对者指出,我们可以对有缺陷的动物实施安乐死,但对有缺陷的克隆人实施安乐死就会产生很多道德问题。克隆技术的支持者说,在移入母体之前,很容易把有缺陷的胚胎挑出来。关于人类克隆的争议刚刚开始,但随着科学的发展,这可能是 21 世纪最大的伦理困境。

Text B

Are We 10 Years Away from Artificial Life?

Background Information

1. Artificial life

“Artificial life likely in 3 to 10 years” from AP reports that scientists around the world are working feverishly on “wet artificial life”—basically the chemicals of DNA assembled to make a human protocells—giving man unparalleled insight into the creation of life. There are several hurdles to overcome, but scientists feel if they can make the membrane and then put in the chemicals in proper proportions that evolution will take over—rather like a science fiction storyline.

The hurdles are:

- A container, or membrane, for the cell to keep bad molecules out, allows good ones, and has the ability to multiply.
- A genetic system that controls the functions of the cell, enables it to reproduce and mutates in response to environmental changes.
- A metabolism that extracts raw materials from the environment as food and then changes it into energy.

在世界各地,少数科学家在尝试从无到有创造生命。专家们期待,在 3~10 年内,现在几乎不为人知的“湿人工生命”领域会有人宣布试验成功。

一些科学家认为,人造生命形式有朝一日将提供解决各类问题的可能性,这些问题包括与疾病斗争、锁定温室气体以及吞噬有毒废料等。

创造合成生命有三大难关。首先,需要创造细胞容器(即细胞膜),使细胞可以将坏分子阻挡在细胞外,允许好分子进入,并具有繁殖能力。其次,需要可以控制细胞各项功能的基因系统,使其可以繁殖并针对环境变化产生变异。另外,需要让合成生命拥有从环境中获取原材料作为食物,然后将其转换为能量的新陈代谢功能。

合成生命领域的带头人之一、哈佛大学医学院的杰克·绍斯塔克预计,未来6个月内,科学家们将提出证据,证明第一步——即创造细胞膜——“并不是一个大问题”。科学家们正在使用脂肪酸解决这一问题。

绍斯塔克对第二个步骤也表示乐观。第二步是取得核苷酸,建立DNA组,以形成可以起作用的基因系统。绍斯塔克认为,一旦细胞容器造成,如果科学家们加入适当比例的核苷酸,那么接下来自然会发生达尔文提出的进化过程。

2. Genetics

Genetics studies how living organisms inherit many of the features of their ancestors—for example, children usually look and act like other people in their family. Genetics tries to identify which features are inherited, and work out the details of how these features are passed from generation to generation.

In genetics, a feature of an organism is called a “trait”. Some traits are features of an organism’s physical appearance, for example, a person’s eye-color, height or weight. There are many other types of traits and these range from aspects of behavior to resistance to disease. Traits are often inherited, for example, tall and thin people tend to have tall and thin children.

Genetic information is carried by a long molecule called DNA which is copied and inherited across generations. Traits are carried in DNA as instructions for constructing and operating an organism. These instructions are contained in segments of DNA called genes. DNA is made of a sequence of simple units, with the order of these units spelling out instructions in the genetic code. This is similar to the orders of letters spelling out words. The organism “reads” the sequence of these units and decodes the instruction.

遗传学(Genetics)是研究基因及其在生物遗传中的作用的科学分支。这就是为什么后代总是与他们的双亲相似的原因。遗传学最早的应用在有历史记载之初就已经出现了,即驯养动物及植物的选择育种。遗传信息以化学方法被编码在DNA(脱氧核糖核酸)中。基因组学是研究特定物种所有DNA的学科。

遗传学研究的任务是阐明生物遗传和变异现象及其表现的规律;探索遗传变异的原因、物质基础及其内在规律;指导动植物和微生物的改良,提高医学水平,为人民谋福利。

3. Nucleotides (Para. 6)

Nucleotides are organic compounds that consist of three joined structures: a nitrogenous base, a sugar, and a phosphate group. The most common nucleotides can be divided into two groups (purines and pyrimidines) based on the structure of the nitrogenous base. The joined sugar is either ribose or deoxyribose.

Nucleotides are the structural units of RNA and DNA. They also serve as important cofactors in cellular signaling and metabolism.

核苷酸是组成核酸的基本单位,是合成核酸的前体物质,核苷酸是由核苷和磷酸构成的,核苷由戊糖和碱基构成,因此核苷酸由戊糖、碱基和磷酸三部分构成。

核苷酸是一切生物细胞的基本成分,是参与生命新陈代谢活动不可缺少的关键物质,核苷酸是核酸在体内的代谢产物,它对生物体的生长、发育、繁殖、遗传等重要生命现象起着主宰作用,被称为生命营养的本源物质。

4. Enzymes (Para. 6)

Enzymes are biomolecules that catalyze (i. e. increase the rates of) chemical reactions. Almost all enzymes are proteins. In enzymatic reactions, the molecules at the beginning of the process are called substrates, and the enzyme converts them into different molecules, the products. Almost all processes in a biological cell need enzymes to occur at significant rates. Since enzymes are selective for their substrates and speed up only a few reactions from among many possibilities, the set of enzymes made in a cell determines which metabolic pathways occur in that cell.

酶(enzyme)是由生物体内细胞产生的一种生物催化剂,由蛋白质组成(少数为 RNA)。能在机体中十分温和的条件下,高效率地催化各种生物化学反应,促进生物体的新陈代谢。生命活动中的消化、吸收、呼吸、运动和生殖都是酶促反应过程。酶是细胞赖以生存的基础。细胞新陈代谢包括的所有化学反应几乎都是在酶的催化下进行的。

Answers to the Exercises

I. Terms Matching

1. D 2. K 3. B 4. E 5. H 6. C 7. I 8. F 9. G 10. M
11. Q 12. J 13. A 14. S 15. P 16. R 17. L 18. O 19. N

II. Questions for Discussion

1. Scientists have made great progress in decoding human and animal genomes, synthesizing DNA and cloning.
2. According to some scientists, the development of artificial life will radically affect our views of biological life and our place in the universe.
3. An artificial life, created entirely from basic parts, is not a modified or genetically engineered organism. It needs to have DNA or genetic code and the life form needs the ability to repair itself and to adapt and evolve.
4. It is used to place the genetic code and keep the DNA and other parts together. It is permeable enough to allow for the absorption of nutrients and relatively impermeable against pathogens.
5. An artificial life is like a natural life form in following ways:
 - A. It has DNA or genetic code;
 - B. It is able to reproduce and pass on its genetic code;
 - C. It has a protective casing or membrane;
 - D. It has the ability to repair itself and to evolve.
6. No, I don't think so. Because some scientists offer the reassurance that by the time

artificial organisms are actually created, more mechanisms would be in place to control them.

7. Compared with creating artificial organisms, it is more likely that dangers lie in the abuse of genetic engineering techniques to modify existing viruses to make them highly contagious or virulent.
8. They produced artificial viruses by synthetically reproducing DNA of known viruses.

III. Multiple Choices

1. C 2. D 3. D 4. A 5. C

[参考译文]

人工生命 10 年之遥？

贾克博·西尔弗曼

1 2007 年 8 月下旬，一篇美联社的文章称，科学家不出 10 年就能培育出人工生命——可能只有三个，这可能吗？科学家在解码人类和动物基因组、合成 DNA 以及克隆技术方面已经取得了巨大的进步。培育具有生理功能的人工生物体似乎还要超出这些能力。但是一些参与培育人工生命的公司和研究人员相信 10 年的构想并非不可能。不仅如此，他们说，湿人工生命（常常这样称呼）研究取得的进展将会极大地影响我们对生物生命以及人类在宇宙中的地位的看法。

2 声称人工生命指日可待可能有点鲁莽。弗兰西斯·柯林斯就是怀疑者之一，这位人类基因组工程的负责人说，10 年的构想太狂妄了。即使如此，人工生命的前景还是富有魅力，我们将在本文中探讨这个课题。

3 湿人工生命不是基因改造或者转基因生物，而是从基础部分创造出生命。但是正如我们在怪异生命的文章中看到的，关于生命的定义，科学家还没有一个严格的标准。即使如此，人工生命应具备什么特征才能称为生命，生物学家的观点基本一致。

4 首先，人工生命要有 DNA 或遗传密码，能够通过繁殖传递遗传密码。其次，这种生命形式需要在某个地方存放其遗传密码，即一个类似细胞壁的保护罩或保护膜，使 DNA 和其他部分不分离。保护罩或保护膜不影响正常生物过程的进行。换句话说，应该具有可渗透性，以允许营养物质的吸收，同时，又要具有相对的不可渗透性，从而把病菌挡在外面。一旦人工生命的基本组成部分不分离，生物体就能自立：应该能吃东西，并且进行食物代谢。最后，生命形式需具有自我修复能力，并且适应环境，可以进化。

5 对研究者来说，要使生物体具有这些特征还有很多困难。但哈佛大学的一位科学家（在美联社的同一篇文章中）预言，到 2007 年初，细胞膜的培育将取得重大进展。即使一些最初的困难得以克服，科学家能够使人工生物体更强壮，但让它们存活几分钟或者几个小时仍是一个挑战。

6 为生成 DNA，一些科学家主张在细胞膜内置入核苷酸（DNA 的基本组件）。核苷酸能以某种方式合成 DNA。这可能会遇到一个挑战：核苷酸的组合需要一些酶，这可能会违背创造人工生命的“基本组成部分”规则。

7 下面，我们来看看人工生命对科学家提出的更多挑战。我们也会考虑这个问题：人工生命形式会不会失控？

对人工生命的关注及技术困难

8 科幻小说或者电影中充满了失控的机器、病毒、人工生物和人工智能生命。有人说这些小说代表了最坏的结果,正如《洛城疑云》这部电影所展现的那样。一些科学家再三向人们保证,人工生命生成之时,控制它们的机制也会更多。

9 我们不要忘记地球上繁杂多样的生物是近 40 亿年进化的结果。即使 10 年时间够用,科学家们在 2017 年也创造不出有毒的植物、肉食动物或者无法阻止的病毒。早期的合成生命形式十分简单,只有少许细胞组成。事实上,更大的危险存在于滥用基因工程技术来改造现有的病毒,从而使它们的传染性更强。

10 对于那些说科学家无权扮演上帝的人,人工生命的倡导者说这种创造表达了人类发展和探索的愿望。研究人工生命或许有助于人们了解生物学中的某些重要进程,而描写人工生命胡作非为的科幻小说可能对这项研究无济于事。

11 关于生命和人工生命的定义尚存争议。因此,我们或许可以看到生物学家过早宣称的成功。什么算成功呢?必须是一个功能正常、结构复杂以及可自我复制的生物体,还是只要是人工培育,能自我复制遗传密码就行了呢?培育生物体的材料到什么程度才算是最基本的呢?弗兰西斯·柯林斯说,如果科学家使用了酶,那就是在“作弊”,因为酶本身就来源于生命形式。

12 一些科学家已经培育出人工病毒,这也许可以代表人工生命的重要的第一步。但他们是通过合成方法培育已知病毒的 DNA 做到的。然后,他们把 DNA 注入到非合成的细胞内。

13 一旦人工生物体培育出来,它将怎样生存(生存多久)呢?柯林斯认为人工生命应该能够生存在基本的环境中,可能是一个简单的没有添加复杂化学物质的糖溶液里。其他人可能说,即使需要许多外部的控制和监控,只要让某种微生物或生物体简单存活,至少就算做成功的开始。

14 一些关于人工生命的最初声明至少会受到严格的审视。在今后几年里,关于生命定义的争论(无论是真正的还是人工的)有望继续下去。