

according to NIH 1995 memoir files
was a print of a
two-headed calf 6-25-95

CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
PASADENA

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WILLIAM G. KERCKHOFF LABORATORIES
OF THE BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

August 2, 1951

Department of Genetics
University of Wisconsin
Madison 6, Wisconsin

ATT: J. LEDERBERG

Dear Department of Genetics of the University of Wisconsin:

I was recently delighted to receive from you a rather curious print claiming to depict a "replica of a multifunctional monogenic enzyme." Certain details in the photograph aroused my suspicions, but not wishing to rely entirely on my own judgement I submitted the print to a panel of five eminent investigators, consisting of two geneticists, two biochemists, and the local milkman, all members of the National Academy. These experts have confirmed my opinion that the depicted object does not, unfortunately, represent a multifunctional monogenic enzyme. It is their unanimous conclusion that the object is, in fact, a representation of a species of common contaminants of Neurospora cultures, called hell-forms.

The following are typical comments of the committee:

- Dr. C. L. B., Prof. of Genetics: "These objects were first described by J. Gredlbeer in a brief note entitled 'Das Neuntesporephaenomen in Ascomyceten,' published in Godey's Ladies' Book, volume seventeen, pages 13 to 473 inclusive. Gredlbeer thought they were a ninth ascospore, and on this basis constructed an elaborate theory called 'Triplomeiosis.' Perfectly ludicrous."
- Dr. C. O., Prof. of Genetics, Emeritus: "It is entirely a problem of semantics. If one wishes to refer to hell-forms as multifunctional monogenic enzymes one has a perfect right to do so as long as the meaning is clear. The question is, what does one mean by a multifunctional monogenic enzyme?"
- Dr. D. P. N., Prof. of Biochemistry: "What's Horowitz done to get First Prize?"
- Dr. D. N. P., Prof. of Biochemistry: "One of my graduate students, Mr. J. Dregleber, has been working on hell-forms since 1922. He has found that they are phototropic and prototrophic, hence phototropoprototrophic."
- Mr. W. O'K., J. & J. Milk Company, Pasadena: "Ever since they started artificial insemination Wisconsin's been full of them things. Found one in the bottom of a beer glass in Milwaukee three years ago. I'd just been graduated cum laude from the milkin' school at the University, and I thought it was a multifunctional monogenic enzyme, too. But when it started mooing I knew I was wrong. It's a hell-form, all right."

Sincerely yours,

N. Horowitz, P. d. M.

N. Horowitz (Prix de Madison, 1951)