

Brief and SCARY Communication

Evidence that *Cucurbita maxima* (the Common Pumpkin) Possesses the Essence of Life

Wendy Chao^{1,2,3,4}, Alexander Scott^{1,2}, and the D'Amore Laboratory^{3,4}

Received for the pumpkin carving contest October 30, 2003, and awarded Most Scientific and Scariest Pumpkin, October 31, 2003.

ABSTRACT The structure of the human frame, and indeed, any animal endowed with life, has long been the focus of scientific research. Whence does the principle of life proceed? To examine the causes of life, one must first have recourse to death (Frankenstein et al., 1818). However, re-examination of Frankenstein's work suggests that this may not be sufficient; rather, *Cucurbita maxima*, or the common pumpkin, actually provided "the essence" of life to his lifeless creature. We find evidence that the "life" produced by Frankenstein et al. was an artifact of pumpkin seed contamination. Furthermore, re-examination of Frankenstein's early data reveals images of pumpkins coinciding with those of his Monster. Interestingly, Frankenstein's early studies were published in obscure journals under the pseudonyms "Pumpkenstein" and "Pumpkenstein." Finally, using the methods described in (Frankenstein et al. 1818) and a freshly harvested pumpkin, we show that *Cucurbita maxima* possesses a detectable "life force" similar to that of a living human.



FIGURE 1. Evidence of pumpkin seed contamination in the Frankenstein laboratory (A) Pumpkin seeds found scattered over laboratory benches. Frankenstein had a history of laboratory safety violations. (B) Bags of pumpkin seeds found in laboratory biohazard bins

¹These authors contributed equal and opposite forces to this work

²Alexander Scott Design, Boston, Massachusetts 02115

³Schepens Eye Research Institute, Boston MA 02114

⁴Harvard Medical School, Boston, Massachusetts 02115

Address correspondence to:

Wendy Chao

Department of Pathology, Harvard Medical School

Schepens Eye Research Institute

20 Staniford Street

Boston, MA 02114 USA

Phone: (617) 912-2557

Fax: (617) 912-0128

E-Mail: wendychao@post.harvard.edu.



FIGURE 2. Images from previous work* by Frankenstein, showing the presence of pumpkins in images of The Monster. (A-C) Pumpkins colocalize with images of Frankenstein's Monster. (D) An unmistakable outline of a pumpkin appears in this phase-contrast image of The Monster. *Images used with permission from Nature Pumpkin, Pumpkin Cell, and Pumpkin Science.

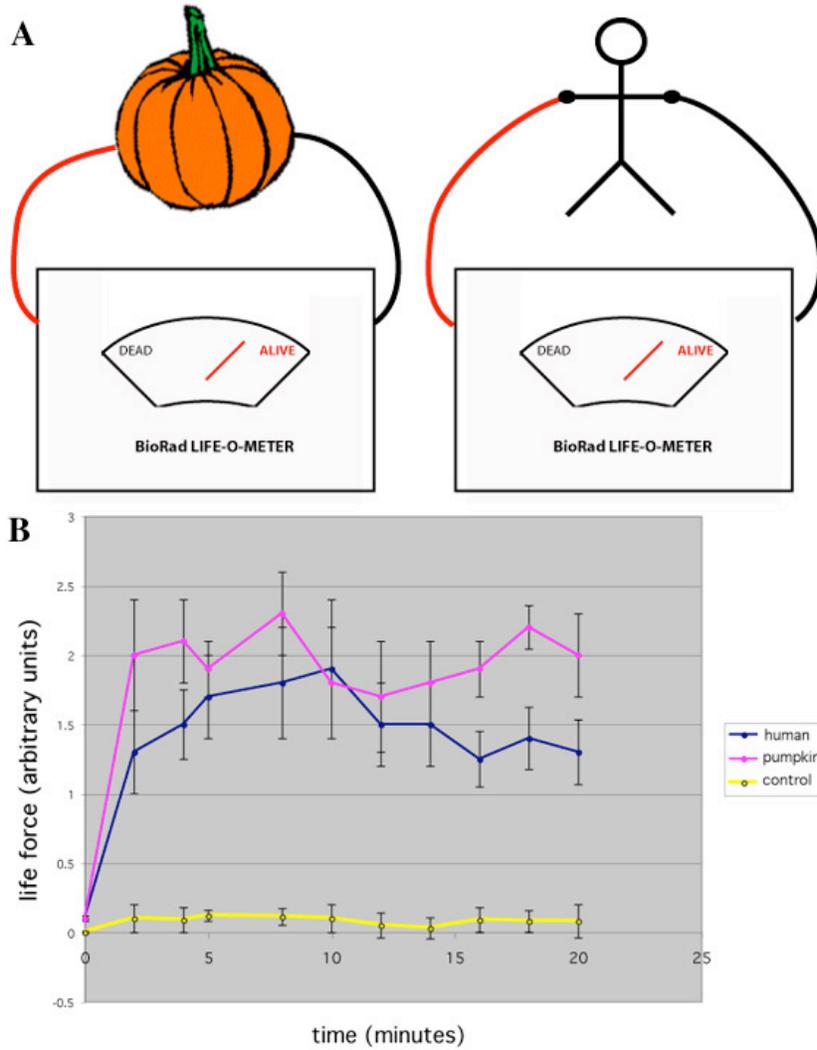


Figure 3. Detection of “Life Force” within pumpkins (A) Schematic diagram of Life Force Detection Apparatus (B) The amount of “Life force” over time of treated pumpkins (pink) compared with living humans (blue) and a no-pumpkin control (yellow). Mean \pm SEM, $p < 0.0000001$.

CONCLUSION

IT'S ALIVE!!!!!!