Russian Space Science Limps On
Western Agencies Bend the Rules

Skeptics Pour Cold Water on
Russian 'Fire Sale'
In Space Technology, Small May Be
Beautiful

Ex-Soviet Aid: Societies Try the Direct
Approach

New Results Yield No Culprit for Missing
Solar Neutrinos

Molecular 'Surgery' for Brain Tumors

How the Brain ‘Sees’ Borders Where
There Are None

An About-Face for Modern Human
Origins

A First in Cell Transplantation:
Researchers Organize, Meet

1516
Anthropoid origins

RESEARCH NEWS
1517
A New Take on Anthropoid Origins

The Quest for a Theory of Everything
Hits Some Snags

1522
Cell transplantation

1518

DEPARTMENTS

THIS WEEK IN SCIENCE
1495
EDITORIAL
1497
Congressional Pork Versus Peer Review
R. S. Nicholson

LETTERS
1502
AIDS Origin: G. Myers • Museum Collections:
Why Are They There?: F. R. Schram • Mammalian
Diversity in South America: R. T. Chesser and
S. J. Hackett; M. A. Mares

SCIENCESCOPE
1507
Energy research budgets in the deep freeze, Colum-
bus project's help from the New World, etc.

1514
RANDOM SAMPLES
Canada Joins Genome Project • Zoologist Indicted
• Zeroing in on a Black Hole • Remember Tianamen
• Making Converts for Condoms • Salvage Operation
for Russian Biology, etc.

1574
BOOK REVIEWS
Egg Incubation, reviewed by B. Sinervo • Sodium
Hunger, M. I. Phillips • The Ecology of Areas with
Serpentinitized Rocks, A. J. M. Baker • Direct Methods
of Solving Crystal Structures, D. A. Langs • Books
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1518

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Schematic of the unimolecular dissociation of ketene (CH₂=O), in which stepwise increases of the dissociation rate are seen as the total energy increases through transition-state vibrational thresholds (white lines). Highly vibrationally excited ketene moves to the transition state of the reaction by localizing energy in the C–C bond (blue). Once at the transition state at the peak of the potential energy surface (yellow), CH₂ and CO repel each other, converting potential energy into translational and rotational energy of the fragments. See page 1541 and the Perspective on page 1523. [Illustration: Tim Robinson, University of California, Berkeley]
Editor's Summary

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