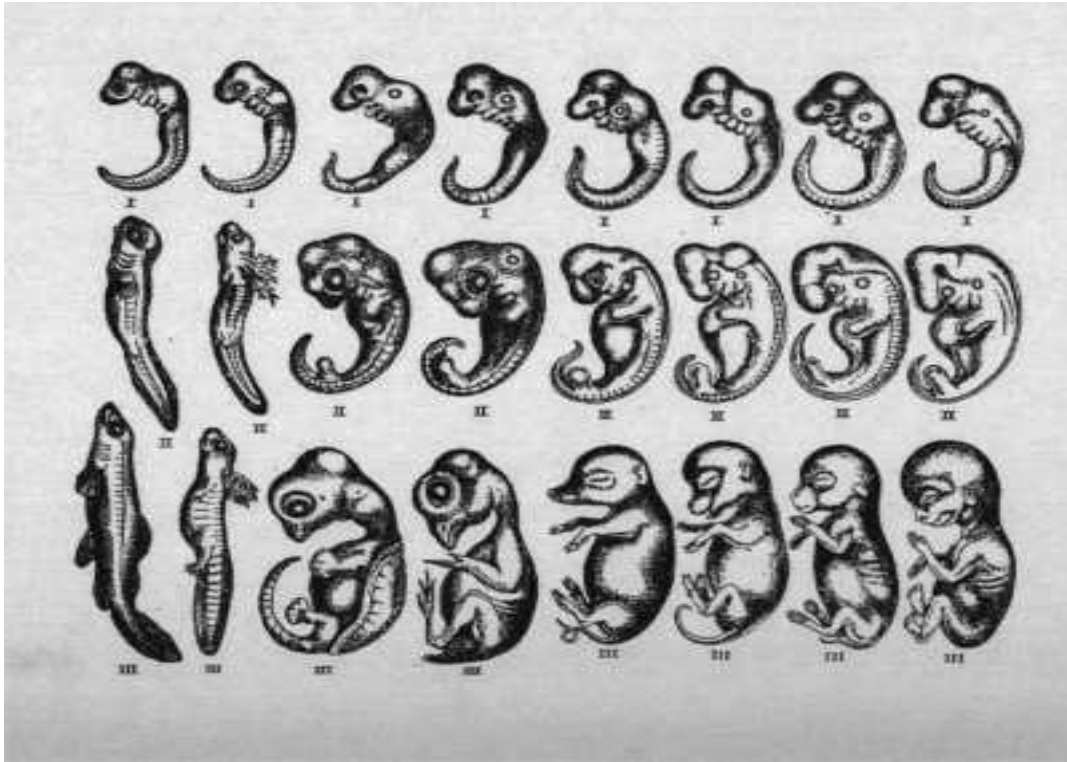


Written by Jonathan Wells

Friday, 13 January 2012 11:00 - Last Updated Tuesday, 31 January 2012 11:48



"This is one of the worst cases of scientific fraud, its shocking to find that somebody once thought to be a great scientist was deliberately misleading... What he did was to take a human embryo and copy it, pretending that the salamander, the pig and all the others looked the same at the same stage of development, they do not, these are fakes."
British embryologist Michael K Richardson.

If you had asked, during my years studying science at Berkeley, whether i believed what i read

in my science text books, i would have responded much the same as my fellow students, puzzled that such a question would be asked in the first place. One might find simple typing errors of course, misprints, ect, and science is always discovering new things. However, i took it as a given that the text books represented the best science available at that time.

It was only when finishing my PHD in cell and development biology, i noticed what seemed to be a strange anomaly, the text book i was using featured drawings of vertebrae embryos - fish, chickens, humans, ect, whose similarities were being presented as evidence that we all descended from a common ancestor. Although the drawings did indeed appear similar, i had been studying embryos for some time, looking at them under the microscope, and i knew these drawings were just plain wrong. Looking through all my other text books i found they all had the same drawings. Not only did they distort the embryos they pictured, they omitted earlier stages in the embryos development where they looked very different from one another. Like most science students, like most scientists themselves, i let it pass.

In 1997 however, my interest in the embryo drawings were revived when British embryologist Michael Richardson and his colleagues, published the results of their study, comparing the drawings found in the textbooks, with the actual embryos themselves. In the prestigious "Science" journal, Richardson was quoted as saying "It looks like its turning out to be one of the most famous fakes in biology". Worse, this was no recent fraud, nor was its discovery recent.

The embryo drawings which appear in most high school and college textbooks are either reproductions of, or based on a famous series of drawings by the 19th century German biologist and fervent Darwin supporter Ernst Haeckel. For over one hundred years they have been known to be forgeries by the scholars of Darwinian and evolutionary biology.

Darwin himself, thought that by far the strongest evidence in favour of his theory came from embryology. Darwin, however, was not an embryologist, he relied on the work of German embryologist Ernst Haeckel. Haeckel produced drawings from various classes of vertebrates, to show they are virtually identical in their earliest stages, becoming noticeably different only during their development stages. It was this which Darwin found so convincing.

However, biologists have known for over a century that vertebrate embryos never look as similar as Haeckel drew them. 1. In some cases Haeckel used the same woodcut to print embryos that were supposedly from different classes of embryos. 2. In others he doctored the drawings to make the embryos appear more alike than they really was. Yet in spite of this, Haeckels drawings can still be found in most of todays current biology textbooks.

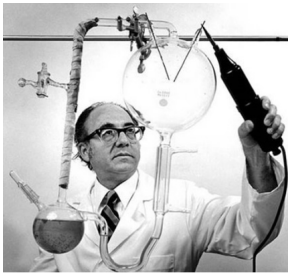
"We have the right to be astonished and ashamed by the century of mindless recycling which has led to the persistence of these drawings in a large number, if not a majority of modern textbooks." Stephen Jay Gould. Paleontologist, evolutionary biologist, and historian of science.

"To support his case, Haeckel began to fake his evidence. Charged with fraud by five professors, and convicted by a university court, he agreed that a small percentage of his drawings were forgeries, he was merely filling in and reconstructing the missing links when the evidence was thin. He also claimed that hundreds of the best observers and biologists lie under the same charge." (Michael Pitman - Adam and evolution).

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"It is only by semantic tricks and subjective selection of evidence, bending the facts of nature, that one can argue that the early stages of vertabraes are more alike than their adults." Embryologist William Ballard.



Anyone old enough in 1953 to understand the import of the news, remembers how shocking, and to many, exhilarating, it was, scientists Stanley Miller and Harold Urey had succeeded in creating the "building blocks" of life in a flask. Mimicking what was believed to be the early natural conditions of planet earth, and then sending an electric spark through it, Miller and Urey had formed simple amino acids. As amino acids are the building blocks of life, it was thought only a matter of time before scientists could themselves create living organisms.

At the time, it appeared a dramatic confirmation of evolutionary theory. Life was not a miracle, no outside agency of divine intelligence was necessary, put the right gasses together, add electricity, and hey presto - LIFE. There were problems however. Scientists were never able to go beyond the simplest amino acids in their simulated primordial environment, and the creation of proteins began to seem not a small step, or a couple of steps, but a great, perhaps impassable, divide.

The telling blow to the life in a bottle experiment, came in the 1970s, when scientists began to conclude that the early atmosphere was nothing like the mixture of gasses used by Miller and Urey. Instead of being what scientists call a "reducing" or hydrogen rich environment, the earth's early atmosphere probably consisted of gasses released by volcanos. Today there is a near consensus among geochemists on this point, but put those volcanic gasses in the Miller - Urey bottle of life, and the experiment does not work, in other words no building blocks of life.

However, just like the faked embryos of Ernst Haeckel, the college textbooks continue to present this as evidence that scientists have demonstrated an important first step in the origin of life, whereas quite the opposite is true, they have no idea, nor can they demonstrate, how life came about.

"Amino acids are old hat and are a million miles from life," "Even if you can make amino acids (and nucleic acids) under soup conditions, it has little if any bearing on the origin of life." Nick Lane - Biochemist and renowned science writer.

"Many scientists now suspect that the early atmosphere was different to what Miller first supposed. They think it consisted of carbon dioxide and nitrogen rather than hydrogen, methane, and ammonia. That's bad news for chemists. When they try sparking carbon dioxide and nitrogen, they get a paltry amount of organic molecules - the equivalent of dissolving a drop of food colouring in a swimming pool of water. Scientists find it hard to imagine life emerging from such a diluted soup". - The National Geographic.

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All of us who study the origin of life find that the more we look into it, the more we feel it is too complex to have evolved anywhere. We all believe as an article of faith that life evolved from dead matter on this planet. It is just that its complexity is so great, it is hard for us to imagine that it did. - Harold Urey.

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