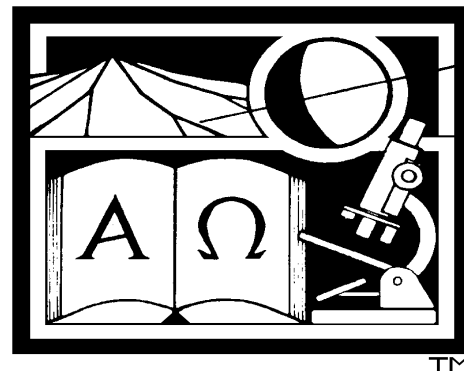


Origins Insights

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October 2002

It All Depends on How You Look at It

by Bob Harsh

Jonathan Wells' book, *Icons of Evolution* continues to rattle the cages of evolutionists. Several of the *Origins Insights* articles this year have been reports of Wells' book. For at least a year now, the use of an internet search engine for "Wells + Icons + evolution" has revealed that *Icons of Evolution* and Jonathan Wells are fairly controversial.

The way evolutionists have handled the "Icons Problem" is very enlightening. Science, by its very nature needs to be self-correcting. If science is our means of "finding out the truth about nature", then hypotheses and theories need to be tentative. **If new discoveries prove a particular understanding of nature to be inaccurate then it is not legitimate to ignore the new information.** If we can demonstrate that something is true, it is not rational to ignore the truth and champion what we believe to be false.

In *Icons of Evolution*, Wells discussed ten major ideas of evolution that are false representations of nature. Each of the ten errors have been taught, and continue to be taught as scientific fact, to students from elementary school through graduate school! Wells, of course, reports his concern for this situation. **Wells' controversy**

stems however, from his expressions of outrage that the scientific establishment has promoted the continued teaching of this misinformation to students. Wells believes that science and science education should promote the self-correcting nature that science claims as a basic tenet.

Some of the "Icons" are controversial among scientists and should not be taught as the unanimous opinion of "science". Darwin's **"Tree of Life" and the "Apes to Man" icons** are a couple of examples. Wells asserts that students should be exposed to the various views on the topic. He **opposes the teaching as scientific dogma, ideas that are still controversial among**

scientists.

Several of the "Icons" are the result of **fraud and deceit**. Most prominent is **Haeckel's "Recapitulation Law"**; "Ontogeny Recapitulates Phylogeny". It is now very clear that Ernst Haeckel got away with a deliberate misrepresentation of comparative vertebrate embryology. The outcry of competent scientists who were contemporaries of Haeckel was drowned out by the evolutionists who saw the "recapitulation law" as positive evidence for their worldview of nature, **EVOLUTION**".

That brings me to the other source of error; incompetent research, and by extension, the incompetence of scientists who should **not have**

MEETING INFORMATION

TOPIC: The Ultimate Icon of Evolutionism From Apes to Man

PRESENTER: Bob Harsh

Exactly how much evidence is there that man evolved from ape-like creatures? Bob Harsh will present a program that should be attended by anyone who is interested in learning about Evolutionists most important Icon. Why is it important for Christians to understand the scientific evidence for the evolution of man? Does your belief about the origin of man have any effect on your worldview? Join us and bring a friend, especially if they are not yet a Creationist!

DATE: Tuesday, October 15, 2002

TIME: 7:30 PM

PLACE: Mars Alliance Church, 997 Route 228, Mars, PA, 16046
Church Phone: (724)776-9400

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allowed poor scientific methods to be the basis of THE MAJOR EVIDENCE FOR THE MAJOR FOUNDATIONAL IDEA OF EVOLUTION; NATURAL SELECTION.

Charles Darwin wrote, *On the Origin of Species By Means of Natural Selection in 1859.* That book changed the worldview of millions of people.

The theme of the book is that all of the modern species of organisms evolved through the ages from distant ancestors that were different species altogether.

Species exist as they are in nature in the same way that the varieties of farm animals exist after centuries of on purpose selection. There is a selection for good traits and against poor traits. But Darwin had no observable evidence!

Darwin relied on a couple of "imaginary illustrations".

According to British scientists in the late 19th Century, only one version of Peppered Moth, *Biston betularia*, existed before the mid-19th century; a white variety, peppered with black spots.

During the Industrial Revolution its numbers declined because it became easy prey for birds as it rested on the pollution blackened trunks of trees. The claim was made that a mutant, black variety of peppered moth began to thrive. It could blend in while it was at rest on tree trunks. **This was the first popular "empirical evidence" that supported Darwin's theory of natural selection.**

The "fitter" black mutant moth soon outnumbered the white version, reaching 100 percent levels in some industrial areas.

Kettlewell did a study in 1955 in which he observed through binoculars that melanics seemed less

conspicuous than typicals, and that birds took conspicuous moths more readily than inconspicuous ones. Kettlewell also performed a mark and recapture experiment. On the dark tree trunks he recaptured 27.5 percent of the melanics [dark moths], but only 13.0 percent of the typicals [light moths], suggesting that a much higher proportion of melanics had survived predation. He concluded, "birds act as selective agents, as postulated by evolutionary theory," and that industrial melanism was "the most striking evolutionary change ever actually witnessed in any organism." [H.B. D. Kettlewell, "Further selection experiments on industrial melanism in the Lepidoptera," *Heredity*, 10:287-301, 1956]

Industrial melanism in peppered moths quickly became the standard textbook example of natural selection in action.

Hold the phone! Kettlewell did not use the normal resting places of peppered moths. In his experiments, Kettlewell released moths directly onto tree trunks. Most textbook pictures of peppered moths show specimens that have been manually placed on tree trunks. [T.D. Sargent et al., "The 'classical' explanation of industrial melanism: assessing the evidence," *Evolutionary Biology*, 30:299-322, 1998]

"In most predation experiments peppered moths have been positioned on vertical tree trunks, despite the fact that they rarely chose such surfaces to rest upon in the wild." [M.E.N. Majerus, *Melanism: Evolution in Action*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1998]

"The fact that peppered moths do not normally rest on tree trunks invalidates Kettlewell's experiments and poses a serious problem for the classical explanation of industrial melanism. In fact, almost all recent (1998-2000) biology textbooks use photos of peppered moths resting

against alternate backgrounds without any indication that they were staged. As a scientist, I find this absolutely inexcusable. If dogmatic Darwinists were as smart as they pretend to be, they would be actively campaigning -- for their own good! -- to rid textbooks of this fraud." [Jonathan Wells, *Ph.D., Center for the Renewal of Science & Culture, Discovery Institute, Seattle*]

"Since biologists have known since the 1980s that peppered moths do not normally rest on tree trunks, not to tell students that the pictures were staged (in many cases by gluing or pinning dead moths to desired backgrounds) constitutes as clear a case of scientific fraud as any on record. Yet I'm aware of no sincere efforts by Darwinists to inform students of this -- despite their pious declarations of good intentions." [Wells, 2000]

University of Chicago evolutionary biologist, Jerry Coyne studied the peppered moth and Kettlewell's experiments and published his report in the journal, *Nature* [396, 1998]. He wrote that Dr. Kettlewell's widely quoted experiments are essentially useless. "There is a lot of wishful thinking and design flaws in them, and they wouldn't get published today." [Robert Matthews, *Science Correspondent, London Telegraph 14 March 1999; Wells, 2000*]

It seems that the classical example of natural selection is actually an example of unnatural selection. "Yet textbooks continue to present the classical story of industrial melanism in peppered moths as an example of evolution in action. Clearly, this is misleading. In particular, it is misleading to illustrate the story with photographs showing moths on tree trunks where they do not rest in the wild. Our students deserve bet-

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ter." [Jonathan Wells. May. 24, 1999 Second Thoughts about Peppered Moths. *The Scientist* 13]

Why has so little research been done to validate this important icon of evolution?

- **Philosophical agenda first**
- **Scientific understanding second**

A book review that appeared in the September 2002 *Discover* will reveal the true colors of the evolutionism agenda. "Darwin's Dark Secret" was the title of the report and served only as a teaser to get people to read the article. The article by Laurence Marschall does not contain any information about Darwin and certainly reveals no dark secrets about Darwin. The title is unfairly misleading because dark secrets about Darwin are not even hinted at in the article. The report is about Judith Hooper's book, *An Evolutionary Tale of Moths and Men: The Untold Story of Science and the Peppered Moth*. I have not read Hooper's book but I would guess that Marschall wrote the article to do damage control for evolutionism.

Marschall wrote, "Kettlewell's work immediately became *the* [emphasis Marschall] textbook example of evolution. This was a serious matter when re-examinations of that work in the late 1990's began to cast doubt on both his experimental design and his conclusions. The critics noted, for example, that Kettlewell released his moths during the daytime; moths, however, are night fliers, so most of them stayed where he put them, easy prey for the birds. Had they been released at night, they would probably have flown to higher branches of the trees, where no birds-nor, for that matter, biologists- could have seen them."

Let us notice Marschall's "uncritical" description of Kettlewell's poor scientific methods. "Such criticism, mounted by fellow

evolutionists, hinged on technical points, but this didn't stop creationists from gloating in Internet chat rooms about the death of Darwinism." Either Marschall is completely scientifically illiterate or he is an extreme evolutionist who is willing to mislead the impressionable readers.

Kettlewell's research represented the most important evidence for natural selection as a force that shapes the evolution of new species. It should be noted that, even before the general public learned that Kettlewell's research was worthless, many scientists understood that a new species of the peppered moth did not originate. *The* major evidence for the creative powers of natural selection did not create anything! It is interesting that it is now thought that the black variety was the original type and the light colored moths are originated as mutations from the dark variety.

What about Marschall's misleading statement that the objections to Kettlewell's research "hinged on technical points"? Even a high school student would easily recognize the Kettlewell's basic research methods were severely flawed, had the methods been revealed to them. Kettlewell's methods would not receive a failing grade in if they were presented by a high school student because of "technicalities" but because of the flawed design of the experiment! Marschall's goal seems to be to keep Kettlewell's peppered moth experiment as "Evolution's Dark Secret"!

Marschall continued, "In retrospect, though, doing the peppered-moth experiment right would have proved nearly impossible for anyone". I wouldn't mind such a naive statement had it appeared in a paper written by a twelve year old, but this is a statement that appeared in a major article in a popular science magazine.

The only part of Marschall's defense of evolutionism that gives a hint that scientists are beginning to have misgivings about Kettlewell's experiments is as follows: "This is a lively yarn, but Hooper spends too much time on University of Massachusetts biologist Ted Sargent, whose skepticism regarding Kettlewell's work is so extreme that a reader might think the foundations of evolutionary biology were crumbling." In the words of modern teenagers, "Well duh!"

Evolutionary theories cannot be allowed to have a monopoly on permissible interpretations! A step in the right direction is reported in the October 2002 issue of *Citizen* magazine. Mark Hartwig reported that the authors of the newest edition of a popular high school biology textbook by Miller and Levine have dropped the story of the peppered moth as evidence for evolution. Other textbooks are finally also omitting the fraudulent story of Haeckel's embryos. A suburban school district near Atlanta, Georgia has, just this month adopted a policy of placing a disclaimer in their biology books stating the tentative status of the "theory" of evolution.

When evolution starts being taught like the rest of science instead of the dogma of evolutionism we will see a further decline in the influence of neo-Darwinism and punctuated equilibrium.

We are seeing here an example of variation in nature - a characteristic that God has designed to bring robustness to ecosystems and which facilitates the survival of the organisms he has created. Natural selection is a key element of ecological thinking - but only dogma extrapolates its relevance to the realm of origins."

[David J. Tyler, June 1999]

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Robert Walsh . . . ICC Proceedings Ed.

Email Address:

csficc@csfpittsburgh.org
CSF Page: www.csfpittsburgh.org

Editors Address: Robert Harsh
439 Little Creek Road, Harmony,
Pennsylvania, USA 16037
Email: naturbob@juno.com