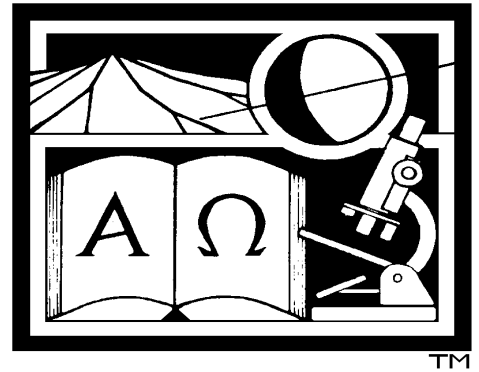


# Origins Insights

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE  
CREATION SCIENCE FELLOWSHIP



March 2002

## ICONS OF EVOLUTION, SCIENCE OR MYTH? #4

by Bob Harsh

Last month we reviewed the first three icons of evolution that Jonathan Wells discussed in his important book published in 2000. I highly recommend Wells' book for your personal library as well as for all school and public libraries. In this article we will be reviewing one more icon. Wells refers to ten concepts of evolution as "icons" because they are the most important examples presented as evidence for the validity of evolution. Each of the "icons" has been shown to be an incorrect descriptions of "real nature". Several icons have proved to be outright frauds. They have lingered beyond their welcome because they are so deeply imbedded into our understanding of biology that they seem to be beyond serious scrutiny. They represent what millions of people believe is proof that evolution is a way of life for living organisms.

**Icon number four is:  
Pictures of similarities in early embryos show that amphibians, reptiles, birds and human beings are all descended from a fish-like animal.**

In 1891 the biologist Ernst Haeckel proposed an idea that grew into one of the most influential arms of evolution. His "biogenetic law" has endured and continues to be perpetuated during the formal education of millions of unsuspecting students. Inspired by the Darwinian principle of descent with modification, many embryologists of the nineteenth century proposed the extreme view that ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny.

This notion holds that ontogeny; the development of an individual organism is a replay of the evolutionary history of the species, phylogeny. "The theory of recapitulation is an overstatement."  
[Campbell. N. 1999. *Biology*.p.425]

**Ernst Haeckel [1834-1919]**

- Well educated in botany, medicine and zoology
- Became professor of zoology at the University of Jena in 1865.
- Became most interested in Charles Darwin's theory of evolution, proposed in 1859.
- Was one of Darwin's most ardent

### MEETING INFORMATION

**TOPIC: MACRO - MICRO: Is it Evolution or Change Within Kinds?**  
**PRESENTER: Amanda Pinkney**

Where is the line between adaptation and evolution? How far can the evidence be stretched? Evolutionists often cite "proof" of evolution that is entirely factual. The problem is that they use these facts to prove macroevolution when they only indicate the presence of microevolution. When these facts are used to extrapolate to larger shifts, they are being stretched beyond their means. This is often a difficult area in which to debate, because this is where the faith of an evolutionist comes into play. They believe that the evidence can be extrapolated because the theory of evolution makes sense to them, and they are willing to trust in it enough to fill in the gaps.

The fact is that organisms do change. They change in minor ways to adapt to their surroundings. However, when all is said and done, a toad is still a toad and a finch is still a finch. It is true that life is capable of adaptation within its kind, but that doesn't mean that organisms are changing into other types.

Note that I don't use the term species. By the current definition of species, organisms can adapt into different species. But a species classification is a man-made system that has been imposed on nature. The difference between two species can be very slight, depending on the classification. It can be based on something as small as a change in color of the organism. But this doesn't necessarily mean that the organism is of a different kind.

**DATE:** Tuesday, March 19, 2002

**TIME:** 7:30 PM

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

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supporters.

- Was the first scientist to draw up a 'family tree' of animal life.

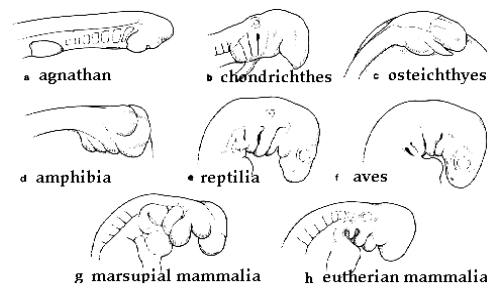
Darwin wrote that all vertebrates are the modified descendants of some ancient progenitor and that the embryonic or larval stages show us, more or less completely, the condition of the progenitor of the whole group in its adult state. [Darwin, 1859, the *Origin of Species* as quoted in Wells, J. 1999. Haeckel's Embryos & Evolution. *American Biology Teacher*. 61:5, May].

**Flash!** Haeckel's drawings misrepresent the embryos they purport to show and Haeckel entirely omitted the earliest stages of development in which the various classes of vertebrates are morphologically very different.

Darwin also deliberately misrepresented the facts of embryology. Darwin believed that embryology provided better support for his theory than did either the fossil record or homology. The most respected expert in embryology during the time of Darwin was von Baer. Although von Baer did not believe that various classes of vertebrates were descended from a common ancestor, Darwin twisted von Baer's observations of embryos around so that it appeared that von Baer was a supporter of Darwin's hypothesis. In reality von Baer rejected Darwin's hypothesis and was a strong critic of Darwinian evolution until his death in 1876.



Bottom row - photos of actual embryos by M. Richardson in 1997



Notice, these drawings indicate that the vertebrates illustrated at the same age of development are not exactly alike. In fact, on closer examination, the lumps, known as pharyngeal pouches, are not the same in number, position, or stage of development. Perhaps these embryological features are difficult to examine and an honest mistake is what took place.

**Here is what they knew in 1894!** "There is no stage of development in which the unaided eye would fail to distinguish between them [vertebrate embryos]... a blind man could distinguish between them." [Sedgewick A. 1894. On the law of development commonly known as von Baer's law: and on the significance of ancestral rudiments in embryonic development. *Q. J. Microsc. Sci.* 36]

A prevalent idea in developmental evolution is that intermediate embryonic stages are resistant to evolutionary change, and that differences among species arise through divergence at later stages of development. As a consequence, all vertebrates are often said to pass through a common stage when they look virtually identical. That conserved stage is called the phylotypic stage because it is thought to be the point in development when there is maximum resemblance among members of a phylum or comparable higher taxon. [Michael Richardson, et al. 1997. *Anatomy and Physiology*]

**Biologists have disputed Haeckel's embryological evidence for over 100 years. Why do biologists teach this misinformation? They have been misled!**

"Haeckel fudged his data. His drawings distort the embryos he selected" [Wells, 1999]. Richardson and his colleagues studied the same embryos and their illustrations do not show any consistent pattern. R. B. Goldschmidt also observed Haeckel's questionable technique as long ago as 1956.

Evolutionists have neglected to honestly report that this is misinformation far too long. It is time for that truth to be told. "The present generation cannot imagine the role he played in his time, far beyond his actual per-

formance... Haeckel's easy hand at drawing made him improve on nature and put more into the illustrations than he saw... one had the impression that he first made a sketch from nature and then drew an ideal picture as he saw it in his mind." [Goldschmidt. 1953. *The Golden Age of Zoology*. University of Washington Press. Seattle as reported in Richardson, 1997]

"From the very first Haeckel's biogenetic law was a theoretical deduction rather than an empirical inference." [Wells, 2000] In 1958 British embryologist, Gavin de Beer published a book on embryology. De Beer wrote: "Recapitulation, the pressing back of adult ancestral stages into early stages of development of descendants, does not take place." [*Embryos and Ancestors*. Oxford: Clarendon Press]

So what? "Recapitulation is a mental strait-jacket that has thwarted and delayed embryological research." [de Beer. 1958]

Recapitulation is, in effect, a par adigm that determines what scientists choose to investigate and governs the way they interpret the results of the research they do. Even Darwin was influenced. Darwin based his inference of common ancestry on the belief that the earliest stages of embryo development are the most similar.

Haeckel, however, deceived most people by omitting the first stages and starting at the middle stages of development when the embryos appear to be more similar.

"It is not necessary to emphasize further these embryonic differences because every embryologist knows that they exist and could bring forward innumerable instances of them. I need only say with regard to them that a species is distinct and distinguishable from its allies from the very earliest stages all through the development. [WRITTEN IN 1884 !!!!!] [Sedwick. 1884. On the Law of Development Commonly Known As Baer's Law. *Quarterly Journal of Microscopical Science*: 36]

Vertebrate embryos vary tremen-

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

dously in size [< 1mm to 10mm]. Haeckel portrayed them as being the same size. Haeckel illustrated the same number of somites in each vertebrate class.

Reality ? 11 to > 60 somites

“Our survey seriously undermines the credibility of Haeckel’s drawings. It looks like it’s turning out to be one of the most famous fakes in history.” [Richardson et. al. 1997. Haeckel’s Embryos: Fraud Rediscovered. *Science*. 277] So, the best support for his theory, according to Darwin, came from embryology. ALSO the most supportive evidence continuing to modern times has been Haeckel’s recapitulation hypothesis.

### Embryological recapitulation based on Haeckel is fraudulent

The empirical evidence from embryology during Darwin’s time and continuing until today has tended to invalidate Darwin’s hypothesis.

All of this revelation has caused evolutionists to reject Haeckel’s recapitulation hypothesis and reject the notion that embryological evidence supports Darwin’s theory, right?

.....  
Think again!

**EVOLUTION SCIENCE**  
The Evidence Must be Made to Fit the Theory

**THE REST OF SCIENCE**  
The Theory Must Be Supported by the Evidence

From the point of view of evolutionism science: The evidence: The first stages of vertebrate embryos don’t resemble each other as much as do the middle stages. The embryos of all classes of vertebrates are easily distinguishable at an embryological stage. **The inference:** Therefore, early stages of developing embryos evolve much easier than we thought while middle stages must be prevented from evolving. [See Wray. 1995. Punctuated Equilibrium of Embryos. *Science* 267 and Raff. 1996*The Shape of Life*]

“Whatever the merit of such proposals may be, it is clear that they start by assuming Darwinian evolution, then read back into the embryological evidence. It doesn’t matter how much the embryological evidence conflicts with evolutionary theory - the theory, it seems, must not be questioned.” [Wells. 2000]

Despite repeated proofs of poor science, why won’t Haeckel’s biogenetic law and the faked drawings simply go away? Too many modern textbooks still include Haeckel’s fraudulent drawings. Other texts employ Haeckel’s old trick of choosing representatives of two vertebrate classes that look very similar at a particular stage of development. They then imply that the embryos of all vertebrates at all stages of development are equally similar.

### Don’t textbook authors know any better?

It was not until February 2000 that textbook-writer, Douglas Futuyma acknowledged that he was aware of any discrepancies between Haeckel’s drawings and actual vertebrate embryos. In March 2000 Stephen Jay Gould admitted that he had known about the discrepancies between Haeckel’s drawings and actual vertebrate embryos for over 20 years but had not shared that knowledge with anyone.

**Ignorance and Dishonesty Have Kept Haeckel’s Fraud Alive!**

**Long live the Icon!!!  
Ontology is a recapitulation of phylogeny!**

**AIG CD for computer available for all members and friends of CSF.**

CSF is making available a great resource to answer the NOVA propaganda of its “Evolution Series” that aired in September of 2001 and will be distributed to schools nationwide for use by them in indoctrinating their students in the “fact of evolution”. This is a great resource to give to students, teachers, libraries etc. It includes 350

pages of creation information including responses by Dr. Jonathan Sarfati to each of the seven “Evolution” programs. It also contains 40 minutes of video content, including the complete video, “From Frog to a Prince”. The complete book “Refuting Evolution” by Dr. Jonathan Sarfati in PDF format and 13 audio interviews and messages (totaling over 3 hours) by creation scientists and speakers. All of this for \$2.00 each for members or \$5.00 each for non members. Shipping is \$2.00 for first disc and additional \$0.50 for each additional disc in a single shipment. Or, you can obtain them at the CSF monthly meeting and pay no shipping charges, another reason to attend :).

### WINTER WEATHER SCHEDULE CHANGES:

If the monthly meeting will be cancelled due to any weather related problem—or if you have a question if it will still go on as scheduled, please call the CSF phone number at **412-341-4908** after 12 noon on the day of the meeting date and there will be a message indicating any cancellation or confirmation of the meeting scheduled.

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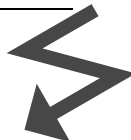
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**MEETING TOPICS  
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"I WANT TO KNOW":  
MEMBER Q&A -  
DENNIS WERT et. Al



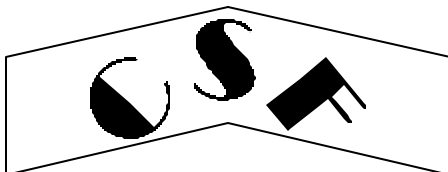
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OR TO THE ADDRESS  
ABOVE FOR THE  
"I WANT TO KNOW"  
MEETING, \*WHICH IS FOR  
NEXT MONTH!***

**MAY 21, 2002**

Irreducible Complexity:  
Case in Point:  
How Bacteria Get Around:  
The Flagella -  
Bob Harsh

**JUNE 18, 2002**

The State of the Creation Model:  
Where are we? -  
Bob Walsh



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