

## **Evolution, Part 2**

### **Ontogyny, Please Recapitulate Phylogyny!**

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When I graduated from college as a science major I was what's termed a *theistic evolutionist*. I believed God created everything, but, based on what I had been told, that He chose the mechanism of evolution to create the kind of body he wanted humans to have, at which point He "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life." This belief violates several prominent Biblical teachings, and has far-reaching implications on the age of the earth, the origin of sin, and the curse that sin brought.

I didn't realize then that I had bought into a destructive philosophy that was turning many away from the Bible and, ultimately, from God Himself. The things I had bought into were presented as fact. It was a few years later that I realized the error of much of modern teaching as it relates to evolution, and that the most compelling arguments for evolution were fraudulent. The single biggest influence in my awakening was Duane Gish's book *The Fossils say No*. I had been led to believe that the evidence for evolution was in the fossil record. Eventually I discovered that this was mostly wishful thinking on the part of evolutionists. The fossil record, as anyone can easily discover, fairly cries out that there was once a global flood that buried millions of plants and animals all over the earth.

**Missing fossils** – Charles Darwin fully expected that, after sufficient effort had been expended, the fossil record would confirm his evolutionary theory. It was anticipated that, for example, the fish-to-amphibian-to-reptile progression would be represented in the fossil record by forms intermediate between these groups. He wrote, in 1859 "...why, if species have descended from other species by insensibly fine gradations, do we not everywhere see innumerable transitional forms?" (Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species*). Many fossils from each distinct group have been catalogued, but almost one hundred and fifty years later we are still looking for intermediate forms. The so-called evolutionary series of horses and birds and whales exist only in books and the imaginations of devout Darwinists .

**Human embryos** – One of the most compelling arguments for evolution for me was the so-called Recapitulation Theory, also called the Biogenetics Law, put forth by German Scientist Ernst Haeckel, an early scientific convert to Darwinism, in 1866. This theory states that Ontogyny (embryonic development) recapitulates (repeats) Phylogyny (evolutionary development). Haeckel's famous drawings showed embryos of animals from salamanders and fish to pigs and even man, and all were remarkably similar. And there, plainly visible in all embryos, were *gill slits*. I remember once in an informal debate with a colleague, I was asked "If mammals didn't evolve from fish, why do human embryos still have gill slits?" I didn't have an answer.

Now I do. First of all, human embryos don't have gill slits; the structures are now known as pharyngeal arches. And no informed evolutionist today adheres to the recapitulation theory. In fact, three scientists who were contemporaries of Haeckel attacked the theory in the late 1800's.

It is a sad indictment on the state of modern Science education that Dr. Haeckel's drawings have survived in science texts for over 100 years. I have in my possession several high school and college biology textbooks from major publishers that contain the drawings or derivatives of it. They date from 1941 to well up into the 1990's. Texts such as *Gray's Anatomy* and the medical school text *Developmental Biology* contained the drawings up until recently. And I found them in the 2002 edition of *Scientific American* (Vol. 10, p 742). It is equally remarkable that it has been only recently that the flawed drawings have been exposed in the popular press and in major scientific journals.

**Dishonest** – In the August 11, 1997 issue of *The Times* (London) an article appeared that was entitled *An embryonic liar*, in which Nigel Hawkes was quoted as saying the “Fundamental research on embryos has been exposed as false, affecting evolutionary studies.” The article cited research by Dr. Michael Richardson, a lecturer at St. George’s Hospital Medical School in London. Dr. Richardson assembled an international team to collect and study embryos from widely varying species and geographic origins. Dr. Richardson published the findings in the August, 1997 issue of *Anatomy and Embryology*. Contrary to Haeckel’s claims, he found that the embryos were, in fact, different. The Times further quotes Richardson: “These are fakes. In the paper we call them ‘misleading and inaccurate’ but that is just polite scientific language.”

**Fraudulent** – Dr. Richardson, an evolutionist, was nevertheless insistent on exposing the fraudulent nature of the embryo drawings that had been used unquestioningly for the past century. To this end he and his colleagues submitted three letters to two publications that are arguably the world’s most prestigious scientific journals: *Science* (280, 15 May 1998; 281, 28 August 1998) and *Nature* (410, 8 March 2001) exposing the fraud.

In the 28 August edition of *Science* they state that “Haeckel’s drawings of 1874 are substantially fabricated. In support of this view, I note that his oldest ‘fish’ image is made up of bits and pieces from different animals – some of them mythical.” They state that later editions of Haeckel’s drawings were “somewhat more accurate”, but conclude that “Sadly, it is the discredited 1874 drawings that are used in so many British and American biology textbooks today.”

A staunch evolutionist, Dr. Richardson believed that other evidence was sufficient to support evolution. And he was concerned that his findings had inadvertently “helped perpetuate a Creationist myth...” Many Creationists, on the other hand, would be happy if evolution was honestly taught in the public schools as a theory. We would be most happy to see the lies and deception removed from textbooks. The young lady who assisted the writer in locating reference material for this article remarked as she saw the embryo pictures in *The Times* article that she “remembered the pictures from her high school biology class”, and “those gill things that we all still have as embryos.” She seemed interested and surprised to learn that the basis for the similarities was fabricated.

From all accounts Dr. Haeckel was so committed to persuading others about evolution that he engaged in deception. The fact that the recapitulation theory and Haeckel’s drawings were not abandoned a long time ago is a testimony to the blind commitment to this naturalistic theory that excludes God. Please don’t misunderstand me; in selecting this example of evolution evidence presented in biology textbooks I am not saying that this alone proves that evolution is false. I believe that the majority of scientific evidence (not theories) fits the Biblical Creation model much better than the evolution / millions of years model. But when false data and faked drawings have been used in biology textbooks for well over 100 years to convince students of evolution, one must begin to question if the motives are purely the truth-seeking that Science is supposed to be all about.

For more information on the evolution/creation issue I recommend [www.answersingenesis.org](http://www.answersingenesis.org).