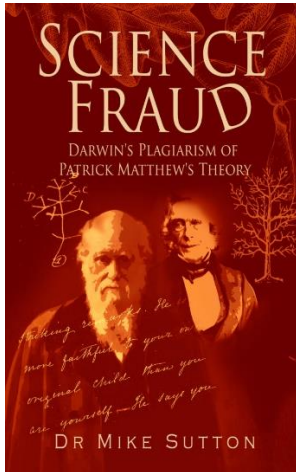


Science Fraud: Darwin's Plagiarism of Patrick Matthew's Theory by Mike Sutton (Published by Curtis Press 2022)

Book Review by Gregory Saville.



Science Fraud: Darwin's Plagiarism of Patrick Matthew's Theory (Curtis Press, June, 2022) uncovers one of the greatest intellectual frauds in science history. Clearly, that is not a trivial claim. But if you take the time to carefully read Dr. Michael Sutton's book, you will discover a marvel in historic forensics, a term I suspect he would not apply to himself. But having read and produced forensic reports, I assure you Sutton's book on Darwin's fraud is as thorough and historically detailed as you will find in any forensic science examination. Science Fraud reads like a murder mystery with fact-after-fact layered coherently into the logical conclusion that Charles Darwin (along with his collaborator Alfred Wallace) – the very same Giant-of-Science Darwin so revered in many academic institutions, my former hero, the founder of the theory of evolution – was not the founder of the theory of evolution and natural selection. According to Sutton, he stole the idea from Patrick Matthew!

The murder in this mystery is the death of truth. The question it asks: Who actually developed the theory of evolution? Sutton clearly shows that Darwin did not. Patrick Matthew did in his 1831 publication *On Naval Timber and Arboriculture* (NTA), 8 years before Darwin wrote *The Voyage of the Beagle* and a full 28 years before *On the Origin of Species*.

Dr. Sutton is a retired Reader In Criminology from Nottingham Trent University (Nottingham, England), a criminologist, and a historian of science, at least the scientific theory of evolution as it relates to Darwin. He is an interesting fellow for a number of reasons, not the least of which is his staunch conviction that scientific thinkers owe allegiance to clear thinking, honesty, and the weight of evidence – not to innuendo, ideology, and inaccuracy. That means they also owe an oath of fealty to telling scientific history truthfully. Having been the victim of intellectual property theft in my crime prevention work, I have great sympathy for this view.

For these convictions, Sutton was lambasted and attacked by other scholars, some of whom wrote to his university Vice-Chancellor looking for his censure. Astonishingly, one had the gall to claim that “fairness to one’s graduate students, fellow team members, and even distant colleagues is relevant to the ongoing process of science. Fairness to scientists who have been dead is not.” (Sutton, page 86). In other words, if I claimed as my own the phrase “Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country,” I need not mention President Kennedy’s provenance of that famous quote since his assassination is now over a half-century old.

The pro-Darwinists, buttressed no less by the statue of Darwin at the entrance to the British Natural History Museum, are outraged at Sutton’s evidence. After all, statues are difficult things to take down, as we have seen of late in America where statues of pro-slavery Confederacy heroes are defended as the heritage of history. These are the kind of absurdities levied on Sutton from the pro-Darwin crowd in response to the claims in *Science Fraud*. Full disclosure: I would once comfortably call myself a pro-Darwinist. No longer!

Along the path to truth, Sutton capitalized on Google’s library of 45 million digital publications with a data analysis tool he developed called the Internet Date Detection method. That method allowed him to siphon through thousands of books, journals, and letters covering both contemporary writing and also the Victorian era scientific culture, steeped as it was in class-based rules and fear of religious heresy. For some contemporary pro-Darwinists, it is difficult to understand why Charles Darwin would hide the fact that he lifted the main tenets of the process of natural selection from a minor publication about trees decades earlier. It is almost impossible to imagine why Darwin would downplay Matthew’s claims of plagiarism. At one point Darwin himself defended his writing by claiming that few read Matthew’s work, therefore no plagiarism took place – a claim thoroughly demolished by Sutton’s evidence in Chapter 3.

Are there flaws in *Science Fraud*? As with all detailed forensic analyses, the writing style is rather dense at times. This reader, at least, prefers a scaled-back writing style a bit more accessible to a popular audience. Yet, I admit to an impudent smirk as I read Sutton’s description of Darwin as an “apex plagiarist ... He mastered the use of Victorian rhetorical smog to conceal the true originator [of evolutionary theory]” (page 98). Also, the book could use a table of contents, rather than a summary of the book in Chapter 1. Admittedly, those are minor quibbles that in no way detract from the monstrosity of intellectual theft uncovered by Sutton.

A more consequential critique, at least for an American audience, is the title – *Science Fraud*. In a country where a substantial portion of the population has poor science literacy, does not believe in evolution, and where a quarter of the population believes astrology as fact, a cursory reading of the title might suggest that science itself is a fraud. Or worse, that the book proves evolutionary theory is wrong. Of course, that is absurd since Sutton’s book suggests no such thing. In fact, the power of evolutionary theory in modern science is reinforced by a truthful telling of who developed it, not the other way around. From that perspective, the pro-Darwinists should give their head a serious shake, look at the data (as all good scientists should), and place a statue of Matthew on the steps of the British Natural History Museum. That is something I’ll bet Sutton would like to see. I know I would.

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