

Mansfelde



Office of Dr. French & Mansfelde  
Lincoln Nebraska

Jan<sup>y</sup> 17<sup>th</sup> 1876.

To Dr. Charles Darwin  
England

Dear Sir

My apology for addressing you, will be found in the humble belief, that I may be the fool in the hands of progressive science, to further its objects the unravelling of its apparent mysteries, and further, in my faith, which sees in you the master worker, well trained to handle tools, though crude in design, effectively. You are aware of the high interest which two questions have and do yet claim from all enquirers. Namely. What is it that produces the box of the embryo? and secondly. What is the cause of one of the propagation peculiarities, called sterility.

Neither of the questions, though speculation had its day with them to satisfaction, has as yet been settled; nay, the fruit of all honest enquiry, has not even attained the dignity of a theory. Hypotheses of the most imaginary kind are the offspring of all labour expended upon them.

I will not tire you with a recapitulation. You certainly are better acquainted with the history of these subjects, than the Doctor away back in the Prairies of beautiful Nebraska.

You are familiar with the attempt made by Ernest Haeckel of Germany in his *Natural History of Man* of erecting a pedigree for Man reaching to the beginning.

of time, in which all animals from the Monera to the Anthropoid have their place, you are also acquainted, with the stress he lays upon the similarity of the human Embryo with certain series of the Animal world.

Yet he, as well as all physiologists and Embryologists commits the error of admitting only a similarity when an identity exists; They handle the human being before his birth as the passive thing, laying all activity on this side of his nativity, an error, which has placed man far beyond his actual position in the universe; I take liberty to reverse this subject. And the Consequences (1<sup>st</sup>) I do not view the Spermatozoon as organized protoplasm, without the living attributes of the same; but I permit it to enjoy all the privileges of such organization. It does not resemble the Monera of Haeckel, but it is a Monera with all its characteristics of life and reproduction, nay even Capacities for perfection.

(2<sup>nd</sup>) The Oovum, while lodged in the Graafian follicle is an Amœba, not resembling it, as Dr. Haeckel has it; and this structure is not a Creation of the female Organ, but the higher developed organized protoplasm, a Monera changed into an Amœba; the Monera Spermatozoon, transformed into the Amœba-Oovum. This transformation takes place precisely under the same natural laws within the Ovary, as does the change of the Monera into an Amœba at large

(3<sup>rd</sup>) The Ovary is therefore not the organ in which the Oovum is formed, but simply the abode of the organized protoplasm, the Monera Spermatozoon, in which it passes from its Larva into its Pupa state, thence to follow up the processes of Metamorphosis from the Embryonit-infusorium to the perfect human form.

(4<sup>th</sup>) In the ovary, as well as Uterus, the Oovum owes nothing of its structural development to the Mother but the preparation and transmission of food, and if the offspring

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takes upon itself any of the Characters of the Mother, they are derived from the impressions, which the Transmissions of Nutrition may produce, together with certain Characteristics derived from the offspring's grandfather, the Mother's Father by true Alarism

5. The Ovary, after it has broken its prison walls or being opened for it, I do not know which, it is to all purposes a true infusorium, globular in form, with a mouth, surrounded by cilia, the Micropyle and which has certainly been demonstrated to exist in insects and fishes, and the Spermatozoa have been observed to enter this opening.

Here is the vital mistake again. I cannot conceive it as harmonizing with fact, that the lesser organized being, should overpower the greater one and by creeping into the latter, should totally transform it. I am satisfied that the reverse takes place.

6. The Ovary advanced to the dignity of the infusorium comes in contact with the spermatic fluid and its contents the Spermatozoa and as any active individual would feed upon this food, the only material which is congenial to its life and growth. It must either meet this, whilst it passes from the extremity of the fallopian tube to the Os Uteri, or die.

7. It is, as you know a fact, that the more vigorous an individual, the greater its capacity to partake of its natural food, and *via versa*, The greater therefore the interval between the advance of the Ovary from the ovary to the contact with the spermatic fluid, the less the ovary will partake of the latter; and the shorter the interval, the more it will imbibe, & its vigor lessens, as time advances.

8. The natural consequence of this partaking of food is a growth of the ovum and its subdivision.

until as many primary cells are formed as are necessary to constitute the 3 germinal layers from which the embryo is built. During this subdivision the Ovary has already attached itself (it is not engulfed in a fold of the Uterine mucous Membrane, as is thought) to the Uterine wall and commences to draw food from that source (The <sup>freely</sup> ~~fixed~~ moving *Porticella*, attaching itself by its stern to the rock of the Sea, is a splendid picture of this State of Affairs.

9 If the energetical Ovary has partaken more of the Spermatic fluid, than was necessary for the Construction of the primary cells, we will always find this surplus of organized protoplasm stored away in the forming Embryo, for already at the end of the fourth day we meet this surplus protoplasm in the not yet completed Ovary of the <sup>Chicken</sup> ~~Chicken~~, in the form of Ova, not made by the Ovary, but deposited here for perfection by nutrition, and we have a female Embryo.

10 But if the Ovary weakened by the above mentioned circumstance takes unto itself barely enough of this organized protoplasm, we will find the warehouse, the Ovary, still preparing, yet no material being left over to be stored away, the Natural Stimulus for the erection of the house is wanting, and instead of progressing the work regresses only a trace of the Ovary is left. And we have a Male Embryo.

11 The quicker therefore the Contact of the Ovary with the Spermatic fluid, the stronger is the Ovary and in consequence the greater is the Amount of protoplasm absorbed, and the result always a female Offspring.

12 The later the meeting of the Ovary with the Spermatic fluid, the weaker is the Ovary and in consequence the smaller is the Amount of protoplasm imbibed, and the result always a Male descendent.

13 The Spermatic fluid with the Spermatozoa, which it contains, is always created in in the sexual organs of the male.

14 The Ova, are remnants of the spermatic fluid and its contents; higher organized by the nutrition and influences which the female as such, and through its ovaries, exerts upon the development of the Ovary.

15 The female is not the producer of the Ova, but simply the recipient of their elements, which she assists and influences to higher organization.

16 The impregnated Ovary therefore consists:

1<sup>st</sup> Of the organized protoplasm, the surplus amount retained by the Embryo, now represented by the female, and received directly from her father — The imperfect Ovary

2<sup>nd</sup> The nutritive elements received from the female, by the agency of her ovaries and their accessories — The perfect Ovary

3<sup>rd</sup> Of the organized protoplasm, which the Ovary takes directly from the material, the Spermatic fluid, with which it comes in contact during its sojourn in the sexual organs of the female. The impregnated Ovary

The Structure then of the embryo consists of the plastic elements derived from its Grand father (Atavus) and its Mother.

17 The growth of the embryo depends entirely upon the nutritive elements, which it receives from its Mother.

My dear Doctor, the answer which I have endeavored to give to the question of the causes of Sex production will, as you perceive, solve the second question, as to the causes of Atavism.

This apparent inconsistency becomes at once a necessary consequence of physiological facts. And variable as the constituents of the Ovary are I tried to show...

might we find the Characters of the developed ovum, the  
offspring, still governed by this law of descent.

I will forbear to apply my conclusions, I know they  
will present many apparent discrepancies, especially if  
you should condescend to use them as a touchstone to  
questions still undecided.

Should I have been so fortunate as to put  
into your hands facts which will further Natural Science  
as you understand it, I will be well paid for my labour  
and if you should give me your opinion as to the  
importance of my observations, I will consider myself  
under many obligations.

Your respectful servant  
A. S. Mansfelde M.D.

Note Dr. Geo. W. French of Lincoln, a native Kentuckian,  
tells me that children begotten by a purely white woman  
and a negro are blacker, than when born of a negro  
woman, who was pregnant by a white man.  
This seems to prove the preponderance of the elements  
of the father, over those of the Grandfather.

Mansfelde

With the complements of the new year, I am  
waiting for an answer, I have no doubt, that I can give  
facts to strengthen my theory.

Again yours

A. S. Mansfelde

