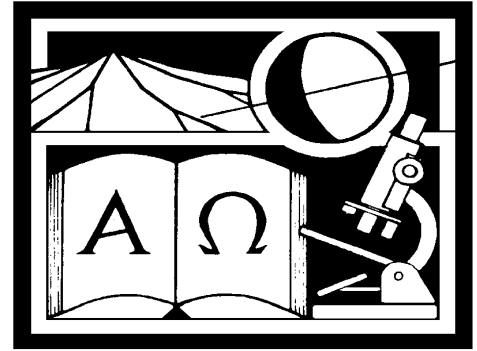


Origins Insights

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE
CREATION SCIENCE FELLOWSHIP



June 2000

Archaeorapter : Modern-Day Piltdown Man or Science At Its Best?

By Bob Harsh

*In 1908 a workman at a gravel quarry in Piltdown, England made a discovery that proved to have a powerful influence on the philosophy of millions of people worldwide for more than two generations. "It is said that more than five hundred doctoral dissertations were written" on the discovery in that gravel pit. [Lubenow, 1995, Bones Of Contention] It was proud England's answer to the discovery the previous year in Germany, of a jaw that was said to have belonged to one of man's ancient ancestors Heidelberg man. An influential Roman Catholic priest, Teilhard de Chardin, was involved in the discovery and promotion of "Piltdown Man". Casts of "Piltdown Man" soon made their appearance in museums, worldwide. Articles describing man's pre-human ancestors "enlightened" the public with **proof** that humans were preceded by links that were half ape and half man, just as that intelligent scientist, Charles Darwin had predicted. The Biblical account, that had for so many centuries had been an acceptable history of how humans came to be was no longer considered to be accurate to the "enlightened people" in the Western world.*

The skull was "modern"; that is it had a large capacity. But the jaw was more ape-like. It was a perfect fit. Darwinian evolution said there had to be many links between man's ancestors and modern humans. These links would have lived successfully for millions of years, then through the changing climate and migrations to remote areas; natural selection would have culled out the less well adapted. A succession of new types would have taken over; with each leaving evidence of their existence in the fossil record. If Darwin's hypothesis

*was to be actually supported there was the need for many intermediates; but never mind. The **English** had "**The Missing Link**"!*

Both Piltdown man and the infamous "Nebraska Man" were used as major evidence for the defense in the Scopes trial. In the popular press, Bible believing "fundamentalists" were portrayed as ignorant and "unscientific" in the face of the "indisputable" scientific evidence. On the seventh day of the trial, July 20, 1925, Professor Horatio Hackett Newman, a zoologist from the University of

MEETING INFORMATION

HOST: Jeff Lawther

TOPIC: Evidence for a Young Earth

Come and learn about some of the evidences for a young earth. Some of the things we will discuss are "time clocks" such as nitrogen levels in the atmosphere.

DATE: Tuesday, June 20, 2000

TIME: 7:30 PM

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

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Chicago testified as an expert witness. Speaking of Neanderthal Man, he informed the court that, "The brain of this ancient homo-Neanderthalensis was large and specialized in some parts, but deficient in those parts associated with higher mental functions. There can be no question that Neanderthal man was much more primitive, more simian in organization, than modern man." [Transcript of the Scopes Evolution Trial as found in The World's Most Famous Court Trial, 1925] Do you believe Dr. Newman had any evidence whatsoever that Neanderthals were mentally deficient in any way? I don't think so either. You may want to look back at our series on Neanderthal. I believe very few modern humans would have had the **mental abilities** to have survived more successfully than the Neanderthals. They had culture, including religion. They cared for their wounded and elderly, and buried their dead. It is now clear the Neanderthals were fully human. "The most ancient English human relic has been called the dawn man of Piltdown. ... There can be no doubt as to the fact that these remains show a curious admixture of simian and human characteristics, the jaw and teeth being even more simian than that of Heidelberg man, while the skull, though primitive, is distinctly human. The age of the dawn man is placed at about 200,000 to 300,000 years". [Testimony by Dr Newman during the seventh day of the trial]. Dr. Newman also "**enlightened**" the court with yet **more faulty "expert" testimony**; this time in the field of Embryology.

In many instances certain early stages in the development of an advanced organism resemble in unmistakable ways the end stages of less advanced organisms. There is, in fact, in the long ontogeny of members of high groups, a sort of rough-and-ready repetition of the characteristic features of many lower groups. This fact has so impressed some biologists that they have embodied it into law, the so-called biogenetic law; that ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny. ... The developmental history of the individual may be regarded as an abbreviated resume of its ancestral history."

Again Dr. Newman's testimony is faulty because it is based on the fraudulent drawings of Ernst Haeckel. You may want to refer to our article on "Haeckel Sleight of Hand" in a previous Origins Insights. The impact of the expert testimony in the Scopes trial cannot be overstated. That trial was heavily covered by a news media that was highly biased for the defense. Reports of the "expert" testimony in favor of evolution went worldwide. It had great influence in turning the tide of opinion from creationism to evolution. After all, which intelligent person could feel right about denying the "**facts**"?

Yet the "**expert testimony**" that was destined to turn so many minds towards evolution, was **faulty!** Nebraska Man was based on a not so old pig's tooth! Neanderthals were, in reality, highly intelligent people! The **evidence from embryology** was based on a **deliberate fraud! Dawn man from Piltdown, England was a deliberate hoax that plagued museums and textbooks until**

1953! Someone had deliberately planted an altered human skull near an, also altered, Orangutan jaw and the two were put together and passed off as a valuable "missing link" for over 45 years!

National Geographic is a magazine that many of us have enjoyed as a source of interesting factual information about nature. Their illustrations and great photography from remote places on Earth have always been their trademark and have enhanced their readers' learning. As the years have gone by, however, I have become increasingly offended by their barrage of jamming evolutionary dogma into every nook and cranny of their magazine articles and television nature programs that they can. They really do believe that evolution is such a common thread running through the study of nature that if evolution is not a central theme of their program or article then it is not worth reporting. To the contrary, if they would subtract **any** reference to evolution in most of their regular nature programs or articles, the audience would still gain some great information about nature. After all, they have some great material upon which to report; God's creation!

The November 1999 issue of National Geographic magazine featured a major article that announced a major paleontological discovery. A bird with a lizard's tail was discovered fossilized in a slab of stone that came from China. It was touted as the missing link between dinosaurs and birds. A model of this great missing link was constructed and graced the National Geographic headquarters

(Continued from page 2)

in Washington D.C. As it turned out a member of the original National Geographic team of scientists discovered that it literally was a fossilized bird attached to a fossilized tail of a dinosaur. It was a deliberate composite! **National Geographic had published and promoted a deliberate hoax!**

Are there any parallels with the announcement of the **Archaeoraptor**, the most important missing link between reptiles and birds and **Pitdown Man**, the reported missing link between man and lower animals?

One glaring parallel is the **appeal to the evidence as indisputable fact**. Let's examine the **opening paragraph** of the article, "Feathers For T. rex?". "New fossil discoveries show that feathers were more widespread in dinosaurs than previously thought. Because so many of its relatives had feathers, scientists now think Tyrannosaurus rex may have had them too at an early stage. Hatchlings would have shed their downy feathers as they grew." [Sloan, C. 1999. Feathers for T. rex? National Geographic Vol. 196, No.5 November 1999]

This is the introduction to a major article that the evolutionists at National Geographic intended to be a breakthrough for their faith. The subtitle for the article boldly proclaimed, "New Birdlike Fossils Are Missing Links In Dinosaur Evolution".

First, notice the statement, "scientists now think" instead of "a few paleontologists now hypothesize". Next, see how positive Sloan was in his report. This new discovery sounds a lot like **the** piece of the puzzle that has been missing for so many years has now been found! In 1868 Thomas Huxley first suggested that birds descended from dino-

saur. He based his hypothesis on the skeletal similarity between Archaeopteryx lithographica and a chicken-sized dinosaur, Compsognathus longipes. Since those two species were located in the same formation, Huxley didn't reason that Compsognathus evolved into Archaeopteryx but the similarity in their skeletons suggested to him that birds evolved from dinosaurs. Although there were many who disagreed with Huxley, by 1926 and the publication of the classic, The Origin of Birds by Gerhard Heilmann, thecodont type dinosaur "ancestry of birds became a matter of textbook orthodoxy for the next fifty years." [Camp, A. 1998. On the alleged dinosaurian ancestry of birds. www.trueorigin.org] Paleontologists of course argued about which line of dinosaurs had given rise to birds. By the mid-1990's the shift had been made in favor of the theropod as opposed to thecodont type dinosaurs. [I know what you are probably thinking by now, and I don't care which type of dinosaur evolutionists believe gave rise to birds either.] I feel like we need a little background, however, so that we can understand why our evolutionist friends think the way they do. The person leading the theropod camp was John Ostrom. In fact Feduccia described Ostrom's theory as, "practically dogma among vertebrate paleontologists." [Feduccia, Alan. 1996. The Origin and Evolution of Birds. Yale University Press. New Haven, CT.] By 1996 Fastovsky could write, "**Birds are dinosaurs**. And not all dinosaurs have gone extinct; one group, the birds, survives. What did dinosaur meat taste like? A trip to Kentucky Fried Dinosaur, or a mouthful of Dinosaur McNuggets can answer that question!" [Fastovsky, David E. and David B. Weishampel. 1996. The Evolution and Extinction of the Dinosaurs. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge, England.]

If you would like to find out more about the history behind

the thinking of evolutionists on the development of birds from dinosaurs, I highly recommend Ashby Camp's article at www.origin.org.

So, I hope you can appreciate why news that "missing links in dinosaur evolution" would be so exciting to people who have placed their faith in naturalism. After all everyone, including you and me, likes to have our faith increased.

The recent discoveries had nothing to do with any new information on Tyrannosaurus rex, so how can National Geographic feel justified in illustrating, on a full two page spread, at the beginning of this major revelation, a huge T. rex, of course without any feathers, but striding in front of it, a young T. rex with fuzzy down feathers? And how did they know that, "Hatchlings would have shed their downy feathers as they grew? Sloan's answer is, of course, "New fossil discoveries show that feathers were more widespread in dinosaurs than previously thought. Because so many of its relatives had feathers scientists now think Tyrannosaurus rex may have had them too at an early age." [Sloan, 1999]

Is any of this information about T. rex based on objective observation? The answer is no! All of these bold statements by Sloan about T. rex were based on inference. Before we condemn Sloan for unscientific practices, let us remind ourselves that much of valid scientific investigation is based on inference. The problem lies in how Sloan developed his inferences.

As we will soon find out,
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Sloan's whole article was based on a complete hoax. But was that Sloan's fault that he didn't know his evidence was a fake? We will see that very prestigious scientists had grave doubts about the authenticity of the fossils and he should have known better! But, after all, a similar thing happened after the discovery of the Piltdown man hoax. There were many reputable scientists that published their doubts about the authenticity of the Piltdown fossils. And yet reproductions of the fossils and wonderful life-sized models of our missing link to apes were successfully displayed in museums worldwide for over 45 years! Major testimony in one of the most famous trials in all of history was based on inferences that relied on the authenticity of a hoax that many competent scientists had warned their colleagues about. Not only did National Geographic publish a very well illustrated report, but they also had a very nice life-like display made up! "Unfortunately, the damage will live on. Most of the adults and children who saw the original articles, as well as the 110,000 that viewed the displays at the National Geographic Explorer's Hall, will still believe that dinosaurs had feathers because they saw the great artwork." [Nutting, Dave. 2000. *The Archaeoraptor Hoax*. Think and Believe. March]

Beyond the authenticity problems, Sloan made another sly inference; Haeckel's now discredited biogenetic theory. Ernst Haeckel produced some fraudulent illustrations that showed that in their development, embryos go through all of the stages that they went through in their evolution; an-

togeny recapitulates phylogeny. There was absolutely no evidence that young *T. rex* ever had feathers. They were illustrated with feathers because of an inference that was made based on a discredited hypothesis!

Sloan went on to write, "We can now say that birds are theropods just as confidently as we can say that humans are mammals." [Sloan, 1999]

Let's next examine what another leading scientist wrote in an open letter to Dr. Peter Raven of the National Geographic Society. The following are excerpts from an open letter from Storrs Olson, Curator of Birds at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History. It was dated November 1, 1999.

Dear Peter,

With the publication of "Feathers for *T. rex*?" by Christopher P. Sloan in its November issue, National Geographic has reached an all-time low for engaging in sensationalistic, unsubstantiated, tabloid journalism. But at the same time the magazine may now claim to have taken its place in formal taxonomic literature.

Because this Latinized binomial has apparently not been published previously and has now appeared with a full-spread photograph of the specimen "accompanied by a description or definition that states in word characters that are purported to differentiate the taxon," the name *Archaeoraptor liaoningensis* Sloan is now available for purposes of zoological nomenclature as of its appearance

in National Geographic (International Code of Zoological Nomenclature, Article 13a, i). This is the worst nightmare of many zoologists---that their chance to name a new organism will be inadvertently scooped by some witless journalist. Clearly, National Geographic is not receiving competent consultation in certain scientific matters. Sloan's article explicitly states that the specimen in question is known to have been illegally exported and that "the Czerkases now plan to return it to China."

Prior to the publication of the article "Dinosaurs Take Wing" in the July 1998 National Geographic, Lou Mazzatenta, the photographer for Sloan's article, invited me to the National Geographic Society to review his photographs of Chinese fossils and to comment on the slant being given to the story. At that time, I tried to interject the fact that strongly supported alternative viewpoints existed to what National Geographic intended to present, but it eventually became clear to me that National Geographic was not interested in anything other than the prevailing dogma that birds evolved from dinosaurs.

Sloan's article takes the prejudice to an entirely new level and consists in large part of unverifiable or undocumented information that "makes" the news rather than reporting it.

His bald statement that
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“we can now say that birds are theropods just as confidently as we say that humans are mammals” is not even suggested as reflecting the views of a particular scientist or group of scientists, so that it figures as little more than editorial propagandizing. This melodramatic assertion had already been disproved by recent studies of embryology and comparative morphology, which, of course, are never mentioned.

More importantly, however, none of the structures illustrated in Sloan’s article that are claimed to be feathers have actually been proven to be feathers. Saying that they are is little more than wishful thinking that has been presented as fact. The statement on page 103 that “hollow, hair like structures characterize protofeathers” is nonsense considering that protofeathers exist only as a theoretical construct, so that the internal structure of one is even more hypothetical.

The hype about feathered dinosaurs in the exhibit currently on display at the National Geographic Society is even worse, and makes the spurious claim that there is strong evidence that a wide variety of carnivorous dinosaurs had feathers. A model of the undisputed dinosaur *Deinonychus* and illustrations of baby tyrannosaurs are shown clad in feathers, all of which is simply imaginary and has no place outside of science fiction.

The idea of feathered di-

nosaurus and the theropod origin of birds is being actively promulgated by a cadre of zealous scientists acting in concert with certain editors at Nature and National Geographic who themselves have become outspoken and highly biased proselytizers of the faith. Truth and careful scientific weighing of evidence have been among the first casualties in their program, which is now fast becoming one of the grander scientific hoaxes of our age--the paleontological equivalent of cold fusion. If Sloan’s article is not the crescendo of this fantasia, it is difficult to imagine to what heights it can next be taken. But it is certain that when the folly has run its course and has been fully exposed, National Geographic will unfortunately play a prominent but unenviable role in the book that summarizes the whole sorry episode.

**Sincerely,
Storrs L. Olson
Curator of Birds
National Museum
of Natural History**

**Smithsonian
Institution
Washington, DC 20560**

So the man in the street, who is getting much of his education from sources like National Geographic probably doesn’t know that any “thinking person” has any doubts about the evolution of birds from dinosaurs. But they should have knowledge that *Archaeoraptor liaoningensis* is a hoax. Right! You mean you didn’t see the “bold disclaimer” in the March

2000 issue of National Geographic? **It’s right out in the open for anyone who wants to learn more about Archaeoraptors to see.** Well not exactly. **It’s highlighted in big print with nice pictures.** Well not exactly. Actually the title of the article is “Feathers for T. rex?” The page number? Well you can’t tell for sure. Wait; let me count. I think it is on page 20. But do you count the inside of the cover page as page one or do you start with the page opposite the cover page? And, to tell the truth, there are no nice pictures nor is there any large print. It does appear exactly ten pages before a really nice underwater picture of an elephant that is swimming. The swimming elephant is an announcement of evidence from elephant embryos in favor of Haeckel’s discredited biogenetic law. “They found kidney ducts akin to those of fish and frogs, and early, well-developed trunks that they believe could have been snorkels.” [National Geographic, March, 2000] In fact this important “apology” appears in the Forum section that may be found on the unnumbered page before the official page one. Of the eight items in the section, instead of being the lead article, it is the fifth item.

The “apology” came from Xu Xing, who was one of the team of National Geographic scientists who originally examined the specimen.

“After observing (Continued on page 6)

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feathered dromaeosaurspecimen in a private collection and comparing it with the fossil known as Archaeoraptor, I have concluded that Archaeoraptor is a composite. The tail portions of the two fossils are identical, but other elements of the new specimen are very different from Archaeoraptor, in fact more closely resembling Sinornithosaurus. Though I do not want to believe it, Archaeoraptor appears to be composed of a dromaeosaur tail and a bird body." [Xu Xing, 2000]

Well that's it! That's their explanation and apology on an unnumbered page in the middle of the letters to the editor section of National Geographic.

And they are really sincere in their apology! Just read the concluding paragraph of the news item on their web site dated April 7, 2000.

"Regardless of this week's conclusion, most scientists have been convinced for some time that birds descended from small, meat-eating dinosaurs. They base the theory on a wealth of fossil evidence from many locations around the world." www.ngnews.com.

So what is your conclusion? Would you vote for the first part of the title as the better picture of what has happened in this episode, or would you place your vote in favor of the second part of the title of this article? Have we observed science at its best as tentative and self-correcting? The most fair answer at this point in time can best be answered by the average reader on National Geographic and the many visitors that saw the nice model of Ar-

chaeoraptor at their headquarters in Washington D.C.

Personally, I favor the comparison with the Piltdown Man hoax. Science discovered the error in both episodes and science educated the people with knowledge based on error. In both cases the caution suggested by competent scientists was ignored. I will be very surprised if National Geographic is truly repentant about the error with the "bird-dinosaur" known as Archaeoraptor. I will not be at all surprised to see nice pictures of Archaeoraptors in future books and magazines.

Study of nature will always be biased in favor of the investigators' paradigms, but much less so if honesty is a valued virtue. True science and dishonesty in presenting the results of the investigation cannot coexist!

Creationism's Message to Russia

Bob Harsh is planning to take the message of creationism to the people of Perm, Russia in July.

He will be a part of a mission team that will travel to Perm, a city of over one million people on July 12. Plans are to rent public meeting places and make three presentations each day at three different sites in Perm. Perm has three universities and it is hoped that his lectures will attract several interested students. The team of Bob and Doug and Heather Irwin plans to be in Perm for two weeks.

This mission trip is com-

ing after much prayer and groundwork done by Doug Irwin and a group of Christians in Perm, Russia. Bob has had the opportunity to meet with a few other people who have taken mission trips to Russia and has been encouraged by their excitement about being used as God's ambassadors to the people of Russia.

As you can guess, a mission trip such as this has many expenses involved with putting it together. The flight, train trip from Moscow to Perm, lodging, and interpreter will cost around \$2000.00. The programs will be presented by using an overhead projector. A very satisfactory projector that weighs only 8# has been purchased. A real unexpected expense has been the actual making of the color overhead transparencies. The cost, even on my home computer is around 80 cents per page. I just finished putting together one of my five programs and it will have 44 transparencies in the program.

I do not like to ask for money, but you may be looking for a way to help spread the truth about God's wonderful design in creation. Well here's your opportunity to help out this worthy ministry.

If you can and would like to help, please make your contribution out to: Zelienville Church of Christ/Russia Mission Trip Box 241, Zelienville Pa. 16063

Attention: Tape Orders

For those who are unable to attend our monthly meetings. In response to requests, we are making available tapes and study notes from the following meet-

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ings for 1999. The tapes are 90 minutes long and include the very extensive set of overheads and notes used by the speakers for these presentations.

Prices are: \$6.00 for tape and notes + 1.00 shipping. Order by title given below by check, Visa, Mastercard or cash at the meeting.

Jan 99: "Developing the creation model for yourself" by Robert Walsh. A how-to-guide on doing Biblical creation studies at home and studying the Bible in general. Excellent resource and guide.

Feb 99: "The age of the earth. What does the Bible say?" by Robert Walsh and Don Schell. An in depth scripture study of two of the most popular compromise explanations for genesis account of origins given in the church. Learn about the day/age and gap theories.

Mar 99: "Rocks around the clock" - Chuck Danley. What does the Bible say about the original created geology of the world and do any of those features remain on the earth today?

May 99: "The pre-flood world" - Robert Walsh and Henry Jackson. A close look at the Biblical descriptions of the pre-fall and pre-flood world in the areas of climate, geology, anthropology, and religion. A discussion of the zodiac and its relationship to the Bible is included in this lively presentation.

Jun 99: "Noah's Ark" - Robert Walsh and Jeff Lawther. This presentation developed the Biblical framework regarding the Ark and Flood, examining the se-

quence and duration of Noah's Flood. The Biblical texts that discuss the sources of the Flood waters were examined along with the data provided for the Ark itself. Jeff and Bob examined some of the frequent questions that often arise when discussing Noah's Ark. These questions include (1) Was the Ark large enough to repopulate the world with all of the know extinct and extant creatures?; (2) How could fresh and salt water fish exist in the same ocean?; (3) Was Noah's Flood local or global in extent?; (4) If the Ark existed, could it be sea worthy? (5) How could Noah feed and care for all of the required animals while on the Ark?; and more...

Aug 99: "The Dead Speak" - Dennis E. Wert. This talk examined the effect of the flood on living things. In particular, what was the impact of the world wide flood of Noah on all the living creatures on the earth at the time of that flood. We looked at the questions of evidences for the flood in the fossil record and effect of the flood on the survival of the animals taken on the ark and those that were not taken. This lively talk had a number of good questions and answers at the end.

Email Preferences

We are seeking input on ways of disseminating this newsletter. If you would like to receive this newsletter via email, let us know at csf@trfn.clpgh.org/csf. Please let us know what format you would like to receive this document—Word Perfect, MS Word, RTF, etc... Thank you!

ATTENTION:

We offer childcare service for ages 3-8 in an attempt to include Mom's and Dad's in the Creation Science Fellowship meetings. Come join us!

Meeting Topics for the Calendar Year 2000

JULY 18: Anthropological Evidence for Creation and the Flood—Reid Moon

AUGUST 15: Fossil Evidence for the Flood—Robert Ivey

PLEASE NOTE DATE CHANGE FOR SEPTEMBER

SEPTEMBER 23: 9 AM SPECIAL SATURDAY FIELD TRIP MEETING; Empirical Evidence for the Flood: Tour of the Carnegie Museum—hosted by Dennis Wert & Bob Harsh

OCTOBER 17: Mankind Evidence for being Made In God's Image—Robert Walsh

NOVEMBER 21, 2000: Evidence for the Design of the Physical Man—Robert Harsh

Creation Science Fellowship, Inc. newsletter is published monthly.

Purpose: The aim of Creation Science Fellowship is to inform and educate people of the biblical, philosophical, and scientific validity of creationism.

Circulation: 500

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AFTER EDEN

by Dan Lietha



Genesis 1, creation day 6.
The real "Walking with Dinosaurs" we'd
like to see on the Discovery Channel!

Science and Nature Two Votes for God

We want to pass on the news that an excellent author and speaker, Bert Thompson, will be presenting a 3-day seminar August 11-13. The seminar is free to the audience and will be held at the Church of Christ, Virginia Avenue & Second Street, Chester, W.Va. Chester is across the Ohio River from East Liverpool, Ohio and is about 45 minutes from Pittsburgh. Church's phone # is 304-387-1030 or 1680.

Bert Thompson is a "Young Earth Creationist" and his seminar will present evidence for the scientific accuracy of the Bible and the scientific problems with evolution.