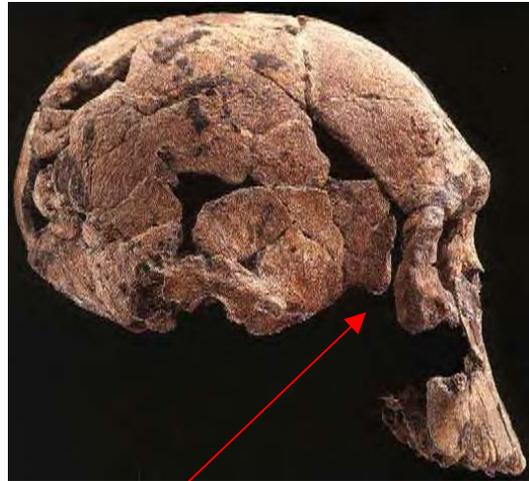
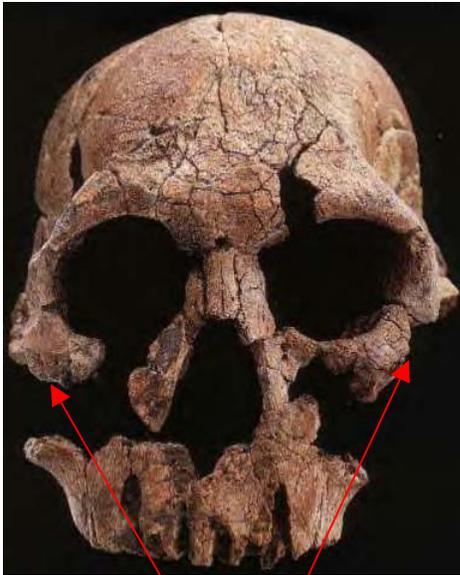


Bias in the Reconstruction of KNM-ER 1470

By: Arnold C. Mendez, Sr.

The following pictures show how bias affected the reconstruction of KNM-ER 1470. The maxilla (upper jaw) is free floating. 1470 was reconstructed with a slanted face to give the fossil a more primitive look. This is very evident when looking at a picture of a side view or by comparison with a cast/replica of 1470. Also evident in a cast is that the eye sockets have been widened to produce a more apish form.

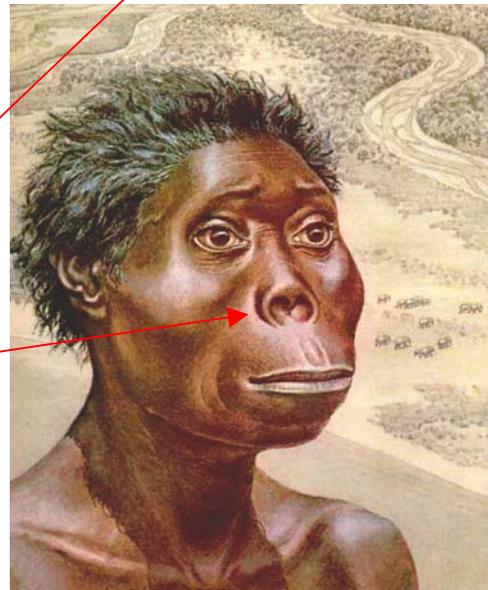
The picture on the lower right is a reconstruction by Jay Matternes and is based on the 1470 fossil reconstruction. This picture appeared in the National Geographic, June 1973. It shows a young African woman. The nose is made up cartilage and does not fossilize therefore the nose was based on the artistic liberty (bias) of Matternes. With a human nose and a less slanted face the picture would appear perfectly human. Interestingly the caption with the picture states, "Nose, ears, skin color, and details of hair are purely conjectural."



Eye orbits/socket widened

Upper jaw and face free floating

Nose is artistic conjecture



Anthropologist must often reconstruct fossil skulls and other bones from literally hundreds of pieces. The area where the fossil was originally found is often screened for fossil fragments. This hunt for fragments may cover a large area. The pieces are literally sifted and screened from tons of surrounding dirt. This collecting of all the pieces of a particular fossil specimen may take months. After the fossil pieces are collected they must be literally joined and cemented together in order to complete the fossil. Missing pieces must be filled in or fabricated. When a fossil is reconstructed from pieces, bias and preconceived notions will color the type of reconstruction made.

The case of KNM-ER 1470 a fossil found in Kenya in 1972 is a good example of this process. It was found by Richard Leakey, son of Louis Leakey, in hundreds of pieces. It was reconstructed over a period of many weeks by a team of anthropologist including Richard's wife, Meave. The maxilla (upper jaw) is free floating and could be attached to the skull in various positions.

One point of uncertainty was the angle at which the face attached to the cranium. Alan Walker remembers an occasion when he, Michael Day and Richard Leakey were studying the two sections of the skull. "You could hold the maxilla (upper jaw) forward, and give it a long face, or you could tuck it in, making the face short," he recalls. "How you held it really depended on your preconceptions. It was interesting watching what people did with it." Leakey remembers the incident too: "Yes, if you held it one way, it looked like one thing; if you held it another, it looked like something else."

Roger L. Bones of Contention; *Controversies in the Search for Human Origins*. Simon and Schuster. New York. 1987

The face and upper jaw were attached at a slant to give the fossil a more transitional appearance. Australopithecus fossils and primate fossils all have slanted faces. Since the face and upper jaw were free floating it would have been possible to make the face and skull look more human or apish. All of this depends on whether you believe in the evolutionary theory of the descent of man or the creation account. If 1470 is an ancestor of man it would be a simple matter to give him a more human look. If he is a descendant of Australopithecines as demanded by the evolutionists then the reconstruction would have been with a more slanted face. It is obvious when looking at pictures or casts of 1470 that he was given a slanted face to further the theory of evolution.

Pictures based on the (faulty) reconstruction of KNM-ER 1470 show this bias. As has been shown the picture that appeared in National Geographic in June 1973 is a very good example of this evolutionary bias. The reconstruction shows what skull 1470 would appear like in the "flesh." In the previous picture the woman appears with an apish nose. This is entirely a subjective matter since fossils do not tell us anything about the shape or form of the nose, lips, ears, etc. With a human nose, correctly reconstructed eye sockets, and a non-slanted face a correct reconstruction of skull 1470 would appear very human. In reality a modern looking and probably beautiful young African woman has been misinterpreted and erroneously reconstructed by the anthropologists. This evolutionary bias has transformed a modern human into a misinterpreted fossil that seemingly supports evolution.