

But this argument is blasphemous, for its logical consequence is that the pinnacle of evolution is not *Homo sapiens* but our ectoparasite *Pediculus humanus*, the body louse. It also turns the Great Designer into a Great Deceiver, who, in the manner of Satan, put fossils in the rocks — and tails on embryos — to mislead biologists of the future.

Finally, Wells's main theme about the collusion of evolutionary biologists is simply wrong. Authors of some biology texts may occasionally be sloppy, or slow to incorporate new research, but they are not duplicitous. And, far from representing a conspiracy, it is invariably evolutionists (including myself) who have noted problems with some classic icons of evolution. Wells has it backwards. It is creationists like him who are conspiring to purge evolution from American education. They hide their own differences about issues such as the fossil record and the age of the earth, they pretend to be disinterested seekers after truth, they fail to do their own scientific research, and, like Wells, they avoid at all costs revealing their own theories about the history of life. *Icons* is exactly as even-handed and intellectually honest as one would expect from someone whose "prayers convinced me that I should devote my life to destroying Darwinism".

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entific mystery because our God is entirely capable of working supernaturally through apparently natural processes — not just in the miraculously large steps touted by Overman and Behe.

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SCIENCE OF TODAY AND THE PROBLEMS OF GENESIS:

A STUDY OF THE "SIX DAYS" OF CREATION, THE ORIGIN OF MAN AND THE DELUGE AND ANTIQUITY OF MAN BASED ON SCIENCE AND SACRED SCRIPTURE; A VINDICATION OF THE PAPAL ENCYCLICALS AND RULINGS OF THE CHURCH ON THESE QUESTIONS. NEW EDITION.

By Fr Patrick O'Connell, BD. Rockford (IL): Tan Books and Publishers, Inc. 1993. 386 pages.

Reviewed by Colin Groves, Australian National University

If there is any book that was really pivotal in laying "creation science" before the public, it is surely Duane Gish's *Evolution: The Fossils Say No!*, first published in 1972. Among other tidbits in this book, there is a 13-page exposé in which Gish purports to demolish the claims for the very existence of "Peking Man", arguing that the conclusions supporting this human fossil are based on not merely bad science, but fraud. The charge of bad science he substantiates by famously misquoting the early 20th-century paleoanthropologist Marcellin Boule (see Ritchie 1991); for his claims of fraud he relies, in the last four and a half pages of the section, on a 1969 book by Father Patrick O'Connell. O'Connell's book has been a bit hard to come by up to now; most of us have just had to take Gish's word for it. But now here it is, reprinted and slightly updated as of 1993, available through Amazon.com. Now we can check: Did Gish misrepresent O'Connell, or did a priest, a man devoted to the truth, really say all that?

He really did say all that, I fear, and more. Gish mentions O'Connell only in those last few pages, but actually relies heavily on him for the whole of the "Peking Man" segment, and for his "Java Man" section, too. Every last libel on anyone involved with *Homo erectus*, every shabby slur on the reputation of these honorable men, is lifted entire, attributed or unattributed, from O'Connell.

O'Connell's book is divided into four parts. In Part I, "The Six Days of Creation", he quotes extensively from Vatican documents, including the Decree of the Second Vatican Council, on what may and may not be believed by a Roman Catholic. O'Connell recounts the history of creation as he sees it and squares it with the Genesis account (he is a day/age man). Part II, "The Origin of Man", is the meat of the book, and I will return to it for a detailed treatment below. Part III deals with the Deluge, which, we learn, intervened between the end of the Mousterian and the beginning of the Aurignacian cultures and did not cover the entire earth but only those parts of it then inhabited by people. O'Connell cites lots of archaeological "evidences" for the Deluge (well, for floods, anyway) from the Middle East and elsewhere. Part IV, "The Antiquity of Man", runs quickly through ways of calculating dates, including radiocarbon but no other radiometric method, and concludes that the human species is about 20 000 years old. There are chapters that are supposed to bring Parts I, III, and IV up to date — but there is no such updating for Part II.

And so to "The Origin of Man" part — the bit that has created all the waves. O'Connell bemoans the way Roman Catholics, both ordained and lay, have not only accepted the evolutionary account but even, like the Abbé Breuil and Fr Boné, contributed to it. His chief wrath, however, is directed

towards Fr Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, the eminent paleontologist who was also a Jesuit, and was forbidden by his superiors to publish during his lifetime his views reconciling evolution with paleontology. Wrath? O'Connell vehemently detests Teilhard, and his assessment of his brother priest, on pages 149-54, is filled with such venom as I would have hoped never to see on the printed page, let alone from a man charged with spreading the religion of brotherly love.

Minor matters are dispatched in a few pages. O'Connell informs us that "Neanderthal Man" was, of course, fully human but not like modern humans, being pre-Deluge. The human fossils that O'Connell regards as genuine either combine Neanderthal and modern traits (Ehringsdorf, Saccopastore, Steinheim) or are fully modern (Swanscombe and Fontéchevade). The obligatory chapter on Piltdown is mercifully brief. The Australopithecines were, he says, "shown to be just great apes"; that takes care of them, then. O'Connell kicks off a great and inglorious tradition by citing none other than Sir Solly Zuckerman as authority. So now we turn to Peking Man.

What actually happened at the "Peking Man" discovery site, Choukoutien (now Zhoukoudian), has been told many times. Jia and Huang (1990) give the full history in great detail. Shapiro (1974) writes about their disappearance during World War II and the subsequent search for them. Van Oosterzee (1999) places the story against the background of China under the warlords and the Japanese invasion. But O'Connell thinks that this well-documented history is all moonshine and is eager to take the lid off what really happened.

Although "Peking Man" — *Sinanthropus* — may or may not be actually ancestral to *Homo sapiens* (and I myself think not), there is absolutely no doubt that it is in every meaningful sense "intermediate" between ape and human. It

was vital for O'Connell to discredit the fossils because they are "the only ones that have the support of great names. Hence they are used by advocates of the theory of evolution to support their contention." And he certainly does his level best to discredit them, in the process accusing all four main protagonists of fraud: Teilhard de Chardin (of course); Davidson Black, who was in charge of the excavations at Zhoukoudian until his death in 1934; Franz Weidenreich, who took his place; and Pei Wen-chung (now spelled Wenzhong), the leading Chinese member of the team.

O'Connell's qualifications for his claims? Only that he was in China, reading the Chinese newspapers, during the 1930s. He never, at any time, visited the discovery site, nor, as will become clear, does he have the slightest expertise in anatomy, geology, or even etymology. Gish repeated a few of O'Connell's claims of fraudulence, but even he does not stoop quite to the same depths; O'Connell's only rival in libel is another Catholic creationist, who repeats the claims in only slightly abbreviated form, even adding his own commentary about Pei's diabolical cleverness (Johnson 1982).

I will list O'Connell's main slanders, more or less in order, and follow each one with my own comments, in italics.

- All the human fossils have disappeared (but none of the animal fossils); all we have are "casts or models" (p 126).

Yes, the fossils have, tragically, disappeared; what we have are casts, not models.

- The skulls did not disappear while being evacuated to America after the Japanese invasion, as the story usually goes. The Japanese did not interfere with the excavations, and in 1943 Weidenreich even wrote an article on the skulls, "and it was published in *Palaeontologia*

Sinica, which means that the article passed through the hands of Japanese..." No, the skulls were destroyed by Dr Pei "in order to remove the evidence of fraud on a large scale" (p 127).

In his 1943 monograph, Weidenreich thanked some American associates "who consented to have this paper printed and edited in the United States as a monograph of the Palaeontologia Sinica where my main reports on the Sinanthropus material have previously appeared". In dedicating it to his Chinese colleagues and to Teilhard, he made it very clear that the Japanese had indeed made the work completely impossible and that this is why he published his monograph in the USA but in a Chinese series. As for Pei's destroying the fossils...!

- After the war, Dr Pei resumed excavation at Zhoukoudian and found animal fossils, but "no more tell-tale skulls of *Sinanthropus*" (p 128).

Nonsense. The Zhoukoudian Lower Cave at Locality 1 had been almost emptied by the excavations of the 1930s, but another mandible was nonetheless discovered in 1959, and two cranial fragments in 1966. These latter, incidentally, completed one of the crania found in the 1930s, and they fit the surviving cast exactly — a tribute to the high quality of the original casts.

- Earlier limestone quarrying and burning at Zhoukoudian had undermined the hill, causing a

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landslide, burying everything "under thousands of tons of stone". The so-called fossil deposits result from this burial. The stone tools were actually the remains of quartz stones used to construct the lime kilns. The so-called hearths were from the lime kilns. The modern human skulls were some of the miners. The so-called *Sinanthropus* skulls were those of local baboons and macaques (p 128-9).

The hill was a lime quarry, but there is no evidence for kilns or a landslide. The cave fill was consolidated. Black and others (1933: 6) write, "... the deposit of Locality 1 had been partially exposed at the head of an abandoned quarry..."

- The discovery of modern humans, as well as *Sinanthropus*, had been concealed by Weidenreich and Pei for 5 years; there is no justification for representing them as being later in time, "for both were found buried under the same landslide" (p 130, 143-4).

Nonsense; papers were published on the near-modern human remains by Black in 1933 and by Pei in 1934 (see Weidenreich, 1939, 205, n 2). They came from the Upper Cave, higher up the same hill as the Lower Cave (Locality 1).

- A skullcap found in 1928 or 1929 was described by Black in 1931 as being "more like man than ape, with a brain capacity more than twice that of a monkey" (p 133), but in 1930 Teilhard described it as a

skull, not a skullcap, with a "probably small" cranial capacity and with close similarities to the great apes in length of face, brow ridges, postorbital constriction, receding forehead, triangular (not oval) skull shape seen from behind, and form of the tympanic bone (p 135). O'Connell concludes from this that "it was the skull of a baboon or monkey, for no fossils of apes have been found in China" (p 136).

That Black emphasized the human features and Teilhard was bound to describe its "ape-like" features says more about the intellectual climate of the times than about the characteristics of the specimen. What is more important is that O'Connell obviously does not know that anatomists use "skull-cap" for anything from the upper vault (calotte) to the major part of it (calvaria), so there is no contradiction at all between the way Black and Teilhard characterized it.

- Boule published a paper in 1937 in which he described the skulls as "monkey-like" (p 137).

Boule did not describe them as "monkey-like" (see Ritchie 1991).

- Boule also revealed that in all of them "there was a hole in the top of the skull at the occiput, supposed to have been made for the purpose of extracting the brain" (p 137), but there was no such hole shown in the photos published by Black in 1931, which was therefore not the actual skull at all but "an artificial model of the mythical *Sinanthropus*" (p 138).

So O'Connell does not

know where the occipital bone is! (I thought that Catholic priests, before Vatican II, were supposed to know Latin.) Boule wrote (1937: 8), "La partie centrale, c'est-à-dire le poutour du trou occipital, a été détruite" (the central part, that is to say the area adjacent to the occipital "hole", has been destroyed); the occipital bone is at the back of the skull and extends onto the base, and the "trou occipital" is the foramen magnum, on the underside of the braincase.

- Black estimated the brain capacity at 960 cc, later corrected by Weidenreich to 915 cc, but Teilhard had described the skull as small and resembled that of an ape — more evidence that the model was not even a cast but "a creature of the imagination" (p 139).

It is clear that "small" is a relative term — in this case, small relative to modern humans.

- Weidenreich alleged that three more *Sinanthropus* skulls had been discovered in 1936, but no photographs of them have ever been published, only of three *incomplete* skulls (that is, of the "artificial models") in a brief article in 1937.

Nonsense. Photographs and x-rays of all of them (Skulls X, XI, and XII are the ones in question) were published in Weidenreich's 1943 monograph, which O'Connell mentions but does not appear even to have glanced at.

- Teilhard stated, in a 1937 article, that the fossils were found in a cave, but "the existence of any natural

cave at either the lower or the upper level is denied categorically — by Weidenreich" (p 151).

Nonsense. Weidenreich many times (1939, 1943, and elsewhere) mentioned both the Lower Cave, where "Peking Man" was discovered, and the Upper Cave, at the top of the hill, where the near-modern specimens were found.

After this simply frightening mélange of misrepresentations, anything else must surely be an anticlimax. Yet O'Connell has a few more willful distortions up his sleeve in the following chapter. "Java Man", he reports, was discovered at Trinil in the 1890s by Dubois:

He brought home a great quantity of bones of various animals, two simian teeth, the thigh bone of a man, and the cap of a skull which some say is that of a man, others, that of an ape, and others still, that of a "missing link". As the brain case is missing, it is not possible to decide to which category it belongs.

He brought home at the same time two human skulls, known as the Wadjak skulls, of large brain capacity... Dr Dubois concealed these on his return... He produced them, however, in 1925, 30 years later... (p 159).

von Koenigswald, he reports, made a final attempt to find more specimens of Java Man in the 1930s, but all he produced was

parts of four skulls so broken that the brain capacity could not be determined. Romer, in *Man and the Vertebrates*, describes these as "three more skullcaps, a lower jaw and an upper jaw". ... As there were only skullcaps, it is impossible to tell what was

the brain capacity, but Romer, Vallois and other propagandists for the man-from-ape theory, give the capacity as much the same as that given by Dr Dubois' first specimen — between 800 and 900 cc (p 161).

"Skullcaps" again! Had O'Connell ever seen any of them, even photographs? All four — Dubois's from Trinil, and von Koenigswald's from Sangiran — are substantial specimens, from which it is easy to obtain cranial capacities. This is also the case for at least three of the many, many specimens which have been discovered since then, mainly by Indonesian scholars. As for the Wadjak (now Wajak) skulls, they were not "concealed", but described by Dubois in three separate papers in the 1890s (Brace 1987).

What do we make of O'Connell? His motives are evident: an old-fashioned Catholic, desperately struggling against the modernizers whose efforts to bring the church, kicking and screaming, into the Enlightenment — no, into the *Renaissance* — finally began to bear fruit in Vatican II. Like some other traditionalists, and even some not-so-traditionalists (see Scharle 1999), he harbors a deep well of hatred against his opponents (witness his unedifying attacks on the reputation of Teilhard de Chardin). Because he has right on his side, he can destroy the reputations of those who incur his detestation without a second thought: fortunate for him, perhaps, that by the time of his first edition all his targets were either dead or, in the case of Pei, alive but isolated from outside contact in Mao's China. He is aided in his crusade by his astonishing invention of whole new scenarios, his willful disdain for actually *reading* the books and papers that he disparages, his triumphant ignorance of anatomy — he does not even know what the words mean, and quite obviously he does not want to know.

It says a lot about Gish that he

takes this poisonous garbage as his primary, no, his *only* source on "Peking Man" and "Java Man" — that he is willing to lower himself to the level of this unspeakable nastiness. And let us, perhaps, raise at least one, whispered cheer for Marvin Lubenow who has managed to avoid it — although he must surely know about it, he never endorses it. But he and others of his sort might merit some respect from us, their critics, if they joined forthrightly in its condemnation.

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