

WAAS GA 2008, Hyderabad
Limits of Rationality

Human Evolution: a case of the Emperor's Clothes?

Jeffrey H. Schwartz

President, WAAS

Departments of Anthropology and
History and Philosophy of Science
University of Pittsburgh

George H. F. Nuttall, University Lecturer in
bacteriology and preventive medicine at
Cambridge University:

*Blood Immunity and Blood Relationship: A
Demonstration of Certain Blood-Relationships
Amongst Animals by Means of the Precipitin
Test for Blood (1904)*

The assumptions:

“...the zoological relationships between animals are best demonstrated by means of powerful antisera.”

“blood relationship” is supposed to = a zoological and, thus, an evolutionary relationship. Ergo,

“If we **accept** *the degree of blood reaction as an index of the degree of blood-relationship* within the Anthroidea, then we find that the Old World apes are more closely allied to man than are the New World apes, and this is exactly in accordance with the opinion expressed by Darwin.”

(emphasis added)

On the basis of hemoglobin-antihemoglobin reactivity Zuckerkandl and Pauling (1962) proposed:

“Over-all similarity must be an expression of evolutionary history,” with descendants “mutating away” from each other, becoming “gradually more different from each other.”

“Our observations can be understood at once if it is ***assumed*** that in the course of time the hemoglobin-chain genes duplicate, [and] that the descendants of the duplicate genes ‘mutate away’ from each other.” (emphasis added)

This assumption derives from the legacy
the “modern” evolutionary synthesis -

There was only one way in which
evolutionists can think about change:

Its version of Darwinism:
Continual and (mostly) gradual
transformation

But does this actually obtain to metazoans?

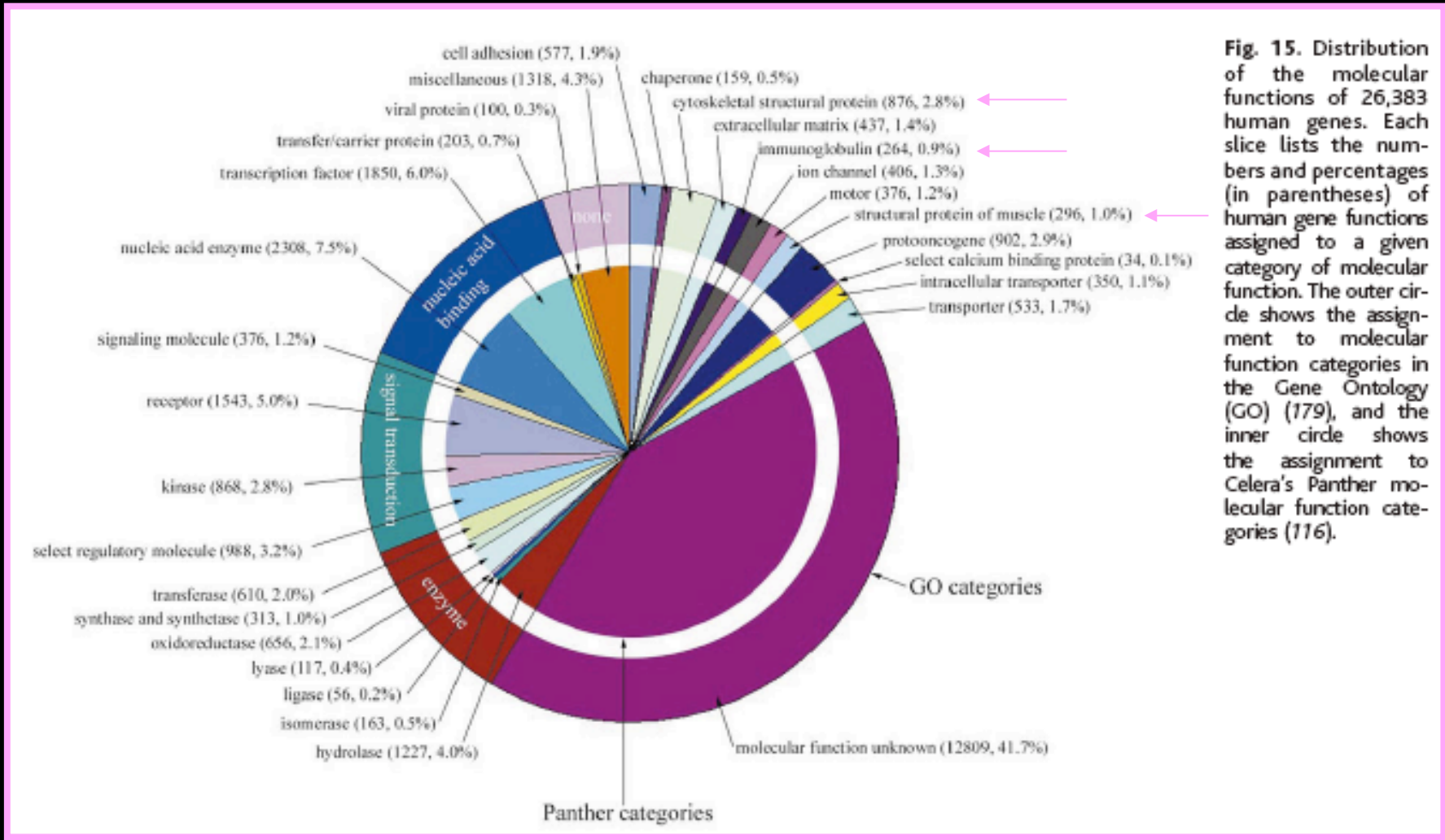
In bacteria, the promoter (non-coding) region is small and up to 98% of the genome is coding (i.e. results in metabolic activity).

In metazoans, up to 98% of the genome is non-coding (introns, enormous promoter regions, junk DNA).

(J. Eisen, Current Opinion in Microbiology 3: 475-480, 2000)

Which means that most molecular change
should be deleterious, that is,
result in death (cellular etc.)

For example, the human genome (Science 291: 1335, 2001)



Nevertheless -

Wildman et al (2003):

Implications of natural selection shaping 99.4% nonsynonymous DNA identity between humans and chimpanzees: Enlarging genus *Homo*.

Proceedings of the National Academy of Science USA 100: 7181-7188.

Their conclusion: humans and chimpanzees are almost 100% identical in their DNA.

Reality: humans and chimpanzees are 99.4% identical in a ~90 kb stretch of presumably orthologous coding DNA.

Ergo, considering that only c. 2-3% of the entire metazoan genome is coding, the significance of this comparison, and of all DNA sequence comparisons, diminishes considerably.

Psychological effect of the “law of large numbers”.

It *sounds* impressive that humans and chimpanzees share 99.4% of 90,000 nucleotide bases in contrast to their sharing only a few hundred bones and teeth. But if most of the 99.4% similarity is primitive retention, the comparison is phylogenetically meaningless.

Unfortunately, the impact of the human-chimpanzee “relationship” shapes the interpretation of fossils.

Hadar AL 333-1



Top: SKW 11 & Sts 17, Sts 71, StW 505
Bottom: Taung and StW 183a, Sts 52a & Sts 5



SK 48, KNM-WT 17000 & KNM-ER 406



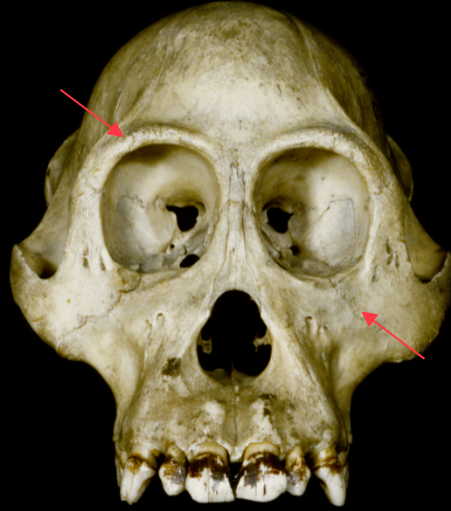
DNH 7 & OH 5

Hadar AL 333-1

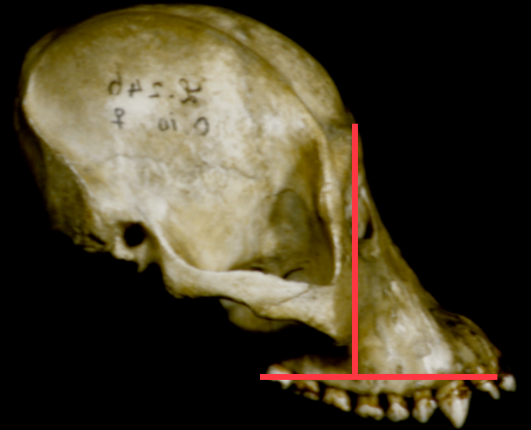
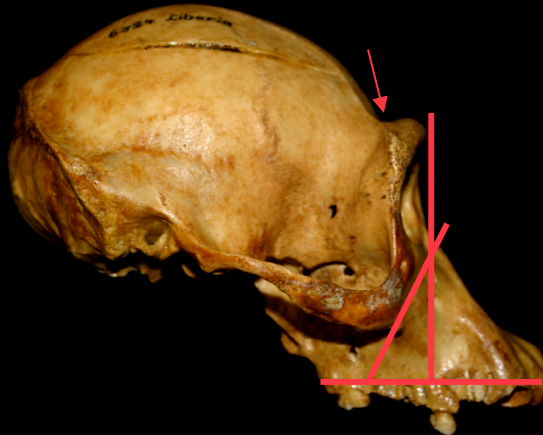


Hadar AL 333-1

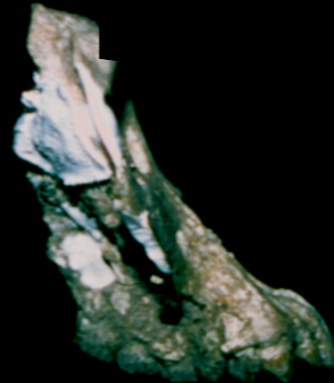


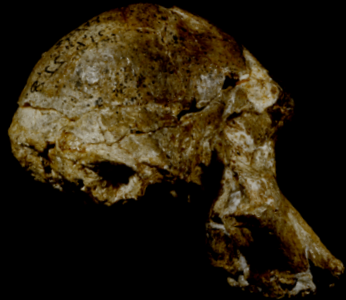


Hadar AL 444









KNM-ER
1470



KNM-ER
1813



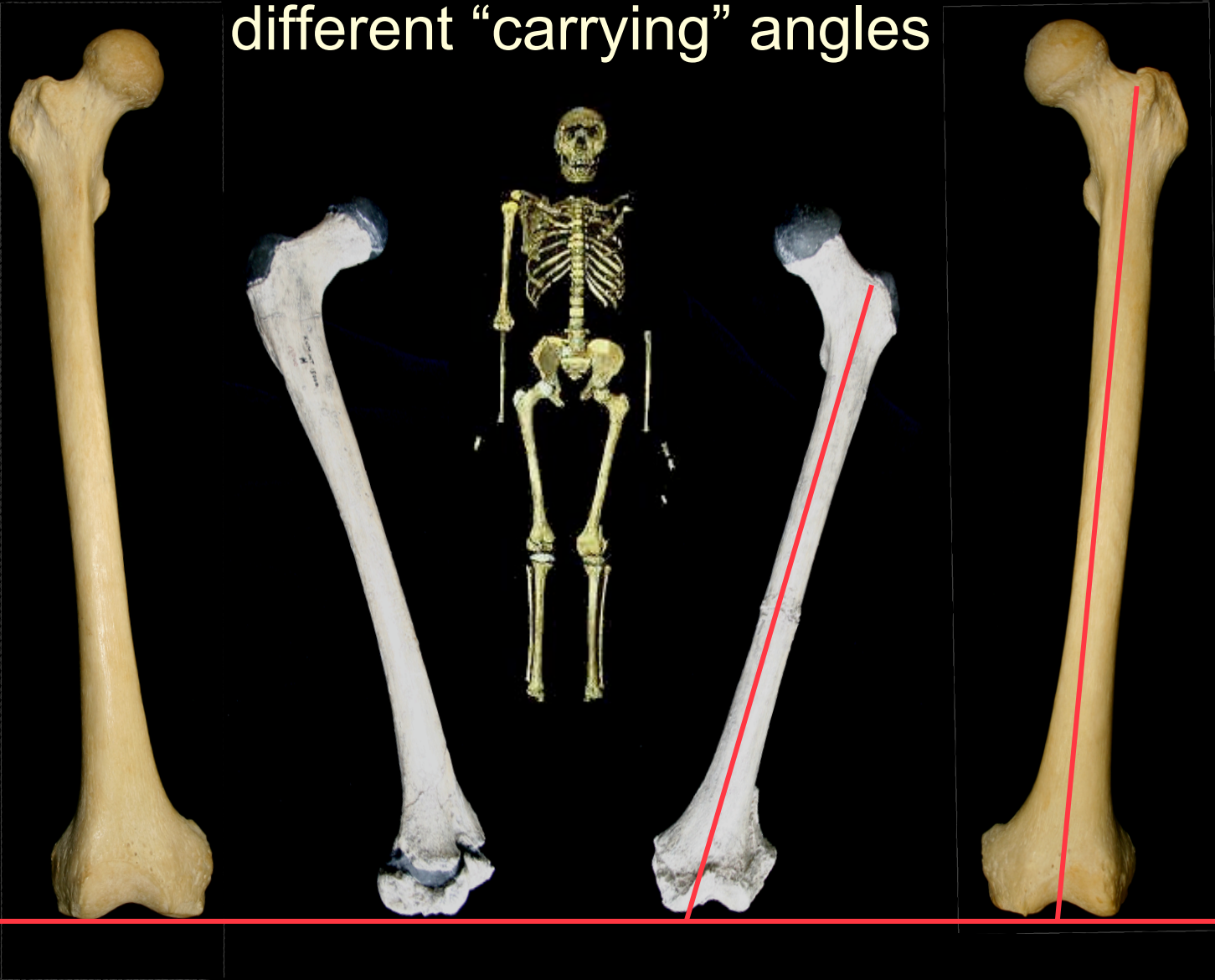
KNM-WT
15000



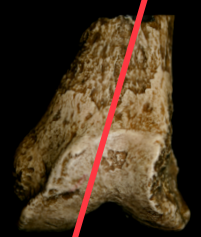
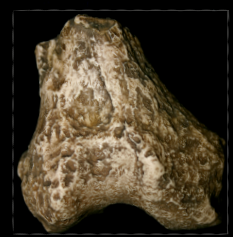
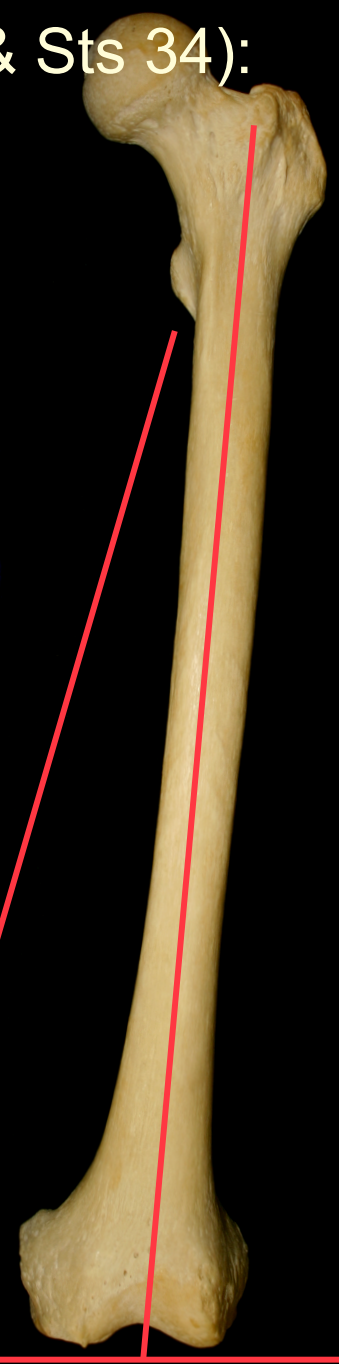


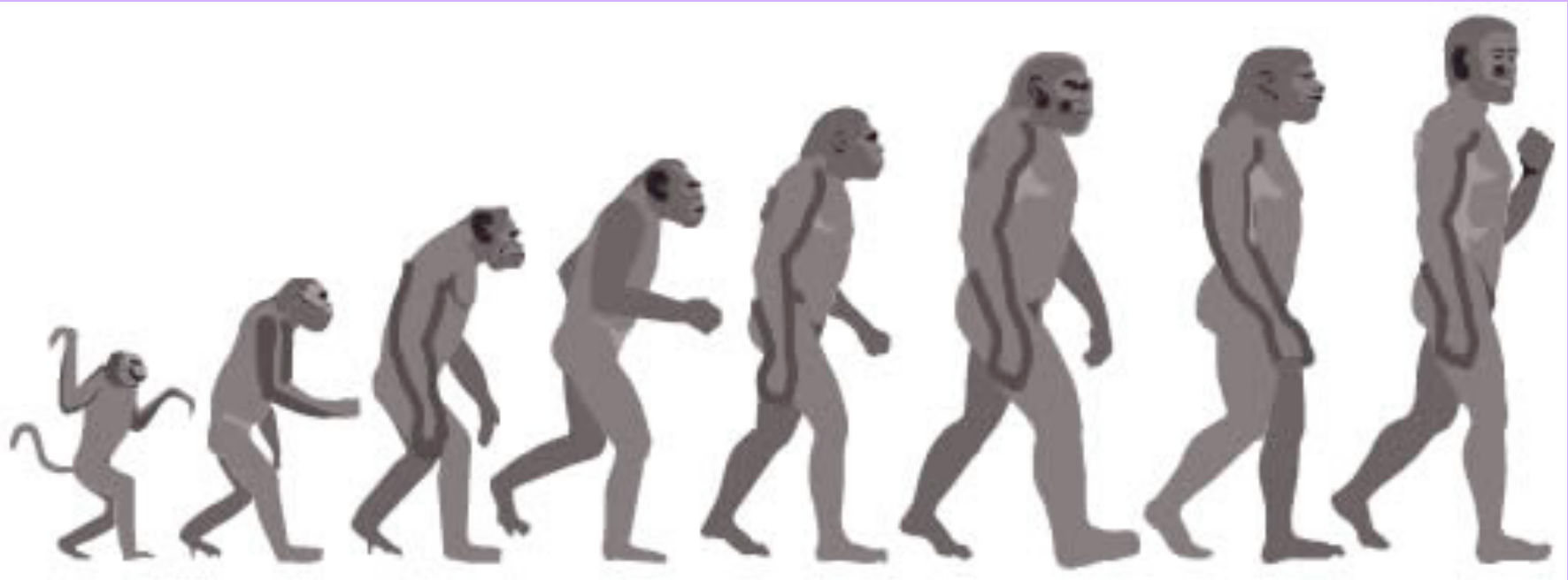
KNM-WT 15000:
the first “modern”
striding biped -
demanded by having
first assigned it to
genus *Homo*

Homo sapiens & KNM-WT 15000:
different “carrying” angles



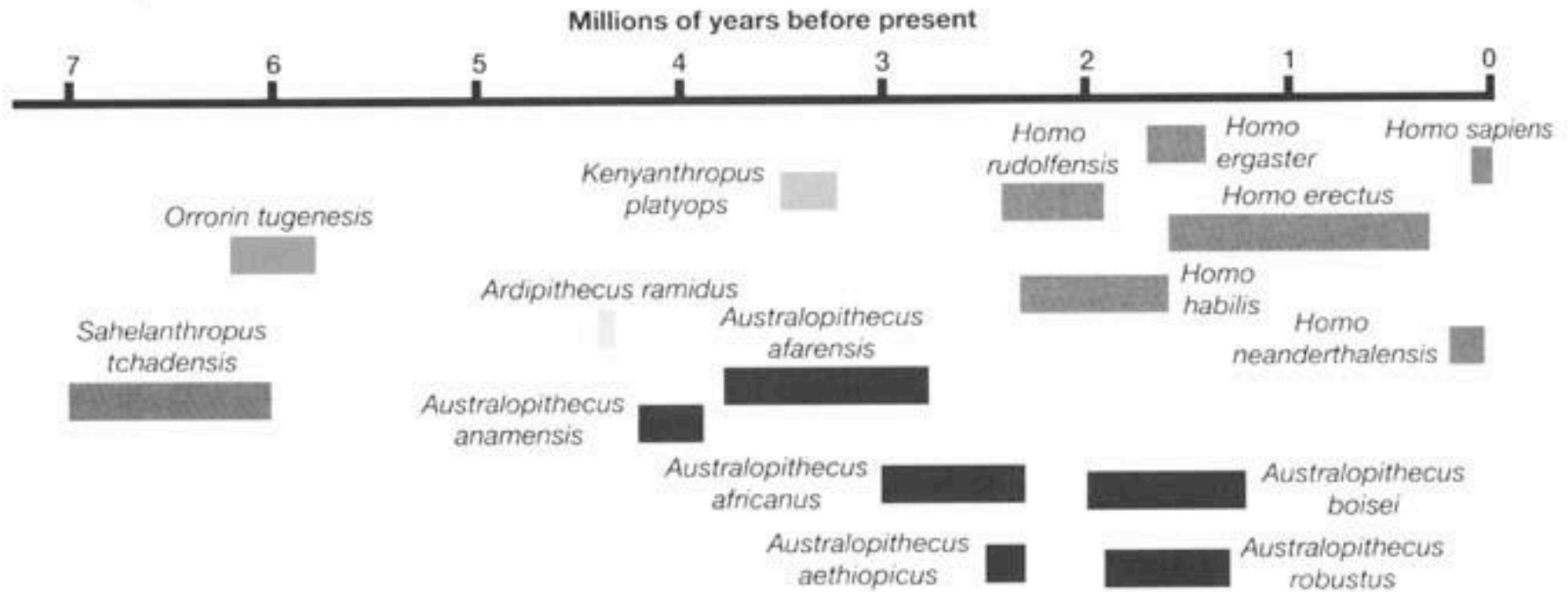
KNM-WT 15000 & Sterkfontein (TM 1513 & Sts 34):
similar "carrying" angle





So, how much are we still influenced by a naïve sequence such as this - becoming increasingly brainier and more strident bipedally?

Figure 26 Hominid evolution. Several species of hominids arose and then died out.



Which, even if taxic diversity is acknowledged, still impacts interpretations of fossils?

Alternative Thinking

“If everyone’s thinking the same
thing,
nobody’s thinking.”

General George S. Patton

Thank you for your kind
attention