Art and Archaeology in the American Funny Pages

Part VIII

Murray C McClellan

Frontispiece: Charles Schulz, *Peanuts*, 13 Oct., 1968.

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Fig. 847. Gary Larson, *Far Side*, 26 Oct., 1984.

In his essay "Archaeological Humor: the Private Joke and the Public Image," which appeared in *Antiquity and Man* (the 1981 *Festschrift* for the distinguished archaeologist Glyn Daniel), Warwick Bray identified three satirical representations of archaeologists in popular culture: the "Explorer," the "Collector," and the "Antiquary." Bray maintains that the popular image of archaeologists and of archaeology has become frozen in time, an "Archaeologyland" of cavemen and dinosaurs, and pith-helmeted archaeologists uncovering Egyptian tombs like Howard Carter of 1922. The archaeologist as explorer, Bray says, ". . . comes in various forms, from the cartoonist's stand-by (an endearing, incompetent figure in pith helmet and baggy shorts, with ill-concealed inclinations towards lechery) to the tough and somewhat sinister characters of popular fiction." A 1984 Gary Larson cartoon (**Fig. 847**) depicts this cartoon cliché of the endearing explorer archaeologist—here correctly identified as an anthropologist as he is studying the fossilized remains of early hominids (for a similar depiction, cf. Larson's 1987 cartoon, cf. **Fig. 270**).

Fig. 848. Troy Lovata, "Talking Dog Archaeology," 2005, p. 25.

Just as how the depiction of prehistory in comics has recently become an academic hot topic (cf. **Figs. 814–824** above), so too has popular culture stereotypes of archaeologists and archaeology drawn a great deal of attention in archaeological circles [cf. Russell (2002), Holtorf (2007), Kristiansen (2008), Ascherson (2017), and Moshenska (2017)]. Troy Lovata's "Talking Dog Archaeology," his humorous 2005 comic strip about his experience of writing a Ph.D. in a comic-strip format, demonstrates how "the role of images in the conception of archaeology" is an acceptable subject in a Ph.D. defense (**Fig. 848**).

While scholars have agreed with Warwick Bray's suggestion that the popular culture characterization of archaeologists has been frozen in time to the 1930's, several have objected to his view that media like newspaper cartoons is an accurate reflection of the public's knowledge of the discipline. Gabriel Moshenska, for instance, writes

> The reality of popular culture archaeology is more complicated than Bray suggests: most if not all archaeologists are just as aware as anybody of popular representations of archaeology, if not more so. Some will have

> become archaeologists based at least in part on a fascination with the representations, and a few might even have consciously constructed their professional identity in relation to the archaeological tropes found in popular culture, most cringe-inspiringly through the acquisition of an *Indiana Jones* hat. This is the same set of commonly understood archaeological themes that form the basis for most popular culture archaeology, including a set of actions such as journeying to remote places and excavating; a set of setting based primarily around Egypt and the Mediterranean; and a set of personal characteristics of the archaeologist themselves as mostly physically tough, and socially, intellectually and economically elite white men. These themes have evolved and changed over time . . .

In other words, the popular culture representations of archaeologists and archaeology are part of the "culturally bound background knowledge" that informs both the layperson and professional alike.

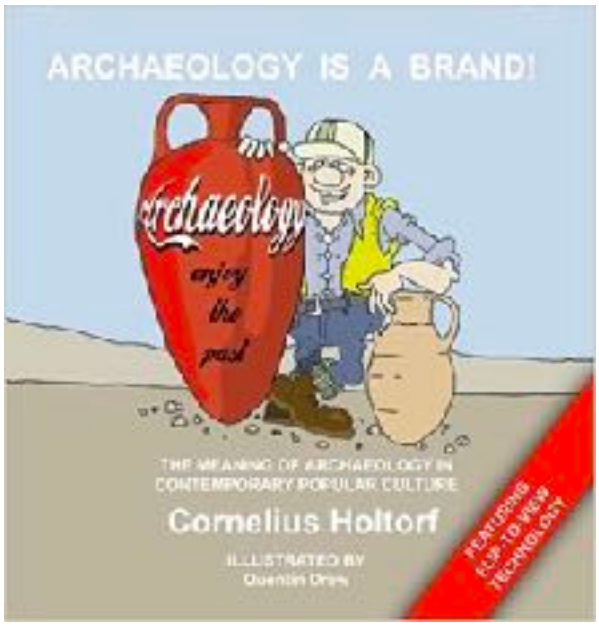

Fig. **849**. Front Cover to Cornelius Holtorf, *Archaeology is a Brand!*, 2007.

Cornelius Holtorf, in his book subtitled *The Meaning of Archaeology in Contemporary Popular Culture* (**Fig**. **849**), has modified Bray's Explorer/Collector/ Antiquary categorization of popular culture stereotypes of archaeologists, proposing instead an Adventurer/Detective/Rescuer tripartite schema. Holtorf, a Swedish professor of cultural heritage, urges archaeologists to embrace popular culture rather than complain about how it misrepresents archaeology. For Holtorf, "archaeologists need to ask their audiences not 'How can I best persuade you about the merits of my project or discipline?' but 'What does what I am doing mean to you?'" To this end, archaeologists, according to Holtorf, should utilize what he calls the "archaeo-appeal" of

the popular culture image of the discipline to focus on the advantages that the archaeological study of the past can bring to the present: the preservation of cultural monuments which contribute to regional economic growth; the entertainment value and inspiration of "heroic" field archaeologists; and the creation of stories about the past that are meaningful to local audiences. Kristian Kristiansen, however, has warned that Holtorf's goal of "shifting the emphasis from archaeology as a way of learning about the past to archaeology as a set of relations in the present" and Holtorf's suggesting an "alternative categorization of archaeology: from archaeology as science and scholarship to archaeology as popular culture" is problematic. For Kristiansen, such an attitude "represents a dangerous attempt to deconstruct archaeology as a historical discipline in order to allow modern market forces to take over the archaeological heritage and the consumption of the past as popular culture."

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Without dwelling more on these debates about the proper relationship of archaeology and popular culture, I might be excused for a few more words about the representation of archaeologists and archaeology in popular culture before we turn to the cartoons and comic strips:

Just as was the case with the association of cavemen and dinosaurs, the first depictions of archaeologists in popular culture is to be found in pulp fiction. One of the earliest of such is H. Rider Haggard 1885 novel, *King Solomon's Mine*, the protagonist of which is Allen Quatermain, an English-born South African professional game hunter who leads a group of explorers on a mission to find lost treasure (**Fig. 850**). Haggard's *King Solomon's Mine* is often cited as one of the progenitors of the genre of "lost world" fiction, influencing such works as Arthur Conan Doyle's 1912 *Lost World*—the novel we noted above for its "lost world" of dinosaurs and ape-like cavemen (**Fig. 748**). Doyle himself wrote a short story which featured archaeologists, "The New Catacomb" (originally published as "Burger's Secret" in *The Sunlight Year-Book* in 1898). If Haggard's character Allen Quatermain is the stereotypical rugged explorer/tomb-robber Collector, the archaeologists in Doyle's "The New Catacomb" are more staid, well dressed, Antiquarians: Dr. Julius Burger, a German archaeologist who entombs his rival, the Englishman Kennedy, in a Roman catacomb as revenge for Kennedy having seduced Burger's fiancé (**Fig. 851**).

"TO THOSE WHO ENTER THE HALL OF THE DEAD, EVIL COMES." (*p.* 268).

Fig. 850. Walter Paget, Illustration for H. Rider Haggard, *King Solomon's Mine*, 1888.

BURGER'S SECRET. 451

catacomb. You can see for yourself that it is difficult, but every one of these passages divide and subdivide a dozen times before you go a hundred yards."

They had descended some twenty feet from the level of the byre, and they were standing now in a square chamber cut out of the soft tufa. The lantern cast a flickering light, bright below and dim above, over the cracked brown walls. In every direction were the black openings of passages which radiated from this common centre.

"'WAIT UNTIL I BRING THE LIGHT.'" [*p.* 450

"I want you to follow me closely, my friend," said Burger. "Do not loiter to look at anything upon the way, for the place to which I will take you contains all that you can see, and more. It will save time for us to go there direct."

He led the way down one of the corridors and the

SUNLIGHT SOAP is a friend in need. Q 2

Fig. 851. Arthur Conan Doyle, "Burger's Secret" ("The New Catacomb"), *The Sunlight Year-Book*, 1898.

Perhaps the most famous archaeology novel is Agatha Christie's 1936 *Murder in Mesopotamia* (**Fig. 852**), which was informed by Christie's own experience of working alongside her archaeologist husband, Sir Max Mallowan, on his excavations in Iraq. In *Murder in Mesopotamia*, Christie's fictional detective Hercule Poirot arrives at an archaeological excavation where there had recently been two murders, and, of course, he solves the case. [Spoiler alert, the murderer was a former WWI German spy who had assumed the identify of an archaeologist and married his former wife who thought that her husband (the spy) had died in a train wreck.] At the end of the case, one of the diggers tells Hercule "You would have made a good archaeologist, M. Poirot. You have the gift of re-creating the past."

The popular image of archaeologist-as-detective was reinforced by the novels of the eminent Cambridge archaeologist Glyn Daniels, who wrote mysteries originally published under the pseudonym Dilwyn Reese. The crime in Daniel's 1945 *The*

Cambridge Murders (**Fig. 853**), for instance, is solved by an eccentric, scholarly, archaeologist loosely based on Daniels himself.

Fig. 852. Robert Macartney, Dust jacket illustration for Agatha Christie, *Murder in Mesopotamia*, 1936.

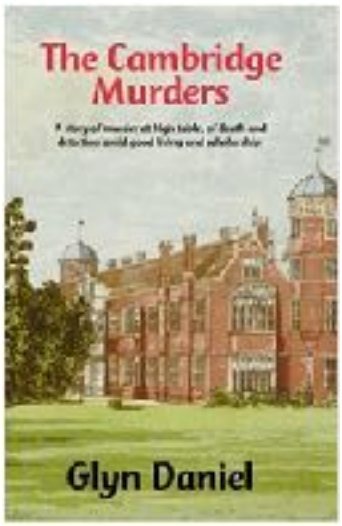

Fig. 853. Cover to Glyn Daniel, *The Cambridge Murders* (1964 Penguin reprint of 1945 original).

And, again, just as the caveman-dinosaur connection first appeared in pulp fiction but only became a significant part of popular culture once it appeared in films, so too have movies played a major role in creating our contemporary popular image of archaeologists. One of the first archaeologist to hit the big screen was in Leslie Howard's 1941 *Pimpernel Smith*, which was released in the US as *Mister V* (**Fig. 854**); in this pro-British propaganda film, Howard played the role of a British archaeologist who mounts an excavation to Nazi Germany in 1939 as a cover for his plans to rescue inmates from a concentration camp. [*Pimpernel Smith* is said to have inspired the real-life Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg who saved thousands of Hungarian Jews from concentration camps at the end of WW II.]

Fig. 854. Poster for *Mister V* (*Pimpernel Smith*), 1941.

Fig. 855. Poster for *Indiana Jones* movies, 1981–2008.

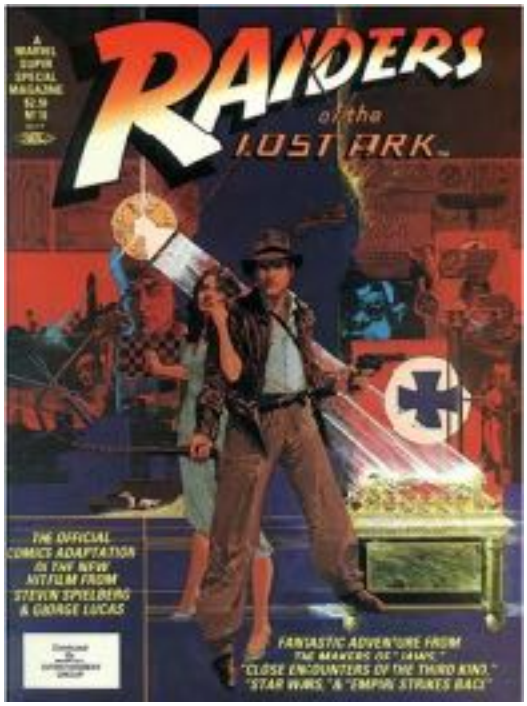

Fig. 856. Howard Chakyn, Cover art for Walt Simonson, "Raiders of the Lost Arc," *Marvel Comics Super Special*, Vol. 1, # 18 (September, 1981).

Fig. 857. "Indiana Jones: Fashion Icon," *Biblical Archaeology Review*, March/ April 2014.

Of course, the most famous archaeologist movies are the *Indiana Jones* franchise. After the initial 1981 film *Raiders of the Lost Arc*, Harrison Ford has reprised his role as the indefatigable archaeology professor/procurer-of-mystical-artifacts three times, in 1984, 1989, and 2008, and a much-delayed fifth *Indiana Jones* film is scheduled to be released in 2021 (**Fig. 855**). In addition to being a staple of the silver screen, the swashbuckling archaeologist Jones has also appeared in comic books (**Fig. 856**), and, as Gabriel Moshenska observed, has become a cringe-inspiring fashion model for a generation of real field archaeologists (**Fig. 857**).

Harrison Ford's Indiana Jones character epitomizes the stereotype of archaeologists as being physically tough elite white men who travel to remote parts of the world to uncover exotic artifacts. We see the same type of macho explorer in the modern *Mummy* film franchise, loosely based on the original films of 1932–1944 which featured Boris Karloff and Lon Chaney Jr. as the reanimated mummy; in the 1999 version, which was set in 1923, a rugged American explorer and his beautiful librarian assistant (and future wife) have to defeat the mummy's curse to save the world (**Fig. 858**).

Fig. 858. Poster for *the Mummy*, 1999.

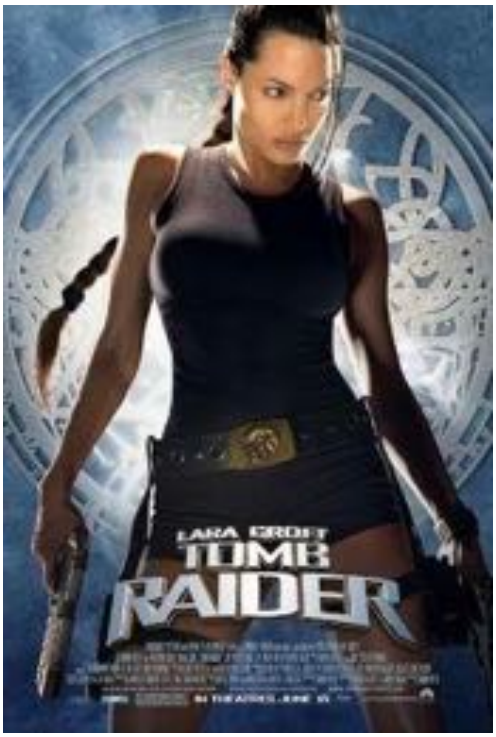

Fig. 859. Poster for *Lara Croft Tomb Raider*, 2001.

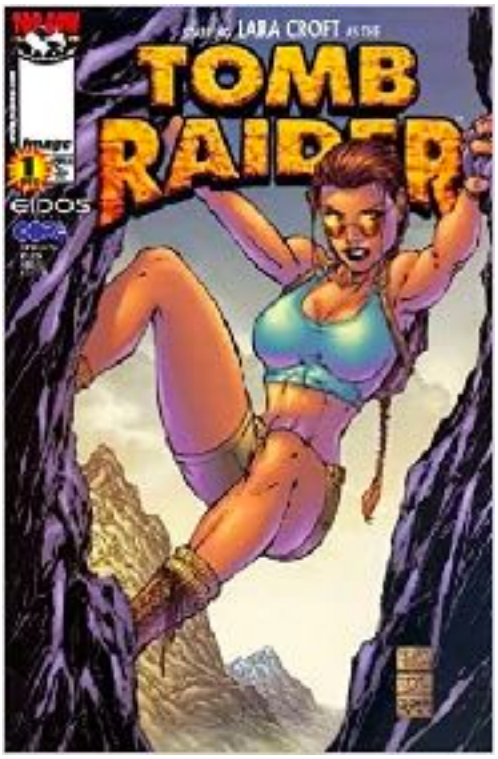

Fig. 860. Michael Turner, Cover illustration illustration for *Tomb Raider* # 1 (1 Jan., 1999).

Fig. 861. Adam Hughes, Cover art for *Tomb Raider* # 33 (1 Jan., 2003).

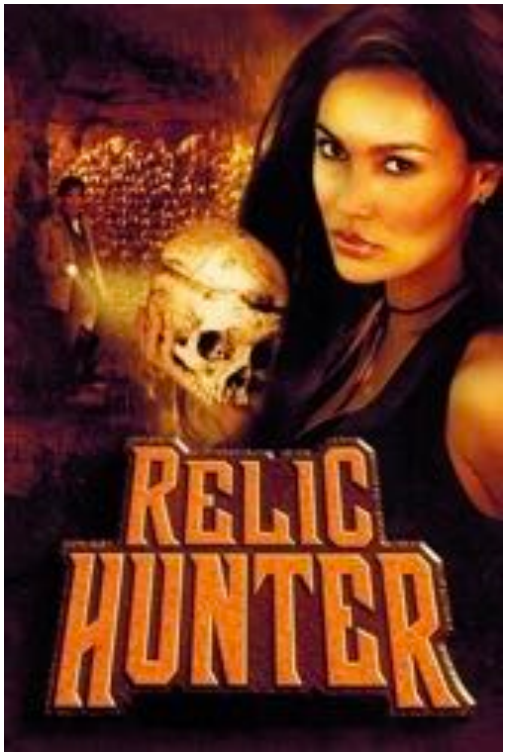

Fig. 862. Poster for *Relic Hunter*, 1999.

Fig. 863. Salvador Larocca, Cover art for Kieron Gillen, *Star Wars Doctor Aphra*, Marvel Comics, 25 March, 2015.

Fig. 864. Rucka and Bilquis Evely, *D.C. Universe Rebirth # 8, Wonder Woman* (Dec., 2016).

It is not surprising that in the 1990's women would come to have more active roles to play in archaeology movies, even taking on the part of the swashbuckling archaeologist, although at the same time still being sexually objectified. This transformation began with the Lara Croft Tomb Raider video game, which was launched in 1996 and spawned a media franchise that includes movies (**Fig. 859**) and comic books (**Figs. 860–861**). The Canadian television series, *Relic Hunter* (**Fig. 862**), which aired from 1999 to 2003, featured a dynamic, globe-trotting professor, Sydney Fox, who searched for ancient artifacts to return to museums or to the descendants of the original owners. In 2015, as part of the *Star Wars* spin-off franchise, Kieron Gillen created the Marvel comic-book character Dr. Aphra (**Fig. 863**), a morally ambiguous archaeologist who once worked for Darth Vader and who is obsessed with uncovering ancient weapons technology and Jedi artifacts; Gillen said he modeled his female space archaeologist on "the Indiana Jones archaeological archetype." Not to be outdone, in 2016, DC Comics introduced its own female archaeologist, Barbara Ann Minerva, an arrogant, hard-drinking and gun-toting heiress who ends up being possessed by an ancient spirit that turns her into one of Wonder Woman's arch-enemies, the Cheetah (**Fig. 864**).

As we can see, the archaeologist of pulp fiction and the movies is a socially liminal figure, just as likely to be an anti-hero or anti-heroine as he or she is to be a hero or heroine. And, in English-language fiction and cinema, the foreign archaeologist is invariably evil, from Arthur Conan Doyle's murderous German Dr. Burger and Agatha Christie's German spy usurper to the French archaeologist and Nazi collaborator René Belloq of the *Indiana Jones* movies. This moral ambiguity, in American popular culture at least, reflects a deep suspicion of the discipline of archaeology, with the rugged individual leaving the Homeland to go off to foreign lands where he or she will be exposed to exotic cultures while searching for ancient artifacts in a manner that few can distinguish from common tomb-robbing. [It should go without saying that an accurate portrayal of what real archaeologists do—mind-numbing hours of slowly uncovering stratigraphic layer after stratigraphic layer, and a year in the laboratory and library for every month spent in the field—would not make for a very compelling drama!]

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Curiously, although both the male and female swashbuckling archaeologist-adventurer of pulp fiction and the movies have been featured in action comic books, neither has become a cartoon cliché in the funny pages. Instead, humorous cartoon and comic-strip archaeologists continue to be locked into Bray's "endearing, incompetent figure in pith helmet and baggy shorts" of the 1930's. To the extent that cartoonists and comic strip artists assume their viewers have a "culturally bound background knowledge" of the portrayal of archaeologists in popular culture, they do so only to create an ironic incongruity, such as with Dave Whamond's gag about an elderly demented Indiana Jones (**Fig**. **865**) or Mark Tatulli's parody of a child Indiana (**Fig**. **866**).

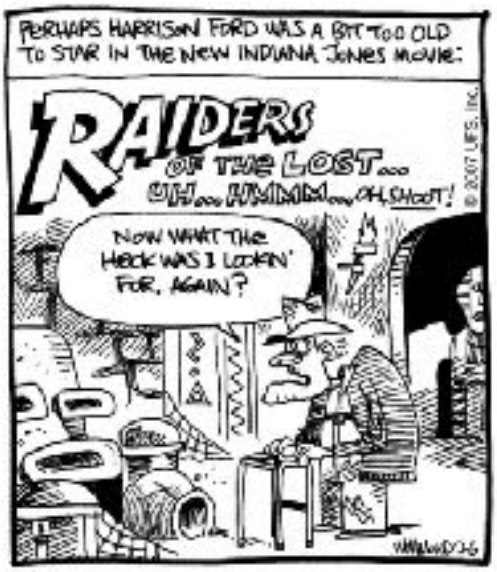

Fig. **865**. Dave Whamond, *Reality Check*, 6 Feb., 2007.

Fig. **866**. Mark Tatulli, *Heart of the City*, 2 March, 2015.

Just as we have seen with cartoons about children in museums (**Figs**. **221**–**229**) and children making art (**Figs**. **398**–**429**), portraying children as archaeologists is intrinsically funny. The *locus classicus* of the cartoon child-archaeologist, as John

Kantner noted, is the 1988 two-week series of Bill Watterson's *Calvin and Hobbes*, which I reproduce here in its entirety (**Fig. 867**), with the words of caution I made in the "Test Case" essay about analyzing daily strips as a group, which both transforms the technical unit of analysis from a horizontal segment to a whole page, and denies the timing that the artist originally intended for us to appreciate the strips, in this case as a slow accumulation of small jokes about Calvin and his animated stuff tiger excavating garbage while thinking that they were digging up dinosaur bones. While these jokes were intended to bring a smile to the viewer's face, the real target of this Watterson series are "archaeologists" (paleontologists) themselves, here portrayed as more interested in financial gain than in scientific discovery. [I might add that cartoons like this contribute to the common popular confusion of archaeologists, who study the material culture of past human societies, with paleontologists, who study the fossilized remains of ancient animals—a confusion that Faith Hanney joked about in her 2012 "Six Things I've Never Found" *Shovel Bum* comic (**Fig. 836**).


ARCHAEOLOGISTS DIG SLOWLY AND CAREFULLY, USING SMALL DELICATE TOOLS.
EACH ROCK HAS TO BE PAINSTAKINGLY BRUSHED AND SCRAPED SO NOTHING IS BROKEN OR MISSED.
DIG DIG SCRAPE SCRAPE BRUSH BRUSH
ARCHAEOLOGISTS HAVE THE MOST MIND-NUMBING JOB ON THE PLANET.
I DON'T THINK YOUR DAD WILL WANT TO SHAVE WITH THIS TOMORROW.
HEY, LOOK! I HIT SOMETHING!
DON'T BREAK IT! DIG CAREFULLY!
GOSH, WHAT DO YOU SUPPOSE IT IS?
DUST IT OFF SO WE CAN SEE.
IT'S SOME BIZARRE SKULL!
LOOK AT ITS MOUTH. MAYBE IT'S A PREHISTORIC ANTEATER.
WOW! I CAN'T BELIEVE WE FOUND A DINOSAUR SKULL ON OUR VERY FIRST ARCHAEOLOGICAL DIG!
IT'S COMPLETELY INTACT, TOO! WHAT A DISCOVERY!
MAYBE THE REST OF THE SKELETON IS NEARBY!
YEAH! IF WE CAN FIND THE WHOLE THING, WE'LL BE WORLD FAMOUS!
WITH THE GRANT MONEY WE'LL GET, WE CAN BUY A PORSCHE!
HOW WILL THIS LOOK ON THE COVER OF NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC?
I FOUND ANOTHER BONE! I FOUND ANOTHER BONE!
BOY, THIS IS A WEIRD ONE. WHAT IS IT?
IT COULD BE A FOREARM AND FINGERS.
I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE WHAT THE COMPLETE CALVINOSAUR LOOKS LIKE.
I DIDN'T KNOW BONES CAME IN DECORATOR COLORS, DID YOU?

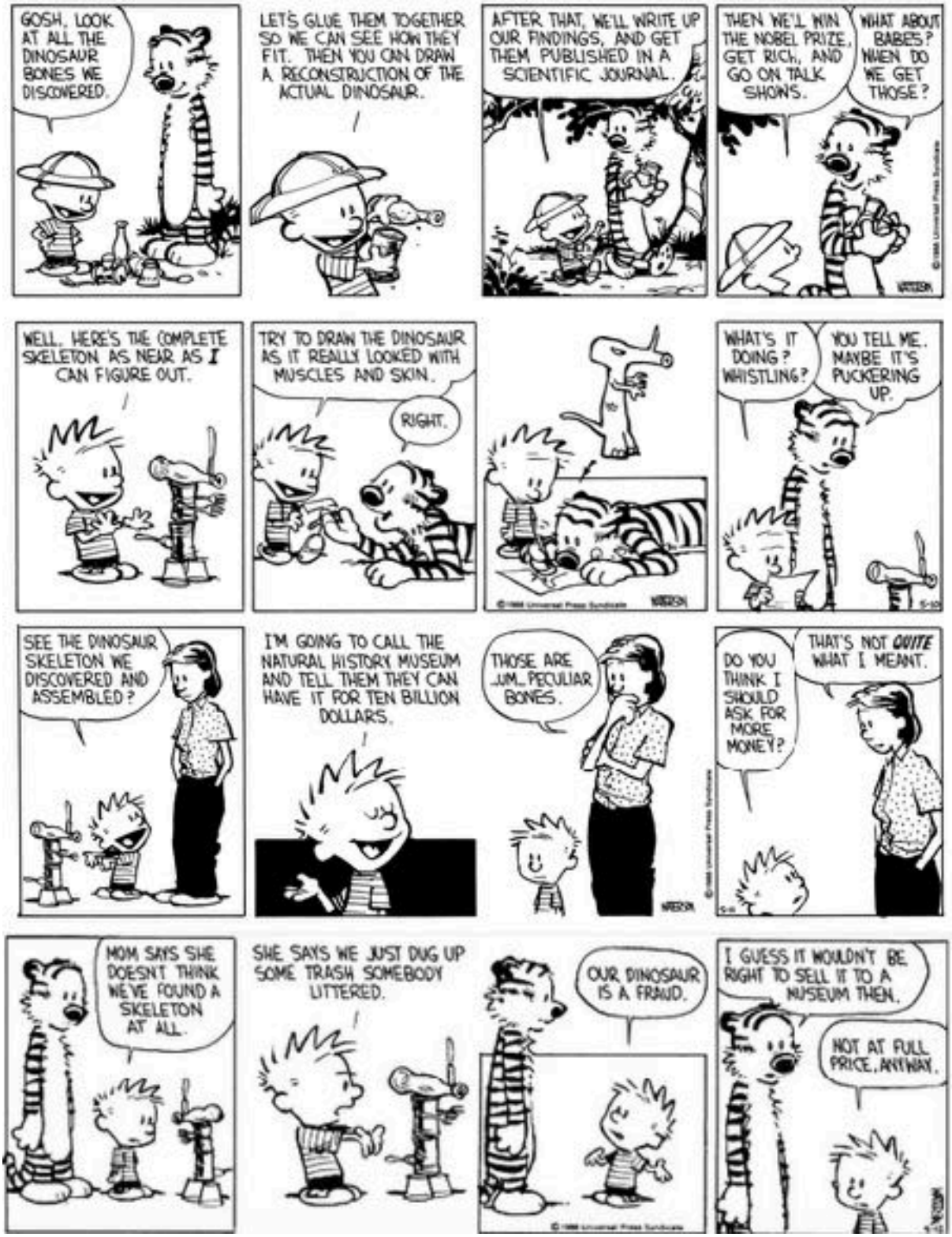

Fig. **867**. Bill Watterson, *Calvin and Hobbes*, 2–7 and 9–12 May, 1988.

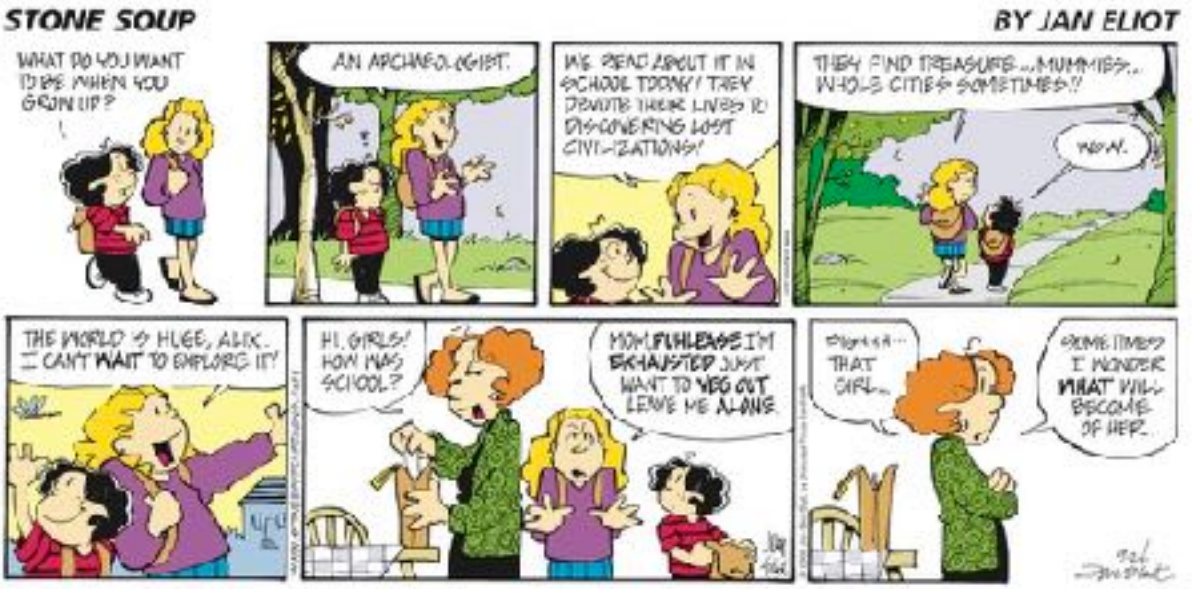

Fig. 868. Jan Eliot, *Stone Soup*, 24 Sept., 2000.

A Jan Eliot *Stone Soup* strip (**Fig. 868**) presents a poignant variation on the child-as-archaeologist theme, with the teenaged daughter Holly waxing eloquently to her younger sister about her desire to be an archaeologist when she grows up, and then clamming up to her mother; the gag here is not on archaeologists *per se* but rather on the lack of communication between mother and teenaged daughter—a joke that is accentuated by the switch in the visual point of view, with us starting out looking down at the girls from an adult perspective and ending up looking up at the mom from a child's perspective.

Fig. 869. Wiley Miller, *Non Sequitur,* 16 Nov., 2015.

Fig. 870. Wiley Miller, *Non Sequitur*, 22 March, 2015.

Fig. 871. Jeff Stahler, *Moderately Confused*, 31 Dec., 2014.

Another way children feature in archaeology-themed cartoons and comic strips is to have them view the adults in their lives as some sort of throw-backs to an archaic past. Wiley Miller used this type of "inverse humorous ucronía" in his *Non Sequitur*

strip, where the pre-adolescent daughter Danae looks upon her father with scorn for his adherence to ancient technologies like paper newspapers (**Fig. 869**) or landline telephones (**Fig. 870**). Miller, known for his innovative development of a format so that newspaper editors could print a strip horizontally or vertically, uses a variety of design elements to accentuate the gags in these two strips: the **Fig. 869** horizontal strip begins with a borderless panel that segues into a single-bordered and then a wordless double-bordered panel which focuses our attention on the dawning-realization consternation marks coming off the father's head before returning to the final, borderless, release panel; in his vertical Sunday strip (**Fig. 870**), Miller uses a number of inset panels that the viewer returns to after coming to the final, borderless, release panel in order to realize that Danae is mocking her father as a Neanderthal. The "inverse humorous uchronía" in Jeff Stahler's *Moderately Confused* cartoon (**Fig. 871**) is presented from an adult perspective, which provides a degree of separation as we look down upon the children who consider using the *Encyclopedia Britannica* as prehistoric googling.

And, just as we have seen portraying dogs or cats as artists is intrinsically humorous (**Figs. 343–349**), so too having a dog dig like an archaeologist strikes our funny bone.

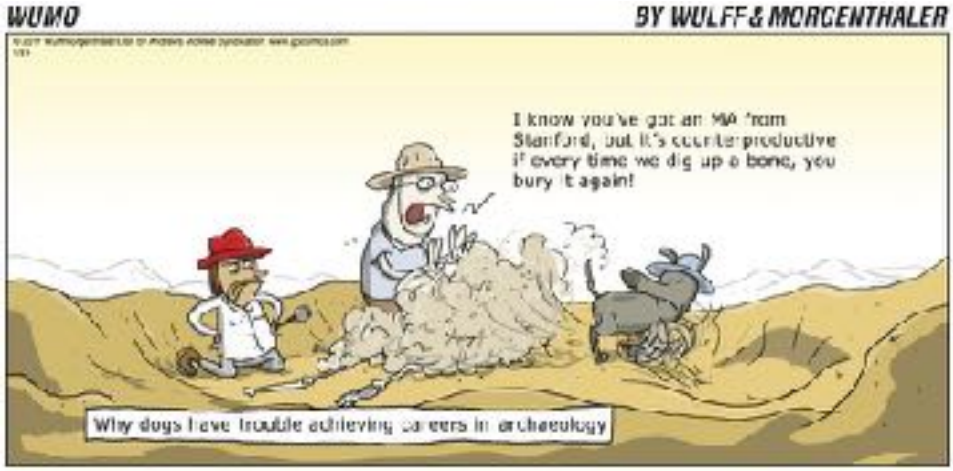

Fig. 872. Mikael Wulff & Anders Morgenthaler, *Wumo*, 29 Jan., 2017.

Fig. **873**. Paul Gilligan, *Pooch Café*, 23 June, 2013.

Fig. **874**. Paul Gilligan, *Pooch Café*, 22 Nov., 2015.

The gag in Wulff & Morgenthaler's *Wumo* cartoon, with its pith-helmeted and *Indiana-Jones*-hatted archaeologists (**Fig**. **872**), is just absurd. Paul Gilligan used the same dog-burying-a-bone cliché for a joke about the mischievous Pooch stealing a bone from the "museum of dinosaurs" (**Fig**. **873**), a gag that Gilligan repeated two years later (**Fig**. **874**).

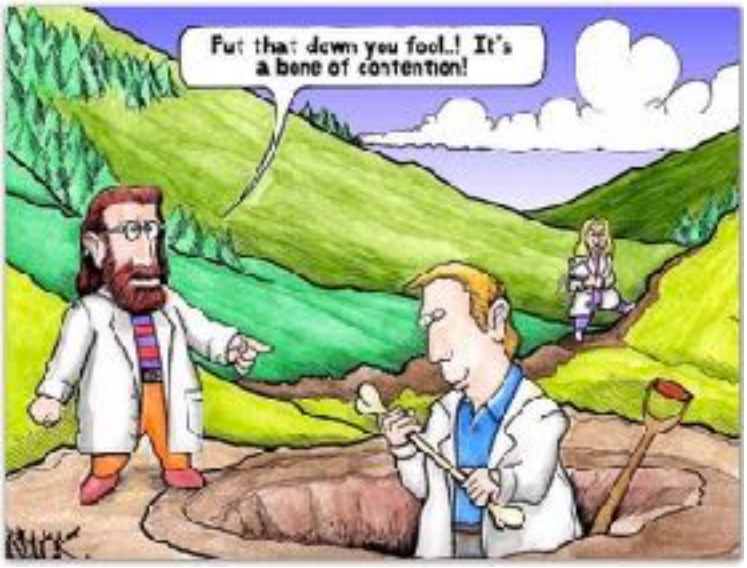

Fig. 875. Nick D Kim, 5 September, 2017.

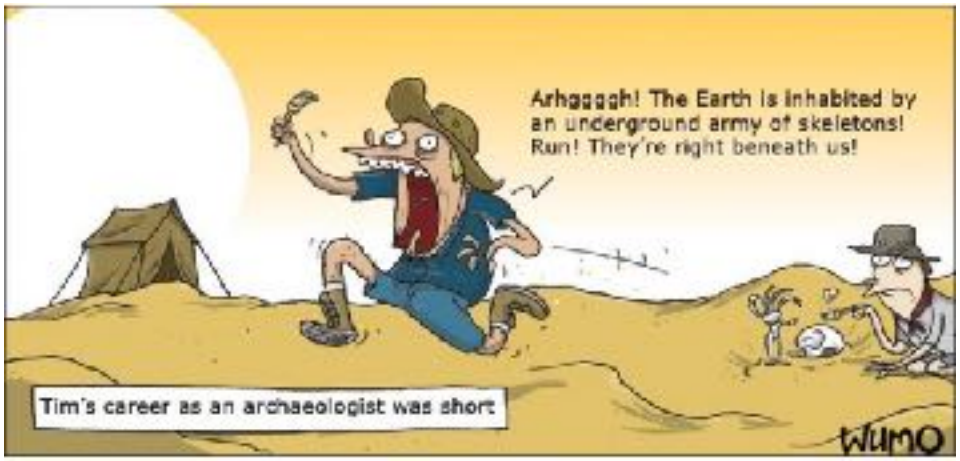

Fig. 876. Mikael Wulff & Anders Morgenthaler, *Wumo*, 30 April, 2019.

The New Zealander cartoonist Nick D Kim gives us another "digging-up-a-bone" archaeology cartoon (**Fig. 874**), this time with a silly play on words. [We might note that real field archaeologists, for obvious reasons, do not wear pristine white lab coats while digging.] The Danish Wulff and Morgenthaler team returned to their failed archaeologist theme with another archaeologist-digging-up-bones cartoon (**Fig. 875**) where an archaeologist in an Indiana Jones hat is excavating a skeleton that is inexplicably sticking out of the ground. We might also note that, as they are portrayed in these Kim and Wulff & Morgenthaler cartoons (and in their **Fig. 872** and **Fig. 878** *Wumo* cartoons), archaeologists do not dig random holes like pot hunters; the carefully excavated square trenches real archaeologists dig, with vertical side walls (baulks) used to record the stratigraphy, rarely appear in humorous cartoons. And, although bones—albeit not fossilized ones—do form an important component of the ecofacts that

archaeologists collect, these “digging-up-bones” cartoons also reinforce the popular confusion between archaeology and paleontology.

Fig. **877**. Charles Addams, *The New Yorker*.

Charles Addams played with this issue in a *New Yorker* cartoon (**Fig**. **877**), where a team of paleoanthropologists are digging up fossilized remains of early humans when a pith-helmeted, baggy-shorts member walks up incongruously leading a slope-headed, club-wielding hairy Neanderthal.

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Fig. 878. Tom Thaves, *Frank and Ernest.* , 13 March, 2015.

Fig. 879. Mikael Wulff & Anders Morgenthaler, *Wumo*, 27 March, 2019.

Tom Thaves, in a typical *Frank and Ernest* silly word-play cartoon (**Fig. 878**), shows us an archaeologist who wears a pith helmet in the field and a lab coat in the museum storerooms, but we should point out that this cartoon archaeologist excavates like a pot-hunter and certainly would not have been allowed to work on Paleolithic, Minoan, and Celtic sites. Wulff and Morgenthaler's Indiana-Jones-hatted Dr. Winterbottom (**Fig. 879**) is also a bad digger—a careful excavator would be able to discern the stratigraphic deposition of the lost socks. The pith-helmeted archaeologist

in Mark Godfrey's cartoon (**Fig**. **880**) has dug a nice strait baulk, although Godrey's word-play gag leaves unexplained why there was a gap in occupation at this site between the Paleolithic (ca. 18,000 BCE) and the Iron Age (ca. 900 BCE).

Fig. **880**. NAD (Mark Godfrey), *Wildlife Cartoons Australia*, 2013.

Fig. 881. Jim Meddick, *Monty*, 25 March, 2013.

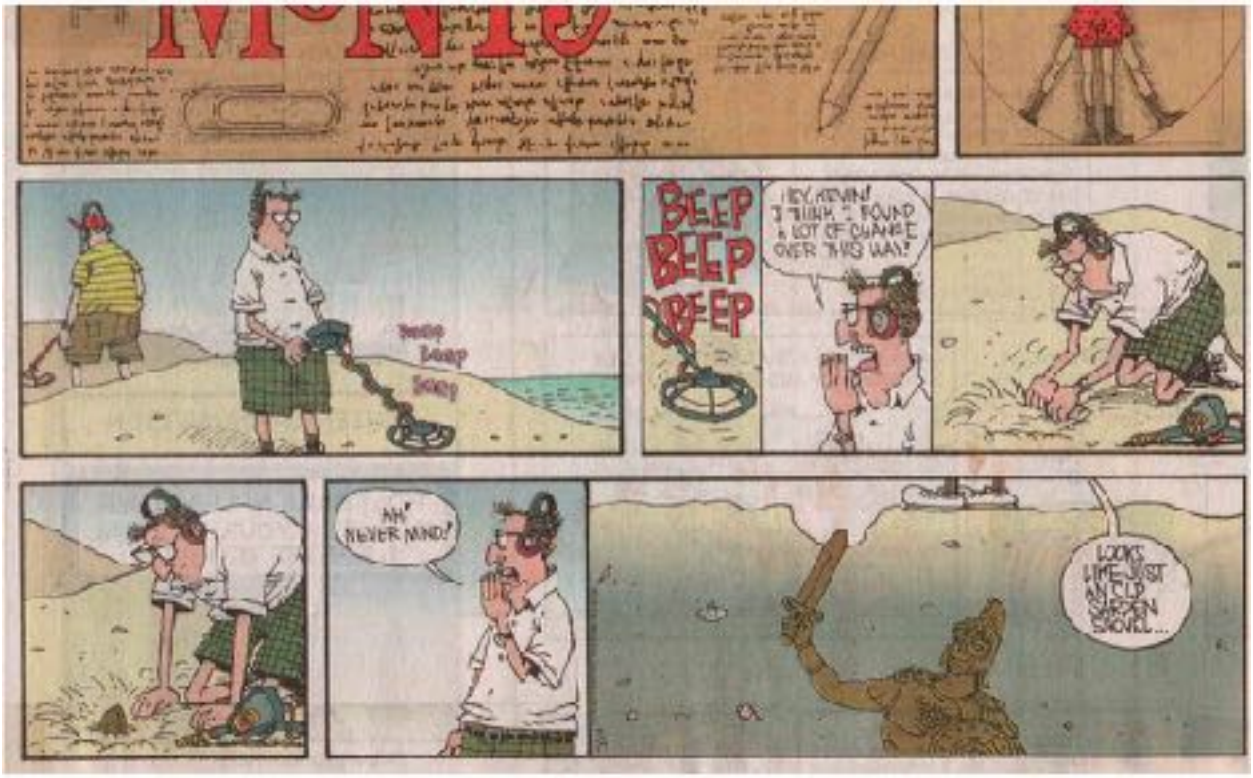

Fig. 882. Jim Meddick, *Monty*,14 July, 2013.

Jim Meddick has made fun of amateur archaeologists on several occasions. His **Fig. 881** strip features Monty's friend Moondog, who, as we have seen, works as a museum guard and is not against breaking the rules to impress the ladies (cf. **Figs. 182–185)**. Meddick's **Fig. 882** comic strip has Monty using a metal detector at the beach, only to miss finding what, in the elongated release panel, appears to be a Roman bronze statue buried in a deposit curiously devoid of stratigraphy; given that pot hunters using metal detectors are a bane of archaeologists and can inflect serious damage on archaeological sites, I, for one, am glad of Monty's misfortune.

The Funny Future of the Past

A popular secondary-school social-studies lesson plan is to have students imagine what archaeologists of the future might surmise about their lives based on the material culture they see around them. Cartoonists have employed this same idea to find humor in projecting archaeologists into the future and having them misinterpret the material remains of our contemporary world—another form of an "inverse humorous ucronía" used to satirize modern society.

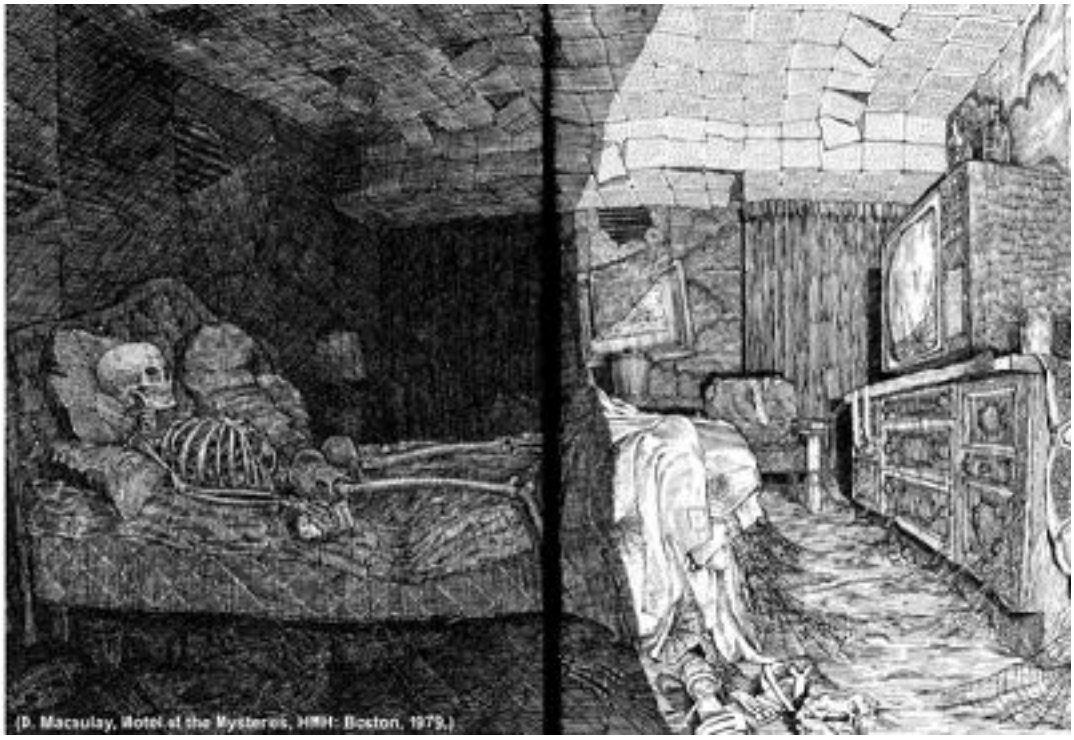

Fig. 883. David Maccaulay, *Motel of the Mysteries*, 1979.

Fig. 884. Sophia Schleimann wearing the "Jewels of Helen," 1874.

Fig. 885. David Maccaulay, *Motel of the Mysteries*, 1979.

Fig. **886**. David Maccaulay, *Motel of the Mysteries*, 1979.

One of the funniest example of this "inverse humorous uchronía" is David Maccaulay's 1979 illustrated book *Motel of the Mysteries*, which came out just after the blockbuster exhibition of the Tutankhamum treasures had toured the United States between 1976 and 1979. *Motel of the Mysteries* is set in the year 4022, after ancient "Usa" had collapsed in 1985, buried under the detritus of junk mail that descended on the country after a reduction in postal rates. The plot revolves around an amateur archaeologist, Howard Carson, and his assistant, Harriet Burton, who stumble upon a buried motel which they misidentify as a sacred site. A skeleton in bed, remote control still in its hand, is interpreted by Carson as "facing an altar [i.e. a TV] that appeared to be a means of communicating with the Gods" (**Fig**. **883**). Howard and Harriet find another body in "a porcelain sarcophagus" [i.e. a bathtub] in the "Inner Chamber" [i.e. the bathroom]. In a parody of Henrich Schliemann's famous 1874 photograph of his wife wearing part of "Priam's Treasure" (**Fig**. **884**) [gold ornaments that actually date to the Early Bronze Age, a thousand years before the time of the Trojan War], Harriet put on the "Sacred Collar" [i.e. the toilet seat], "matching Headband" [i.e. the "sanitized for your comfort" paper strip one finds on motel toilets] and "the magnificent plastics ear

ornaments and the exquisite chain and pendant" [i.e. toothbrushes and bathtub plug] (**Fig. 885**). Howard Carson also puts on the "Sacred Collar" and "matching Headband" and worships at the "porcelain altar" (**Fig. 886**)—an early reference to the urban slang phrase "worshipping the porcelain altar" referring to bulimics and binge-drinkers throwing up; this is also a rather risqué reference for the MacArthur "genius" grant recipient Maccaulay, who would go on to illustrate a popular series of young-adult "how things are made" books. In keeping with the Howard Carter/Tutankhamum theme, both Howard Carson and Harriet Burton fall victim to the "mummy's curse" and die after excavating the Motel of the Mysteries.

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Fig. 887. Gary Wise and Lance Aldrich, *Real Life Adventures*. 29 Dec., 1999.

Fig. 888. Guy Endore-Kaiser and Rodd Perry, *Brevity*, 13 July, 2011.

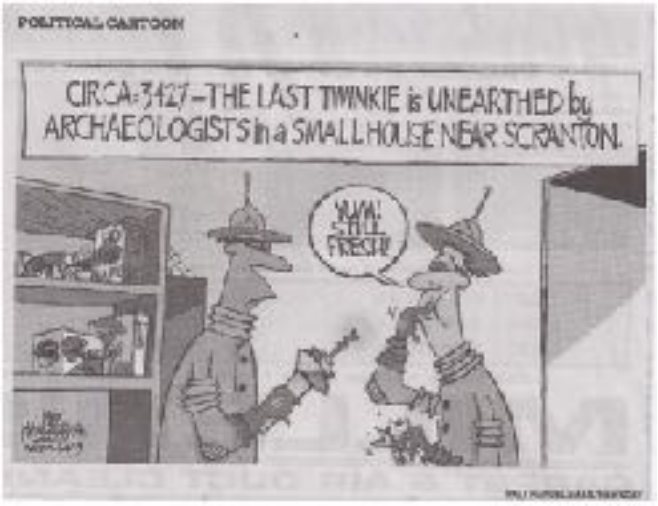

Fig. **889**. Walt Handelsman, *Newsday*, 19 Nov., 2012.

Fig. 890. Wayne Honath, *WaynoVision*, 7 Oct., 2015.

One way cartoonists can indicate that they are making a joke about future archaeologists, without alerting their readers with an explanatory text, is to dress them up in space-agey clothes. Gary Wise and Lance Aldrich, for instance, give us a high-collared professor with radical sun-glasses lecturing in front of a triangular lectern about his silly interpretation of our contemporary tendency to loose coins in the sofa (**Fig**. **887**). The future archaeologist misinterpreting an airport luggage carousel in a Guy Endore-Kaiser and Rodd Perry cartoon (**Fig**. **888**) is wearing futuristic pantaloons, although the excavator is still wearing a white lab coat and pith helmet, and is digging like a pot hunter without proper trench baulks. Although we could surmise by their costumes and pith helmets with little antennae that the archaeologists in a Walt Handelsman cartoon (**Fig**. **889**) are from the future, the political cartoonist Handelsman needs to gives us a date—humorously labeled as "circa"—in order for us to appreciate his crack at preservatives in our modern junk food. Wayne Honath has used the cartoon cliché of a mother talking to her child in a museum (cf. **Figs**. **223**–**226**) to have the futuristically dressed and coiffed mother read a museum label with its humorously misinformed interpretation of Disneyland (**Fig**. **890**)—a joke very much in line with David Maccaulay's *Motel of the Mysteries*.

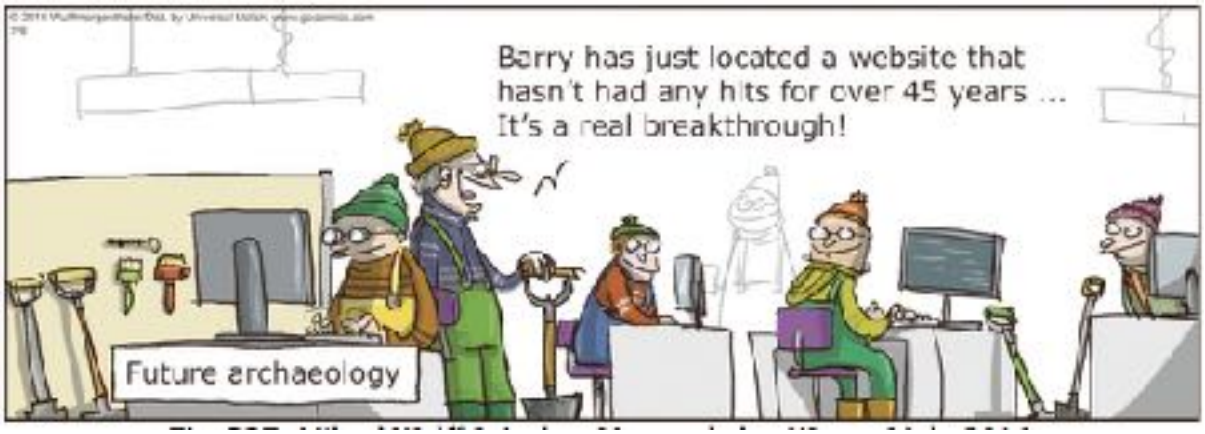

Fig. 891. Mikael Wulff & Anders Morgenthaler, *Wumo*, 6 July, 2016.

Fig. 892. John Baynham 2006.

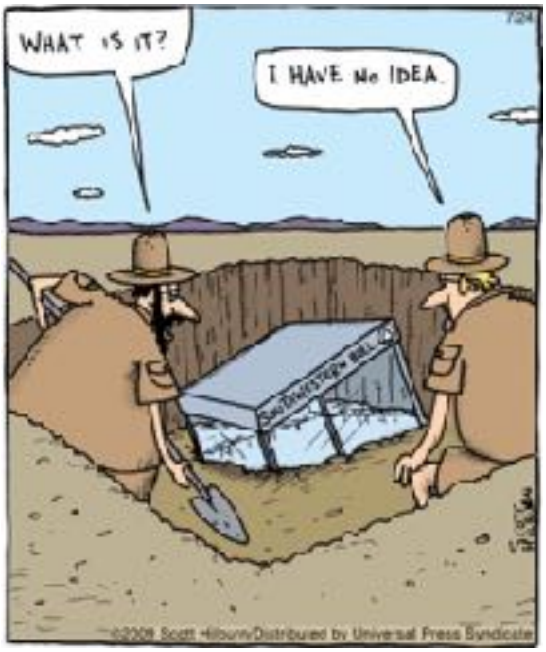

Fig. 893. Scott Hilburn, *The Argyle Sweater*, 24 July, 2009.

A common theme in future archaeology cartoons is making fun of technology. A Wulff & Morgenthaler's, *Wumo* cartoon (**Fig. 891**), for instance, has future "archaeologists"—inexplicably wearing winter caps and sporting shovels next to their computers—excited by their discovery of an ancient website. We need to assume that the archaeologists in John Baynham's and Scott Hilburn's cartoons are from the future, even though they are wearing sensible khakis; the pith-helmeted archaeologists in Baynham's cartoon (**Fig. 892**), who dig like pot hunters, are amazed at older, slow bandwidth technology, while the Indiana-Jones-hatted archaeologists in Hilburn's cartoon (**Fig. 893**), who have dug a nice, squared trench, are befuddled by an old phone booth.

Fig. 894. Wiley Miller, Non Sequitur, 7 Oct., 1992.

Fig. 895. Wiley Miller, Non Sequitur, 7 July., 1998.

While the humor in future archaeology cartoons and comic strips usually comes from incongruous misinterpretations, one function of these "inverse humorous uchronía" jokes is to make a social commentary about what comics artists sees as contemporary problems in their world, and a such they provide interesting insights into American culture. The absurd premise that the "Usa" came to an end by being buried by an avalanche of junk mail in David Maccaulay's *Motel of the Mysteries*, for instance, not only provides Maccaulay an excuse to have his amateur archaeologist Howard Carson make silly surmises about ancient America, but it is also a critique of the excesses of advertising in our capitalistic society. In the same vein, Wiley Miller has given us "Future Archaeology" cartoons that critique the propensity of contemporary Americans to overeat and watch too much television (**Fig**. **894**), or to work in mind-numbing office cubicles (**Fig**. **895**).

Indeed, some future archaeology cartoons and comic strips have moved beyond being simple "gags" and should be considered as political, op-ed, pieces. We see this especially with those that deal with our serious contemporary environmental issue of climate change.

Fig. 896. Ruben Bolling (Ken Fisher), *Tom the Dancing Bug*, 4 May, 2002.

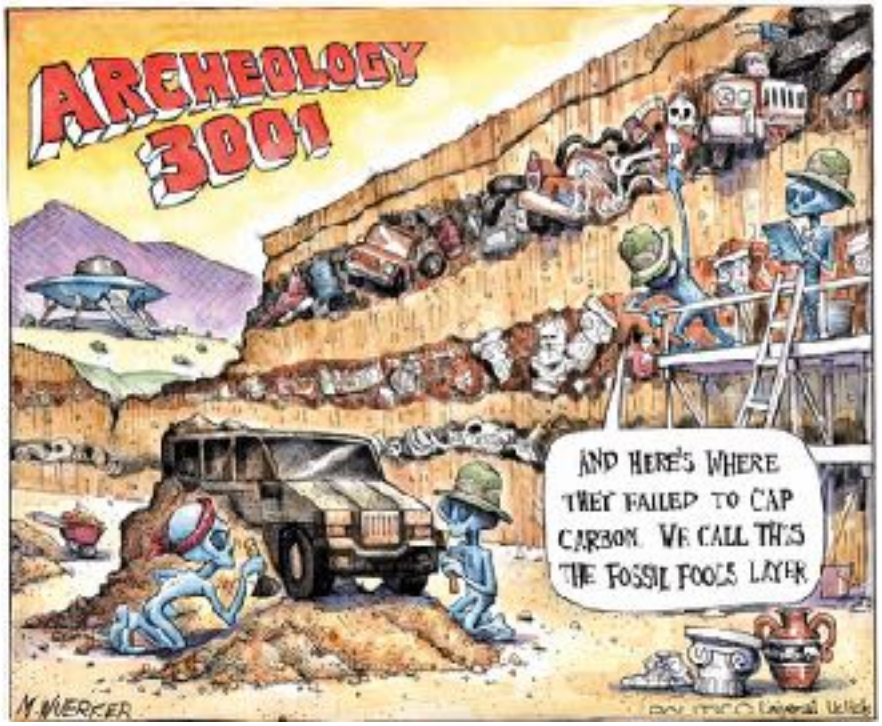

Fig. 897. Matt Wurker, 12 July, 2012.

The pith-helmeted future archaeologist in Ken Fisher's 2002 *Tom the Dancing Bug* strip (**Fig. 896**) has conducted an excavation of a "S.U.V. shrine" with a proper grid layout, and the balding, sweater-wearing, bearded professor—standing in front of a blackboard and resting one hand on a globe!—blames America's "political high priests" for our "insatiable appetite for 'gasoline'" that will lead to the coming apocalyptic collapse of our world; Fisher (aka Ruben Bolling) has added an extra layer of metafictional humor with the "artist's rendition" of 20th-century America in the second panel of the second row of his strip, perhaps making a comment on the general question of the artistic merits of the comics medium. Matt Wurker's "Archaeology 3001" cartoon (**Fig. 897**) makes an equally explicit critique of America's gas-guzzling SUV's, as stereotypical bug-eyed blue aliens, wearing pith helmets and bandanas, excavate layers of dinosaur bones, classical antiquities, and our "fossil fools" industrialized society.

One further cartoon to close this "Digging the Past" essay:

Fig. 898. Guy Endore-Kaiser and Rodd Perry, *Brevity*, 28 March 2011.

The *Brevity* team has given us an "anticipatory humor" cartoon (**Fig. 898**), where we smile at the thought of some future archaeologist being confused if the dying man's heirs honor his last request. While no future archaeologist would actually be anatomically confused, the reason for such an unusual grave gift would certainly cause consternation.

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Nutty Stone Age

There seems to be an inverse relationship between how old a potential cartoon subject is and its popularity as a humorous comic cliché. Cartoons about early hominids and cavemen are to be found on the funny pages much more frequently than those of more recent subjects such as the Romans or Vikings, where our "culturally bound background knowledge" constrains the "humorous uchronía" and other types of gags a cartoonist can project onto the past. The Stone Age, on the other hand, is a blank slate upon which cartoonists can draw whatever caveman gag they fancy.

The Ascent of "*homo hilarious*"

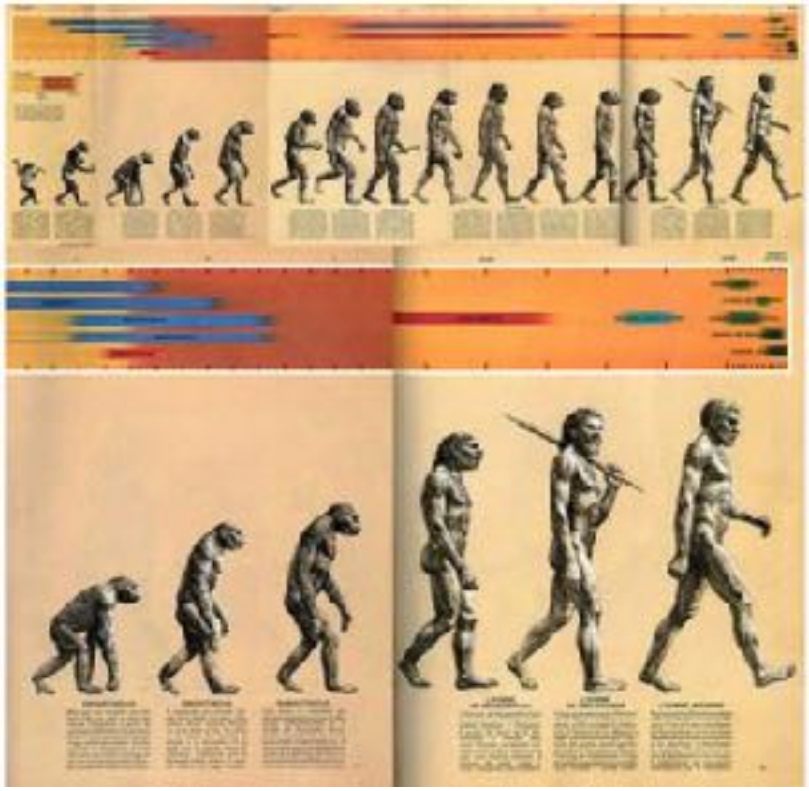

Fig. 899. Rudolph Zallinger, *Early Man*, 1965.

When Rudolph Zallinger created his "The Road to Homo Sapiens" (now more commonly known as the "March of Progress") illustration for F. Clark Howell's Time-Life publication *Early Man* in 1965 (**Fig. 899**), the idea that evolution was a unilinear progression from the primitive to the advanced had already been long out of fashion among paleontologists and evolutionary scientists. Still, the great chain of being—which puts humans at the pinnacle of evolution—has remained a powerfully attractive idea, abetted by religious ideology and the self-centeredness of humanity. And besides,

the image of the "March of Progress," with vertebrates wading out of the primordial slime and gradually standing upright into *Homo sapiens* is intrinsically funnier than an evolutionarily more accurate cladistic branching tree.

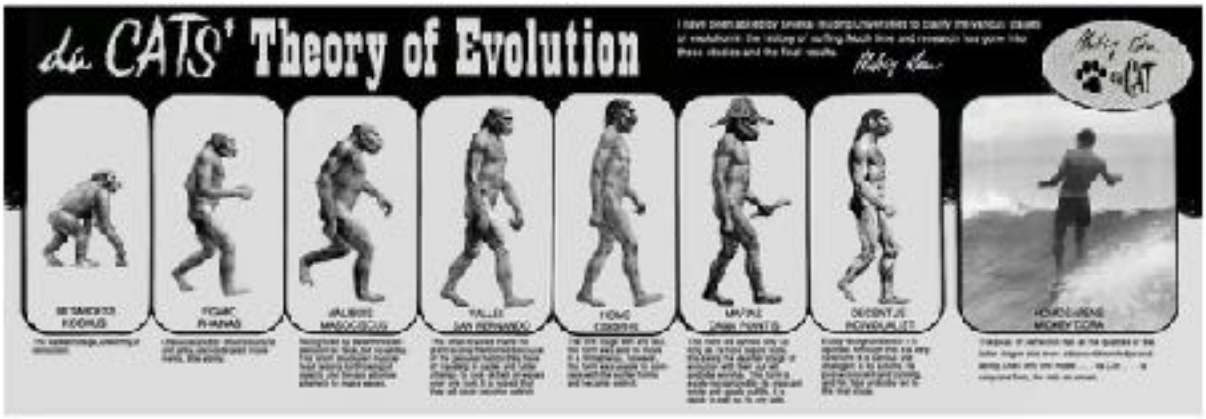

Fig. **900**. Greg Noll "Da Cats" surfboard ad, 1966.

Fig. **901**. Logo of the Leakey Foundation, 1968.

Fig. **902**. Joe Garnett, Cover art to Door's *Full Circle* album, 1972.

Fig. **903**. Supertramp, *Brother Where You Bound* album cover, 1985.

Fig. **904**. *Encino Man* soundtrack album cover, 1992.

Almost immediately after its publication, Zallinger's "March of Progress" illustration entered into American popular culture. In 1966, for instance, the Greg Noll "Da Cat" surfboard company parodied the image to promote the evolution of surf-boarders (**Fig**. **900**). The Leakey Foundation, created in 1968, modified the "March of Progress" image for its logo (**Fig**. **901**). The image has also been particularly popular in musical circles: in 1972, Joe Barnett used a similar progression of child to man for the cover of the Doors' *Full Circle* album (**Fig**. **902**); the band Supertramp used a silhouette of the image for its 1985 album cover (**Fig**. **903**); and the 1992 soundtrack album to the movie *Encino Man* put a skateboarder dude at the pinnacle of evolution (**Fig**. **904**).

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The sequential form of the "March of Progress" almost calls out for comic parody, and cartoonists have used it for a variety of humorous, and non-humorous, purposes (cf. Pausas, 2009; Giller and Connie, 2014; Gri, 2016; and Klimas, 2016).

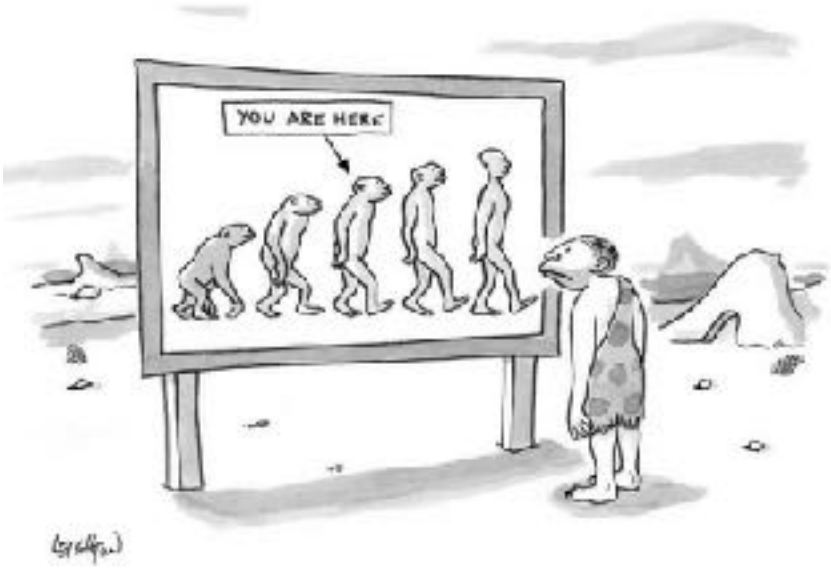

Fig. **905**. Robert Leighton, *The New Yorker*, 25 Dec., 2006.

One type of "March of Progress" cartoons are those that make a comment about evolution itself. As Constance Areson Clark noted in her 2009 article "'You Are Here.' Missing Links, Chains of Being, and the Language of Cartoons" (the title of which refers to Robert Leighton's 2006 *New Yorker* cartoon, **Fig**. **905**):

> Evolution cartoons have, from the beginning, commented on such preoccupations as race, gender, and social and cultural hierarchies. But their forms— narrative presentations and visual conventions—may reinforce assumptions about how evolution is supposed to work even in cartoons that make fun of those assumptions as applied to society. Evolution cartoons have evolved over time, responsive to changing historical contexts, but they carry their history with them. The iconographic motifs denoting evolution—especially primates, "cavemen," and the linear evolutionary sequence, have become fixed in a cartoon lexicon. The jokes work because viewers recognize the pattern. It is the familiar popular version of evolution.

In other words, when Americans see a "March of Progress" cartoon in the funny pages or in the op-ed section of their newspapers, it "re-presents" a complex "culturally bound background knowledge" about the socially contentious issue of evolution.

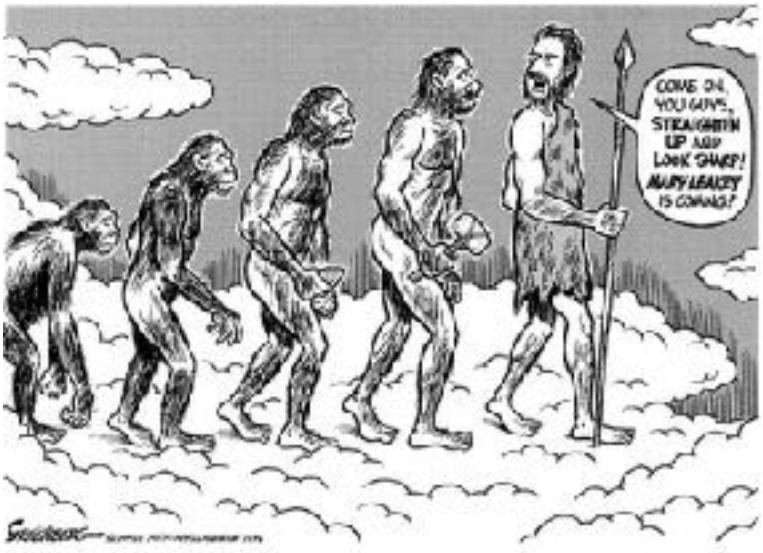

Fig. **906**. Steve Greenberg, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 1996.

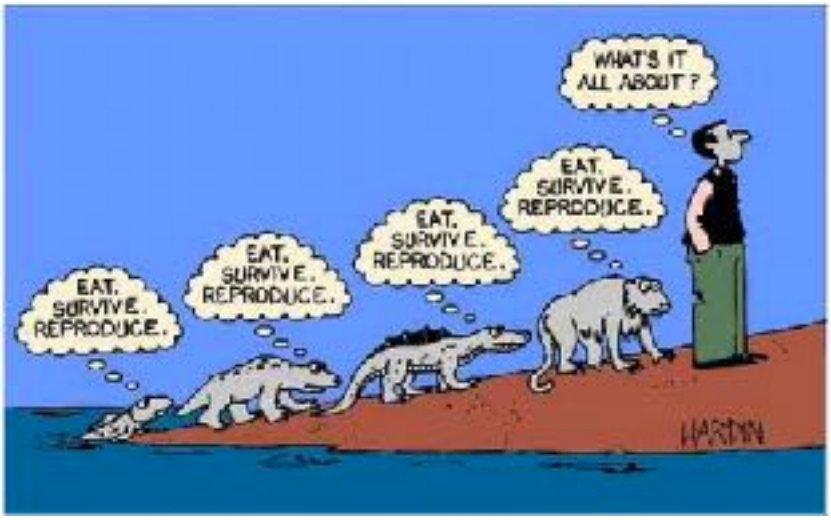

Fig. **907**. Patrick Hardin, 3 Feb. 1999.

Fig. **908**. Wiley Miller, *Non Sequitur*, 30 Aug., 2004.

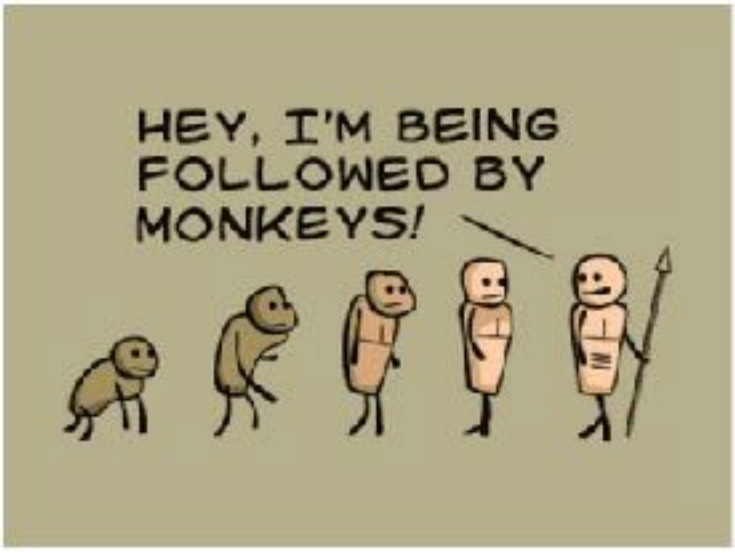

Fig. **909**. Kris Wilson, Rob DenBleyker, Matt Melvin and Dave McElfatrick. *Cyanide and Happiness*, explosum.net, April, 2005.

The Mary Leakey joke in Steve Greenberg's 1996 cartoon (**Fig**. **906**) is presented in a format that is commonly used in "March of Progress" cartoons, where the lead characters turn back and make a comment to their evolutionary ancestors. Patrick Hardin uses thought bubbles to poke fun at our modern existential angst in a cartoon (**Fig**. **907**) presented with the common conflation of the "fish-tetrapod" evolutionary schema with the primate "March of Progress" image. Wiley Miller's cute cartoon (**Fig 908**) incongruously puts an animated evolutionary diorama one might expect to find *inside* a Museum of Natural History to *outside* at the museum's box office. The 2005 offering (**Fig**. **909**) by the *Cyanide and Happiness* cartoonist team makes an explicit reference to the "man-evolved-from-monkeys" controversy that has been a cultural flash-point ever since the 1871 publication of Charles Darwin's *Decent of Man*.

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Although we will return to the issue of apes and cartoon cavemen in the next section of this essay, and although I have generally avoided discussing op-ed cartoons in these essays about humorous cartoons and comic strips, because the issue has come up I hope I may be forgiven a short excursus on editorial "March of Progress" cartoons.

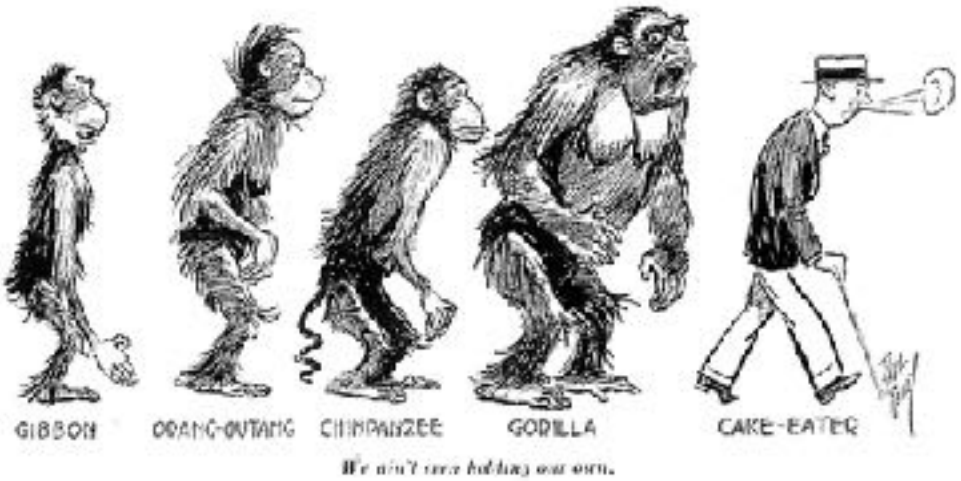

Fig. 910. Paul Reiley, *Judge*, 18 July, 1925.

In the United States, the teaching of evolution in public schools has been a contentious issue since the infamous Tennessee Scopes Trial of 1925. The viewers of a Paul Reiley cartoon in the 1925 "Evolution" edition of the satirical publication *Judge* (**Fig. 910**) presumably were unaware that Reiley erroneously presents the "March of Progress" as a procession of living primates, and they presumably thought it was funny to have a gorilla complain that they "ain't even holding our own" with a human "cake-eater."

The controversy over the teaching of evolution in public schools has been an on-going feature of the American cultural and political landscape ever since the Scopes Trial, but the issue regained prominence in the late 1990's and early 2000's as a concerted effort was mounted by conservative Christian religionists to have Biblical creationism—relabeled as "intelligent design"—taught as an alternative to evolutionary theory. In 1999, the Kansas State Board of Education changed their science education standards to remove any reference to "biological macroevolution, the age of the Earth, or the origin and early development of the universe," and in 2005 the Board drafted new science standards that require critical analysis of evolution – including scientific evidence refuting the theory. In 2002, the Board of Education in Cobb County, Georgia, voted to attach a sticker to the science textbooks their students used: "this textbook contains material on evolution. Evolution is a theory, not a fact, regarding the origin of living things. This material should be approached with an open mind, studied carefully, and critically considered." Several other states adopted policies similar to those of Kansas and Georgia, although most have been struck down in Federal courts as violations of the Establishment clause.

Given the general cultural conservatism we have noted in newspaper cartoons and comic strips, it is remarkable that many cartoon editorials came out in opposition against this push to teach creationism (aka, "intelligent design") instead of evolution—an opposition that is especially remarkable given the fact that, as a 2017 Pew Research Center poll suggested, nearly a third of Americans believe that the *Bible* is "the Word of God" and "should be taken literally."

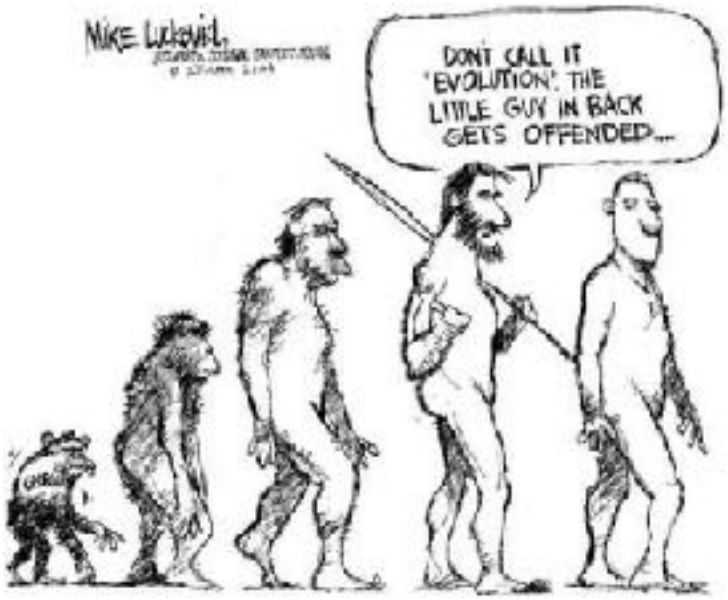

Fig. **911**. Mike Luckovid, *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, 1 Feb., 2003.

Fig. **912**. Jeff Parker, *Florida Today*, 6 May, 2005.

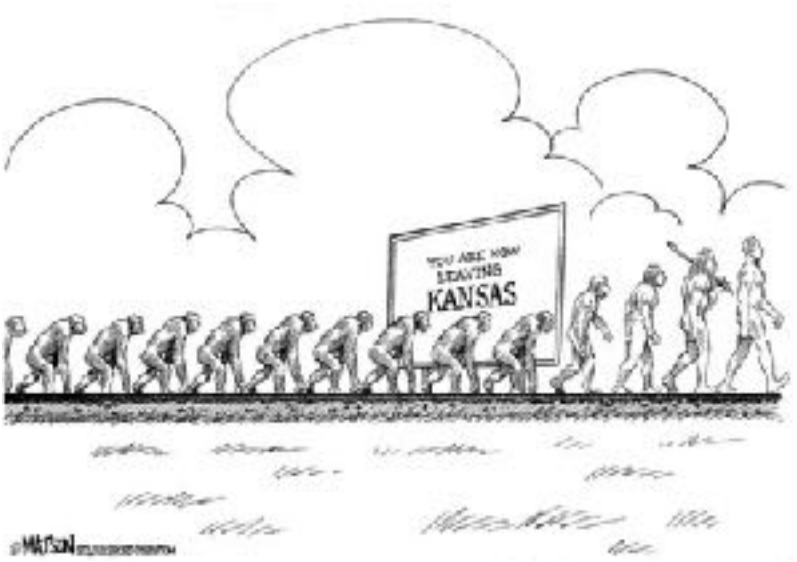

Fig. **913**. R. J. Matson, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 10 Nov., 2005.

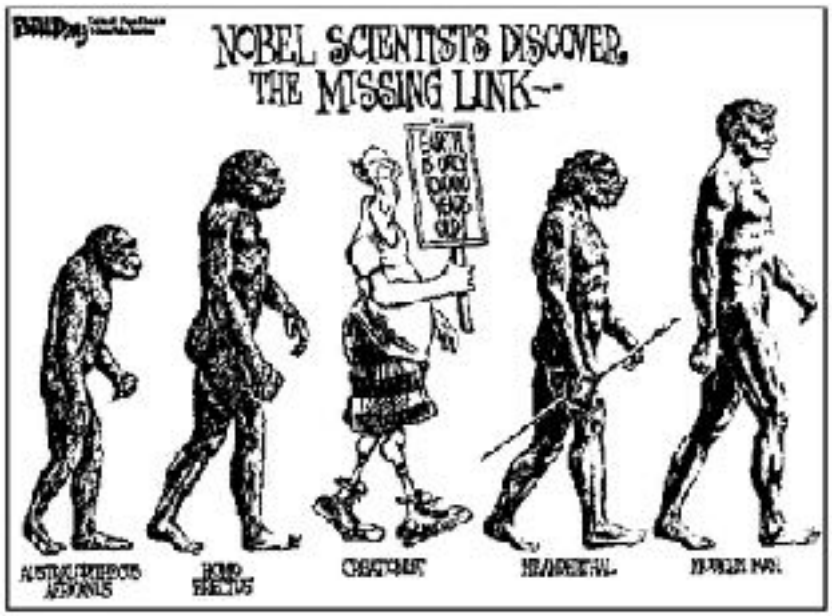

Fig. **914**. Bill Day, *Detroit Free Press*, from Pausas (2009).

The target of Mike Luckovid's *Atlanta Journal Constitution* 2003 editorial cartoon (**Fig**. **911**) is the state of Georgia, shown as the earliest primate, cringing at the word "evolution." Jeff Parker and R.J. Matson, on the other hand, poke fun at Kansas, with Parker (**Fig**. **912**) representing the state's Board of Education as a clown who stops the evolution of humanity, and Matson (**Fig**. **913**) depicting the state as inhabited by un-evolved apes. Bill Day's editorial cartoon for the *Detroit Free Press* (**Fig**. **914**) zings creationists as "the missing link"—a common misunderstanding of Darwinism that mistakenly interprets evolutionary theory as saying humans were directly descended from living apes and that an as yet undiscovered fossil ape-man linking the two species must exist.

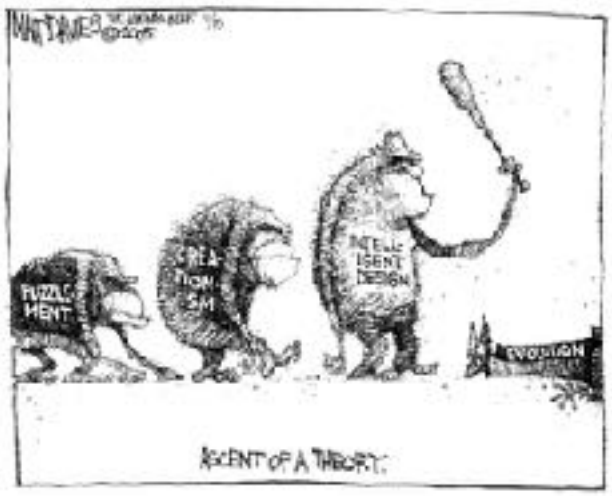

Fig. 915. Matt Davies, *The Journal News*, 15 April, 2005.

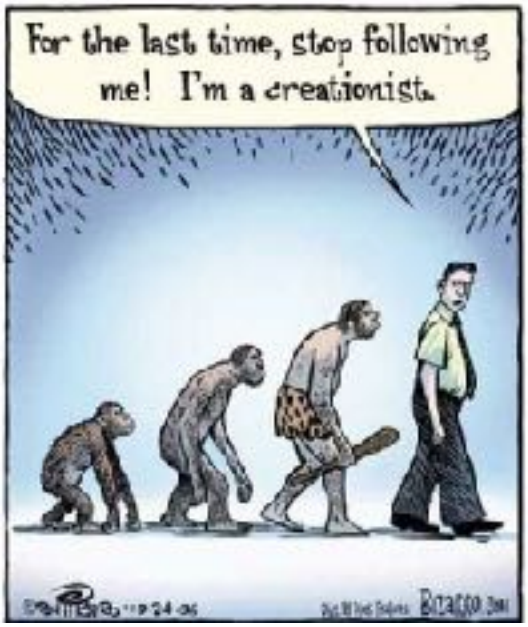

Fig. 916. Dan Piraro, *Bizzaro*, 24 Oct., 2006.

Fig. 917. Tony Auth, from Pausas (2009).

Matt Davies' editorial cartoon for the White Plains, NY, newspaper *The Journal News* (**Fig. 915**) similarly uses the "March of Progress" to poke fun at creationism, as does a 2006 Dan Piraro cartoon (**Fig. 916**) that, with its specific social commentary, is an unusual departure from Piraro's normal "bizzaro" sense of humor. Tony Auth took aim at creationism using a different tack, with a parody of Michelangelo's *Creation of Adam* (**Fig. 917**); how the little lizard and the wooden branch came to be before God commanded evolution in Auth's cartoon is left unexplained!

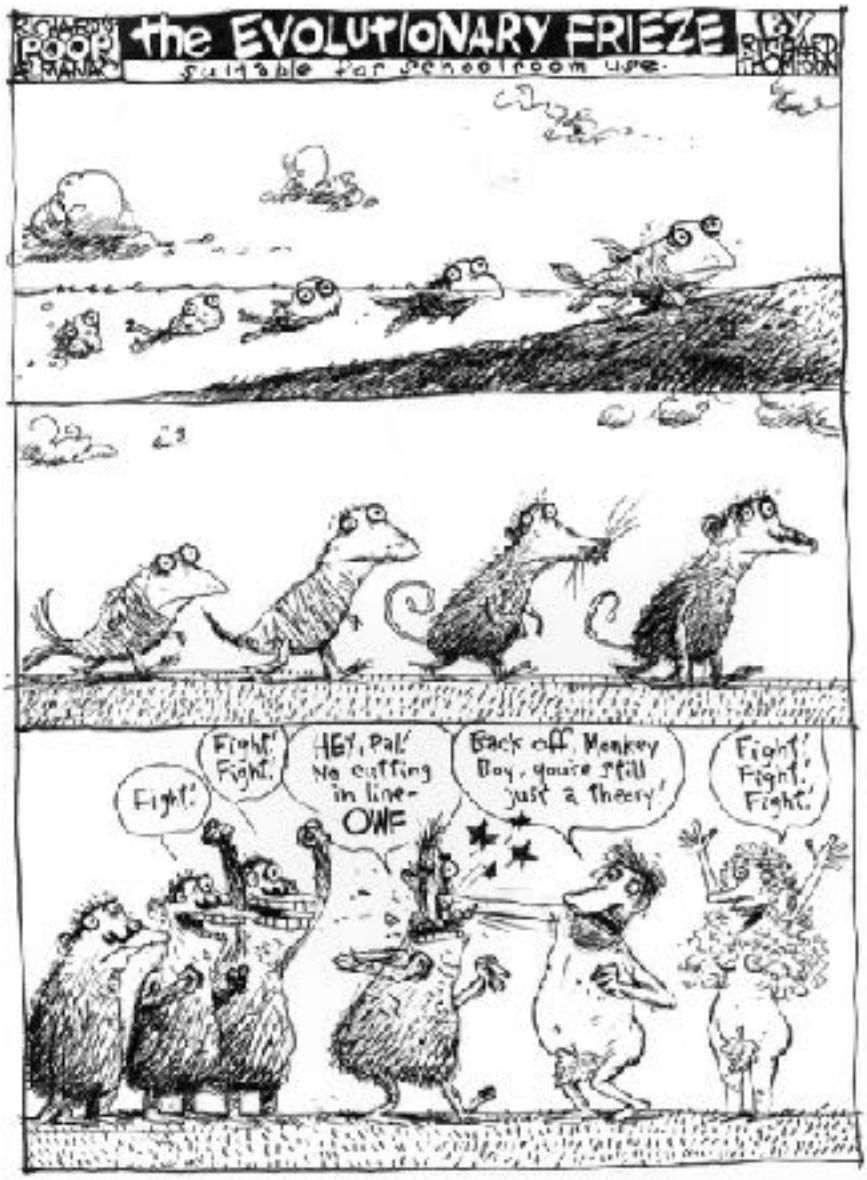

Fig. **918**. Richard Thompson, *Richard's Poor Almanac*, reprinted 14 July, 2014.

Like Dan Piraro, the normally apolitical Richard Thompson has also editorialized about the creationism/evolution education controversy. Thompson's "The Evolutionary Frieze"—reprinted posthumously in 2014 (**Fig**. **918**)—is subtitled "Suitable for Schools," which sets up his joke about the pugilistic, fig-leaf-wearing, Adam and Eve jumping to the front of the amalgamated fish-tetrapod and mammal "March of Progress" evolutionary lines.

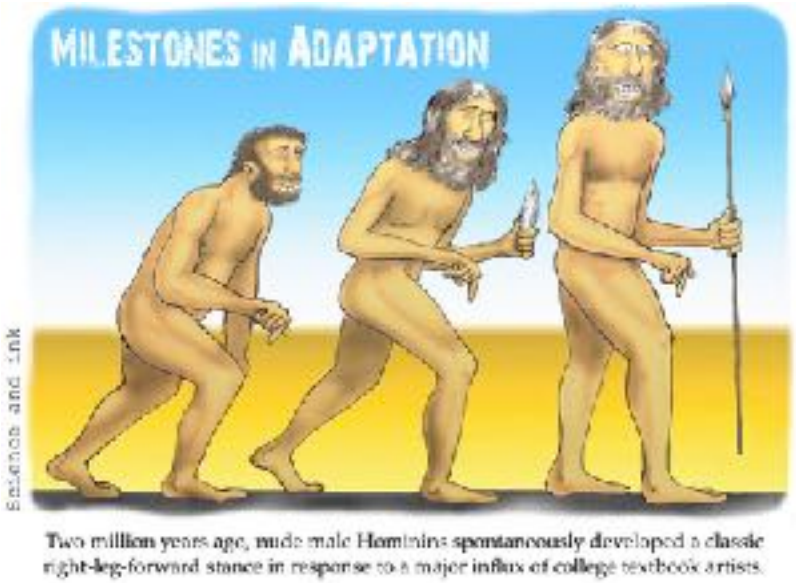

Fig. **919**. Nick D Kim, *Science and Ink*.

The New Zealander analytic environmental chemist and cartoonist Nick D Kim has given us a related humorous "March of Progress" cartoon (**Fig**. **919**), which targets the taboo about showing nudity in educational textbooks.

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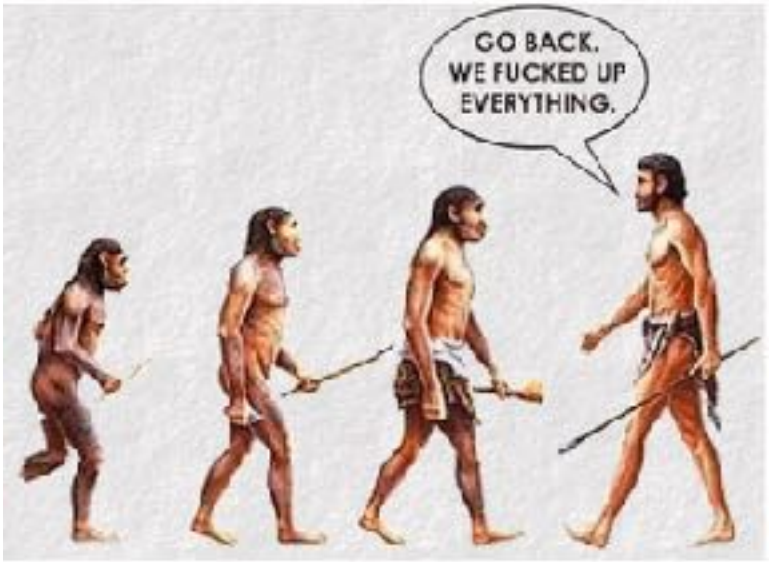

Fig. **920**. Carmen Ezgeta, from Gri (2016).

These examples of editorial cartoons aside, the vast majority of comic parodies of Zallinger's iconic "March of Progress" image function as "inverse humorous uchronía" cultural commentaries, usually with the end of the evolutionary line highlighting some social ill the cartoonist wants to parody. As the *homo sapiens* addressing his progenitors in a cartoon by the Croatian anesthesiologist and painter Carmen Ezgeta (**Fig**. **920**) puts it: "Go back. We fucked up everything."

Fig. **921**. Peter Steiner, *The New Yorker*, 30 July, 1990.

Fig. **922**. Mort Gerberg, *The New Yorker*, 24 Dec., 2001.

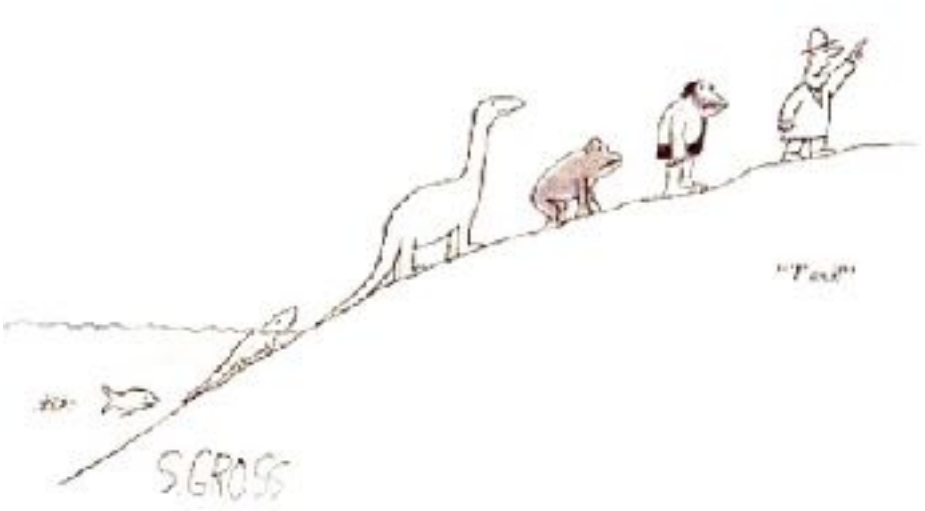

Fig. 923. Sam Gross, from Pausas (2009).

Fig. 924. Bruce McCall, three alternative covers for *The New Yorker,* 14 May, 2007.

Because we read cartoons from left to right, we identify with the man standing at the top of the subway station in Peter Steiner's 1990 *New Yorker* cartoon (**Fig. 921**), baffled to see the pinnacle of evolution as a briefcase-carrying man emerging from the primeval subway on his way to a mind-numbing job. The briefcase-carrying end of the evolutionary line in Mort Gerberg's *New Yorker* cartoon (**Fig. 922**) ascends the hill only to face an airport metal detector, while the end of evolution in Sam Gross' cartoon (**Fig. 923**) calls for a taxi. In 2007, Bruce McCall designed three alternative covers for the

New Yorker that, when properly aligned, show a "March of Progress" which ends with a briefcase-carrying man falling down an escalator (**Fig**. **924**). The circular "March of Progress" in Jerry Scott's and Jim Borgman's comic strip (**Fig**. **925**) reverses the semiotic reading of the "March of Progress" from left to right to humorously highlight the complaint of the privileged white suburban American teenager Jeremy that doing lawn chores leads to de-evolution.

Fig. **925**. Jerry Scott and Jim Borgman, *Zits*, 10 April, 2015.

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One of the most common target of "March of Progress" cartoon parodies is modern technology, especially the cell phone, which comic artists portray as stopping evolution in its tracks (**Figs**. **926**–**928**) and causing our spines to revert to an earlier evolutionary curved form (**Figs**. **929**–**932**).

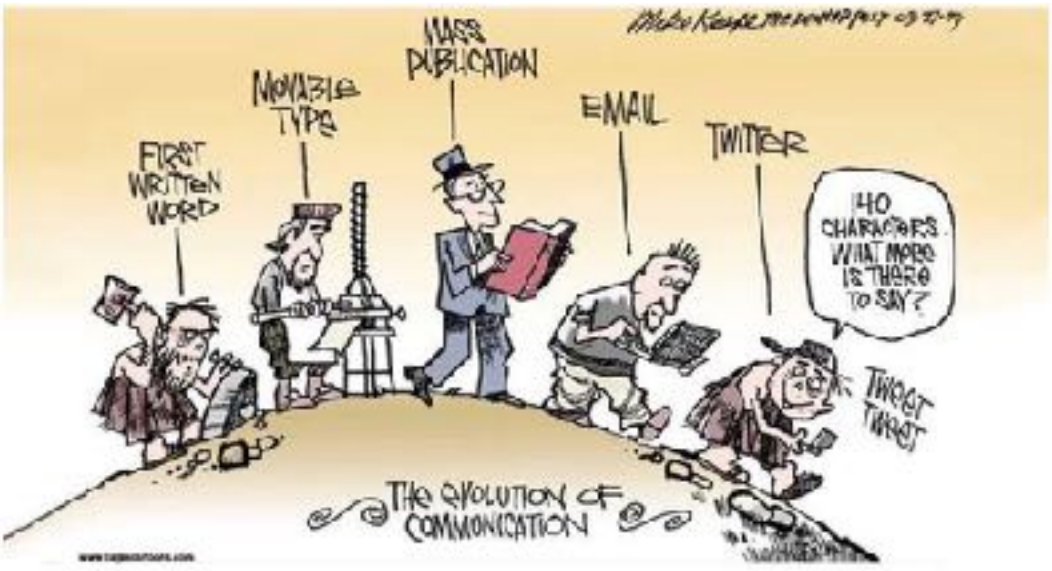

Fig. **926**. Mike Keefe, *The Denver Post*, 27 March, 2009.

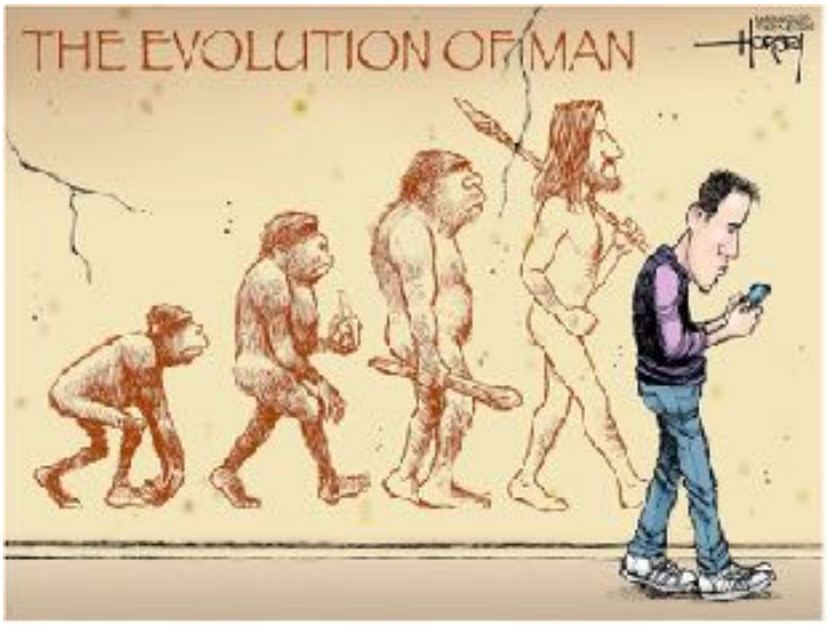

Fig. 927. David Horsey, *The Los Angeles Times*, 2012.

Fig. 928. George Riemann, from Gri (2016).

Fig. 929. Wilbur Dawbarn, from Giller and Conniff (2014).

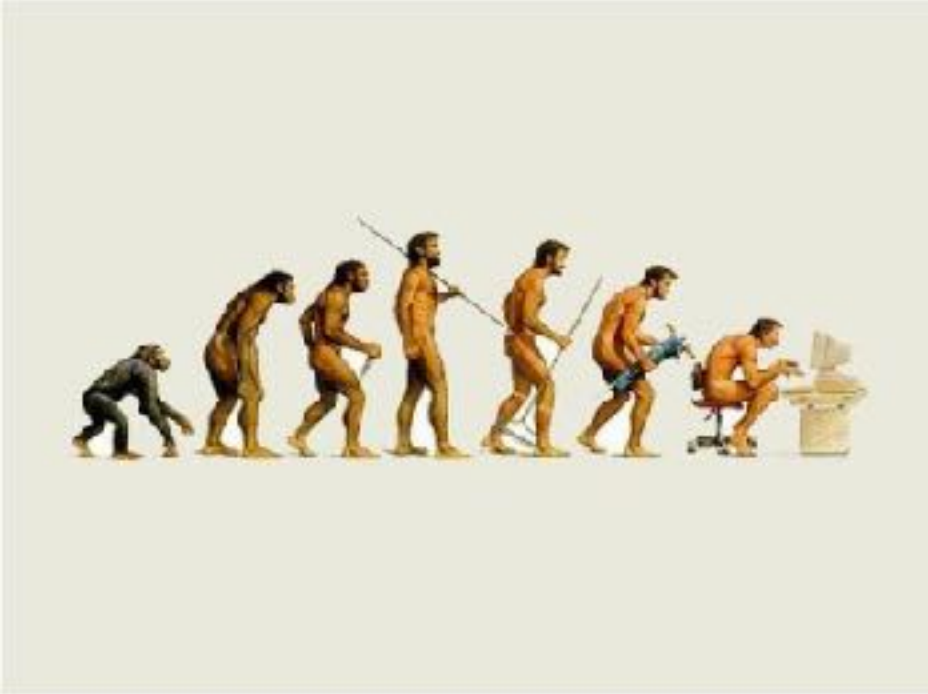

Fig. 930. From Gri (2016).

Fig. 931. Dave Whamond, *Reality Check*, 16 July, 2017.

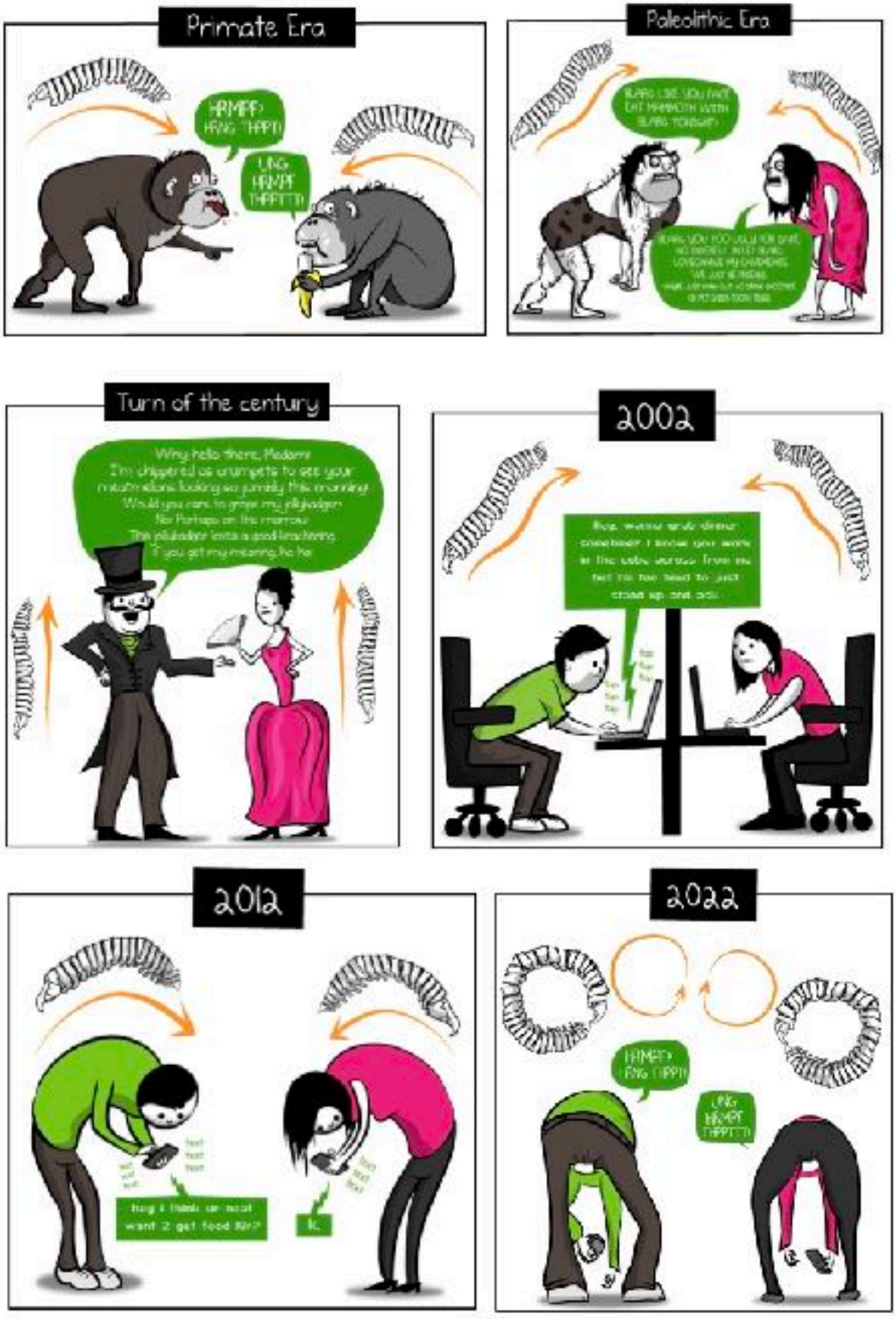

Fig. 932. Matthew Inman, "The evolution of our spine and speech," theoatmeal.com, 2020.

Fig. 933. Patrick Boivin, June, 2005. From Gri (2016).

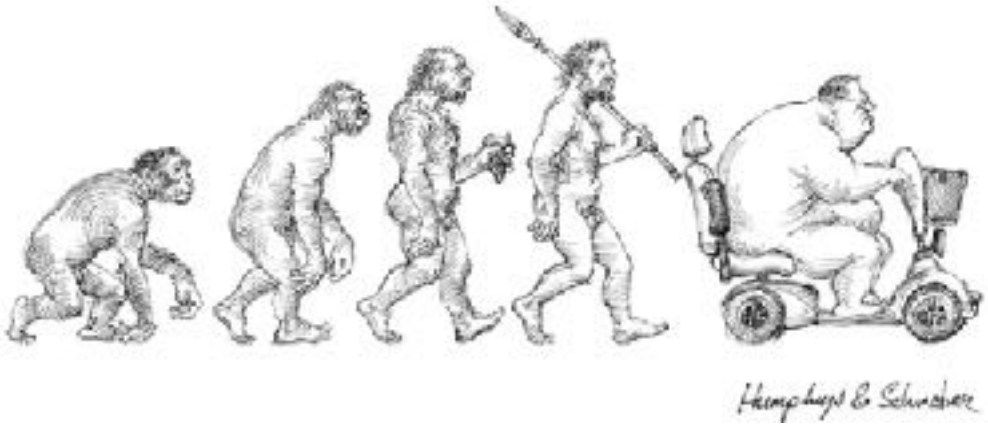

Fig. 934. Darren Humphreys and John Schmelzer, 14 Nov., 2013.

A related set of "March of Progress" cartoons by Patrick Bovin (**Fig. 933**) and by Darren Humphreys and John Schmelzer (**Fig. 934**) suggest that our modern unhealthy lifestyle is leading us to evolve into pigs or obese handicap-cart riders.

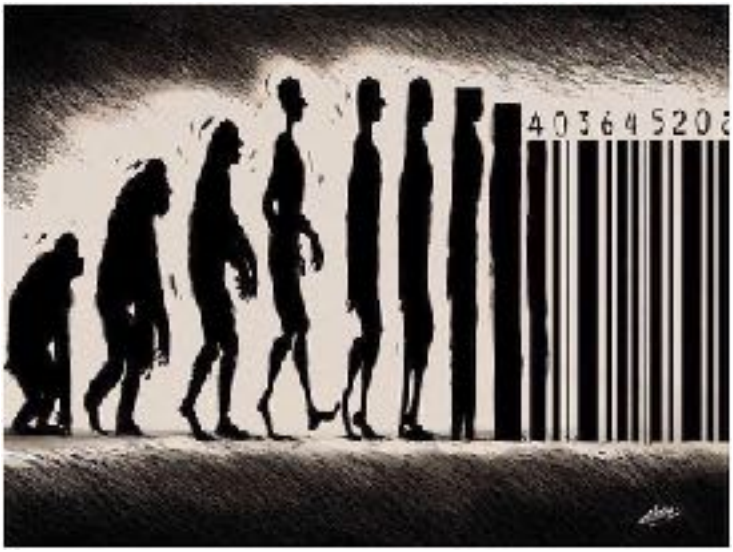

Fig. 935. Amjad Rasmi, from Gri (2016).

Fig. 936. Anonymous, street art, London, 2008.

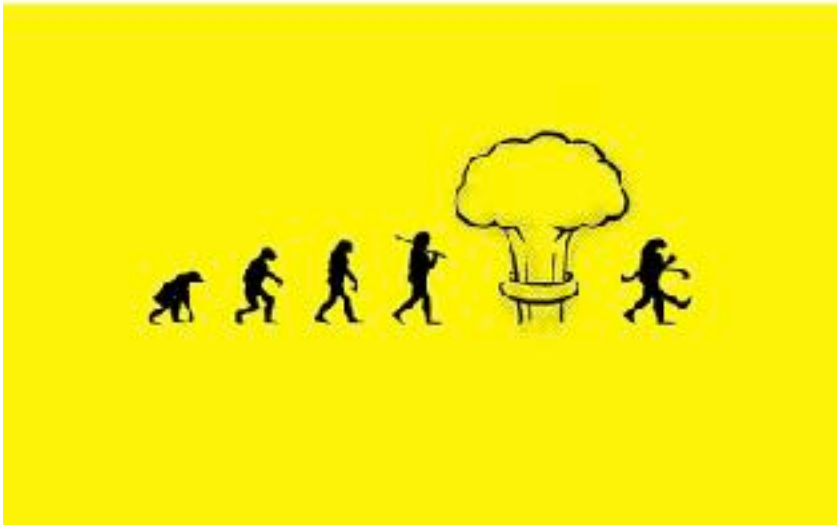

Fig. 937. From Gri (2016).

The Jordanian editorial cartoonist Amiad Rasmi used the "March of Progress" cliché to highlight the increasing social isolation of modern society, suggesting that we are evolving into inhuman bar codes (**Fig**. **935**). Other artists (**Figs**. **936–937**) worry that a coming nuclear holocaust will reverse the course of evolution or cause us to mutate an extra arm and leg.

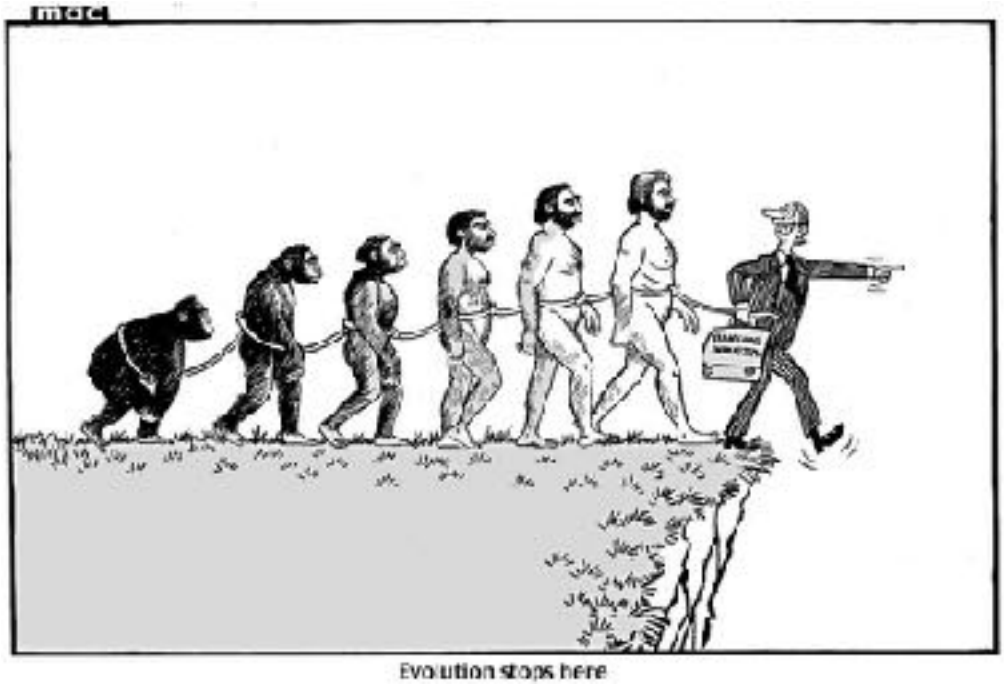

Fig. **938**. MAC (Stanley McMurtry), *Daily Mail*, 2008.

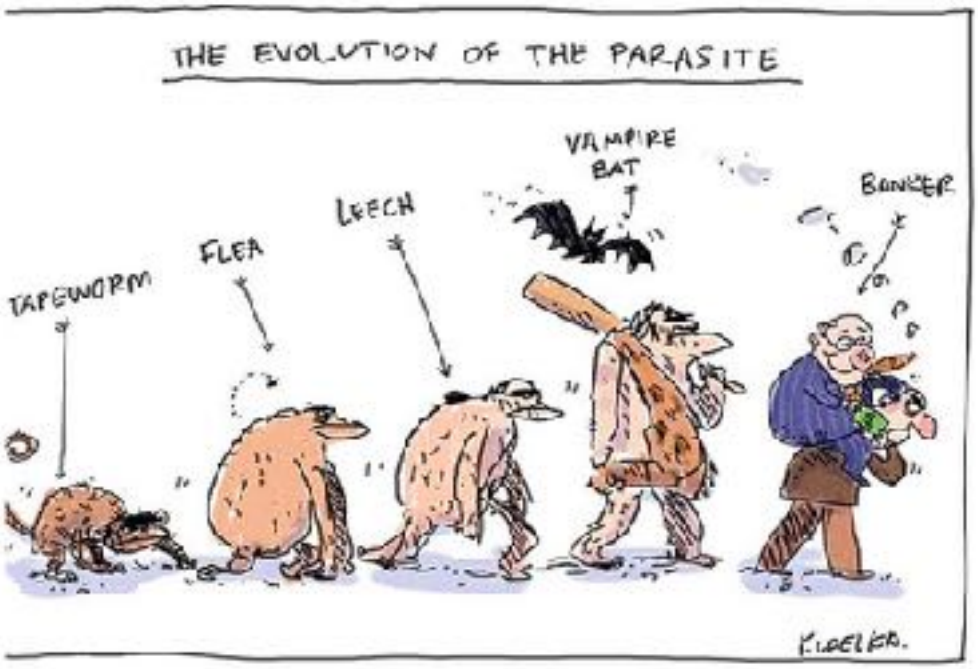

Fig. **939**. Jon Kudelka, 4 June, 2009.

Fig. **940**. Teddy Tietz, 2009.

The global economic crisis of 2008 brought on by the predatory practices of bankers elicited "March of Progress" cartoons by the British comic artist Stanley McMurtry (**Fig**. **938**) and the Australian comic artist Jon Kudelka (**Fig**. **939**). For his attack on advanced capitalism, the German cartoonist Teddy Tietz created a variation of the "March of Progress" (**Fig**. **940**) giving us an evolution of God, from the sun to the Venus of Willendorf to the Egyptian Anubis to Zeus to Jesus, to the Almighty Dollar.

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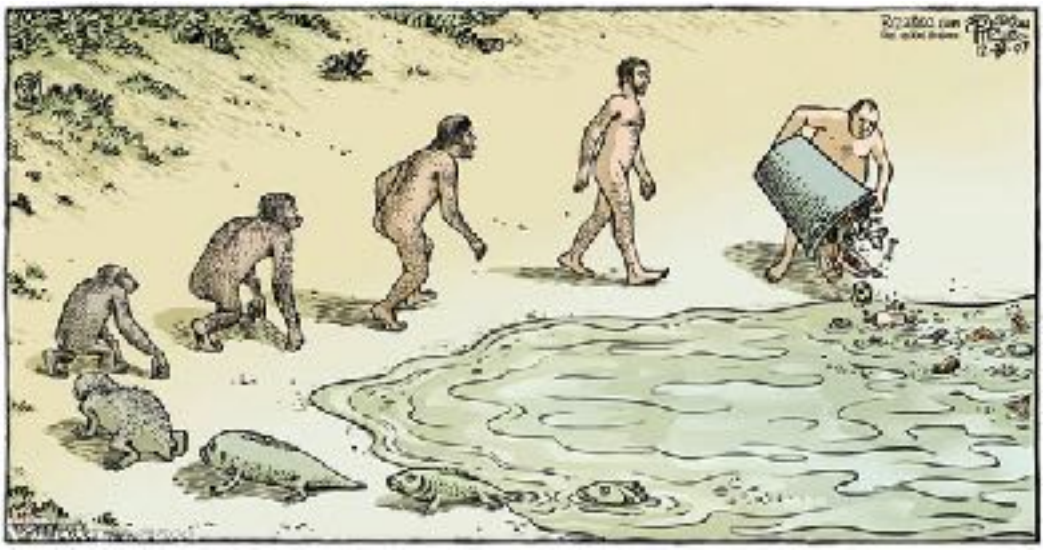

Fig. **941**. Dan Piraro, *Bizarro*, 30 Dec., 2007.

Fig. **942**. Dan Piraro, *Bizarro*, 1 Feb., 2015.

Fig. **943**. Dan Piraro, *Bizarro*, 9 April, 2017.

Dan Piraro seems to have a special affinity to the iconic "March of Progress" image, returning to it every couple of years. While some of these *Bizarro* cartoons do carry an underlying social criticism, such as with his crack at creationism (**Fig**. **916** above), his circular "March of Progress" critique of our polluting the oceans (**Fig**. **941**), or our over-populating the planet (**Fig**. **942**), others are just plain humorous, such as with the **Fig**. **943** joke about our propensity to anthropomorphize chimpanzees.

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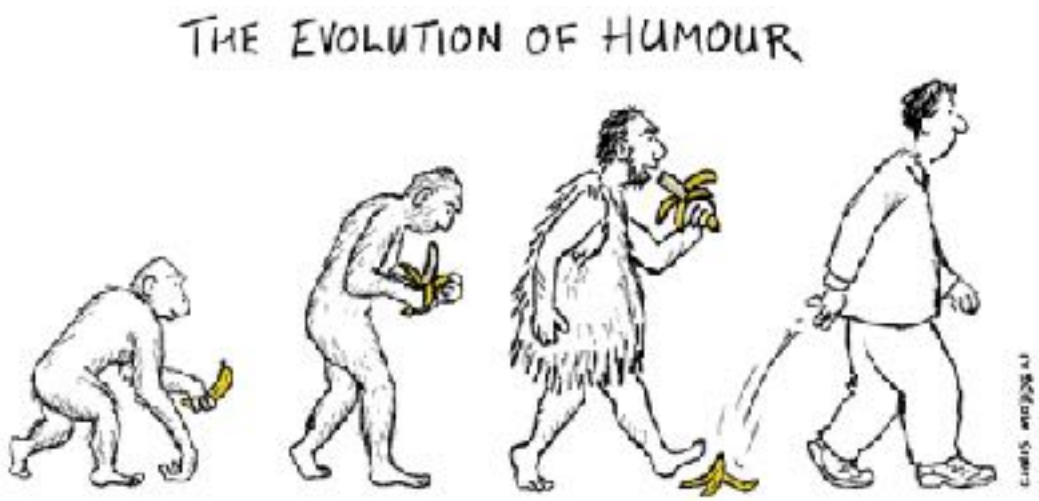


Fig. **944**. Chris Madden, 1 Sept., 2008.

Fig. **945**. Glenn Jones, from Gri (2016).

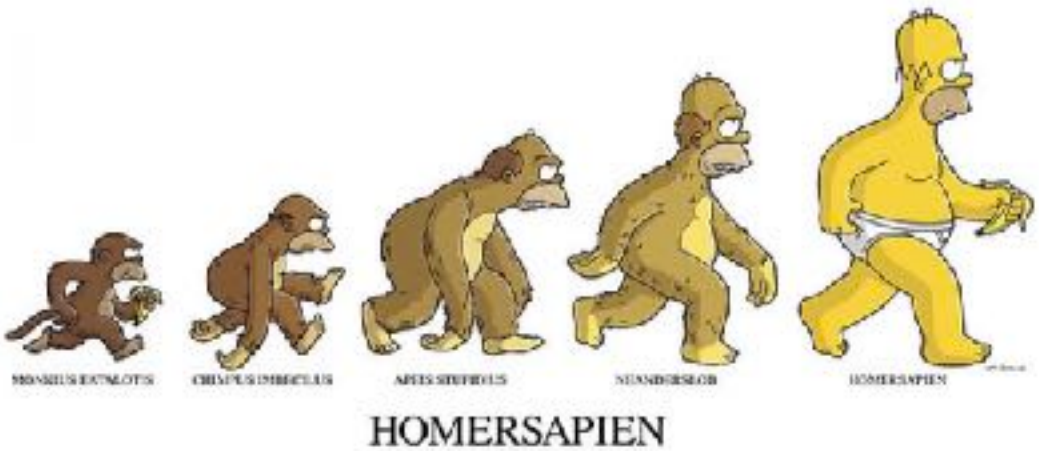


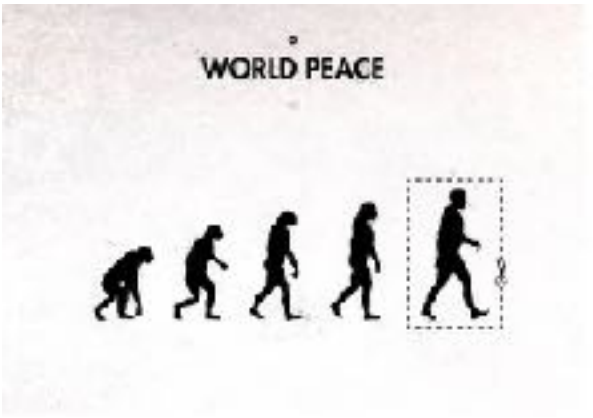
Fig. **946**. Matt Groening, from Gri (2016).

Other cartoon humorists have also turned to the "March of Progress" cliché simply to make a joke. Chris Madden, for instance, inserts a slipping-on-a-banana-peel gag into his rendition of evolutionary progress (**Fig. 944**). Glenn Jones gives us a humorous Lego™ evolutionary visual joke (**Fig. 945**), and Matt Groening has used the "March of Progress" icon for a silly pun about his banana-eating Homer Simpson (**Fig. 946**).

In 2012, the mysterious individual or group Maentis, which purportedly was a French online design company that now appears to be defunct, re-purposed the "March of Progress" iconic image for a series of clever "99 Steps of Progress" posters, a generous selection of which I present here (**Fig. 947**)


Marketing.


FIGHT AGAINST HUNGER


WORLD PEACE


COMMON SENSE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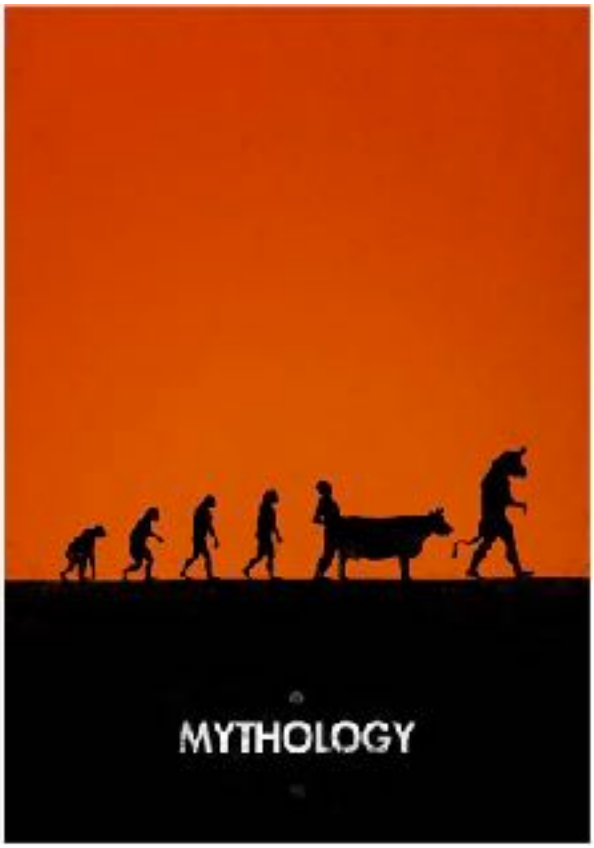
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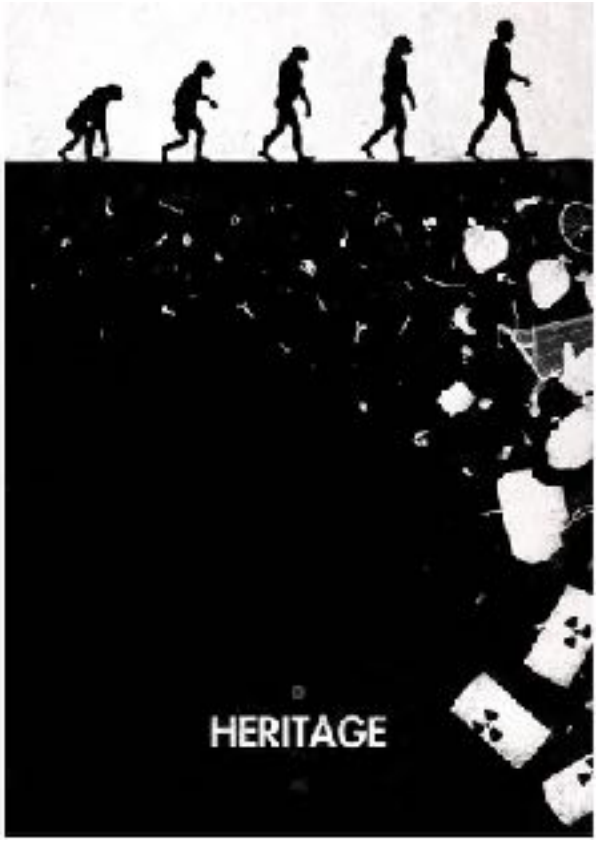
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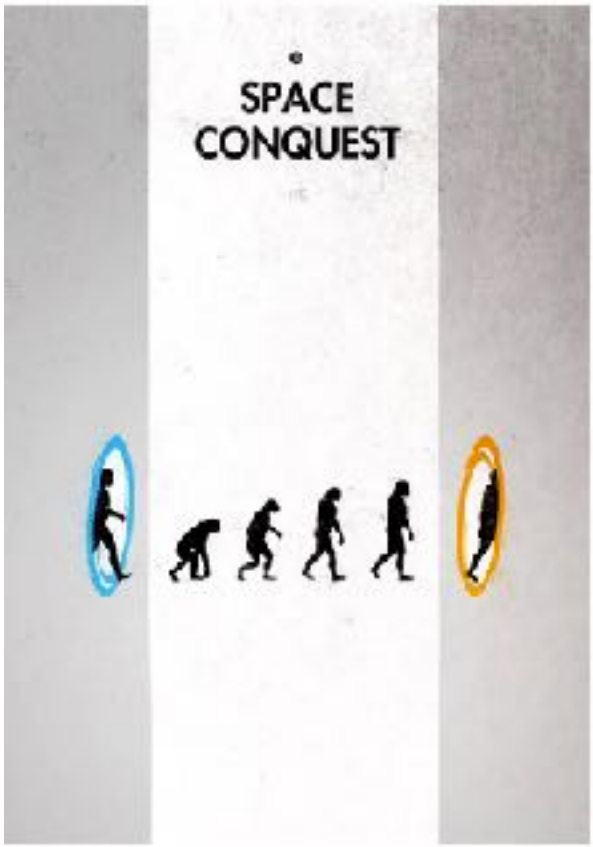
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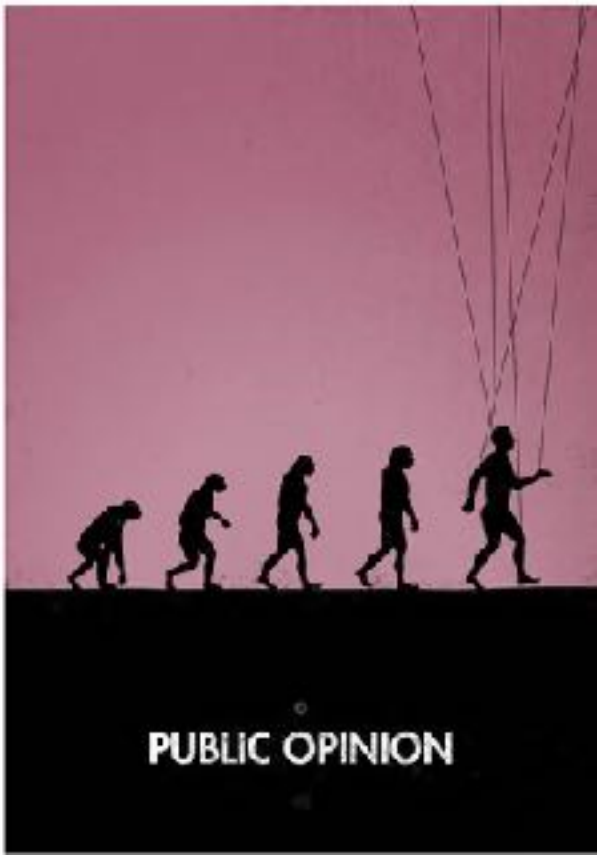
PUBLIC OPINION

Fig. **947**. Maentis, Selection of "99 Steps of Progress" posters, 2012.

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Fig. **948**. NAD (Mark Godfrey), *Wildlife Cartoons Australia*, 2013**.**

In closing out this "The Ascent of '*Homo hilarious*'" section of our "Nutty Stone Age" essay, I return to the question of plagiarism vs. common cartoon cliché. As we have

seen, and as the long-time cartoon editor of the *New Yorker* Bob Mankoff has noted, the iconic "March of Progress" image is particularly popular among cartoonists. Given that popularity, I, at least, am tempted to attribute similarities in such cartoons to independent invention. Seeing someone else's cartoon that uses the "March of Progress" for a gag and then coming up with a variant for one's own joke is not plagiarism, but rather the highest compliment any cartoonist can pay to another—giving him or her the honor of creating a cartoon cliché.

My generosity in this matter has limits, however, and my suspicion of plagiarism rises sharply when one cartoonist uses a punchline identical to the punchline another comics artist had already used in a similar cartoon. To be sure, the idea of combining the "March of Progress" cartoon cliché with the "You are here" signs one finds on directional billboards could easily occur to more than one cartoonist, and Mark Godfrey (**Fig**. **948**) might well have independently thought of this without copying the Robert Leighton *New Yorker* cartoon Constance Areson Clark used for the title of her 2009 article (**Fig. 905**); the gag in Leighton's cartoon, with the befuddled ancestor being the middle hominid seems to work a little better than Godfrey's choice of an earlier *australopithecine*. [The issue of plagiarism in this case is complicated by the fact that Godfrey has not dated the cartoons he has posted on the "Dinosaurs and Cavemen" page of his *Wildlife Cartoons Australia* website, other than to provide a *terminus ante quem* copyright date of 2013.] On the other hand, while more than one cartoonist might have thought that making the end of the "March of Progress" evolutionary line a woman would be humorous, Clare Mulley (**Fig**. **950**) using the same "What took you so long?" punchline that the cartoonist Jorodo (**Fig**. **949**) had used a decade earlier is suspicious. Similarly, it is not inconceivable that more than one humorist might have thought it would be funny if a police officer were to give a ticket to one of the members of the "March of Progress" for evolving too fast. But Bill Whitehead's "Do you have any idea how fast you were evolving?" punchline (**Fig**. **952**) being identical to the one Mick Stevens (**Fig**. **951**) had used four years earlier is just a bit too much, although the visual set up to Whitehead's joke is significantly different from Stevens' original.

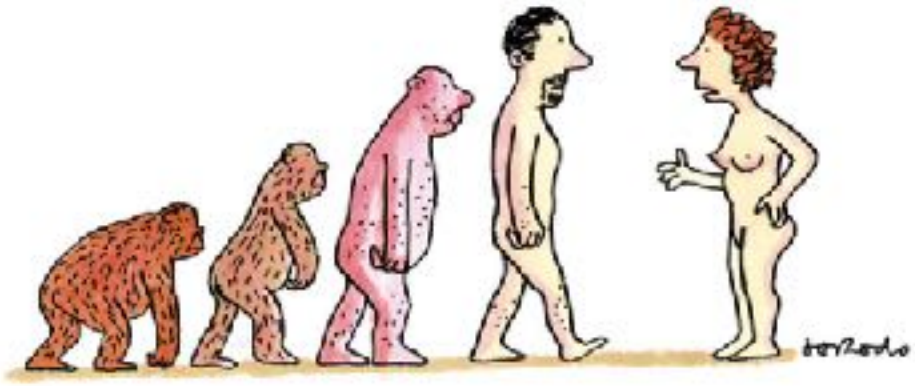

Fig. **949**. Jorodo, 1 March, 2010.

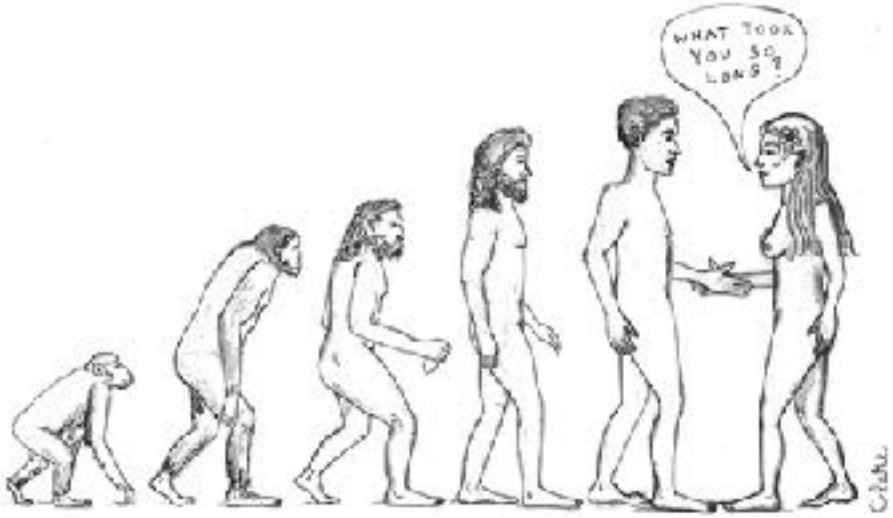

Fig. **950**. Clare Mulley, *The Spectator*, 29 Feb., 2020.

"Do you have any idea how fast you were evolving?"

Fig. **951**. Mick Stevens, *The New Yorker*, 24 Nov., 2014.

Fig. 952. Bill Whitehead, *Free Range*, 4 April, 2018.

And even in the case when one cartoonist has independently come with the same idea and punchline for a joke that some other cartoonist has already published, now in the internet age when so many cartoons are available online—something that I have taken full advantage of in compiling this corpus of art- and archaeology-theme cartoons and comic strips—it would seem that professional responsibility would require cartoonists to undertake an online search before publishing their "original" cartoons.

Humorous *"homo horriblus"*

The protagonist of Eugene O'Neill's 1922 play *The Hairy Ape* is Yank Smith, a brutish ship's coal-stoker who, after being rebuffed by a beautiful wealthy passenger who calls him "a filthy beast," quits his job and wanders about Manhattan futilely seeking acceptance among waterfront laborers as well as Fifth Avenue socialites. At the end of the play, Yank breaks into the Brooklyn Zoo and frees a gorilla from its cage; the gorilla crushes his ribs and throws his dying body back into the cage:

[The gorilla lets the crushed body slip to the floor; stands over it uncertainly, considering; then picks it up, throws it in the cage, shuts the door, and shuffles off menacingly into the darkness at left. A great uproar of frightened chattering and whimpering comes from the other cages. Then YANK moves, groaning, opening his eyes, and there is silence. He mutters painfully.] Say—dey oughter match him—wit Zybszko. He got me, aw right. I'm trou. Even him didn't tink I belonged. [Then, with sudden passionate despair.] Christ, where do I get off at? Where do I fit in? [Checking himself as suddenly.] Aw, what de hell! No squakin', see! No quittin', get me! Croak wit your boots on! [He grabs hold of the bars of the cage and hauls himself painfully to his feet—looks around him bewilderedly—forces a mocking laugh.] In de cage, huh? [In the strident tones of a circus barker.] Ladies and gents, step forward and take a slant at de one and only—[His voice weakening]—one and original—Hairy Ape from de wilds of—[He slips in a heap on the floor and dies. The monkeys set up a chattering, whimpering wail. And, perhaps, the Hairy Ape at last belongs.]
[Curtain]

Fig. **953**. Carlotta Monterey and Louis Wolheim in the 1922 Plymouth Theater production of Eugene O'Neill's *The Hairy Ape*, Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Yale University.

The rather heavy-handed metaphor of the working-class man as an ape is central to O'Neill's exploration of Yank's existential journey in the face of social class prejudices. The metaphor of the primitive man as ape is deeply entrenched in Western culture and is closely tied to 19th- and early 20th-century debates about evolution and race. As Constance Areson Clark noted in her 2008 book *God—or Gorilla:*

> Images of the primitive in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries everywhere implied evolutionary and racial themes—and, as the cases of Edith Wharton [i.e., in *Glimpses of the Moon*] and Eugene O'Neill suggest, class as well. This was, after all, an age of imperialism and

of sweeping generalization about the differences between the "civilized" and the "primitive."

Fig. 954. Caricature of Charles Darwin as a monkey, *La Petite Lune*, 1878.

Fig. 955. C. H. Bennett, *Punch's Almanack for 1882*, 6 Dec. 1881.

Fig. 956. Label of "Anis de Mono" liquor, and statue in Vicente Bosch Company, Badalona, Spain.

The ape-man metaphor often appears in anti-evolutionary literature. The 1878 *La Petite Lune* caricature of Charles Darwin as a monkey (**Fig. 954**) was meant to make fun of Darwinism, as was C.H. Bennett's 1881 circular "March of Progress" (**Fig. 955**) with its deformed "missing links" and elegant Victorian gentleman doffing his top hat to

an enthroned Darwin. The Catalan liquor company Vicente Bosch has, since 1907, used a Darwin-faced monkey on the label of its "Anis de Mono" (**Fig. 956**)—either as a swipe against evolutionism or perhaps as a way of saying its alcoholic beverage is for evolved tastes.

Fig. 957. Emmanuel Frémiet, *Gorille enlevant une femme*, 1887. Bronze sculpture, 187 X 167 X 100 cm, Musée d'Arts, Nantes.

Fig. 958. Cover to Georges Sim (Georges Simenon), *Le Gorille-roi*, 1929.

Fig. 959. Still from the 1933 RKO movie, *King Kong*.

In Western art and literature, the gorilla has symbolized unbridled sexuality, and the image of the dark, hairy, beast carrying off the lily-white woman is replete with racist overtones (**Figs. 957–959**). Constance Areson Clark again, from her 2009 article "'You Are Here.' Missing Links, Chains of Being, and the Language of Cartoons":

Apes in general and gorillas in particular carried associations with rapacious sexuality and with race, through, for example, the freighted term "miscegenation." Gorillas began abducting women in European art almost as soon as they became familiar to Europeans, in the mid-nineteenth century.

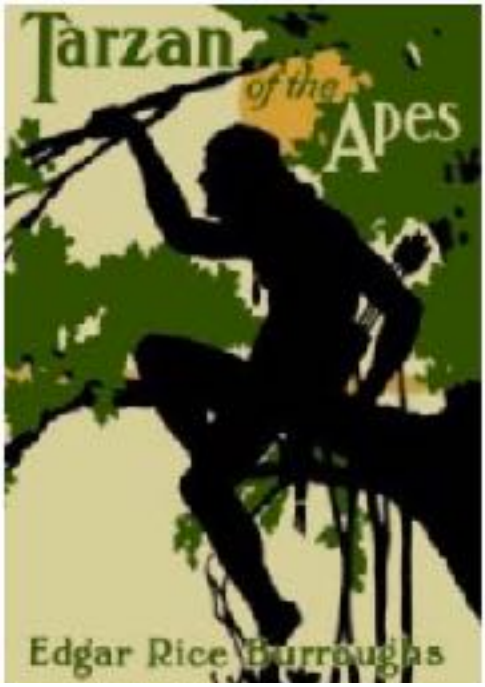

Fig. **960**. Fred J. Arting, Book cover to Edgar Rice Burroughs, *Tarzan of the Apes*, A.C. McClurg, 1914.

Fig. **961**. Lee O'Mealia, Cover art for *Action Comics*, No. 6, Nov., 1938.

Fig. **962**. Publicity photo of Dorothy Lamour in *Her Jungle Love*, 1938.

And the jungle itself has come to be a racially-tinged symbol of threatening "primitive" wild abandon, a place where the white man treads at his own peril (**Fig. 961**). The famous "ape-man" Tarzan "went native" when abandoned in the jungle as a baby (**Fig. 960**), although the nobility of his (white) aristocratic heritage remained intact. Similarly, the white woman character played by Dorothy Lamour in the 1938 movie *Her Jungle Love* lived in the wild, stolen as a child by a savage Pacific island tribesman when her mother refused his advances and set up on a nearly island to be worshipped as a goddess (**Fig. 962**—note the black/white contrast between Lamour and the small champanzee, suggesting that Lamour's virginity is threatened, though still intact); as one might have expected, in this movie a white man arrives and, in the course of rescuing the white woman, falls in love with her.

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The racist stereotype of the "ape-man" as a sexually rapacious primitive permeates the representation of the "caveman" in Western culture.

Fig. 963. Pierre Boitard, Frontispiece, *Paris avant les hommes* (*Paris Before Man*), 1861.

Fig. 964. Frontispiece to Charles G.D. Roberts, *In the Morning of Time*, 1919.

Fig. **965**. Joe Kubert, Cover art, DC Comics *Tor*, No. 1, June, 1975.

We have already noted the common motif in prehistoric "lost world" fiction of "modern" (read, white) tribes contending with ape-like (read, black) primitive tribes. For example, J.-H. Rosny the Elder's influential 1911 novel *La guerre du feu* (*The Quest for Fire*) pits two heroes in competition: the haughty, fine, slender and refined Naoh, son of the Leopard, and Aghoo, son of the Aurochs, described as a "hairy" brute, with an ape-like appearance (cf. **Fig**. **770**); the "lost world" of Pal-ul-don in Edgar Rice Burroughs' 1921 *Tarzan the Terrible* is inhabited by the hairless and white skinned, city-dwelling Ho-don tribe and the hairy and black-skinned, hill-dwelling Waz-don tribe (cf. **Fig**. **751**). The frontispiece to the French botanist and geologist Pierre Boitard's *Paris avant les hommes* (*Paris Before Man*), published posthumously in 1861 (**Fig**. **963**), presents a 100,00-year-old, cave-dwelling, prehistoric ancestor of the Parisians as a black ape-man —holding an anachronistic hafted metal axe—ferociously defending his woman and child. The frontispiece to the Canadian poet and author Sir Charles G. D. Roberts' 1919 novel *In the Morning of Time* (**Fig**. **964**) depicts Mawg, the leader of the ape-like tribe of the Bow-legs, capturing A-ya, one of the "modern" tribe of the Children of the Shining One. The front cover to the DC Comics 1975 rebooting of the St. John Comics *One Million Years Ago!* features Joe Kubert's white hero Tor battling fang-toothed black apemen (**Fig**. **965**).

Fig. **966**. Movie poster and still from D. W. Griffith, *Brute Force* (Primitive Man), 1914.

We have also noted early Hollywood movies which feature a clash between advanced tribesmen and primitive brutes for access to white women. In D. W. Griffith's 1914 short silent film *Brute Force*—the story of a modern-day man who dreams of ". . . the good old days of brute force and marriage by capture!"— the character Weak Hands rescues his girl Lily White from Brute Force and his fellow hairy ape-like tribesmen (**Fig**. **966**; cf. also **Fig**. **755**). The prehistoric section of Buster Keaton's 1923 silent feature *Three Ages* likewise highlights the struggle between the puny Keaton and the brutish Wallace Berry for the favors of the winsome Margaret Leahy (**Fig**. **967**; cf. also **Fig**. **761**).

Fig. **967**. Still from Buster Keaton, *The Three Ages*, 1923.

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Fig. **968**. Léon-Maxime Faivre, *Envahisseurs, d'une migration a l'âge de pierre*, 1884. Oil on canvas, 259 x 189 cm. Musée des Beaux-Arts et d'Archéologie, Vienna.

Fig. **969**. Paul Jamin, *Rapt à l'âge de épisode de pierre*, 1888. Oil on canvas, 279 x 200 cm. Musée des Beaux-Arts, Reims.

As Shalon Parker has demonstrated in her 2019 study *Painting the Prehistoric Body in Late Nineteenth Century France*, French Romantic painters took advantage of prehistoric settings to explore painting the nude, or semi-nude, human body, including violent, erotic, compositions of cavemen fighting over women (**Figs**. **968**–**969**). The literary historian of prehistoric fiction Nicholas Ruddick, in his 2007 article "Courtship with a Club: Wife-Capture in Prehistoric Fiction, 1865–1914," noted that Victorian Brits were particularly concerned with caveman mating rituals. In 1865, the amateur Scottish anthropologist John F. McLennon published *Primitive Marriage: An Inquiry into the Origin of the Form of Capture in Marriage* in which he postulated that, in order to raise as many male warriors as possible, primitive cavemen tribes practiced female infanticide, forcing them to capture women from other tribes for exogamous mating. As Ruddrick observed:

> To McLennan, progressionism seemed logically to imply that, if civilized sexual relations were typified by monogamous marriage, then the most primitive people ('savages') must have lived in what was the polar opposite of middle-class matrimony, namely, one of promiscuity. Thanks

to the influence of Charles Lyell, whose uniformitarian geology had first opened up the vistas of deep time, Victorian evolutionists tended to think in gradualist terms. They assumed that the period between promiscuity and monogamy would have seen slowly elaborating systems of polyandry or polygamy, as the most primitive human social group (the "horde") evolved towards its culmination in the modern nation state.

Fig. **970**. Giambologna, *The Capture of the Sabine Women*, 1581–1583. Marble, 4.1 m. Loggia dei Lanzi, Florence.

For McLennan and other Victorian social evolutionists, the Roman myth of the Rape of the Sabine Women (**Fig**. **970**)—the tale of how, at the foundation of the city of Rome, Romulus and other men abducted women from their neighbors—was a cultural "missing link" in this hypothesized progression from sexual savagery to civilized monogamy.

Fig. **971**. Photograph of the Centenary of the Liverpool & Manchester Railway, Liverpool, Sept., 1930.

And out of these 19th-century speculations about prehistoric mating came the "courtship with a club" cartoon cliché of the caveman dragging the cavewoman by the hair. One particularly amusing manifestations of this motif can be seen in a photograph from the 1930 pageant held in Liverpool to celebrate the centenary of the Liverpool & Manchester Railway, the first intercity railway in England (**Fig. 971**). The pageant featured different types of transport through the ages, beginning with a caveman dragging his wife home by her hair! [Note the dinosaur costume in the background, presumably operated by two men!]

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One of the earliest "courtship with a club" cartoons is an illustration in Frederick Opper's 1903 *Our Antediluvian Ancestors* (**Fig. 972**), the set of cartoons that first introduced American audiences to the cavemen-living-with-dinosaurs fallacy (cf. **Figs. 788–789**). The joke in this Opper cartoon, presented in his typical format of a verbal comment made by bystanders, is a "humorous uchronía" projection onto the Paleolithic past of contemporary social mores about the proper length of time a widower should spend in morning a deceased spouse.

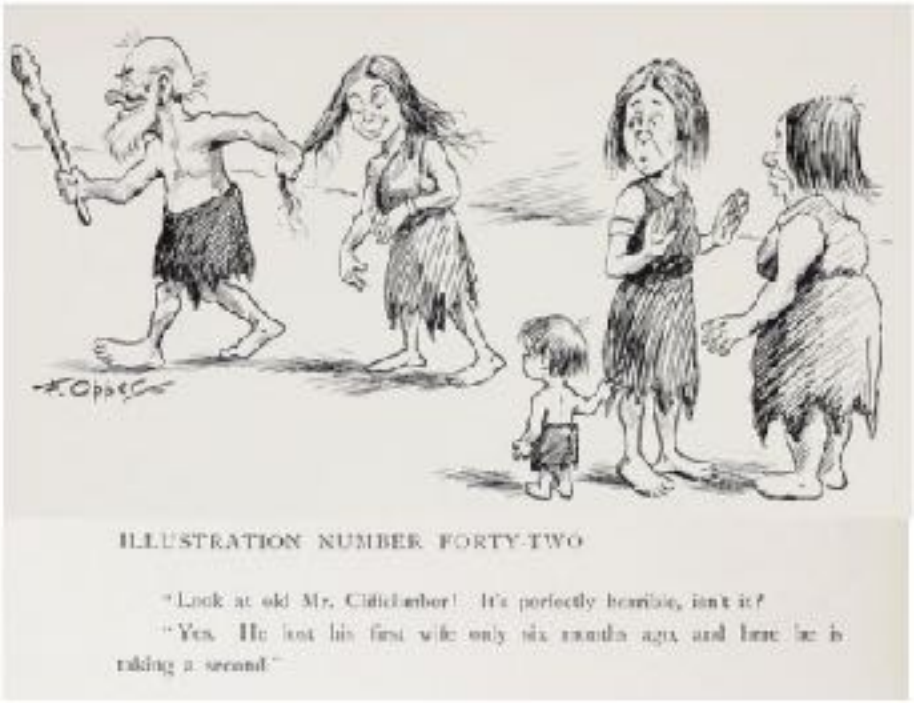

Fig. 972. Frederick Opper, *Our Antediluvian Ancestors*, 1903.

Fig. **973**. Leonard Dove, *The New Yorker*, 1 Dec., 1934.

Fig. **974**. Misha Ricther, *The New Yorker*, 27 Nov., 1943.

Fig. **975**. Tom Cheney, *The New Yorker*, 12 April, 1999.

Fig. **976**. Danny Shanahan, *The New Yorker*, 2002.

The cartoon editors at the *New Yorker* seem to have been particularly partial to "courtship with a club" cartoons. In 1934, Leonard Dove used the cliché for a cartoon where a caveman drags a woman into his cave only to discover that "Cripes, it's the wife!" (**Fig**. **973**). The cavewomen in Misha Richter's 1943 cartoon (**Fig**. **974**) humorously comment on how being dragged by the hair stimulates the roots. Tom Cheney and Danny Shanahan turn the tables on the motif by having cavemen drag other cavemen by the hair—Cheney to make a "humorous uchronía" gag about jury duty (**Fig**. **975**), while Shanahan does so in "humorous uchronía" sympathy with gay rights (**Fig**. **976**). Mark Godfrey (**Fig**. **977**) and Bill Whitehead (**Fig**. **978**) make similar gender-bending jokes, with "new age" cavewomen dragging off cavemen. The humor in Leigh Rubin's "courtship with a club" cartoon (**Fig**. **979**) derives from the incongruity of the other cavemen being aware that they are "primitive knuckle draggers."

Fig. 977. NAD (Mark Godfrey), *Wildlife Cartoons Australia*, 2013**.**

Fig. 978. Bill Whitehead, *Free Range*, 18 Oct., 2019.

Fig. 979. Leigh Rubin, *Rubes*, 27 May, 2018.

Fig. **980**. Ballo (Rex May), 2010.

Fig. **981**. NAD (Mark Godfrey), *Wildlife Cartoons Australia*, 2013.

The "humorous uchronía" in Rex May's "and Mark Godfey's "courtship with a club" cartoons (**Figs**. **980**–**981**) is the projection of contemporary dating onto the Paleolithic period in gags where the parents are incongruously unconcerned that their daughters are being dragged off by their hair. R. Crumb has played with a variation of the "courtship with a club" motif in one of his underground *Zap Comix* (**Fig**. **982**) where he speculates that a neurotic man like himself—wearing a fig leaf as "the first modest person"—would not have fared well "in Neolithic time" if it meant that he had to hit a woman over the head with a club in order to get a mate. Crumb—and, presumably, the readers of *Zap*— was apparently unconcerned that the date of 111,989 B.C. he gave to his comic strip is over 100,000 years *before* the earliest Neolithic period, or that his hairy and claw-toed gorilla-woman—depicted in typical large-body Crumb style—is an absurd "missing link" at a time when fully modern *homo sapiens* were emerging.

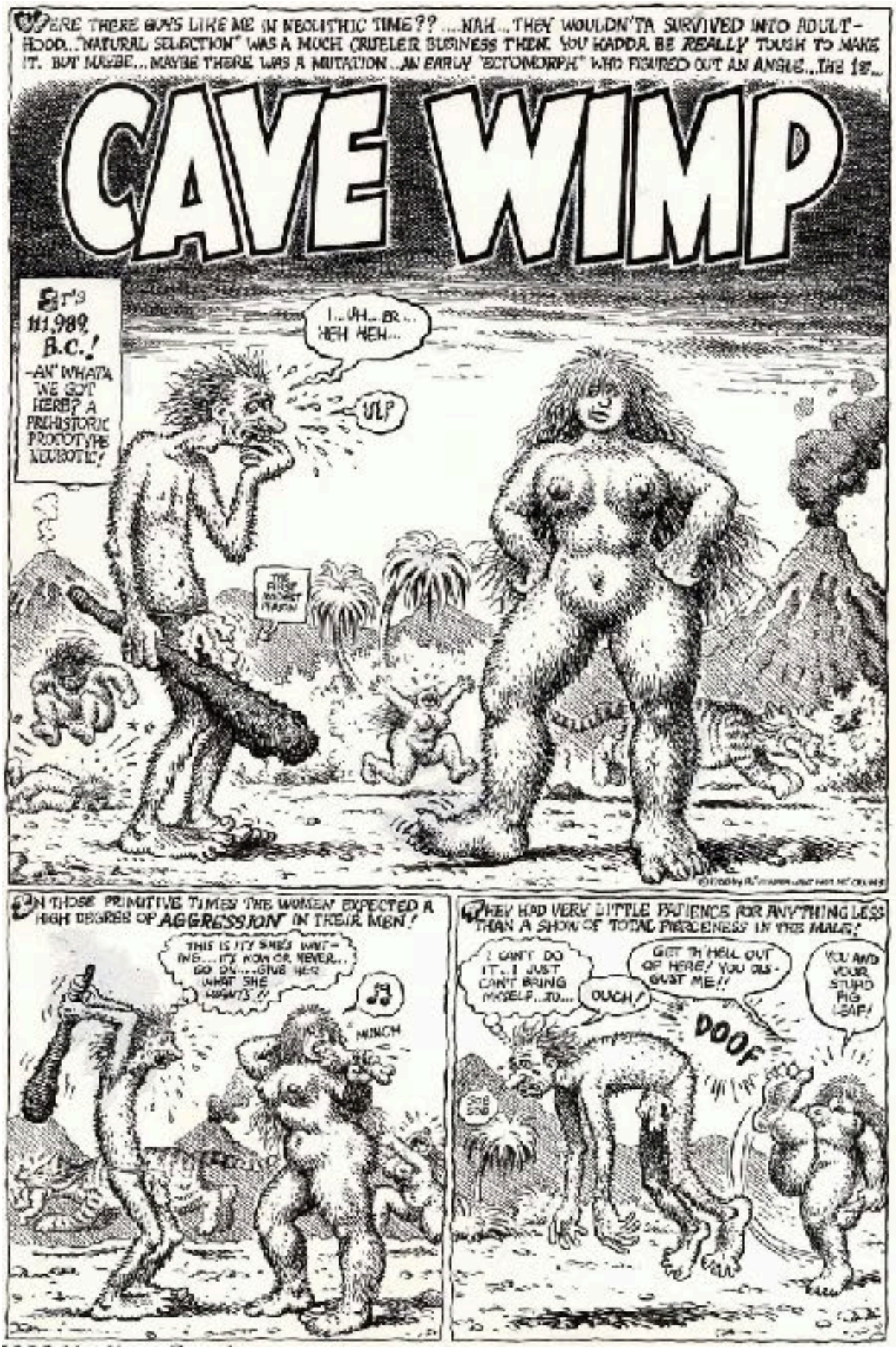

Fig. 982. Robert Crumb, "Cave Wimp," *Zap Comix*, No. 12, 1988.

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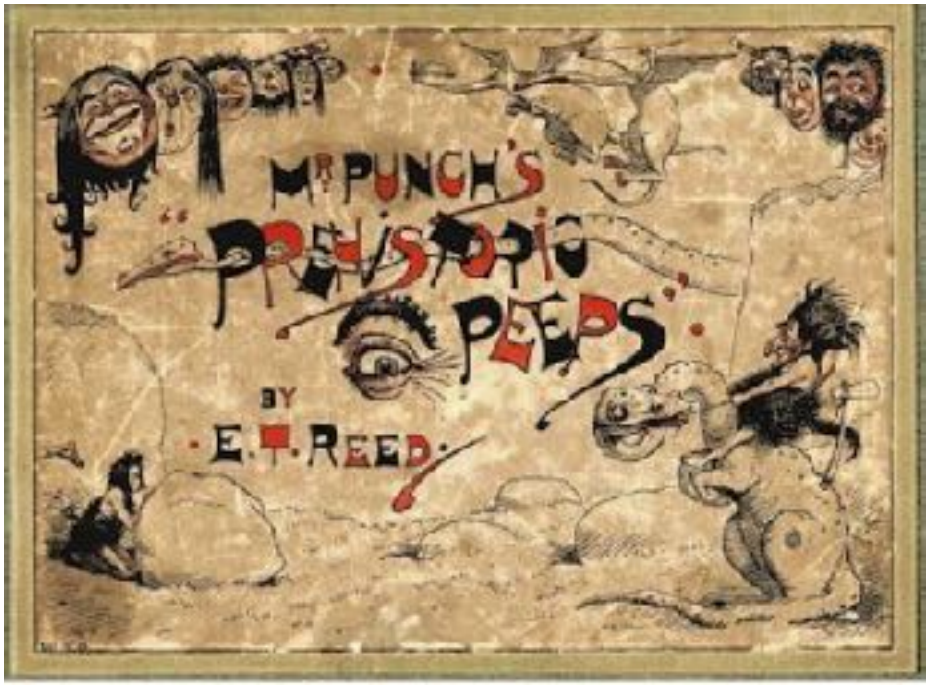

Fig. 983. Front cover to E.T. Reed, *Mr. Punch's Prehistoric Peeps*, 1894.

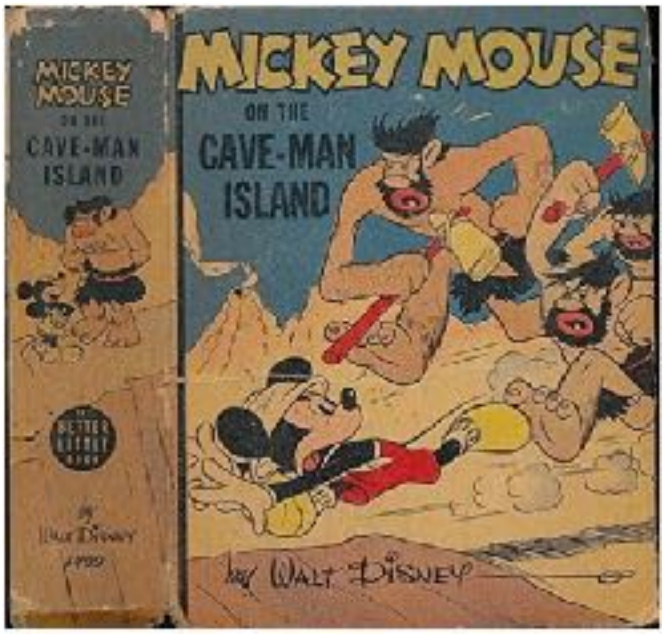

Fig. 984. Dust jacket to Walt Disney, *Mickey Mouse on the Cave-Man Island*, 1944. "

Fig. 985. Jean Ache (Jean-Baptiste Huet), Archibald, l'homme de la préhistoire," *Pilote. Le journal d'Asterix et Obelix*, 1965.

Fig. **986**. Gary Larson, *The Far Side.*

Fig. **987**. Kaaman Hafeez, *The New Yorker*, 2 Jan., 2017.

The cartoon depiction of "*homo horriblus*" is not solely confined to the caveman "courtship with a club" cliché. Ever since cartoon cavemen first appeared in the funny pages (and in prehistoric fiction and in Hollywood movies), they have been bashing each other with clubs and hafted stone weapons. The front cover to E.T. Reed's 1894 *Mr. Punch's Prehistoric Peeps* has a dinosaur-riding caveman with a hafted stone axe chasing an axe-less caveman cowering behind a rock (**Fig**. **983**). The dust jacket to Walt Disney's 1944 *Mickey Mouse on the Cave-Man Island* comic book has hafted-axe-wielding cavemen—depicted with racially stereotyped mouths—chasing a pith-helmeted Mickey (**Fig**. **984**). The front cover to Jean Ache's 1965 Archibald, l'homme de la préhistoire, comic book (**Fig**. **985**) has the playboy caveman Archibald using a club to knock cartoon stars out of the head of a hefty, bearded, opponent while, in the background, another caveman with a hafted axe munches on his club and a Tyrannosaurus Rex chases a Brontosaurus. Gary Larson has a dim-witted caveman accidentally "shoot" himself in the face while cleaning his club (**Fig**. **986**), and the *New Yorker* cartoonist Kaaman Hafeez uses one caveman clubbing another to make a "humor uchronía" joke about technological advances (**Fig**. **987**).

Clubbing each other aside, another favorite pastime of cartoon cavemen seems to be throwing rocks at each other.

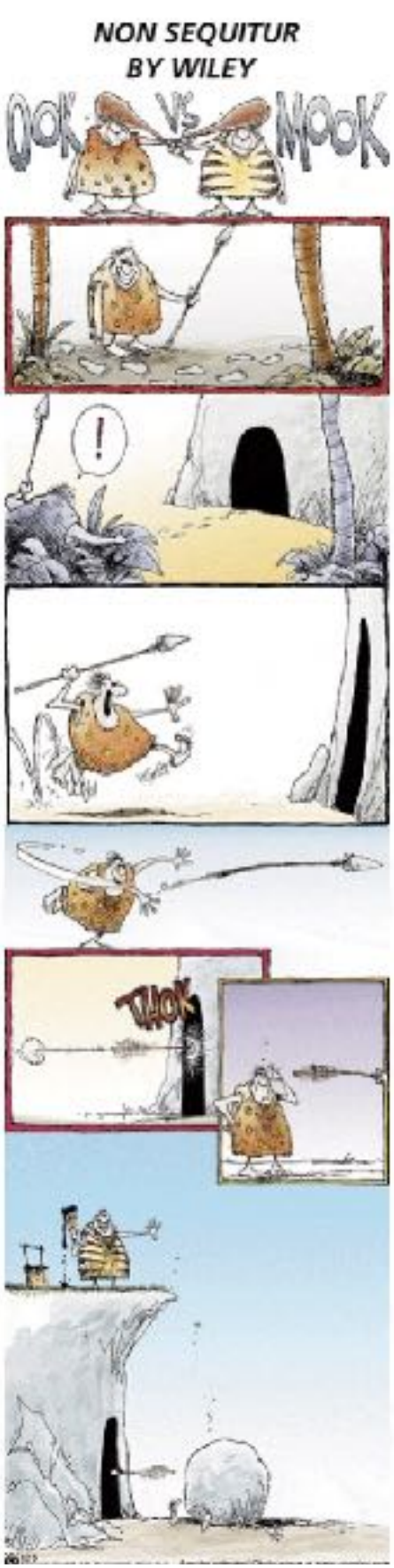

Fig. **988**. Wiley Miller, *Non Sequitur*, 12 May, 2013.

Fig. **989**. Wiley Miller, *Non Sequitur*, 31 May, 2015.

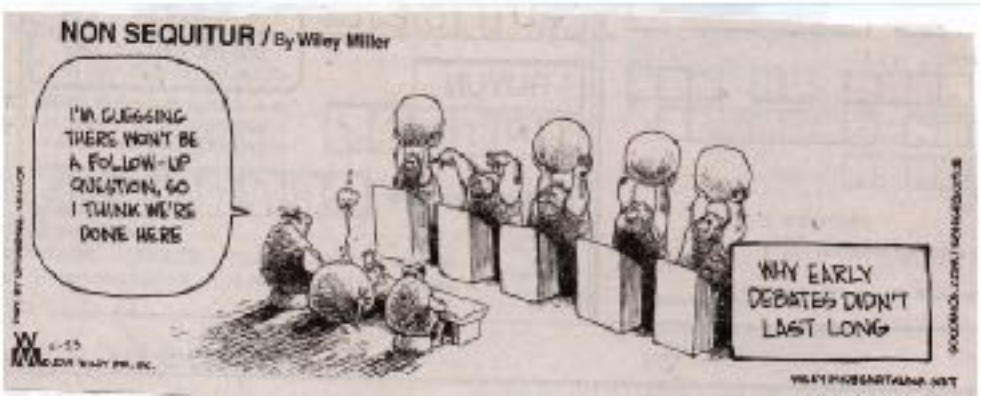

Fig. **990**. Wiley Miller, *Non Sequitur*, 23 Nov., 2015.

The syndicated cartoonist Wiley Miller seems to be particularly fond of the cavemen-throwing-rocks theme. Using the vertical-panel format of his Sunday comic strip, Wiley has given us a 2013 strip (**Fig**. **988**) where a clever caveman defeats a spear-throwing rival by disguising the opening of his cave to allow him to drop a rock on the befuddled spear-thrower; Miller's 2015 Sunday strip (**Fig**. **989**) uses rock-throwing to resolve a "humorous uchronía" dispute about which caveman's book of truth is "truthier." [This comic is one of many examples that erroneously depict Stone-Age men as chiseling letters on stone blocks, something that would not happen until 10,000 years after the Paleolithic period.] A few months later, Miller drew another "humorous uchronía" cartoon (**Fig**. **990**), this time about Stone Age political debates.

Fig. 991. Tom Cheney, *The New Yorker*, 22 June, 2009.

Fig. 992. Tom Cheney, *The New Yorker*, 11 Oct., 2011.

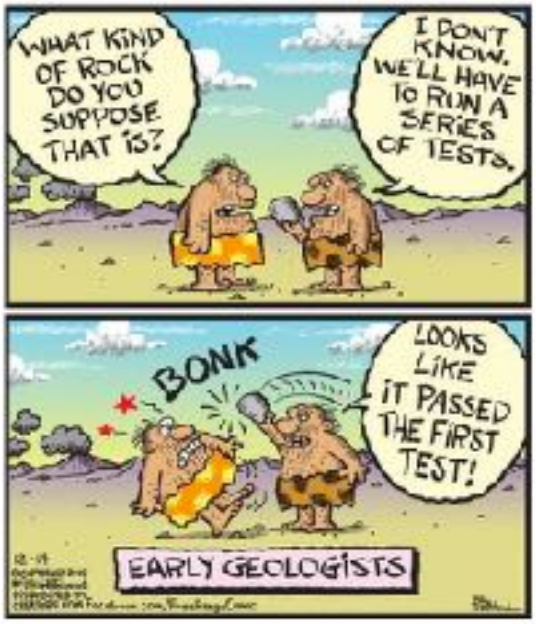

Fig. **993**. Bill Whitehead, Free Range, 14 Dec., 2019.

The *New Yorker* cartoonist Tom Cheney also has cavemen bashing each other with clubs in a "humorous uchronía" cartoon (**Fig**. **991**) about the American social phenomenon of interventions by friends and family members to confront people about their addictions; Cheney employs the rock-throwing motif in a "humorous uchronía" cartoon (**Fig**. **992**) about Stone Age theater. Bill Whitehead combines bashing and rock-throwing in a cartoon (**Fig**. **993**) about "early geologists."

Fig. **994**. Steve Moore, *In the Bleachers*, 27 Dec., 2001.

Fig. 995. Dan Piraro, *Bizzaro*, 16 Nov., 2014.

Steve Moore (**Fig. 994**) and Dan Piraro (**Fig. 995**) have combined stone-throwing caveman with another "humorous uchronía" trope of Stone-Age cartoons, namely cavemen as inventors—a trope that we will now examine in the following section of this essay.

Humorous "*homo inventus*"

Fig. 996. Gary Larson, *The Far Side*, 5 May, 1988.

Fig. **997**. Screen shots from *Originalos,* Tiny Film, 2010.

Fig. **998**. Baloo (Rex F. May), 2014.

"Who first invented the . . .?" One of the most popular form of Stone-Age cartoon uchronía humor is to project onto the Paleolithic past the invention of this or that modern contraption or social custom. Gary Larson imagines a "think tank" of cavemen sitting around a cave coming up with ideas for discovering fire, inventing the wheel, and making comical faces (**Fig**. **996**). The Danish team of Søren Tomas and Karsten Madsen have used the premise of "*homo inventus*" for their *Originalos* animated cartoons (**Fig**. **997**)—short, three-minute, dialogue-free cartoons in which, through humorous trial and error, bushy-bearded cavemen invent such things as Stone-Age footballs, flush toilets, or soup plates that the Tiny Film team cheerfully admit "may not all be scientifically proven facts." Rex May's 2014 cartoon (**Fig**. **998**) suggests that the red-headed caveman used a stone ". . . *for Dummies*" book to invent fire and hafted stone axes.

Ironically, we do know that by the Upper Paleolithic period (ca. 50,000 to 12,000 years before the present), fully modern *homo sapiens* were using hafted stone tools and had mastered the control of fire, although they obviously did not need an *Inventing for Dummies* book to make these discoveries. Claims that earlier hominids such as *homo erectus* had mastered fire as early as a million years ago have been questioned by

geomorphologists, as the evidence of wood ash in cave strata occupied by these hominids has been re-interpreted as having been blown in from forest fires. There is universal consensus among archaeologists, however, that Upper Paleolithic stone tools made from heat-treated silicate rocks prove that humans were controlling fire by this period.

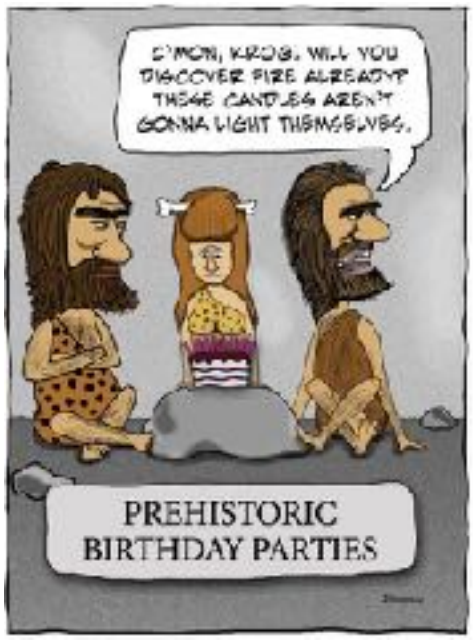

Fig. **999**. Chuck Ingwersen, 2009.

Fig. 1000. Paul Mahoney, 2012.

The niceties of these scientific debates about when humans first controlled fire seem to have gone over the heads of cartoonists, who continue to make gags about cavemen discovering fire (cf. **Fig**. **54**). A text-heavy greeting card cartoon by Chuck Ingwersen (**Fig**. **999**), for instance, uses the caveman-discovering-fire cliché in a "humorous uchronía" gag about prehistoric birthday parties; the gag in a Paul Mahoney cartoon (**Fig**. **1000**) is set up by the text, but the joke is visual, with the humorous image of the burnt cavemen who tried to eat fire.

Fig. **1001**. Ted Blackman, *Crotchety Comics*, 2012.

Ted Blackman's "humorous uchronía" comic strip (**Fig**. **1001**), divided into panels with stick-borders, similarly attributes to a caveman inventor the discovery of something—the spoon—that was never "invented," as it is likely that simple wooden or bone ladles were used by hominids from the earliest Paleolithic times, although whether they hung these spoons from their faces as a joke is doubtful!

These cavemen-discovering-fire (or the spoon) jokes aside, most humorous caveman-as-inventor cartoons involve the "humorous uchronía" invention of something that is an obvious temporal anomaly in the Paleolithic period. The 1928 "El origen de algunas cosas" ("The Origin of Some Things") in the Spanish comic magazine *TBO* (**Fig**. **1002**), for instance, gives us the first billiards game (using skulls), the first motorboat (riding a shark going after a bunny on a stick), the first automobile (sliding down a hill on a log), and the first eyeglasses (rock crystals mounted on a wheeled vehicle); note that "la primera excursion campestre de la familia humana" ("the first human family country outing") in the lower left is another example of the "courtship-with-a-club" motif.

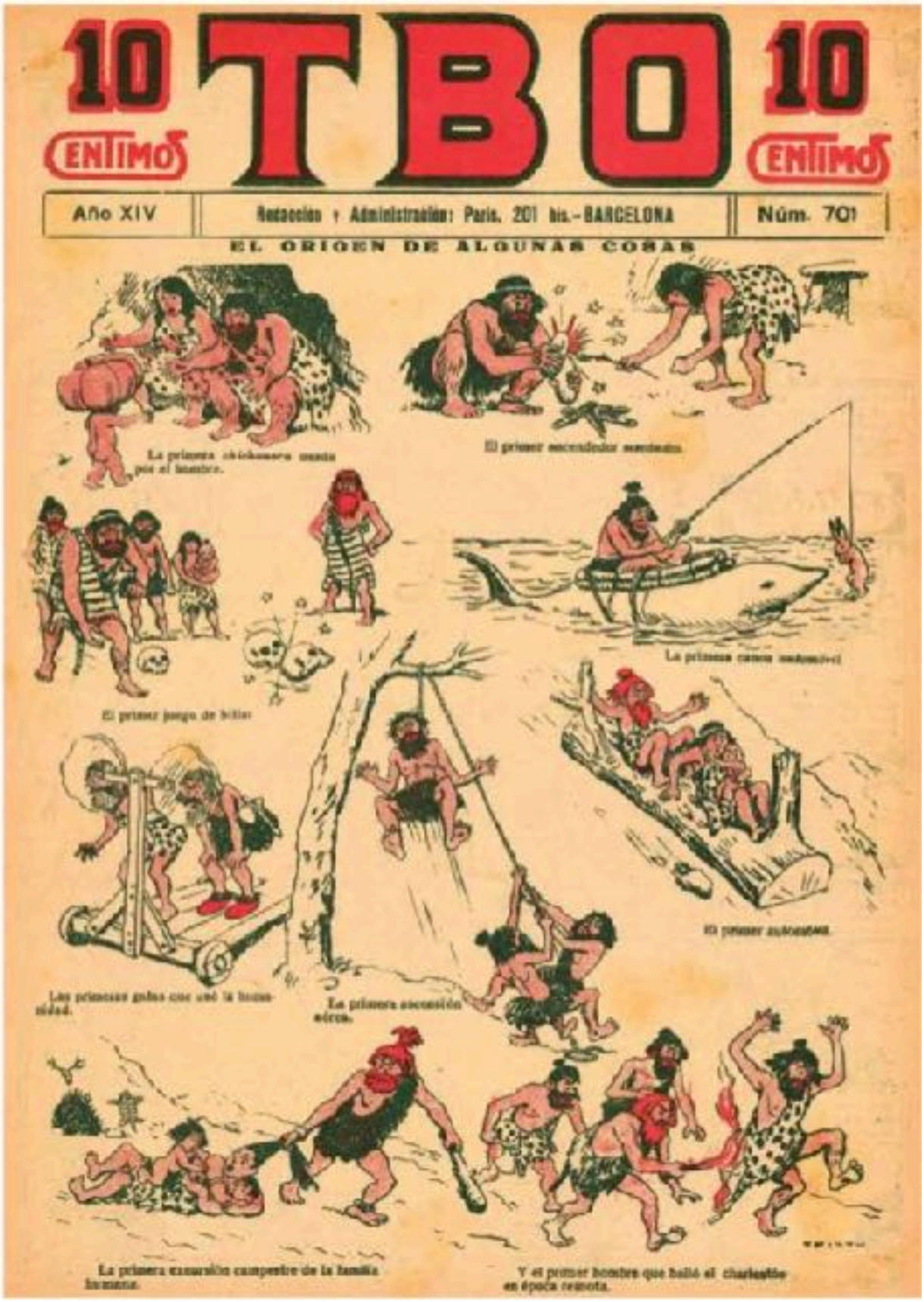

Fig. **1002**. "El origen de algunas cosas," *TBO.* Año XIV, n. 701, Barcelona, 1928.

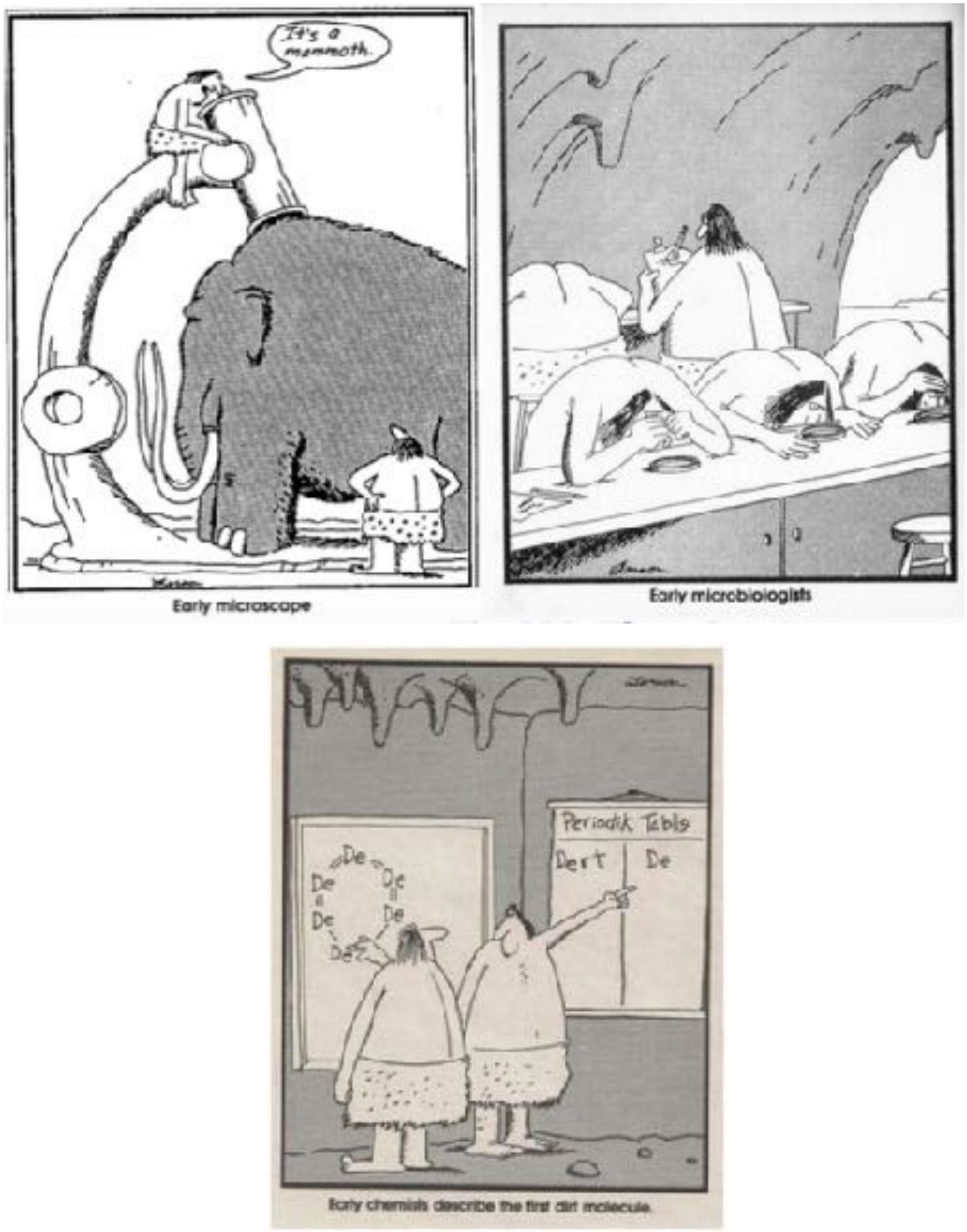

Fig. 1003. Three Gary Larson *The Far Side* cartoons.

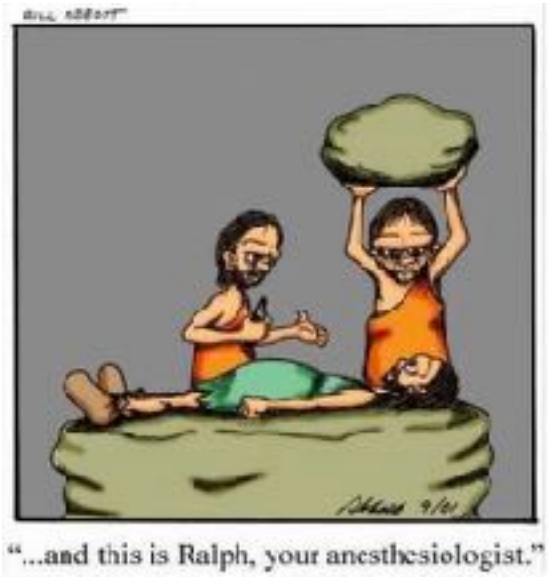

Fig. **1004**. Bill Abbott, Sept., 2001.

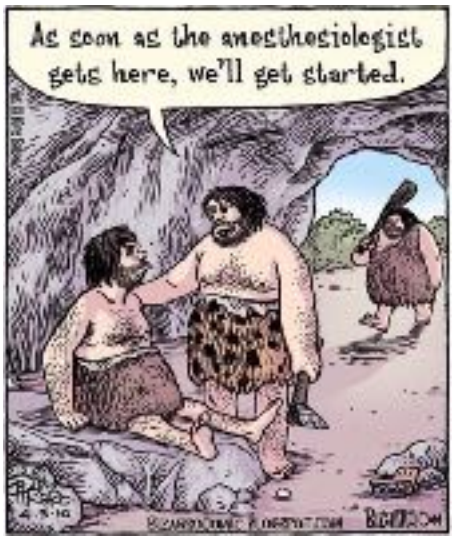

Fig. **1005**. Dan Piraro, *Bizarro*, 5 April, 2010.

Fig. **1006**. Robert Leighton, *The New Yorker*, 13 Aug., 2012.

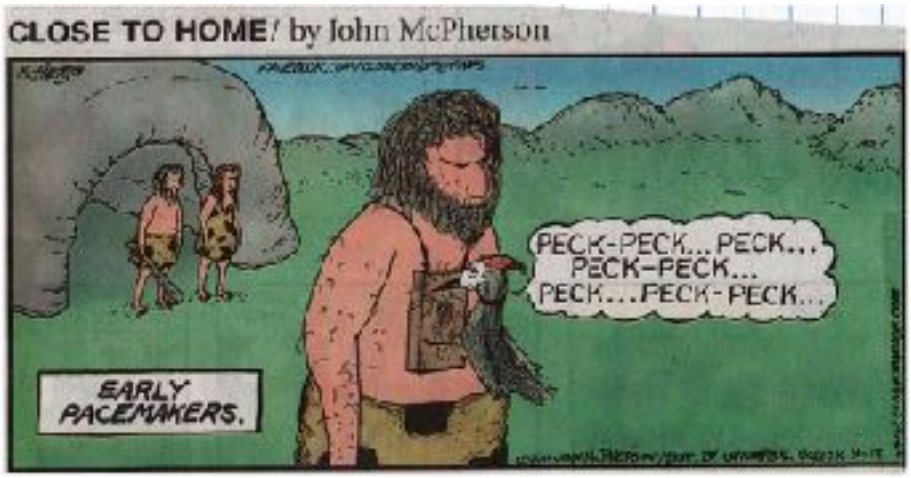

Fig. **1007**. John McPherson, *Close to Home*, 14 Sept., 2014.

Gary Larson, who has perhaps created more caveman cartoons than anyone else, has given us a number of humorous caveman-as-scientist cartoons, such as a caveman humorously examining a mammoth with a microscope, cavemen microbiologists hunched over petri dishes, and cavemen chemists describing the dirt molecule (**Fig**. **1003**). Bill Abbott and Dan Piraro have similarly transposed scientific "humorous uchronía" onto the Stone Age with rock-throwing and club-wielding anesthesiologists (**Figs**. **1004** and **1005**), while Robert Leighton and John McPherson have given us a Stone-Age operation (**Fig**. **1006**) and a woodpecker pacemaker (**Fig**. **1007**).

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But by far the most common type of Stone-Age humorous "*homo inventus*" cartoons are those that revolve around cavemen inventing the wheel—a misconception we have already seen in a John Atkinson cartoon (**Fig**. **194**).

Fig. 1008. Maurice Cuvillier, "Les Aventures de Ra et Ta. Écoliers de L' Âge de Pierre," *Guignol*, no. 96, 6 May, 1928, pp. 1 and 8..

Fig. **1009**. Jon St. Ables, *Lucky Comics*, Oct.–Nov., 1945.

Fig. 1010. Gene Hazelton, *The Flintstones*, 27 Nov., 1962.

When cavemen first appeared in the funny pages, they were depicted as riding wheeled vehicles. E.T. Reed's 1894 "A Day in the Country" *Mr. Punch's Prehistoric Peeps* cartoon (**Fig**. **782**) showed wild-haired cavemen bouncing around in a four-wheeled

cart being pulled by a megalosaurus with an awkward-looking yoke. The frontispiece to Frederick Opper's 1903 *Our Antediluvian Ancestors* (**Fig. 788**) showed "young Skinclothes" riding an "auto-something-or-other" that he made himself and rode around at more than three miles an hour, scaring "the old fogies." Maurice Cuvillier's 1928 "Les Aventures de Ra et Ta" (**Fig. 1008**) depicted the two school children as lugging their stone tablets to school in a cart, driving with their father in a tapir-pulled cart, and riding bicycles with wheels made from slices of tree trunks. Jon St. Ables' 1945 *Piltdown Pete* cartoon (**Fig. 1009**) featured a two-wheeled cart pulled by an odd-looking dinosaur yoked to the cart via its segmented tail. The cavemen in *The Flintstones* rode around in foot-propelled cars, a "humorous uchronía" that Gene Hazelton, in a newspaper comic strip spinoff of the television animated cartoon series, used in a gag about a suburban housewife forgetting to buy more toothpaste and the husband using the car to get the last bit out of the tube (**Fig. 1010**).

Fig. 1011. Johnny Hart, *B.C.*, 1958.

Fig. 1012. Arby's B.C. Comics Caveman Unicycle Glass Tumbler, 1981.

If cartoon cavemen rode wheeled vehicles ever since the beginning of the caveman cartoon genre, gags about cavemen *inventing* the wheel would seem to be the brainchild of Johnny Hart. When Hart first started drawing his *B.C.* strip in 1958, he was working in the art department at General Electric, and he modeled the strip's characters on his fellow co-workers at the plant. In one of Hart's early *B.C.* strips (**Fig. 1011**), Thor (a character based on a GE graphic designer named Thornton Kinney) invents the wheel, and, when BC (a stand-in for Hart himself) asks if it works, Thor replies "you don't **have**

to work to be important." [While this gag has a socialist barb appropriate for someone who had been working at the Dow Jones industrial giant General Electric, it seems curiously out of place for Johnny Hart, who would later become a conservative born-again evangelical and publish several controversial pro-Christian *B.C.* and *Wizard of Id* comic strips.] We might speculate that Hart came up with the idea for his caveman-inventing-the-wheel cartoon from the phrase "don't re-invent the wheel," which was becoming popular in American business circles at precisely this time; on the other hand, Hart may well have been the source for this commonplace phrase! Subsequent *B.C.* comic strips feature an impossible unicycle vehicle that Thor created by putting a wooden axle in the wheel (**Fig. 1012**), providing Hart with a comic trope he would frequently use to satirize contemporary driving habits and the American automobile industry; in a life-imitating-art twist, the recent invention of self-balancing electric unicycles seems to have been inspired by Johnny Hart's *B.C.* comics.

[The issue of the invention of the wheel has recently made the news in the United States when President Donald Trump, at the 22 Jan., 2020, World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, declared that America should support its geniuses like Elon Musk: "You know, we have to protect Thomas Edison, and we have to protect all of these people that came up with, originally, the lightbulb, and the wheel and all of these things." Although when and where the wheel was first invented is still a matter of some debate —most scholars think that the potter's wheel was invented around 4,000 to 3,500 B.C.E. and that Mesopotamians developed wheeled transport soon thereafter—it is clear that the wheel and wheeled transport were neither American inventions nor creations of our Paleolithic ancestors.]

Fig. 1013. Gary Larson, *Far Side*, 20 March 1981.

Fig. 1014. Gary Larson, *Far Side*, 23 Oct. 1984.

Fig. 1015. Gary Larson, *Far Side*, 24 July, 1985.

Fig. 1016. Gary Larson, *Far Side*, 17 Jan., 1986.

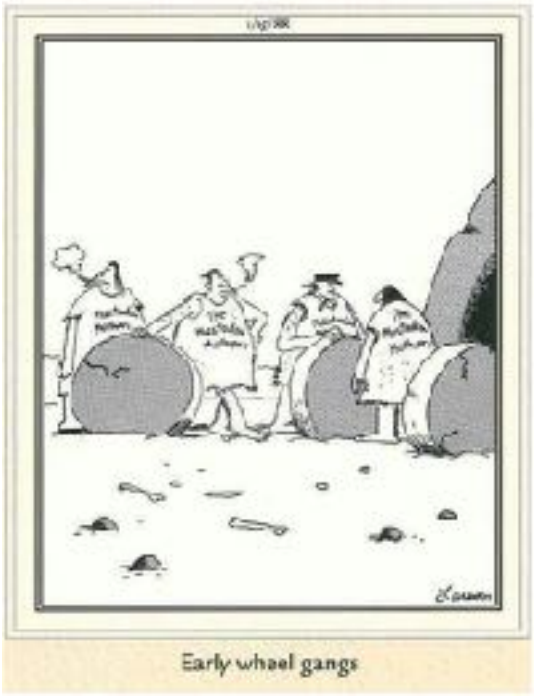

Fig. 1017. Gary Larson, *Far Side*, 15 Jan., 1988.

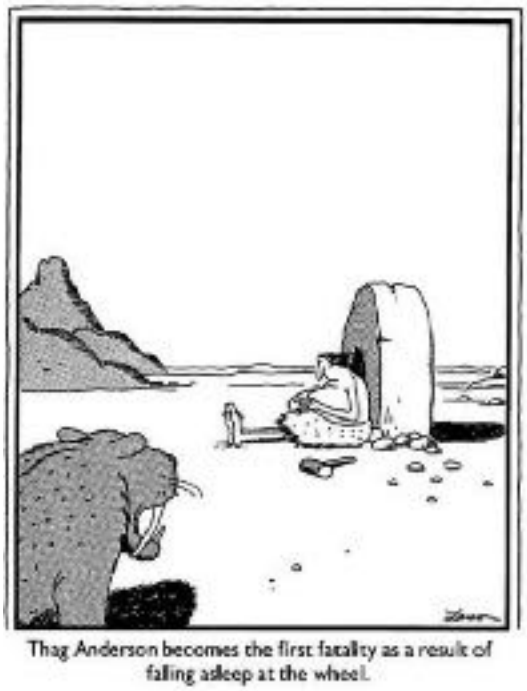

Fig. 1018. Gary Larson, *Far Side*, 22 May, 1990.

As one might expect, Gary Larson has gone to town with wheels in his Stone-Age cartoons: making a wheel with stone tools (**Figs**. **1013** and **1015**); silly experiments in transportation without an axle (**Fig**. **1014**); playing the children's game of wheelbarrow without a wheel (**Fig**. **1016**); cavemen motorcycle gangs (**Fig**. **1017**); and the dangers of falling asleep at a stone wheel (**Fig**. **1018**).

Fig. 1019. John McPherson, *Close to Home*, 3 Aug., 2014.

Fig. 1020. John McPherson, *Close to Home*, 27 Nov., 2016.

Fig. 1021. John McPherson, *Close to Home*, 22 Oct., 2017.

The cartoonist John McPherson has also enjoyed the caveman-with-wheels cartoon genre, giving us gags ranging from the absurdity of carrying around a spare stone wheel (**Fig**. **1019**), to "humorous uchronía" references to hybrid cars (**Fig**. **1020**) and bumper stickers (**Fig**. **1021**). We might note that the 47,000 BC date McPherson gives to his misspelled "Sav the Dodos" bumper sticker is well within the Upper Paleolithic period, although Stone-Age people would not have known about the dodo, which was discovered by Dutch sailors in 1598 and went extinct in 1662.

Fig. **1022**. Patrick Hardin, 4 March, 2003.

Fig. 1023. Dave Coverly, *Speed Bump*, 17 April, 2005.

Fig. **1024**. NAD (Mark Godfrey), *Wildlife Cartoons Australia*, 2013**.**

Fig. 1025. Scott Hilburn, *The Argyle Sweater*, 4 Jan. , 2010.

Fig. 1026 Scott Hilburn, *The Argyle Sweater*, 14 Feb., 2014.

Fig. 1027. Mike Stanfill, 12 April, 2013.

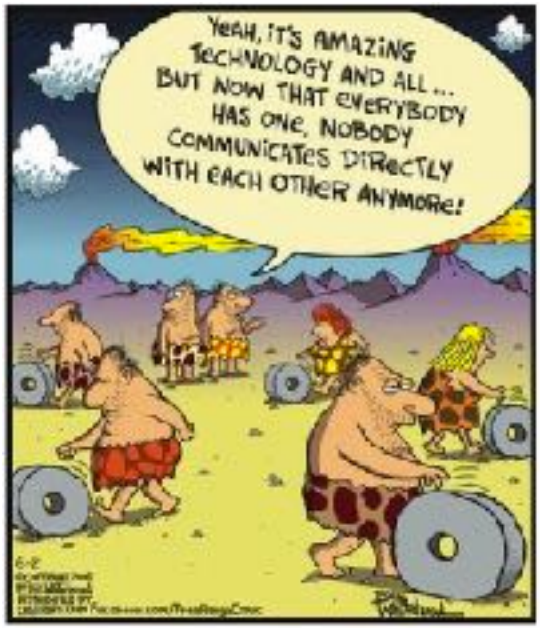

Fig. **1028**. Bill Whitehead, *Free Range*, 2 June, 2016.

Fig. 1029. Harry Bliss, 21 Dec., 2016.

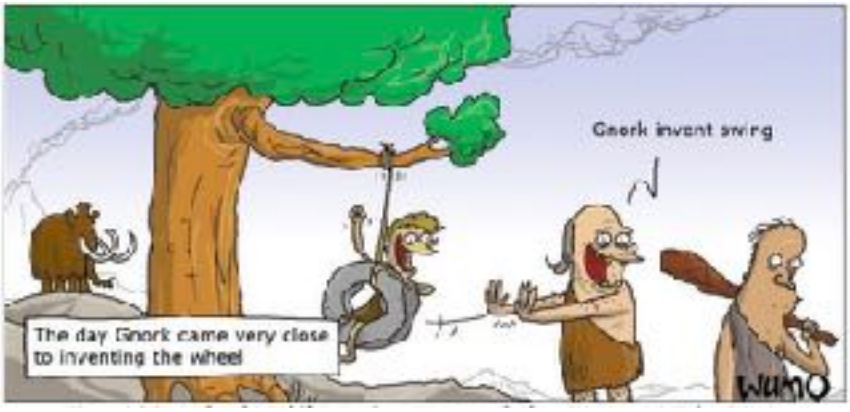

Fig. **1030**. Mikael Wulff & Anders Morgenthaler, *Wumo*, 12 Feb., 2018.

"Once he invented the wheel, it was only a matter of time before he came up with the food truck."

Fig. **1031**. David Sipress, *The New Yorker*, 24 Sept., 2018.

Fig. **1032**. Bill Whitehead, *Free Range*, 25 April, 2019.

There seems to be no limit to the way cartoonists can use the caveman-inventing-the-wheel cliché. A few recent examples: Patrick Hardin uses the cliché to make a joke about grant-funding (**Fig**. **1022**); Dave Coverly gives us "cave hamsters" inventing exercise wheels (**Fig**. **1023**—Coverly would return to this theme 14 years later, cf. **Fig**. **481**); the date of 3,500 B.C. in Mark Godfrey's silly cartoon (**Fig**. **1024**) about an incongruous invention of the coffee percolator would be a good approximation for the date of the invention of the wheel, although it is 10,000 years after cavemen; Scott Hillburn has made jokes about the dangers of trying to ride his oddly thin, oversized stone wheels (**Figs**. **1025** and **1026**); the progressive cartoonist Mike Sanfill has used the caveman-inventing-the-wheel cliché to take a crack at organized religion (**Fig**. **1027**); Bill Whitehead used it for a "humorous uchronía" comparison to the social dangers of cell phones and artificial intelligence (**Figs**. **1028** and **1032**); Harry Bliss used it for a "humorous uchronía" gag about Stone-Age gender relations (**Fig**. **1029**); the Wulff & Morgenthaler *Wumo* team employed it in a "humorous uchronía" cartoon about a dad pushing his child on a tire swing (**Fig**. **1030**); and David Sipress used it in a *New Yorker* "humorous uchronía" cartoon (**Fig**. **1031**) about a food truck, here depicted as a dead mammoth on wheels.

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