

# Re: Evolution = gradual

---

*Source:* <http://sci.tech--archive.net/Archive/sci.anthropology.paleo/2008-01/msg00860.html>

---

- *From:* Lee Olsen <[paleocity@xxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:paleocity@xxxxxxxxxxx)>
  - *Date:* Tue, 22 Jan 2008 16:06:24 -0800 (PST)
- 

On Jan 22, 3:42 pm, Marc Verhaegen <[m\\_verhae...@xxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:m_verhae...@xxxxxxxxxxx)> wrote:

My little boy, what on earth has that to do with AAT??

Nothing has anything to do with AAT

Ah??

Inform a bit:

Aquatic Ape (non)Theory: Comments on a Recent Guest Lecture  
by

Cameron M. Smith

PhD, Department of Archaeology

"If you were among the unfortunate crowd who spent a good amount of time listening to visiting lecturer Elaine Morgan recently, regarding the 'Aquatic Ape Theory', be advised of the following points.

1. Aquatic Ape Theory has been scientifically reviewed, and, despite what was presented at this lecture, it has been found to be severely wanting. AAT is not a 'credible alternative theory'; it is what is known as a post-hoc accommodative argument. Strictly speaking AAT does

not really have a coherent body of theory, only a few disassociated (non)explanations for a few biological characteristics of the genus Homo. People should be aware that AAT is NOT 'mainstream' or 'a viable alternative' as claimed at the lecture.

2. AAT is poorly regarded because it is a poor explanatory device. It is poorly regarded because it has been examined and found to be invalid. It is not poorly regarded because of some scientific cover-up

Re: Evolution = gradual

or paranoia. It is not poorly regarded because scientists cannot accept change. Scientific knowledge does change, all the time, and it has been pointed out that science is the worst place to try to hide anything because fraud will be exposed through experiment. AAT is simply a theory that has been evaluated (and ditched) by most serious anthropologists.

3. The presentation on 14 October is an embarrassment to Simon Fraser University, and the sponsoring hosts. How this pop/crypto/science 'theory' was given equal billing with real research efforts is beyond me. The fact that the 'theory' was included in a series of lectures dealing with darwinian processes (The Institute of Humanities' 'Old Minds and Bodies in New Worlds: A Darwinian Perspective on Our Past, Present and Future' lectures) is a travesty, as AAT crumbles when examined for internal darwinian logic. Unfortunately, having the speaker lecture on AAT was akin to having SFU sponsor Erich von Daniken to speak about spaceship depictions in Maya tombs.

Here's a point to consider when evaluating AAT. I did not learn this point from some academic overlord with an anti-AAT agenda; I learned it while trying to avoid becoming crocodile food in Africa. When I spent several months with a team at Lake Turkana, Kenya, investigating

some of the most important early hominid sites in the world, one of our overriding concerns -- while swimming, bathing, or catching fish with a net -- was to watch out for crocodiles in the shallows. A croc can be on you, crush your legs in its jaws, and drag you under to drown before you have time to screech for help.

The fact that crocodiles co-existed in time and space with early hominids is a colossal blow to AAT, which does not explain what advantages early humans would have gained by spending time in crocodile-populated waters; an environment where they could not make fires, throw stones or sticks, use other tools, or have any hope whatever of escaping the most common predator. A troop of early hominids wading in a lakeshore or swampy forest would best be described as a crocodile banquet. The cute, feel-good images of babies

swimming freely in a pool, shown in the AAT video, have nothing to do with the real situation of predator avoidance in Africa. Ask the Dasenich or Turkana people who live around Lake Turkana: only visiting maniacs swim in that lake.

There's much else to say, but I have a 650-word limit. Please keep in mind, the 'savanna hypothesis' has indeed been largely abandoned, but that does NOT validate AAT a priori. Neither is AAT validated because of the common sentiment that 'it is someone's opinion, and everyone is entitled to an opinion'. Opinion is not the same thing as scientific theory.

Re: Evolution = gradual

Re: Evolution = gradual

The damage of this lecture was to those who came to the lecture expecting, and possibly believing, that AAT was a viable body of theory. It is not, and it does not deserve that label."

Cheers,

Cameron M. Smith

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/AAT>

Description:

- \* Comparative & fossil information on human & ape evolution.
- \* Waterside diaspora of Homo after Homo & Pan split ~5 Ma.

AAT:

- \* Aquatic Ape Theory of human evolution (original term E.Morgan 1982)
- \* Aquarboreal Apes Theory of Mio–Pliocene apes (aqua=water, arbor=tree)
- \* Amphibious Ancestors Theory of Plio–Pleistocene Homo (AAT strict sense)

AAT s.s. is based on comparisons of the behavior–anatomy–physiology–DNA of living humans with chimps & other living animals.

Collection of waterside foods (eg, fruits, (coco)nuts, turtle & bird eggs, shell & crayfish, water(side)plants, drowned herbivores, stranded whales etc.) explains unique Homo traits (not seen in apes & australopiths) better than dwelling in forests or dry plains: huge brain, slow–diving skills, breath control, vocality, small mouth+chewing muscles, tongue bone descent, longer airway, projecting nose, poor sense of smell, handiness & tool use, late puberty, long legs, aligned body, poor climbing, flat feet, fur loss, fatness, profuse sweating, high needs of water, sodium, iodine, poly–unsat.fatty acids (DHA), etc.

Homo & Pan separated ~6-4 Ma. Homo populations dispersed along lakes/shores/rivers in savannas & elsewhere, eg, crossed 18 km sea to reach Flores 0.8 Ma.

Homo tools/fossils 2.5-0.1 Ma are found near Rift valley lakes & even (sea level fluctuations hindered fossilisation) Indian Ocean & African coasts: Mojokerto, Dungo V Baia Farta, Terra Amata, Table Bay, Eritrea etc.

- \* Max Westenhöfer 1942. Der Eigenweg des Menschen. Mannstaede
- \* Alister Hardy 1960. Was Man more aquatic in the past? NS 7:624
- \* Maggie Roede etc.1991. The Aquatic Ape: Fact or Fiction? Souvenir
- \* Elaine Morgan 1997. The Aquatic Ape Hypothesis. Souvenir London
- \* Marc Verhaegen etc.2002. Aquarboreal ancestors? TREE 17:212
- \* Stephen Cunnane 2005. Survival of the Fattest. World Scientific
- \* Phillip Tobias <http://allserv.rug.ac.be/~mvaneech/outthere.htm>
- \* Symposium 1999. Water & Human Evolution <http://allserv.rug.ac.be/~mvaneech/Symposium.html>

Re: Evolution = gradual

Re: Evolution = gradual