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**ABOUT EARLY
WATER STAGES IN
HUMANITY :**

A COMPARISON
BETWEEN THE AAT AND
THE INITIAL BIPEDALISM
THEORY

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Résumé :

ABSTRACT : Traditionally our species Homo sapiens is thought to have found its origins in quadrupedal/terrestrial Simian ancestors, despite of the fact that many human characteristics are found in water mammals. Scientists, however, commonly keep on arguing that Hominid Evolution was accomplished only on land (Savannah Theory). Yet two theories, the Aquatic Ape Theory (AAT) and the Initial Bipedalism Theory (B.I.), have emphasized that humans once went through an aquatic stage. The differences between the 2 theories are

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now recalled in this following article.

ABOUT EARLY WATER STAGES IN HUMANITY :

THE AQUATIC APE THEORY (AAT)

The **AAT** hypothesizes that humans developed from apes through an **aquatic** : stage in evolution, **during the transition from the last common ancestor we shared with them.**

As the original theory was done by the marine biologist Alister HARDY in 1960, the palaeontological *datae* were rather scarce, in the sense that one proponent **Ramapithecus** kept a major role in the commonly admitted History of humanity.

Australopithecus also seemed to be a good candidate for an early bipedal "human being".

The "gap" (*) between **Ramapithecus** (9 million years) and **Australopithecus** (4 million years) appeared, then, to be the favorable period when a supposed "**marine ape**" has lived in the oceans, and when the evolution of human bipedalism has occurred.

Since, molecular biologists do present new evidence for the time frame of human evolution. Simon EASTEAL (1997) claims in a recent work that the divergence between humans and chimpanzees was done, 4.0-3.6 million years ago, suggesting : "**that the common ancestor of humans and chimpanzees was bipedal and that the trait has been lost in chimpanzees rather than gained in humans**".

Also **Australopithecus** is meaning to have lost bipedal habits (GEE, 1995). And **Ramapithecus** is declaring definitely as a next relative of our modern orang-outang (COPPENS, 1983).

Indisputably, the acquisition of bipedal gait was obtained a long time before an alleged "gap" had taken place in the evolution of some terrestrial Primates, allegedly a few million years ago. The **Aquatic Ape** Theory, indeed, is dealing with a phantom... !

Therefore, the **AAT** develops core ideas that are present in the **Initial Bipedalism** Theory :

- Man cannot have evolved on land.
- Many features are found only in humans and in aquatic or in post-aquatic mammals.

Elaine MORGAN, a "pupil" of Sir Alister Hardy, claimed in her book, The **Aquatic Ape** (1982), that : "**Something must have happened to the ancestors of Homo sapiens which did not happen to the ancestors of gorillas and chimpanzees**".

She argued that : "**No fossil relics have yet been discovered from the period when these changes were taking place**". - As a matter of fact, it is yet not necessary to invent an "**aquatic ape**" in order to forge an ascent to man ! Human beings may have come in a direct line from the ancient

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mammals...

On the contrary, apes must be now regarded as a further development beyond human kind (*dehominization*, HEUVELMANS 1954, 1966, 1974).

Specifically, **AAT**-proponents claim that the "aquatic apes" have become less and less aquatic (from being fully acclimated to sea life !), as they allegedly began to "stand erect" in wading along the shores... - But predators in shallow waters, such as sharks or crocodiles, should have presented for million years (until today) a big problem for any ape-like shore creature !

If some primates ever went, into the ocean, it is attempted that they have soon extended to open sea-surfaces : and that they did not remain in close to the dangerous shore-lines...

The so-called "**Steller's sea-ape**", described in 1741, although not yet listed by science, or any "**mermaids**" reported from places where no species of sirenians are known to live, may represent such forms of primate adapted in marine life !

An other relevant question, referring to the **AAT**, is to ask for what reason a low-browed distorted ape-skull once developed into a spherical fittingly built human skull
👉 in some bipedal purpose ?

(*) perhaps, only a simple extrapolation of stratigraphic *datae* that are to be reduced consequently, under the light of new investigations.

THE INITIAL BIPEDALISM THEORY (B.I.)

The **B. I.** (for : **Bipédie Initiale**) hypothesizes that humans developed from a peculiar stock, not from the apes !

The theory suggests that the first mammals were bipeds that issued from a former aquatic stage.

Man's large globular brain, indeed, is not an indication of simian ancestry, but it shows us a **primitive** feature that could have been obtained only in water.

Max WESTENHÖFER, a German anatomist, declared in 1926 that man is developed from a remote animal that itself developed from an amphibian form of life. As the Belgian zoologist Serge FRECHKOP also emphasized : monkeys and other quadrupeds originated from bipedal forms ! [s. in Bibliography]

This leads us to regard "modern" humans as the least removed, morphologically and anatomically, from the **aquatic** and big-headed common ancestor to all mammals !

As a matter of fact, like in the **AAT**, we shall find some arguments that imply a former marine existence of mankind, such as :

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- the graceful "streamlined" **shape of man**,
- the human baby's **swimming response**,
- the **diving reflex**,
- the **webbed** fingers and toes,
- the pattern of human **hair alignment** for swimming,
- **salt tears, subcutaneous fat, hymens**, and other traits.

Thus, facts have proved the **AAT** was in the wrong, because most of the claims mentioned above are not only shared by man and some water mammals, but also by simian primates and other land-dwelling mammals !

In the theoretical framework of **Initial Bipedalism**, these assertions can be now reinterpreted, and actually explained by declaring that pre-humans are the ankle-joint animals from which other groups of mammals have branched. Reminiscences of an aquatic past can also occur **beyond** human kind, if quadrupeds are told to descend from bipedal man-like ancestors.

Regarding to the **AAT**-assertion that human "hairlessness" is due to water habits, I would surely disagree on this point. I am inclined to think that our aquatic ancestors were as pilous as all primates are, including man.

But most of the disagreements with the **AAT** take place in the hypothetical transformation from an ape into a hominid, even if occurring in a water environment, instead of "on the land".

What's now the real difference between **AAT** and "**savannah theory**" ? Either a terrestrial ape or an aquatic ape undoubtedly remain... apes !

Post-scriptum :

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