

Reading response paper # 2 - Contrasting views of the origins of humans: Isaac, Lovejoy and Bingham

Please read the three journal articles referenced below. Then write a 4-5 page (double spaced) paper in response to these readings. (Remember to reference your sources and please do not exceed 7 pages.) Please think about and address the following issues and questions in your paper.

Humans in general, tend to look for simple, single causal explanations of the complex phenomena around them. Certainly there has been no dearth of this type of explanation in palaeoanthropology. Historically, numerous single factors have been cited as the primary or triggering force behind the origins of hominids and of humans, even if a somewhat more integrated multi-factor approach has gradually emerged recently. The papers by Bingham, Isaac, and Lovejoy represent some of the more recent views and arguments concerning "human" origins. Lovejoy deals largely with the origin of hominids and bipedalism in the 7 - 4 myr. time range. Isaac and Bingham with the origins of larger brained modern humans, essentially post -2.5 myr.

- 1) Briefly review the central points of each model, paying close attention to what types of evidence and arguments are used to support the models. To what extent are the models in marked opposition and to what extent are they complementary?
- 2) How would you go about testing the data and assumptions in each of these models? Can you suggest any such tests or predictions? Can such models be tested scientifically?
- 3) Does any one of these models seem particularly compelling to explain why either hominids or larger brained humans evolved in the directions they did? And if so, why? For the others what seems to be their principal weaknesses.

For additional ideas and views, read Chapter 9 of either the 9th or 8th ed. of the text for Campbell and Loy's discussion of the ideas presented in Lovejoy and Isaac.

Readings:

Bingham, P.M. 2000. Human evolution and human history: a complete theory. *Evolutionary Anthropology* 9(6):248-257.

Isaac, G. Ll. 1978. The food-sharing behavior of protohuman hominids. *Scientific American* 238(4):90-109. (April issue)

Lovejoy, O. 1993. Modeling human origins: are we sexy because we're smart, or smart because we're sexy? In: *The Origin and Evolution of Humans and Humanness*, (Ed.) D.T. Rasmussen. Boston: Jones and Bartlett, 1993, pp. 1-28.

Due: March 22nd

N.B. Make sure that you adequately reference and cite the sources of your readings. Please use the standard anthropological referencing format provided with the first discussion paper assignment.