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**THE MARINE
HOMONCULUS
HYPOTHESIS :**

an alternative paradigm for
human earliest evolution

Résumé :

Man's emergence, in the ascending series of mammalian forms, has been associated with brain enlargement and an orthograde position of the body. Therefore, several facts in Embryology render untenable the acceptance of the usual model of human evolution, in which our species evolved from quadrupedal apes. An alternative paradigm is considered here based on the hypothesis that man's immediate predecessors have passed through a former aquatic phase. The globular form of the human skull represents the final evolution of a marine creature's floating and sustenance organ. Indeed, such a round configuration of our encephalon and brain-pan could only develop naturally in water. Only the human lineage preserved the primordial (and embryonic) brain disposition among living mammals.

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THE MARINE HOMONCULUS HYPOTHESIS :

The marine **Homonculus** hypothesis is an individual development of the theory of **initial bipedalism**, regarding the origins and evolution of mankind. Other authors, like Max WESTENHÖFER, Serge FRECHKOP, Klaas de SNOO and Bernard HEUVELMANS, have on several occasions expressed their dissent from the current view of what might be called the "simian ancestry of our humanity".

The **Marine Homonculus** hypothesis is linked with following facts :

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Studies on human anatomy and physiology (WESTENHÖFER 1948, de SARRE 1988) have indicated that man preserved structural primitiveness and surviving features from a former aquatic life [in comparison with the other amniotic land-dwelling vertebrates], so that he could directly be connected with archaic pre-human water forms.

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Humanity did not develop from some branch of the ape-stock that entered the sea, then the land again, as Sir Alister HARDY (1960) emphasized.

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The genus **Homo** originated from an ancient stock peculiar to himself.

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Thanks to the primitive characteristic of his big brain, man could have remained a biped.

Indeed, in their initial stages of embryological development, the **quadrupedal** vertebrates display a brain organization **superior** (i.e., 'human-like') to that which is achieved with complete growth (WESTENHÖFER 1953) : the problem of human origins can be carried back to a very early stage in the evolution of the vertebrate line !

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Returning to modern man, we shall notice that, from an embryological standpoint, ***the brain comes before the skull***, and not the opposite. The volume and weight of our encephalon determine the degree of flexion of the skull-base. The growing ***chorda dorsalis*** moves under the osseous skull base and "locks" the whole body in an upright position ***which is still the original embryo disposition***.

The ***globular*** form of our human brain is a primitive feature, as WESTENHÖFER 1953 and HEUVELMANS 1954 emphasized. ***From a mechanical point of view***, it was in water, i.e. during a former aquatic stage - *and at this moment only* - that the today shape of our brain developed and - subsequently - ***the globular form of our bony brain-pan !***

The phylogeny of the water-dwelling ***pre-Hominid*** [until the archepagoge-stage, i.e. with 4 limbs and a round head] is summarized in Fig. 3 .

Fig. 3 PHYLOGENETICAL SERIES
showing the fashioning of the human encephalon and brain-pan
through the dwelling-up of a sustenance organ in a marine creature.

Man's large and globular brain represents the ***final*** evolution of a ***marine animalcule's floating and***

THE MARINE HOMONCULUS HYPOTHESIS :

sustenance organ.

Embryologically, the outer skin (epidermis) developed from **ectodermal** cells, during the **gastrula** stadium, and the brain formed in the same way, in the course of ontological development. Our osseous skull, in compensation, originated from the same **mesodermal** cells that are also building the embryonic vertebral column and musculature.

In the course of the phylogenetical history of the **Marine Homonculus**, we may suppose that a floating organ developed on the top of the body, as a "bubble", like in a medusa. Between an inner ectodermal bag, filled with gas, and the outer skin, a mesodermal membrane would extend [whose cells originated from the spinal cord]. ***It was this which once shaped the original form and structure of the vertebrate skull !***

Such a round figuration, like the human head, only could develop **naturally** in water. The **Marine Homonculus** then started to evolve into the first land-living Vertebrates. This was, in remote times, the completion of the human form and the conception of an original **bauplan** of bipedal placental mammals.

Post-scriptum :

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