

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### A RESPONSE TO C OWEN LOVEJOY

Dear Sir,

I was disappointed to read Professor Lovejoy's recent commentary [1] on the Rushton-Leslie exchange concerning race and AIDS [2, 3]. He was one of those I had hoped would see the merits of applying  $r/K$  theory to human differences. Along with E. O. Wilson's magisterial *Sociobiology* [4], it was a paper on 'The Origin of Man' by Lovejoy [5] that helped orient me to evolutionary analyses. I still recall vividly how late into the night I stayed up reading and discussing that exciting article just after it came out. If, as Lovejoy maintained, primates could be scaled from lemur to macaque to gibbon to chimpanzee to human with a consistent trend toward a  $K$  life-history and with progressive prolongation of gestation period and life phases, then might not the trend be continued among human populations? So, I extrapolated the  $r/K$  framework to human differences, empirically examining several of the falsifiable predictions that followed. Given that Professor Lovejoy chooses to comment on my work, therefore, it behoofs me to give special weight to his opinion.

On inspection, unfortunately, I find that Professor Lovejoy has nothing of importance to say. Instead, he uses ridicule and sarcasm to assert that my work is 'mediocre' and 'substandard', while Leslie's diatribe is judged as 'eloquent'. Lovejoy omits any mention of  $r/K$  theory, his particular area of expertise for this exchange, and also the racial pattern of HIV infection which is the topic under consideration. He also sidesteps commenting on the ordering of Mongoloids > Caucasoids > Negroids in central tendency on such life-history variables as longevity. Instead of discussing substantive issues, Lovejoy raises objections to life-spans being scaled only as relatively 'short', 'medium' and 'long' and its inclusion under the rubric 'maturation rate' and he ignores the more detailed breakdowns that I had provided elsewhere [6]. He also seems oblivious to the extensive behavior-genetic literature demonstrating substantial genetic loadings on everything from altruism and crime to sexuality and religiosity [7].

Lovejoy is surely correct, however, when he calls for both better data and clearer language. I am still processing my own surveys of the sexual behavior of young blacks, Orientals, and whites but consistently find that they differ in their age of first sexual intercourse and the total number of their sexual partners in the direction outlined in my earlier paper. It is not altogether surprising, therefore, that they also differ in their rates of HIV infection, gonorrhoea, syphilis, and other sexually transmitted diseases, not only in the United States but elsewhere in the world. These populations also differ in the rate they drop out of school, their abuse of drugs, their rate of committing crime and in a host of other problem behaviors.

It might be tempting to lay the blame for this racial pattern on white racism. Blaming whites, however, will not explain why the races also differ in brain size and gamete production, with Orientals having the largest brains and producing the fewest eggs, a trade-off described in more detail in my previous work. Curiously, the trade-off was summarized succinctly in the popular book *Lucy. The Beginnings of Human Kind* [8] written by Lovejoy's colleague Donald Johanson. "More brains, fewer eggs, more 'K'" (p. 326). Interestingly, the quote was attributed to C. Owen Lovejoy. Lovejoy may fervently wish that his statement did not apply to human races, but the data show otherwise.

Yours sincerely

J. PHILIPPE RUSHTON

Department of Psychology  
University of Western Ontario  
London, Ontario, Canada N6A 5C2

### REFERENCES

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