Human Evolution: Homo Habilis Versus Homo Erectus

Hominin adaptation was significantly important. The cultural hominids were the most successful and the noncultural eventually went extinct. Cultural behavior made a difference between survival and death. Cultural behavior is a product of natural selection. Cultural behavior drew the line between life and death for Homo habilis, lucky this is what helped them survive for years. Homo habilis developed from gracile Australopithecines,Their ability to adapt and learn is what saved their life. Cultural behavior is anything that is “learned, shared, and transmitted” (Lecture 6, p.2). Evidence of Cultural behavior within Homo habilis goes all the way back to “ roughly 2.5 mya to 1.8 mya.” (Lecture 6, p.3) Tool use was cultural because they learned how to use tools through shared knowledge. Learning how to make tools was very important for this species. The earliest stone tools are called Oldowan; they were sharpened stones. These sharpened tools were used for scavenging not hunting. Homo habilis were not hunters, they were scavengers, instead of hunting their food they would look for it even sometimes eat other species' leftovers. The scavenging tool Oldowan was discovered in East Africa; Homo habilis originated in East Africa. Oldowan tools were made for over 700,000 years.

The term Hominid is a primate of a family, which happens to be humans and their fossil ancestors and apes. They distinguish from other apes because they are bipedal, which means to walk on two legs. “ Other traits of hominids include increased brain size relative to weight, increased manual dexterity, and reduced sexual dimorphism”(Presentation 6, Homo habits) No one thinks Homo habilis had the ability to communicate to one another but they could do certain things just like humans. Most importantly, they “ had the ability to think abstractly and to think Symbolically” (Lecture 6, p.3) Having the ability to think not only abstractly but symbolically is a huge reason why “homo habilis, the cultural hominid, was extremely successful” It radiated and speciated.”(Lecture 6, p.3) “Eventually Homo habilis gave rise to a new species, Homo erectus. The robust Australopithecines were not cultural.”(Lecture 6,p.3) Homo Erectus had a larger brain than Homo habilis. The stone tool associated with Home erectus is called Acheulean; it is more sophisticated and advanced than an Oldowan tool. “The archetypal tool is the handaxe. The handaxe was most likely a general-purpose tool, used for cutting, scraping, and digging.” (Presentation 6, p.8) This tool was a stone just like an Oldowan tool but the archetypal looked like it had a purpose, it was more advanced. Homo erectus used their archetypal tool for hunting instead of using it for scavenging like Homo habilis. Homo erectus kills have been found several times and shockingly in Olorgesailie, Kenya “Homo erectus hunted a large number of baboons, dispatching them and butchering them on the site with stone tools.(Lecture 6, p.5) this proves that they were hunters. It also proves that Homo habilis and Homo erectus might have similar stone tools but they served different purposes, one to scavenge and the other to hunt. Olorgesailie was the Homo erectus hunting site from 1.4-1.6 mya. Their adaptation was restricted, unlike homo habilis where they adapted easily.

Australopithecus could not adapt and go extinct at about 2.0 mya. Cultural behavior comes more from influence than biologically based behavior. The genus Homo is also known as Homo habilis was and is characterized by cultural abilities that are greater than other Hominids like Homo Erectus. Homo habilis had the ability to adapt. They also knew how to learn, share, and transmit which is known as cultural behavior. Homo erectus is also known as the robust Australopithecines was a non - cultural hominid, which was what lead to their extinction. Cultural

behavior is not based on biology but it is the result of natural selection.