

IV-24 Bumbling Tool-Maker

Machiavelli's world is not about trial and error: It is a kind of empirical skepticism emanating from the observation that we live in an imperfect world. Appeal of apparently random behaviors of *going against method and principle* is to take out the element of predictability for the enemy. Such assaults and ways to deal with it are part of animal behaviors.

Tools mimic natural devices and behaviors that extend or substitute for the motions and sources of power. Humans have learnt to mimic animals, and use them as tools. Also animals get used to the human way of doing and looking at things. Not only all animals want to survive and thrive, they also seek pleasure (gratification) at significant expenditure of their energy and resources.

Human behavior is many things to many people. Behaviors have evolved to avoid harm and conserve bodily resources. Posturing with aggression reduces chances of violent fights. Empathy follows from pain. Rhesus monkeys know pain of others of their own kind, and stop hurting them after they recognize it to be the case. Some anglers are disturbed after finding out that fish feel pain when hooked.

Relative to post-ice age history, human behaviors have come to represent us as: The bumbling toolmaker who has depersonalized war; the glorified chimp who is in a constant power struggle; the babbling ape who has substituted gossip for grooming; and the loss of estrus has emerged as cryptic copulation as genes and environments create the follies of mind.

In the same vein (Natalie Angier): "*We are old-fashioned monkeys and futuristic apes. We are sympathetic, canny, crude, and dazzling. We are profoundly aggressive, and we have many loci of control over that aggression. We feel our way to the narthex of love and think our way down its nave. We are like nothing else that has even appeared on this threshing blue planet, and we will become, in the next few centuries, like nothing we can fathom now. And we will do it wearing our same old Stone Age genes.*"

The purpose of dialectic about human behaviors and natures is to examine the consequences of the emerging insight that we cannot remain untouched from the influences of vast epigenetic world. No one anymore argues that the agricultural and industrial revolutions, or even the perspectives of the Dutch paintings enhanced by mirror and lenses, were the result of a sudden evolutionary restructuring of our brains. The Tao of Genes is not going to make us any wiser in our social choices than the Tao of Physics did against the means of mass annihilation.

Possibly more than anything else, individual and social behaviors are constantly manipulated with subtle and not so subtle influences. Unfortunately, some seek to educate and raise consciousness guided by ad hoc rationality and bring out the evil. Invented dogmas, beliefs, and wars are meant to empower and exercise control. With increasing pace of change, it is imminent that we have to find ways to coexist sooner rather than later. Desires and choices call for examination of what constitutes progress, development, growth, pleasure, and meaning. How such behaviors relate to human interactions and what it foretells about the future? Can technology be surrogate for human natures?

Room for Doubt

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