

Too Conscious To Be Civilized?

By John Steiner

I wrote this in regards to the Israeli/Palestinian situation but it just as easily describes a number of violent interactions between societies and civilizations:

Imperialism, colonialism and violent abusive tendencies are like vampirism. The previous victim often becomes the next perpetrator if, that is, they survive the first stage.

Americans inherited the condition from Europeans, then in turn from the Romans, and they from the Etruscans before them, and so on and so forth. It would be an interesting archaeological find to discover the first conquering civilization, but then again we might have to dig deeper than the genus *Hominidae*.

H. sapiens is like any other pack animal that hunts. They hold territory in which reside or at least pass through game animals. Rival packs work to expand that territory as much as they can hold. Sometimes this is at the expense of other packs or other species. The problem is with humans is they're convinced they stepped above those rules, and in so being self deluded they invariably fell right into the middle of pack animal behavior.

Jewish, Muslim, Christian... Norse even. The religion doesn't even matter. Ask any sixty eight of a hundred Israelis. They're not interested in holding the West Bank and would gladly give up Gaza. They've no religious urge to hold those places. But they're not the alphas or even betas of their pack. Those that are content exhibit less ambition. Ergo, they don't attempt to control their packs.

A lot of people think an alpha personality is more aggressive than other pack members, but that's not true. The most aggressive is the beta. It's the beta who most enforces the rules of the alpha. The alpha is simply the most outgoing and gregarious. They're suave and that's how they convince the rest to let them hold the lead position. Also in contrast to commonly accepted views the omega, the lowest member of the pack isn't the smallest nor necessarily the least violent. What they are is the most diplomatic. Their role is to ease tension in the pack between other members. However, they don't make any decisions for the pack.

If human beings instead exhibited swarm logic they'd forge better societies and always would be true democracies. Ant colonies and termite mounds are unerringly ruled by independent decisions whose accumulated effects serve the population's best interests. The Argentine Ant is the first species to attain global peace within its own evolutionary line. An ant from any colony from any of the five continents they live on can be moved to any other colony regardless of distance and that individual will work as seamlessly harmonious with the others as it did in the colony from which it hatched and was raised as a larvae.

Granted anything other than an Argentine Ant caught wandering as they will into the colony would be readily felled upon until it died or, if a larger animal, retreated. Despite this it's the Argentine Ant that's quantitatively more civilized than *Homo sapiens*. They've been at the work of building societies and cities for a hundred millions of years. The apeman is just out of the starting gate.

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