

Re: Article: brain & tools; Well-tooled Primates

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"Our ancient forerunners didn't think up these technological advances so much as explore their way into them, according to this perspective. The distinction is important because rule following and planning—not to mention self-awareness, imitation, and language skills—flowered after prehistoric humans attained toolmaking expertise."

This is, IMHO, a brilliant deduction and beautifully stated. We "explored" our way into our humanness! Then, with a couple of haphazard mutations, and taaa-daaa! hss!

"Researchers who subscribe to these ideas theorize that modern humans are neither blank slates nor carriers of a batch of instincts unique to our species. Instead, via language and cultural traditions, people have collectively molded a shared primate-evolutionary heritage for their own purposes."

I know that Jim Mc will be jumping up and down on this one, but culture in this view certainly shaped our evolution. And it does point up the need for us, as inhabitants of a single, fragile planet, to somehow "shape" our future so that we don't kill ourselves off.

"Fairly ancient brain systems were elaborated in new ways when human ancestors began making and using stone tools," says Stout, now at University College, London. "This process relied on an education of attention, not intellect."

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So now that we have the brain systems in place, it is up to us in sap to elaborate how niche, genetics, sexual selection, etc. played into our evolution. Seems like a lot of our brain growth is going to now has to be ascribed to language and culture, logic and mathematics, thinking and pondering. Imagination, Thought, Understanding, and Memory = ITUM.
—chap