

Humanity: species changing from one niche into another.

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Humanity is a species developing from one niche to another, causing all kinds of problems.

The niche of the species currently called humanity was some millions of years ago that of an omnivorous group animal under threat from predation. There are some behavioral adaptations that can be seen in other species that make success in that niche more likely. The most important may be the internal-species violence, which seeks out to promote the strongest fighting individuals. Apparently it is so important to select the most fighting fit individuals that other interests can be pushed to the background at least temporarily. Other interests can be preventing injury from mutual struggle and spending energy on finding food.

When a species faces a risk of being a victim of predation, then it has a benefit if it stimulates those attributes that prevent becoming a victim of predation. When a species has the ability to survive by hunting other species, it has an interest in stimulating those attributes. When larger land animals are being predated or are hunting themselves these activities usually end in the same kind of a fight between two animals. Working to maintain a fighting fit population by selecting the most fighting fit for breeding would roughly have the same effect in improving performance of a species in the last stages of both being hunted and hunting themselves, because those stages are similar in the demands they place on the animal.

Example: if 2 monkeys fight over the right to rule a group and have best access to food and making offspring, and the one who is just a little bit quicker in biting effectively while all else is equal, that the monkey who bites a little bit more effective is more likely to survive the confrontation with the other monkey of the same species. That monkey may then go on to rule the group, have easiest access to food, and produce most or all of the offspring. The offspring is then more likely to also be a little bit quicker and effective with a bite. Although this was only tested in a battle between monkey and monkey of the same species, the struggle at the end of predation is sufficiently similar to a monkey on monkey struggle to also give that offspring an additional benefit there. Eventually the groups that maintain their internal

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personal violence end up doing better than others in the end stage of predation, and worse in some other aspects of survival. Apparently the importance of being competent in the end stage of predation is important enough to promote such species that maintain internal personal violence.

The attributes of fighting are also stimulated automatically by culling the less fighting fit through predation and lack of making prey, but if they can be stimulated by behavioral adaptations the attributes would develop quicker. If the cost of the behavioral adaptation to other aspects that promote survival is less than the benefit, such behavioral adaptations are stimulated into existence.

There are some individual aspects of this: when two individuals fight, then whatever the evolutionary pressures surrounding a species, the loser in that fight has a lesser chance of survival. Therefore a group of violent specimen maintains its own direction toward being ever more adapted to violence, at least in the short term and local to one group. Only on a larger scale where different groups (and species) are competing and non-violent survival aspects end up being more important in the long term, only then may the violent groups be removed and the less or non-violent take over their place.

Example: all animals die out except that violent species of monkey, and a non-violent species of birds. If food becomes less generally available the distance between food increases, making adaptation to finding food and reaching it more important than it was, and there will be fewer animals in total. If the violent species of monkey is just on the brink of starvation for a long time, those groups that spend more time on violence waste more energy and could die out quicker. The groups that are less violent lose their fighting fitness over time, but without predation or hunting this does not affect them negatively. Although in the more fighting groups the last specimen could be the most effective fighters so that they could even eat the other specimen, as groups they are still dying out. It is possible that if nature recovers that the importance of predation returns, and with it the adaptation of internal violence.

One of the adaptations to finding the fittest fighter that species do is to stage fights. In many species (such as hoofed grazing mammals) the females judge the performance of the fight and make the selection on who will father the offspring. This works because the attributes of fighting fitness also pass on from father to daughter, therefore the females of the species also become more fighting fit (without having to do the nasty work). In other species the females establish fighting hierarchies between themselves (some monkey-like species for instance). One of the side effects of this is polygamous relations between males and females in a species, because they are constantly making new selections based on who is dominant in fighting. When one specimen is dominant today, another may be dominant tomorrow. When one specimen is dominant today in one area, another may be dominant in another area, which means the selection changes when place is changed. Polygamous relations can be helpful when selecting for fighting fit

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specimen, because constantly the most fighting fit can be immediately selected. A second effect is that one dominant specimen can create offspring with many other specimen. As long as dominance was truly established they will all get offspring from the best fighting specimen. Because the relation is not stable through time but different specimen will later become dominant, the genetic diversity of the species is maintained. If the relation was monogamous – one male and one female – there would not be very effective selection on fighting fitness. If the relation was stable through time there would not be effective selection on fighting fitness. Selecting for fighting fitness is most effective in a winner takes all system, especially when genetic diversity does not suffer. Polygamous relations in larger land animals can be seen as having a role as part of the selection mechanism of the most fighting fit animal.

Humanity however is no longer in the same biological niche as it was before. Humanity is now a technical animal. Humanity fights not with its hands and muscles and teeth and reflexes. Humanity fights currently with guns, infrastructure and satellite imaging, atom bombs, engineered biological viruses, chemistry, etc etc. In the future this will only become more powerful. For humanity the biological pressure is toward non-violence, because our niche does not react well to violence anymore. It is not useful to confront an attack by a predator with an atom bomb. It makes no sense to defend a city from a pack of lions by sending out a carpet bomber. That level of violence is overkill, it will destroy parts of humanity and its infrastructure, while simpler weapons such as hand guns will do the necessary trick even more effectively. All out internal-species violence of a high tech species will either decimate that species, extinct it, and it can presumably sterilize the planet once we are far enough ahead in technical development. In a potential war between Earth and a colony on Mars either planet could end up sterile and lifeless.

When we did not have technology and when we were in the same niche as the naked apes, we would have had to establish fighting dominance in order to survive. When we had simple technology the aspect of body on body violence (fist/teeth/athletics) still existed, because the technology was dependent on the state of the body to be effective. A spear is a new tool few if any animals have, but it does nothing without a strong and athletic arm. (Sports is an interesting adaptation to the problem of perfecting certain primitive technology skills in a non-violent way.) A person may also not always be carrying a spear and therefore have to confront a predatory animal bare handed. When humanity began to herd cattle an amount of violence was taken out of the problem of catching prey. When hunting in the open to find prey, there is more risk of being attacked by predators, and fighting to overcome the prey is less predictable and potentially more violent. Taking an animal from a herd and slaughtering it requires much less specially selected for fighting fitness. Walking around with a herd would reduce the danger of predation as the predators will likely

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select an animal from the herd rather than one of the humans. When humanity began to live in settled villages it became easier for humanity to defend those areas from violent predators. The increases in weapons and their quality made predatory animals increasingly afraid of humanity, thus reducing predation pressures on humanity.

Today humanity has technology and infrastructure which is so far developed that humanity does not require any specially bred in fighting fitness to survive. All the adaptations meant to improve fighting fitness are only cost factors without benefits now.

But behaviorally humanity has not managed yet to make the transition cleanly. Humanity its behavior remains significantly adapted to its former niche and is significantly not adjusted to the niche it is currently occupying. In important ways both niches have opposite demands: the former demanded adaptations for violence, the current niche demands adaptations for internal peace.

The monogamous/polygamous adaptation to violence is now also without those benefits. The benefits are now presumably with monogamous creation of offspring which has a tendency to produce higher quality offspring through better care and knowledge. The monogamous relation system is also helpful to promote internal peace in the species. The existence of about as many males as females also suggests monogamous relations.

Presumably this niche transition is what all problems for humanity boil down to because the change is fundamental and radical. It is affecting everything, and the change is radical from one opposite to another: from generalized all out war between all having been perfected over many millions of years, to generalized all out peace between all. Humanity has to overcome its "internal beast," where it has already overcome the external beast which are predators/prey. Either there will be a victory of peace itself, or humanity is looking at a bleak picture of increasingly effective technology assisted species-internal violence. Humanity could then end up in some kind of nightmare scenario, or it dies out completely.

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