

MAN AND THE CHIMPANZEE

Since modern man evolved on this planet from homo erectus to homo sapiens, the one, innate attribute of his nature that is stored in his genome is that he loves to kill: Birds; animals; and, his own kind.

While man, during the past few centuries, has made countless, important advances in many disciplines, in science, in medicine and in technology, to name but a few, but, in one discipline, that of philosophy, little has been accomplished.

Recently, in Canada, across a lake in Quebec, a Canadian inventor flew his home-built, hover-board at an altitude of about 900 feet.

Mr Catalin Alexandru Duru, the inventor, said, in respect of his accomplishment:

‘The machine was built and designed by me. I am the first man to create and fly a working prototype. I will showcase that stable flight can be achieved with a machine one can stand on and control with their feet.’

No doubt, if the military powers of the world have not, yet, invented a similar device as that of Mr Catalin Alexandru Duru, they will be very excited by this gentleman’s invention.

The military powers must be thinking along the lines:

‘Now, our soldiers will have the ability to fly to the front lines instead of being forced to march for many miles. Much time will be saved. We shall be able to surprise the enemy from great heights without even being heard.’

In the ignoble art of warfare, a new age is upon us.

Of that, there can be question because, among other things, the world has just witnessed another major advance in the art of killing by soldiers, mounted on hover-boards.

Killing will soon become much more expeditious than in years of yore.

From the invention of the Turing Machine in 1936 by Mr Alan Turing, today just about every office in the world has a bank of computers for use by its staff.

The Turing Machine ushered in the age of the computer – and ‘killed’ the typewriter and its like, in its wake.

In 1886, the modern motor car was born, thanks to the invention of Mr Karl Benz.

About 22 years later, the Ford Motor Company (of the United States of America) built the Model T, a motor car that was specially manufactured for the masses.

The Ford Model T ‘killed’ the idea, forever, of using animal-drawn carriages and carts in order to travel.

And, as one would have expected, it did not take long – just eight years, in fact, after the first Model T rolled off Mr Henry Ford’s mass-production line in Detroit, Michigan – for the military powers of the world to construct motorised, armoured vehicles, today known as tanks.

These primitive tanks first went into action in World War I (1914 – 1918) in The Battle of The Somme in September of 1916.

Today’s tanks are much more advanced than those of the World War I versions: They are quite able to kill many people much more efficiently than ever before.

One could cite thousands of other examples of man’s great achievements, over the centuries, from the bobby pin to the atom bomb.

The Pre-Socratic Philosophers

How many people, today, know of a man by the name of Orpheus of Leibethra in Pieria, a district around Mount Olympus, now part of The Republic of Macedonia?

Orpheus is believed to have lived in the Fifth and Fourth Century B.C. and is credited, by many, as having composed a collection of hexametric poems.

Some people maintain that, perhaps, it was not Orpheus who composed that collection of great poems, but a man by the name of Onomacritus who lived in the Sixth Century B.C..

Whoever composed that collection of poems, however, it is accepted that Christian and Neo-Platonist writers freely quoted the so-called, Orphic epic poems.

Onomacritus is only known, today, if at all, by his magical, adventurist story: ‘*The Voyage of the Argonauts*’.

Even Hollywood knows of the story of Jason and the Argonauts – because it has been made into movies on more than one occasion.

In the study of philosophy, today, Orpheus and Onomacritus are rarely mentioned.

Even the works of Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), the German philosopher who, in 1781, wrote ‘*The Critique of Pure Reason*’, is rarely mentioned.

By the same token, it is noted that The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám is, almost completely disregarded by students as being of little use in today’s world.

For **TARGET** () Subscribers, who may not have heard of Omar Khayyám (1048–1131 A.D.), he was a Persian (Persia, today, is known as Iran) poet, mathematician, and astronomer.

Mr Edward FitzGerald translated many of the works of Omar Khayyám and, while one may question the correctness of some of his translations, from the Arabic to the English language, one cannot but fall in love with that which he published from 1859, attributed to Omar Khayyám:

*‘Some for the glories of this world; and some
Sigh for The Prophet's Paradise to come;
Ah, take the cash and let the credit go,
Nor heed the rumble of a distant drum*

*‘And much as Wine has played the Infidel
And robbed me of my robe of Honour, well ...
I often wonder what the vintners buy*

One half so precious as the stuff they sell

*'For some we loved, the loveliest and best
That from His rolling vintage Time has pressed,
Have drunk their glass a round or two before,
And one by one crept silently to rest*

*'But helpless pieces in the game He plays
Upon this chequer-board of Nights and Days
He hither and thither moves, and checks ... and slays
Then one by one, back in the Closet lays*

*'The Moving Finger writes: and, having writ,
Moves on: nor all thy Piety nor Wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,
Nor all thy Tears wash out a Word of it.'*

But, poetry does not win wars: It is only beauty; beauty with a deep meaning; beauty that lives on, and on, and on, long after the destruction of civilisations, all of which are, today, related to the history books of the world.

Kill or Be Killed

Today, as everybody realises with utter dread, many nations of the world have weapons of mass destruction, weapons that have the ability to expunge all of the life on this planet of ours – perhaps forever.

The only reason that, thus far, more atom bombs have not been dropped since the ones that took the lives of some 140,000 people in Hiroshima, Japan, on August 6, 1945, and about 80,000 lives in Nagasaki, Japan, on August 9, 1945, is that, should one nation determine to explode one such device over an enemy's territory, other nations might take their cue and attempt to outdo the other.

An atomic war of any great magnitude is likely to be this world's last battle for adventurist man to try to achieve supremacy over his own kind.

All of the above is well known, but man, with his great knowledge of so many disciplines, fails to appreciate that wars are not won by incurring numerous deaths on the militia of an enemy or by destroying the great cities of the world, but by an attribute, so often forgotten or disregarded by leaders of nations, one endowed in all mankind: The love of wisdom.

Religion has never been, and shall never be, the answer to the many problems that have plagued mankind since the time when the realisation became evident of his ability to think.

This is because, among other things, religion is, and always has been, but a mental crutch upon which for man to lean when answers to the queries of antiquity are not forthcoming.

Gods and demons are, still, today, depicted anthropomorphically since man's brain remains unable to make valid, abstract determinations, try as he might.

The ancient Greeks thought of their gods as being a massive, immortal family, some males and some females, but all reposing in a Heavenly abode in the cosmos – a pantheism.

The first monotheist thinker is credited to Amenhotep IV who, subsequently, changed his name to Akhenaton.

It is believed that he and many – if not all – of his devout followers were assassinated by the polytheists of

Egypt, polytheism, having been disavowed by Akhenaton, and, in its place, there was Aten, the one-god.

Akhenaton is thought to have lived about 45 years, including his reign as Pharaoh for 17 years.

How Akhenaton first perceived of Aten is not known, but one cannot help but ponder, in his day and age, without the benefit of atom bombs, the iPhone, the personal computer, the aeroplane, the motor car, etc, how such a concept crept into this man's mind at a relatively young age.

Akhenaton lived in absolute luxury for most of his entire life as a youth, the history of Egypt has recorded, but, on his ascension to becoming the head of the government of his country, he announced that he had perceived of the existence of the one-god.

This statement by the youthful pharaoh was to the horror of the many priests of ancient Egypt, all of whom were polytheists.

This was blasphemy to the priests and to most of the devout, polytheistic population of the country.

And, so, Akhenaton suffered the ultimate penalty for his crime against the entrenched, polytheistic religion of his country.

Aside from man's propensity to kill members of his kind, indiscriminately, he, also, has that which other animals have failed to attain: The ability to reason, rationally: A cause, explanation, or justification for an action or event.

Unfortunately, as well as being very unlucky for every living thing on earth, man's desire to kill continues to remain much stronger than man's desire to struggle in order to comprehend how to suppress the most-destructive aspect of his thinking process.

The chimpanzee is not the lovable great ape as was depicted in the successful series of 12 films, screened between 1932 and 1948, all of which starred Johnny Weissmuller, the former, champion Olympic swimmer.

'Tarzan, The Ape Man' was, in those 16 years, a must for many a child and they all looked upon the chimpanzee, the companion of Tarzan, as man's friend.

The truth, however, is that the chimpanzee is far from being any animal's friend, let alone man's.

Due to this animal's ability to create and to use the tools that it has fashioned, many people tend to forget that the chimpanzee, even with his advanced behavioural ability, is a very accomplished killer – and, only too often, of his own kind.

The chimpanzee is a territorial animal and, should another band of chimpanzees enter his territory, blood will surely flow.

Regularly, bands of chimpanzees march through their territory, looking for interlopers. If found, the interlopers are dispatched, post-haste.

Even within his own band, many a chimpanzee has been killed when a larger animal decides to attack him, more often than not for no apparent reason.

It could be held that man's thinking has not, really, achieved that maturity, past the stage of the mental advancement of the chimpanzee.

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