

Robert Ardrey's THE SOCIAL CONTRACT

Robert Ardrey's new book, The Social Contract (Collins, London 1970) is a collection of animal stories loosely bound together by a common ideology. This ideology is a curious one and it is also likely to be the most influential aspect of this book. Ardrey is read widely. In recent years a certain kind of popular anthropology has been virtually the only material of its sort to reach the general public; it is based on the proposition that man is less far removed from his animal relatives than has been commonly supposed. Ardrey is one major exponent of this point of view; Konrad Lorenz and Desmond Morris are others. But Ardrey's approach is more polemical than that of Lorenz and Morris; he is explicitly supporting a number of ideas based on the fundamental principle that man possibly faces evolutionary disaster if he cannot find ways to live in accord with his innate biological heritage. Ardrey finds that the increasing complexity of industrial society is warping human behaviour in such a manner that fundamental human drives are contradicted or given little chance for expression. It is this attitude toward society which led Ardrey to dedicate his book to Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

Ardrey is in fundamental sympathy with Rousseau's arcadian utopianism although he cannot accept Rousseau's belief that there was a time before the social contract brought natural man into the restrictive orbit of unnatural society. Ardrey maintains that society is the natural condition of man and that the basic conditions for society are written into human genes. He therefore seeks to define the natural condition of man by reference to the natural conditions of society, and he does so mainly through an examination of the nature of non-human societies especially those of the other primates. What he finds leads him to condemn characteristic features of modern society found in both 'capitalistic' or 'socialist' countries.

This book is written by an American and mainly for Americans, but its basic message is likely to have a far wider appeal; if only for this reason I think his book worth a detailed review. It is ultimately based on an antique stratum in western political thought, one which may be finding an unusual new form in modern North America. This is difficult to characterize since it is generally not a system of ideas consistently expressed or consistently adhered to. Its closest well-known relation appears to be the political thought of Thomas Jefferson. But at first it seems that this or its consequences is what Ardrey is most dead set against.

The first sentence of The Social Contract is deliberately provocative: "A society is a group of unequal beings organized to meet common needs."⁽³⁾ By 'unequal' Ardrey means genetically unequal. He is thus not against Jefferson's thought as such. Jefferson's propositions were largely ethical in intent: that all men should be regarded as equal and given opportunities as though this were in fact

the case. What Ardrey is against is the supposed modern liberal view that all men are equal in potentiality and that usually this potentiality is blocked only by adverse external circumstances. He maintains that this idea is wrong, pernicious, and an affront to biological knowledge. Ardrey is in search of the innate background to human behaviour and therefore attacks those who support theories of environmental or social determinism; so, in his early pages, he attacks cultural anthropology, sociology, and behaviourist psychology in the forms of Sol Tax and Melville Herskovits, Durkheim, and B.F. Skinner respectively; on his own side he counts Noam Chomsky (!), several psychoanalysts, and, led by Lorenz, a large selection of ethologists. Curiously the only support he musters among anthropologists is from Claude Lévi-Strauss who somewhere suggests that a desire for prestige is somehow innately determined. In his pursuit of the innate Ardrey examines and decides in favour for the existence of: racial psychological differences (intelligence included; he does however find that blacks are fine athletes); the natural subservience of women (given the chance, women will vote for men); a tendency to follow the leader once a true leader has emerged; a tendency to strive against obstacles; a real or symbolically transformed territoriality, i.e., self-definition through exterior symbols such as money and, of course, territory itself; and, in connection with this last, a natural xenophobia - fear and hatred of the stranger. Virtually all of these conclusions are based on observation of the societies of the higher animals and on analogous commonsense observations on man. I will devote little attention here to Ardrey's animal evidence though it takes up the majority of his book and though it is essential in giving his argument its surface plausibility. It is human society which is Ardrey's main concern, and it shall be mine as well.

Ardrey's argument is analogical throughout, and though Ardrey says on occasion that one cannot reasonably argue from animals to man, he systematically ignores his own advice; a similarity noted between animal and human behaviour is taken as proof of the innate background for this behaviour in man. Ardrey only infrequently has detailed references to the nature of man in society and this reference is usually anecdotal in nature.

He refers to a number of innate needs which he believes exist in man and which account for the nature of human society; but most of his examples are taken from animal behaviour studies. There is a "...triad of innate needs, common.....to men and all higher animals. There is identity as opposed to anonymity; there is stimulation as opposed to boredom; there is security as opposed to anxiety." (168) Men naturally find identify through groups and their symbolic representations, though Ardrey is not specific about the kinds of groups that will serve. For him the family has no final validity; he finds that functionless groups are not cohesive and that in our time the family is largely being replaced by the peer group.

The drive for stimulation is the most clearly established of Ardrey's triad. Observations of infant behaviour and studies of the results of sensory deprivation clearly show what appears to be an innate demand for exterior stimulation. Ardrey relates this drive to the factor of 'aggression', a term which he takes over in its technical sense from psychoanalysis. This is its manifestation in action:

"We seek self-fulfillment. Within the limits and the directions of our individual genetic endowment we seek such a state of satisfaction as will inform us as to why we were born. We have no true choice. The force that presses us is as large as all vital processes, and were it not so, life would return to the swamp. If there is hope for men, it is because we are animals. This is the aggressiveness that many would deny."(257)

Though "self-fulfillment" is somewhat vague what he seems to mean by it is 'meaningful identify with purposeful group activity'. Ardrey does not here take 'aggression' to signify a tendency toward physical violence. But in his first book, African Genesis, he traces man's descent from a carnivorous, weapon-using half-man and clearly indicates his feelings about our ancestry by his referring evocatively to this being (an australopithecine) as "Cain". Ardrey's preference is generally weighted toward a belief in an inherent violent streak in man and elsewhere in The Social Contract states that: "What we have in our genetic endowment is the rejection of strangers and probably the propensity for violence. These have not been abolished."(277)

The last of his triad of drives, security, is also considered by him to be the least powerful. Men will seek identity and stimulation before security; security is however rather more important to women. It is the case with most social vertebrate species and 'therefore' it is the case with man.

One of Ardrey's other main concerns, territoriality, is closely related to the factor of identity. Territoriality is seen to produce in man phenomena such as 'personal space', a small domain which moves around with one and within which one dislikes to admit others. Territoriality also produces identifications with symbolic outside objects, as Ardrey puts it 'conventional objects conventionally competed for,' e.g. property: "...a cultural institution, such as private property, which accords with natural law rarely fails."(210)

The above drives are the main constituting forces of human social life. But the external environment also has its long-term demands and these demands are what Ardrey takes to have been responsible for the evolutionary appearance of the basic drives in the first place. A changing world demands changing capacities in the individuals which must deal with it. It was for this purpose that sex came into being and eventually, in social species, a range of instinctive behaviours to deal with the problems of sex. Sexual reproduction is a means for the rapid spread of mutations, mutations which may be of value to species or local group survival. The following statement indicates Ardrey's evaluation of the importance of the individual in this process and also, it seems, his general ethical evaluation of the value of the individual per se:

"Variation: the variant individual who makes little sense in today's climate, but who may save us in tomorrow's; diverse isolates, spreading the risks of total population committment, the recessive gene, hidden here, hidden there, waiting for new environments to perform the selective alchemy of transmuting dross into shining metals."(54)

But he argues that it is the case in social populations that selection must be of value to the group generally. For example, individuals may come into possession of behaviour patterns detrimental to their personal survival but of advantage to the group as a whole. Thus male baboons will attack a leopard while the reproductively more valuable females make their escape.

In social species there will also be rank ordering because an ordered group is a more viable entity than an anarchic group. This, says Ardrey, generally will be arrived at by competition, but it must be assured at the same time that competition does not harm the society at large; many species get by this through competing 'for conventional objects by conventional means;' hence the war of all against all is avoided and bloody intra-group struggle uncommon. And these conventional objects and conventional means are genetically encoded. Various devices may ensure that subordinate males accept their subordination; Ardrey notes that the subordinate males of some species may be subject to 'psychological castration' simply as a result of their subordinate status.

Ardrey sees society as a balance between necessary order and necessary disorder; disorder is necessary so that individuals with the necessary traits under the circumstances may rise to the top, and order so that they do not destroy society in doing so. A proper balance between these two forces helps ensure the long-range genetic health of the population. But man does not always allow his societies to adopt the best form from a genetic standpoint:

"Animal justice [i.e., full equality of opportunity] was perhaps the first natural law that civilized man began systematically to violate. Advantages of birth offer no guarantee of genetic superiority. Restrictions of caste, of class, of occupation, of poverty distort, or suppress the phenotypic flowering of genetic endowment in the maturing individual. But the accident of the night [sex], in all its rich, random resource, became in man socially aborted. There have been revolutions, it is true. But human history has far more frequently witnessed the decline of empires, the vanishment of kingdoms, the disappearance of peoples genetically exhausted through order's injustice." (45)

Unfortunately Ardrey gives no evidence whatever for this last proposition. Apparently he is saying that the character of a population may alter for the worse (toward unadaptability) by an interference with gene flow throughout the population and the consequent less rapid distribution of valuable genetic traits. Since Ardrey does not indicate what groups he has in mind it is difficult to see exactly what he believes genetic stagnation to consist of. Only in small, highly interbred populations do any deleterious genes become common enough to be an observable menace to general well-being. However there are several means by which society could wittingly or unwittingly influence the direction of its evolution. Sexual selection is one example; an ideal of male or female beauty may influence who has how many offspring. This is a classical Darwinian mechanism used to explain the apparently unviable absurdities of creatures such as the male peacock. If specific psychological characteristics are genetically influenced or determined then the same

mechanism could alter a gene pool in a certain direction thus affecting 'racial psychology'. Ardrey definitely believes that this can happen in human populations and that in fact it has happened and happened often. But he is never explicit about how it comes about in practice and never points to an actual population in which it is observably at work. The following statement, combined with his unverified assertions about genetic stagnation in unspecified populations, is his way of 'proving' his point:

"The overwhelming environmental change which independence /cultural isolation and consequent partial breeding isolation/ has introduced provides overwhelming disproof for the acceptance of cultural relativism. Some populations, such as the Kikuyu in Kenya and the Ibo in Nigeria, have contained superb potentiality for change. There were fit for tomorrow.....But some populations have so far demonstrated little or no such potentiality."(58)

Now, it is possible though not particularly parsimonious to account for findings such as these by reference to genetic traits; but note well that Ardrey has not established their existence. Note also that his 'overwhelming' disproof of cultural relativism is neither overwhelming nor a disproof; it is assertion pure and simple. Something which could, just possibly, be at least partially true is presented as though it were incontrovertibly true. His disproof of 'relativism' cannot be a disproof since here, as elsewhere, he does not give an example of a cultural explanation with which he could juxtapose his own explanations. To argue with something it is necessary to state clearly what one is arguing with.

It is well known that Kikuyu and Ibo are exceptionally active in trade and politics; an explanation of these patterns of behaviour, is available from sociology, cultural anthropology, and social psychology. Since Ardrey does not point to any trait save success which could have something to do with genes, and since even this is debatable on genetic grounds alone, it would appear that his case is almost entirely trivial. Unless he can show that the traits in question are somehow genetically determined; unless he can demonstrate from the actual pattern of preferential marriage and natural or social selection that it is at least possible that the quality of Kikuyu and Ibo life can be due to genetic factors, then Ardrey's case is irrelevant. It is possible, at least in principle, to demonstrate that a given population may be biased toward selection of a certain trait; if sexual selection were at work, which in African societies it generally is not, then a certain trait could conceivably be selected for. If it is the case that men with a greater degree of some genetically determined psychological quality somehow leave more children or at least make it possible for others who carry this trait to leave more offspring, then again it is possible that a given trait may be selected for. Ardrey does not do any of this, and I have to say that his assertions are empty and even dangerous.

Ardrey believes that the Kikuyu and Ibo represent processes which may be going on in society everywhere; the contrary case, that there can be unfavourable selection and genetic stagnation, is meant in a universal sense as well. Is it also meant to apply to modern

societies? Apparently so; Ardrey's main fear seems to be conformity, and it is his belief that traits such as 'conformity' may be selected for or against genetically. We have seen what he says about the evil effects of social institutions which get in the way of gene flow. Elsewhere he says:

"A population must achieve a fair degree of adaptation to its environment if it is to survive in the present. And if fitness for today were the sole criterion, then cultural relativism would be theoretically sound. But adaptation can be too perfect. When selection for conformity has persisted through a sufficient number of generations, all may seem well; yet reduction of variants will have affected the population's gene pool and reduced its prospects of survival tomorrow. Either variation so wild as to render future survival dubious, or conformity so narrow as to endanger the future, becomes the character of a genetically inferior population."(55)

Conformity is a bad thing; wild nonconformity is a bad thing. It is possible for a population to select for one aspect of life or another; any genetically isolated population has the capacity to do so. Therefore Ardrey's implication is that this may happen within the various functional and cultural sub-groups of western society, at least in so far as they are isolated from the others. How conformity as such may be selected for genetically is beyond me; I have already illustrated the difficulties of applying such reasoning to a specific society (Kikuyu and Ibo). Still Ardrey seems to believe that it is possible that such selective pressures, particularly those for 'conformity', may operate in western society because of the necessity for men to conform to institutions which demand uniformity. How it could happen I do not know; any effective argument along these lines would involve digging up Lamarckian genetics again, and this Ardrey cannot do. But if conformity is somehow established in our genes, the results may be these:

"...we pray.....in our industrial organizations, on our collective farms, in our churchly councils, in our processes of government, in our relations between states, in our righteous demands for world government, in our most seemly prayers that someday we shall all be the same.(...) As life is larger than man, so is life wiser than we are. As evolution has made us possible, so will evolution sit in final judgment. As natural selection declared us in, so natural selection, should our hubris overcome us, will declare us out."(367)

I think he is possibly more concerned that an egalitarian totalitarianism will somehow take over the selective process itself than that selection will take place in a more random fashion; this however is quite unclear.

The Ibo and Kikuyu example is not the only one that Ardrey uses to justify his claims about psychological differences between populations. His prime example is derived from statistical surveys of I.Q. test results made in the United States; here Ardrey is on slightly firmer ground if only for the reason that much work has in fact been done in this area. I am scarcely a specialist in I.Q.

testing, but it is the case that this is an intensely debatable area both for political and for methodological reasons. I do not intend to review the entire nature-nurture controversy; I will simply point out what Ardrey has done with the data as it stands. He has declared that intelligence is related to racial heredity; blacks are statistically inferior to whites in their ability to manipulate the kinds of facts and processes tested by I.Q. tests and this difference is genetically based. Of course it is true that the statistical evidence does exist; it is its meaning which is in question. Most sociological and psychological statistics suffer from a fundamental problem which makes them very difficult to interpret; whatever uniformities appear in them tend to be overdetermined, caused by several factors rather than just one. The controversy over I.Q. testing is greatly complicated by this kind of problem; class differences must be evened out, cultural differences taken account of, motivational aspects of the testing process itself analyzed, etc., etc. I cannot settle this argument; it still goes on in the journals and elsewhere. But I will say that Ardrey has pretty well ignored these complexities; his conclusion lacks force for this reason. I.Q. tests rate culture-bound abilities with which not all persons even in the same general culture are equally familiar. Until it is certain that statistical differences in I.Q. results are not due to differences (for example) in child rearing and to differences in general cultural background then genetic arguments seem a waste of time. I might say that child-rearing in particular has a profound effect on the 'intelligence' of children; this effect can be dramatic, as witness the by now numerous studies made on children deprived of maternal care in early childhood. I am not trying to make a radical claim for social determinism; I am simply stating that in proven fact culture does influence the potentiality and the content of learning to a very great degree and, most likely, usually to a greater absolute degree than most genetic differences between individuals.

The fact that Ardrey in general does not cite any clear evidence for his case will not be noted by the general public; and I suspect that some parts of his book will be seized upon with glee in some quarters for reasons which are not exactly motivated by scientific objectivity. Much of all three of Ardrey's books give a kind of covert support to certain ideological biases; Ardrey knows full well that he is open to the charge of racism but disclaims responsibility by invoking pure scientific curiosity and by accusing the liberal spokesmen of prejudice in the other direction. I do not think that a charge of racism can be personally levelled against Ardrey; his general ideology, which I will discuss in a moment, does not logically permit it. But I have shown that his attitude toward evidence is scarcely responsible, and it is this evidence which leads him to make the dogmatic assertions which I sum up below:

1) Groups which have been genetically isolated are likely to differ genetically from the groups from which they have been isolated. An intra-breeding class or caste may differ from the surrounding society, and the results of this inbreeding may turn up in psychological traits, conceivably of a rather subtle nature. Ardrey's own examples permit me to say that this is what he believes. Thus cultural features and skills in enclave groups such as the Chinese away from China, the British working-class, the blacks, the Jews, university professors and royalty may be genetically determined and

and will, as such, stand in contrast to the genetic makeup of the culture in which they find their place. Ardrey's assertions can and most likely will be used to justify a number of beliefs expressible in the form: "The X are all the same; they'll never change." Ardrey's assertions can also give the naive fuel for the belief that the populations should be kept separate lest the one contaminate the other. Ardrey does not support such beliefs himself.

2) Women are genetically destined to a lesser charge of aggression than are men. Women are naturally inclined to take the subordinate position. This is a hot matter also (to say the least) and has been ever since Margaret Mead stated the alternative relativist viewpoint. Ardrey's conclusions would have been quite acceptable to the Kinder-Küche-Kirche beliefs of National Socialism.

3) Mankind is naturally 'aggressive' and probably violent. Hence one could reason that repressive policing may always be in order. Ardrey does not comment on the need for police, save to say that increased social violence may lead to a surfeit of them. A natural violent streak is a dubious idea; the existence of 'aggression' in its technical sense may not be in question though the choice of the word 'aggression' for the innate factor driving much of human behaviour in its general activity relative to the world is distinctly inappropriate and misleading.

4) Man naturally cleaves to certain external objects in accord with the "natural law" of territoriality. 'Property' is one form that this takes. This idea may have something in it though very possibly not for the reason and with the implications that Ardrey thinks; I will discuss this briefly at the conclusion. In any case the manner in which Ardrey states this proposition is very unlikely to cause any discomfort on Wall Street and in the Monday Club.

Enough said. It is my conclusion that Ardrey's evidence seldom gives any definitive support to any but a pre-judged and intuitive acceptance of these propositions. I cannot think, given the state of things generally, that these conclusions are harmless. They are in fact grossly irresponsible in a book destined for the large public to which Ardrey appeals. However, I cannot fault him for suggesting what he suggests; the problem is that his suggestions are presented as affirmations and as scientifically 'proved' affirmations at that. It is a paradox in Ardrey that he puts forward what actually turns out to be some kind of absolute egalitarianism but yet a good part of his theory has profoundly nonegalitarian implications. It may at least be said that Ardrey does not support these implications himself; nor does he suggest any action which should be taken on the basis of his findings. At most he would say that some things, e.g. the subordination of women and man's desire for property are so deeply rooted that they can probably never be completely expunged. And, on the whole, his more positive statements actually support a certain kind of conservative ideology so extreme as to be revolutionary, and ideology not realized in this or perhaps any other century. To this I now turn.

All of what follows is based on the idea that man's genetic heritage comes into conflict with forms of social organization that do not permit an expression of basic drives. And we have also seen that Ardrey is sceptical of any social organization which gets in the

way of gene flow; it is this attitude which I believe saves Ardrey from the charge of racism. The genetic effects of society may be long-term; Ardrey is more directly interested, in the latter part of his book, with the interaction of culture and biological drives as they now stand and in general he sees great and increasing potential for social violence in what is going on. Such violence, formerly expressed in war, is a redirection of energies now denied that outlet by nuclear detente. The young are chiefly implicated in this. Thus Ardrey manages to include within his scheme virtually all disturbing phenomena of our time; this is no doubt a considerable selling point. But it is this aspect of Ardrey's book which is the most interesting and suggestive for anyone interested in practical concerns.

As I have said the basic point is that modern society is providing increasingly little opportunity for the exercise of man's biological drives. This is Ardrey's ultimate explanation for youthful revolt. If every being requires 'self-fulfillment' and an outlet for its charge of aggressive energy, and if it comes to be commonly realized that in fact modern society provides little chance for this, then there is trouble. Ardrey points to certain sociological findings to account for this malaise. He examines studies on industrial psychology and discovers that men work best and most purposefully when they are implicated directly in the planning of whatever the project happens to be. Men under such conditions are not, according to Ardrey, working in accord with a stimulus-response-reinforcement model in which money is the positive reinforcement and its lack the negative:

"...capitalist and Marxist share the same idée fixe of the almighty dollar; that man works exclusively for reasons of economic determinism. The Hawthorne workers /the workers of the electric components factory where the pioneering industrial study was done/ had been motivated by identity, not money - by being people different."(159)

Stated somewhat differently, Ardrey seems to believe that men work best and most happily when they are implicated in the results of their labour.

Ardrey also examines studies conducted by urban sociologists on city neighbourhoods. He discovers that, given a chance, neighbourhoods are self-establishing, self-regulating, and exclusive relative to other neighbourhoods. Again men are directly implicated in rewarding human activity. The antithesis to this is the anomic tower-block housing estate. In general these aspects of Ardrey's thought bear a startling resemblance to classical Marxism (the above quotation notwithstanding).

Of course it is true that Ardrey relates all the phenomena above to his three innate needs; but they are so vague as to be almost meaningless in this context. Nonetheless he has hit on things which are socially interesting. Given the fact that Ardrey is pointing to the above studies as illustrative of the nature of man, and given that he is against restrictive social organizations Ardrey's ideas come close to both Marxism and also to a certain kind of conservatism; he fits uncomfortably within the two positions but finally appears to opt for the latter.

Ardrey would look with approval at a society maintaining maximum flexibility within the confines of biological imperatives. The Russians prevent some forms of hereditary privilege by making hereditary wealth impossible; this presumably keeps everyone up to the competitive mark as well. I wonder if Ardrey approves of this sort of measure. It is certain that he would not approve of bureaucracy in almost any form; in this he is close to agreement with the radical critiques coming both from within the western and from within the presumably Communist world. He appears to see the bureaucratic state as a prime cause of the social malaise:

"Human youth recognizes that a few achieve identity. But it is a shrinking few, as organizations devour each other, while youth grows in numbers. And so there are those among the young - today some, tomorrow more - who suggest that if something does not give, then they will tear the place down as a house not worth living in. There is nothing unusual, in the quest for identity, to find those who will contemptuously reject security's last offer."(173)

He finds this quite correct biologically. But elsewhere he advocates restraint. The division of labour, he says, makes modern society very delicate, and youth should consider this before making irrational attacks. Again a paradox appears; Ardrey is unwilling to go along with his own argument, and so stops short of advocating anything really in accord with what he often states are the conditions for human satisfaction. His belief that society must strike a balance between order and disorder leads to the following deeply felt, but rather shallow proposition:

"What is at stake in our times is not the survival of man, but the survival of man's most rewarding of all inventions, democracy."(287)

Ardrey cannot or does not deal with the fact that a democratic form is something of a farce in a society which he himself characterizes as made up of ever more embracing bureaucratic organizations. But its defence is all that he can positively suggest, and with and as a part of its defence a return to nothing other than 'individual responsibility'; otherwise there will be no alternative to the police state:

"As a people normally gets the government it deserves, so a society normally receives the punishments it asks for. And so long as we support the Age of the Alibi, just so long must we inhabit the Age of Anxiety. There must come a limit, of course, when the social order to endure accepts violent means to suppress violent disorder. And we shall then see an endless procession of concentration camps, death penalties, public whippings, and police ascendancy. It is the likelier outcome, no doubt."(340)

The American mind can be very tortuous indeed when it comes to political reasoning. Ardrey has blocked every possible solution to the problems which he poses. He suggests the desirability of self-determination, of worker's control, community organizations, decentralization, and at the end of it all can only return to what can only be built upon these bases and which cannot really precede their establishment - democracy and responsibility.

A curious route indeed. Ardrey's formulations are something in which many would like to believe. Ardrey's dream comes from a time at least as far back as Jefferson; it is a dream of a pristine society built upon a base of autonomous, self-determining, free small farmers and merchants. This is still very much a live ideal in North America among so-called 'conservatives' and so-called 'radicals' alike. Every now and then it takes a political or quasi-political form. It has been noted in the rise of the Populist movement at the end of the last century and it can even still be detected at work behind such phenomena as George Wallace. There are also still many who actually believe that what is needed is a return to a pure capitalism in which enterprise is neither fettered by monopoly nor by government interference, a system in which each man can rise as far as he is able. The followers of the American novelist cum philosopher Ayn Rand believe just this in spite of its apparent absurdity. The curious birth and success of the Conservative Party of New York may indicate a new and perhaps more effective leaning in this direction. The fact that the beliefs which persons of this persuasion actually express are often inconsistent and even brutal gives no very good reason to discount it all as either unimportant or stupid.

But how very odd to find this stance supported again by an argument based upon biological imperatives and natural law. Though it is not very convincing in general, the biological argument may have some use in application to certain cases. For example, little enough is known about the makeup of the human mind; Ardrey mentions Chomsky at one point in his discussion of innate factors in human mentality. Chomsky points to the existence of innate factors which make it possible for the infant to assimilate the complex grammatical structures of language. Along this same line it could also be said that human cognitive organization may have its own demands, and that these demands could lead to what Ardrey characterizes as innate territoriality, xenophobia, identity through symbols, etc. What these demands could be I am in no position to say; there is work going on in psychology which may point towards at least the asking of the proper questions. But in general Ardrey is so devoted to biological arguments and analogical arguments from the observation of human and animal behaviour that he pays no attention at all to much material which could bear on his case for good or ill. The result is that he became so thoroughly muddled that there was no possibility that he might have given some kind of sense to the analysis of the biosocial nature of society.

I can only conclude this review by stating that I believe that Ardrey has written a harmful book. It will probably have most appeal to those who would support an essentially absurd bureaucratic 'democracy' or worse. Again, I can only say, how very odd. Surely this cannot have been what Ardrey set out to do.

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