

# War (Again), Rothbard, Ab Origine



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*"Finding the Challenges" is an original column appearing every other Wednesday at Everything-Voluntary.com, by Verbal Vol. Verbal is a software engineer, college professor, corporate information officer, life long student, farmer, libertarian, literarian, student of computer science and self-ordering phenomena, pre-TSA world traveler, domestic traveler. Archived columns can be found [here](#). FTC-only RSS feed available [here](#).*

Sooner or later, all contemplation comes down to human nature and philosophy. We may live in a specific time and space, but there is a dualism of the species. The things which shape us have to do with the time going before and the time coming after, as well as the construction of the space at relevant times. Descartes first posited dualism (I believe) but his had to do with the individual, the body (in space and time) and the soul (heretofore and hereafter). But I share thoughts with you about the concrete man (individuals between birth and death) and abstract man (the species over its arc from arising to extinction).

The first segment covers the roots of history, were they ever to be captured objectively, and the process and product as realized in the future. The second segment treats a Rothbard view relevant to the first. And the third segment addresses a common fallacy that arises through the misperception of time and space.

## **War (Again ... and Again)**

Today's column marks the official (by me) relinquishing of the idea that the human species is truly gifted with reason in any sense other than as an amusing delusion. If we did have reason as our predominate feature, why would we still be making war, condoning war, being victims of war?

It is a certainty that we will either evolve to another rational species, who will banish war, or our evolutionary trail will vanish into the underbrush, probably with a great deal of help from paying the wages of war. Everything looks like a failure from the middle, but that is

true of both the prodigious history of failure and the minuscule record of success. I say that the human experience looks like a failure — a failed evolutionary trial at creatures with reason and logic. I cite only one piece of evidence, war's continuation.

Not to say that we have made no progress. What about iPhones and Androids? When I suggest that the human kind are, together, a disappointing failure, many of my philosophical friends shush me, "don't you see all the wonders around us?" They frown on my kvetching about barely usable technology, too. I say, if we are so damned smart, how come we think phones are smart.

Both technology and modern life yield so much eye candy in the "developed" regions. But very little satisfies in any lasting sense. Very little comes from a past of peace and usefulness. Very little will go forward to peace and usefulness.

In a recent discussion, someone brought up this YouTube video of the prelude to *2001: A Space Odyssey*. He was making a tongue-in-cheek reference to the origin of imperialism. Funny, but then again not so funny. The depressing part to me is that I see all of the frightful parts of man's existence in that 09:33 clip. Where have we come since then? Where will we go now? The Aborigines saw everything as fight or flight, while they felt no compulsion to improve their response for passing to future generations. All of our calories burned since have been toward creature comfort, not toward recognizing our basic nature as a poorly designed species model. Don't we have an obligation to the future?

Is there only one freaking watering hole in all of Africa? Is there any way of survival without voluntary sharing and exchange?

### **Rothbard Quote #8 — Voluntary Exchange**

Here is what Murray Rothbard writes in *For A New Liberty*:

*The libertarian, then, is clearly an individualist but not an egalitarian. The only "equality" he would advocate is the equal right of every man to the property in his own person, to the property in the unused resources he "homesteads," and to the property of others he has acquired either through voluntary exchange or gift.*

What other choices might the Apes in the movie have made, how could our species have followed a different path. To me there are only four of the commandments that carry any water, those against murder, theft, lying, and covetousness. And I believe, as an aside, that Oklahoma still has those proscriptions on the books if not on the state capitol

grounds. Covetousness is the bane of both the haves and the have-nots. Neither set can ever have enough of either what they have or what they don't have. Ask any financier or holder of water rights, "How much will be enough?" If you like dancing, you will get a good workout.

At some point, a voluntaryist has to see that neither want nor need defines the facts. In the case of the hominids in the video linked above, it just took thinking beyond the box and on the objective elements of the situation. That any of the hominids wanted or needed the water is pretext. In the case we see nothing else is examined but the pretext. How might they have resolved their circumstance in a voluntary way? A simple proposal would be to do it voluntarily by exchange, peaceful exchange.

None of the ape-humans, however, could see beyond covetousness. None could see to the very next layer, which lay entirely within the four corners of Rothbard's thought conveyed above. Today, we still have not advanced to our own second level of species instinct. While self preservation is the first, preservation of species is the second. We do not seem to be capable of processing this. Certainly, we do things at the id level which result in some species preservation, but we have not risen to the task of processing property in the simplest ways, as suggested by Rothbard, so as to preserve our species from its own suicidal murder, theft, lying, and covetousness. It takes more than a fight or flight instinct, to make advances. It takes a rational understanding of how we navigate the natural facts that are inextricable from the principle evoked above by Rothbard.

### **Logic Fallacy #37 — Once More from the Top**

So, this takes us to the place where we see how regarding human nature as a permanent monolith can lead us down the garden path.

Some friends and I were talking, when one stated that the Afghanistan War had by now lasted for X days. Another responded by citing the 19th Century contest between the British Empire and the Russian Empire over Afghanistan — he said that the clock has been ticking far longer. Then I upped the ante by calling for a count back to the beginning of imperialism, where one self-appoints oneself to have dominion over others, let's say to the times before Nabucco. Then I was gainsaid by the guy who provided the link to the Space Odyssey YouTube.

Observation should now tell us that it is impossible to find the origins of behavior, or to isolate the factors which bring us to something like the US presence in Afghanistan. Mark Twain warned us that although history does not repeat, it often rhymes. Nevertheless, history does not give us clean beginnings from which we can start a count up timer. It is understandable that we can lose patience with the wrongheadedness of any circumstance, but we have very little comprehension of when things begin and what they may turn out to

be.

First of all, none of the miscreants who wrought the Afghanistan War are around to fix it or to take responsibility. And, none of the perpetrators who have continued the war are interested in the timer. It's called kicking the can down the road.

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We have been kicking the can down the road for a long time. We have trouble keeping the fictional bits apart from the factual bits. But I have always expected that humans will one day awake. I hope that I am right, sooner or later. I must admit, however, that it is disappointing and alarming that, as a thinking race, we have not arrived at basic kindergarten-type recognition of the facts of life.

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