

## AFRICAN NEMESIS: AN OFF-BROADWAY REVIEW

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Foreword

Robert Ardrey, the author of African Genesis, is a playwright. But he's a thinking man's playwright. He has conducted, as he puts it, a personal investigation into the animal origins and animal nature of man. The investigation focuses on the social behavior of subhuman primates and other vertebrates--most notably, birds--and on the South African "man-ape" (Australopithecine) materials uncovered by Raymond Dart and his co-workers. Ardrey claims to have discovered not merely the true underlying nature of man, but a large "unwitting combine" of influential scientists who refuse to acknowledge the evidences of this true nature. The true nature is made up of certain "cultural instincts" developed in the course of animal evolution and genetically transmitted in the human line. Most of the instincts are bad, and they are responsible for great troubles of the modern world. The combine, intellectually committed to the "romantic fallacy" that man is basically noble, unique among animals, and governed not so much by his animal nature as by his cultural circumstances, will not see this. So Ardrey has taken it upon himself to present the case to the public. He makes out his discovery to be a revolutionary doctrine, and with great flourish and considerable flair lets fly many barbs in the general direction of the "phalanx of modern thought" and the bastions of "scientific orthodoxy."

However different the subject, the book then belongs in the popular Kon Tiki genre. It's agin the interests. It portrays a theory that sounds sensible, but which, for fuddy-duddy reasons, the professors-that-be generally ignore. Right away, Ardrey is an underdog. And to add to the appeal: simply by reading the book approvingly anyone can demonstrate that he is the intellectual equal--indeed, the superior--of the so-called scholars.

Obviously, it becomes difficult to enter the lists against Ardrey. Who wants to be accused of being a counter-revolutionary? Who is a counter-revolutionary? What an improbable position for an anthropological critic. To admit to intellectual conservatism is contrary to the spirit of any science, and not the least so to anthropology. In this context of conspiratorial allegation, how can an anthropologist convey the impression that the theory seems to him unsound? Well, if Ardrey, a dramatist, can pen a book about anthropology, an anthropologist can write his review in play form. That is what I have done.

The play speaks for itself. Insofar as it speaks well it is because I have woven into it many of Ardrey's felicitous phrases. It is only necessary to mention that the bracketed page numbers refer to some of Ardrey's more unusual statements, and the dénouement of the drama is not Ardrey's book but my hope. So now your humble patience pray, gently to hear, kindly to judge:

Cast of Characters

Robert Ardent: Former dramatist. Now leader of a revolutionary movement to reveal the true animal nature of man.

Eve Ardent: His wife.

Raymond Blunt: Anatomist-paleontologist. Discoverer of Australopithecus, the nearest ancestor of man.

Dr. L. Faucet: Noted anthropologist. Discoverer of the early hominid Zinjanthropus--under hazardous conditions due to the menace of prides of black-maned lions.

Mary Faucet: His wife, the real discoverer of Zinjanthropus.

Anyone: Almost everyone.

Kung: A Bushman shaman. (Only we know his real name.)

Mr. Shapiro: A Mr. Shapiro.

Any resemblance between the characters of this play and persons living or dead is purely incidental.

- Prologue -

Ardent and Eve on opposite ends of stage front.

ARDENT. Give order that these bodies  
High on a stage be placed to view;  
And let me speak to the yet unknowing world  
How these things came about. So shall you hear  
Of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts;  
Of accidental judgments, casual slaughters;  
Of deaths put on by cunning and forced cause;

EVE (an interjected aside). And, in this upshot, purposes mistook Fall'n  
on the inventors' heads--

ARDENT. All this can I truly deliver.

Act I

A cave near Johannesburg, late afternoon. A table and chair rear center with typewriter on table. A pile of firewood front center, about eight feet in front of table. Cave mouth, R; cave recess, L. Ardent, standing on table, addressing Blunt, the Faucets, Eve and Anyone. Mary Faucet carrying large rifle.

ARDENT (dramatically). A specter is haunting Europe--the million year old specter of a killer ape whose home was this very cave, the specter of man's carnivorous ancestor . . . his own murderous specter. All the powers of orthodox science, all the orthodox producers and consumers of the romantic fallacy, have entered into a holy alliance to exorcise this specter: Marx and Freud, Rousseau and Jefferson, the frightened anthropologists and their namby committed publics, the whole troop of howling monkeys that is man won't look in the goddam river of time to see reflected there their own hideous visage.

(Mocking) Oh what a piece of work is man, they say: how noble in reason, in form and moving how express and admirable, in action how like an angel! The beauty of the world! The paragon of animals!

(Hardens) Well, that is what he is, the paragon of animals: base to the core in instinct, in form and moving how like the beast of prey, in national action the consummate primate defending to a fool's death all the territory he can grab from others, the beauty of the mushroom cloud! Blunt, Faucet, Anyone--what is to be done? Murder will out, you thought, Blunt. Well you were wrong. So you cheerfully went up to the Livingstone conference to lay before the northern scientists the fossilized evidence from this cave. You put out in plain boxes the stupendous remnants of hominid carnage strewn here by our brutal Australopithecine father. Well, they ignored you! They took refuge behind the laughing hyena--hyenas did it, they said (laughs bitterly). And you, Faucet, you and Mary fighting off black-maned lions to dig in Tanganyika, to dig up the truth. I tell you this: they won't listen! Your specialist voices in obscure specialist journals have no echoes--even when you can get your stuff published. And they censor you. And they drown you in the milksop tears of the orthodox romantic prejudice. (Exhorts) I tell you this: you need drama! You need someone to put it all together, to forge a knife of prose that will rip the reactionary academics from groin to gorge. You need me! And we together will make our revolutionary truth known. Comrades, we are privy to a revolution in knowledge about man, about what he really is. South African workers in the caverns of man's origins, unite! Man has nothing to lose but the chains of his romantic illusion. Let us make him free with the truth. Let us break through the counter-revolutionary phalanx with a manifesto! And let us write it here--write here, right now! (Anticlimax) I have a publisher lined up--and catch this title, African Nemesis. (Comes down from the table.)

ANYONE. Is Marx an enemy of the revolution? A counter-revolutionary?

ARDENT. Private property is an animal instinct, a territorial compulsion put into the genes of man a hundred million years before he was born. (Contempt) But to the romantics, man is a noble fellow. Circumstances, they say, brought him to this end. A unique fellow, they say, with a soul, or a will, or a culture. I say . . . when Blunt found that bashed-in Australopithecine jaw, it said, said across millions of years of bloody history: man is a jabberwocky, a walkie-talkie, talking to disguise the fact that his talk means nothing. Man is an animal with the soul of a murderous, proprietary, status-seeking, in-group loving predator! Ah, we have found the jaws that bite. Next to this, all else is talk. The instincts must burst through. They are the true legacy of a man. He owns them. They own him.

ANYONE. I'm with you. Marx, fancy that. The history of all hitherto existing society is the animal history of animal struggles. Fancy that.

ARDENT (motions Eve to table. She sits before typewriter. She types through scene, especially when Ardent speaks). Light the fire for Eve to type by. Eve, you catch the spirit of the thing. I'll fix it up later.

FAUCET (lighting fire, laughs good-humoredly). Good job for the revolution that only man can make fire. (Ardent glares at him and he stops laughing.)

ANYONE. Can I put out the fire when we're done?

BLUNT. No me, me--

FAUCET. I made it, and I--

ARDENT. Stop this Freudian romanticism. We'll all do it, all four of us. We'll take different sides. But let's go back to the real beginning, the animal beginning, the hundreds-of-million-years old vertebrate beginning. Territory first, love of possession. Fish have it, birds have it, monkeys in the trees have it (Cole Porter 1938:2). It's in the genetic structure. The instinct to possess, the drive to gain, maintain and defend the exclusive right to a piece of territory. Man's cultural instinct for Lebensraum. Small hope for any United Nations that won't recognize that. It's the basic condition of war, of crime, of the fact that humans have a general reluctance to love their neighbors. Every man his own. Every tribe, every nation in territorial strife. An umbilical bondage to a piece of ground that decrees xenophobic hatred of the others of his kind. Got that, Eve? (Listens.) What's that? A scuffling in front of the cave. (Sounds alarm.) Counter-revolutionary scientific orthodox spies! Quiet everyone!

BLUNT. Ardent, I think you're getting a little paranoid.

ARDENT. In a world of man anything else would be insanity. Don't you ever have the feeling, Blunt, that paranoids are after you?

BLUNT. Don't worry, Ardent. I wrote up the report on this cave--no one could possibly find it.

FAUCET (moves toward front of cave, R., startled, runs L. across stage and exit L., screaming in terror). It's a pride of black-maned lions! Run for your lives!  
Mary Faucet advances boldly to cave mouth and fires high-powered rifle twice.

ARDENT (emerging from behind table). Get them, Mary old girl?

MARY. Got five lionesses and two cubs. I missed the male, though . . . he ran like hell.

ARDENT. It's hot in here. (Removes shirt. Begins to pace around fire, with tempo of pacing gradually increasing through scene.) Faucet returns from stage left, dragging with him Kung, stone chisel and crude paint brushes in hand.

FAUCET. Here's your counter-revolutionary, Ardent. He was painting a gazelle(schaft) back there on the walls of the cave. Human all right, but is it art?

ARDENT (to Kung). What are you doing here?

KUNG. Hunting.

ARDENT. The hell you are, you're painting an animal back there.

KUNG. Someone has to do the hunting.

BLUNT. He means he's searching out game by imitative magic.

ARDENT. Why don't you hunt like a man?

KUNG. I enjoy it . . . the arrow in the running beast, the red blood, the veldt. It is hunting. Besides I'm not very good at stalking. So I do the hunting. People give me some of the game sometimes.

ARDENT. Bushman, aren't you? You do this for band belong-you, people belong-you? Make-um magic?

KUNG. Sometimes for my band. But now I'm hunting for all the bands around here. Boys' initiation ceremony coming up. All the boys of all the bands and their people are coming in next week. We need a lot of game in our land to feed everyone. Big time. Good time.

ANYONE. What's your name, Bushman?

No answer.

ARDENT. C'mon, tell us name belong-you.

No answer.

BLUNT. He probably thinks you're going to take his name. He won't tell it to you. You might do something with his name, and he'll suffer.

ARDENT (circling fire faster). Leave him alone. A harmless people, and they suffer from it. . . . Let's go on with the manifesto. Where were we? . . . territory, property . . . yes and next . . . Dominance! (Excited again.) The status-seeker. Man's unquenchable thirst for rank. An end in itself too; make no mistake on that. A drive, a need, a compulsion to dominate that continues on whether it's useful or useless. A basic desire for center stage. Try--

FAUCET. But--

ARDENT (ignores interruption)--to build an equalitarian society of men. Ha! Catch a falling star. How romantic. How delightful. Ha! Bushman, you got-em leader?

KUNG. We mostly listen to Tomu. We like him: a good man. Talks well. Generous to a fault. It's sometimes up to me, though. I mean if Tomu doesn't act right, we shamans see that he does. We know his real name, -see. But no doubt you're right. Tomu must want badly to be the leader. Else why should he be so good?

Faucet begins to follow Ardent around fire. After a while he takes off his shirt and carries it. Pen, matches, cigarettes and other things periodically drop out of his shirt pocket. He reaches for them but often misses as he scurries to keep up with Ardent. Mary Faucet falls in after Faucet, picks up what he drops. Thus the two of them are stooping every once and a while as the dance goes on around the fire.

FAUCET. But listen, this rugged individualism I can understand. Yet there is some cooperation, you know.

ARDENT. Man is truly a social species, although when I say man here I don't embrace women (Linton 1932; after J. Miller 1698). Baboons too, and lots of lesser mammals. Necessary for survival, protection. Society is the animal's best friend, his defense, so sometimes he

plays down his personal desires for the group. It's a kind of primal morality, a development of a double standard. Amity of the in-group, enmity toward the other groups. But listen to me, and don't get me wrong: it's a love born of hate, hate and fear of the outside. It multiplies hate by the factor of society. And in the end, the moral order depends on territory, and so it depends on hostility. Its consummate human product: Xenophobic nationalism. Christ, take a look at what's going on in Africa. Christ, we're in the midst of natural man exercising his natural social hate. Aux arbres Citoyens!

BLUNT (excited, begins to follow Faucets in dance around fire. Takes off shirt from heat. Faucets stooping at more frequent intervals.)  
Why don't you embrace women?

ARDENT. Complete anarchists. Men are the social animals. The male of the primate species is the defender of the horde, of its territory, of its fallen. Even dominance, the sheer struggle of it, breeds order. Man breeds social order, women only children. A specialized child-bearer. And take sex, who is really preoccupied with it? Who, the aggressor? What does order mean to women alongside child-bearing and the competitive struggle to latch on to the best-fixed male? You know why so many women are in psychoanalysis? Because we've been fool enough to give women social roles, votes, masculine jobs. They haven't the instincts for it [p. 165]. Can't clean up the mess that's inside.

Anyone takes off shirt and joins procession around fire, which moves into high gear. Only Kung stands aside, wide-eyed. Eve's typewriter beat becomes rhythmical: tap-tap-tap-tap, tap-tap-tap-tap, bell-carriage slide; tap-tap-tap-tap, tap-tap-tap-tap, bell-carriage slide.

BLUNT. The finishing touch, Ardent. Australopithecus. My cave here. My murderous, small predatory carnivore. My ancestor . . . our ancestor.

ARDENT. Yes, yes, the finishing touch, the jewel in man's crown of instincts: murder. All the primates are vegetarians. But what happened to man's line? Came out of the trees, stood up, lost his ripping canines and found his destiny: weapons. Weapons for defense, weapons for meat, weapons for survival. Cain! We are Cain's children, born with weapons in our hands. Oh, not in Asia and not in innocence is man born. In Africa his genesis, and he is nasty, brutish, and short. Man is a predator with a natural instinct to kill with a weapon [p. 316]. No conditioning force has eradicated it, or can. All human history has had one supreme objective: the perfection of the weapon. United Nations, Ha! We are cursed with an irrational, self-destroying, inexorable pursuit of death for death's sake.

FAUCET. But look, Ardent. Zinjanthropus, you know, the one I . . . uh, Mary and I found. No small carnivore predator. Hunted some smaller animals, maybe. Comes after Blunt's old thing. And he probably made those tools, those pebble tools that started the whole Stone Age sequence. How do you fit that in, I mean.

ARDENT (sneer). Abel. A freak. A side-branch. Backward, inoffensive, lumbering ape-man. Chewing structure of a vegetarian ape. He lived at the bottom of a well, on treacle, and he was very ill. Obviously then he couldn't have been man's ancestor. Slain by Cain, who took

his tools away from him [p. 282]. Simple. And that's it . . . we've got it, the whole of it. (Stops pacing around fire, whole procession brought up. Ardent is facing fire and audience. Others, save Kung, ranged on either side of him. The typewriter rhythm continues. Ardent shrieks:) African Nemesis!

ARDENT.

Man-is-evil  
Mammalian-boll-weevil  
Was arboreal  
Became predatorial  
And carnivorial  
Also territorial  
Status seeker  
Property keeper  
Instinct lies deeper  
Here to stay  
Won't go away  
No matter what you say  
No matter what you say

CHORUS OF ALL.

Man-is-evil  
Mammalian-boll-weevil  
Was arboreal  
Became predatorial  
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Ardent climbs on table. Firelight flickers on face. Spreads arms. Typewriter stops.

ARDENT (frenzied). Comrades, what to us is this quintessence of evil? Let this be our watchword: Man delights not me--no, nor women neither! To the publisher! (He rips the sheets out of typewriter. Leaps with a yell toward cave mouth and exit R., grabbing Kung on way. The rest follow running, yelling, save Eve, left alone, sitting at table.)

EVE (with compassion). Oh Ardent, you were a playwright once--but now what lenten entertainment the players shall receive from you. . . . And how do they expect me to put out the fire?

CURTAIN

Act II. Scene 1

The sitting room of a flat in London. Table and chairs R. Door rear center. Members of revolutionary band sitting around. Mary still packs rifle. Ardent in dominant position, sitting on table with feet on a chair.

ARDENT. I'll never understand why the South African government deported us.

KUNG. Maybe the prime minister was jealous.

ARDENT. London's the place for our movement anyhow: the workshop of Marx, the sanctuary of Freud. Most of all, the very bastille of the romantic fallacy, the British Museum: ivory tower of the world, guardian of the fortress of man's ignorance of man. It's the drilling ground of those snob north-of-the-equator anthropologists who turned their backs on Blunt at the Livingstone conference. . . . (An idea.) And we're going to storm it tonight! The manifesto wasn't enough, by God. We need evidence. Evidence, evidence, evidence. That's their anthropological currency and we're going to pay 'em in it. But it

won't be easy, because I happen to know they've taken it out of the Museum Library, hidden it from romantic eyes. Look, if people really knew how gibbons lived, how long do you think they'd beat their heads against the stone wall of love, how long could they cherish the hopeless hope that things can somehow turn out for humanity? For an hour today I combed through the Museum Library. Get this: not a single copy of Carpenter's monograph on the gibbon [pp. 36-37]. God knows what else they've sequestered. But I have a good idea where. Old Nose Washtree's office! Third floor of the museum. Come, my guerrilla band. To the Bastille! . . . (They rise, except Kung.) You too, Bushman. You're one of . . . us now. And Christ, Mary, leave that blunderbuss here. Those were stone lions in front of the museum, take my word.

MARY. Oh, all right. But may I at least take my pistol?

CURTAIN

Act II. Scene 2

Nose Washtree's office, one hour later. A room lined with books, floor to ceiling. A door to hall L. Large desk with swivel chair R. Curtain opens to empty stage. Door yields under pressure and enter revolutionary band, led by Mary Faucet, waving pistol and motioning for quiet. She turns on light and closes door.

MARY. We're safe now. I'll stand guard. (Posts self at door.)

ANYONE. Look at all these books. Wha' does he do with them?

ARDENT (rapidly crosses to desk, stands in front of it). All right, everyone. Revolutionary discipline. We have to work fast. Eve, you take that bookcase there (at R., nearest door). Faucet, you the next one, then Anyone, then Blunt, and I'll take care of this corner (largest space. Kung, conspicuously left out, finally gravitates to one of the shelves. Ardent now ranges before books, reading shelf labels.) European Paleolithic . . . North African Mesolithic . . . A huge compost heap of scientific orthodoxies. I hardly need impress upon you the revolutionary importance of this mission, and now you see its difficulty. The evidence of man's nature must lie hidden as a few slim needles in this great romantic haystack. What are all these shelves? South American ethnology? . . . African ethnology? . . . ethnology of the Pacific?

FAUCET. Ethnology is the study of peoples, the various conditions of mankind, primitive cultures, that sort of thing--hundreds of them, Ardent.

ARDENT. Paleozoic ethnology they never dreamed of. (Sits at desk with feet on it.) More things in heaven and earth, oh academics--

EVE. Look, I drew the sanctum sanctorum . . . (puzzled) so far it is from his desk too. (Reads titles.) Das Jean-Jacques Rousseau Problem, The Social Contract (takes out Social Contract and reads). The strongest is never strong enough to be always the master, unless he transforms strength into right, and obedience into duty. Hence the right of the strongest, which, though to all seeming meant ironically, is really laid down as a fundamental principle. But are we never to have an explanation of this phrase? Force is a physical



power, and I fail to see what moral effect it can have. To yield to force is an act of necessity, not of will--at the most an act of prudence. In what sense can it be a duty?

KUNG (aside). They don't make 'em like they used to.

ARDENT. Duty and morals: the royal sceptre and cloak of the most dominant ape, the jabberwocky legitimization of an animal compulsion to rule.

BLUNT (browsing shelves). Muckraking. I say, that's what we're doing too, you know. Lincoln Steffens--

ARDENT (excited). Yes, yes, look into it, Blunt. Great revolutionary hero, Steffens. Laid bare the natural predatory core of the city. The incomparable urban paleontologist, digging in an Australopithecine underworld of organized crime, organized murder, organized power.

BLUNT (reads). I always like to put a story Wundt's assistant, Külpe, told us after a visit to the neighboring University of Jena to see the aged philosopher Erdmann, whose history of philosophy, in some ten volumes, we had all read and studied. They had a warm, friendly talk, the old scholar and the young scientist, all about the old philosophers and their systems. But when Külpe tried to draw him out on Wundt and the newer school, Erdmann shook his head, declaring that he could not understand the modern men. In my day, he explained, we used to ask the everlasting question: What is man? And you--nowadays you answer it, saying (voice lowers), he was an ape.

ARDENT. Ach! Nach einmal das Jean-Jacques Rousseau Problem!

FAUCET. Ah, here's a preliminary report from those fellows, Emlen and Schaller, the ones living with mountain gorillas--

ANYONE. No doubt, very happily.

FAUCET. It's buried in this obscure specialist journal, Current Anthropology. (Takes off glasses and reads.) It has been possible for Schaller to observe many details of the behavior and social interactions of these animals. He has found a high level of social tolerance prevails among members of a troop--

ANYONE (quickly interjected). The primal morality of the in-group, the--

FAUCET. --and even between troops. (Thoughtfully.) Several of the troops he has studied include more than one male, and he has never observed signs of aggressiveness among them. Isolated and peripheral males exist, as among other primates; and it is surprising that even these may be accepted into troops without (voice lowers) visible displays of antagonism. Neighboring troops have been watched as they peacefully mixed, socialized, and separated. Gorilla troops are apparently nomadic within vaguely defined spatial limits. (Whispers.) No traces of territorial behavior have been detected.

ARDENT. Don't let it bother you, old man. Pity the poor gorilla, the harmless Bushman of the higher primates. A dying species, an evolutionary failure. Committed to a forest that has disappeared from under him, he came out of the trees and became a stem eater. His oversized body, his tree-swingers' chest and arms: a mass of architectural incongruities about as meaningful to his present existence as

an attic full of memories to a bankrupt nobleman. Doomed by ancient cries beyond control or memory, he knows it, knows it in the balance of instincts which govern his behavior. Vital instincts lose their hold. Primate compulsions fade like color from the skin of the dying. By day he seldom copulates, and by night . . . by night he fouls his own nest! [pp. 112-116]

FAUCET. That's pretty, but is it science?

ARDENT. I detect in you, Faucet, a certain leakiness, a counter-revolutionary romantic tendency, a deviationist drift, a red shift. (He notices Anyone, who has given up reading and is sitting on the floor.) What's the matter with you?

ANYONE. My lips get tired.

ARDENT. Counter-revolutionary devia-- Sh! A noise in the hall! Mary! Mary!

FAUCET (exasperated). Not another goddam black-maned lion, not another! Bushman, I told you to stop monkeying around with those paints.

KUNG. But it isn't monkeying.

MARY (terrified). Eeek! A mouse (runs into Faucet's arms. He comforts her.  
A general hubbub, from which emerges Kung's soothing voice:

KUNG (reading). We walked down the path to the well-house, attracted by the fragrance of the honeysuckle with which it was covered. Someone was drawing water and my teacher placed my hand under the spout. As the cool stream gushed over one hand she spelled into the other the word water, first slowly, then rapidly. I stood still, my whole attention fixed upon the motion of her fingers. Suddenly I felt a misty consciousness as of something forgotten--a thrill of returning thought; and somehow the mystery of language was revealed to me. I knew then that w-a-t-e-r meant that wonderful cool something that was flowing over my hand. The living word awakened my soul, gave it light, hope, joy, set it free! . . . a woman called Keller.

Eve has been absorbed in The Social Contract. She beckons Mary. They sit on the floor, R. Eve speaks sotto voce to her and audience. Ardent engages Blunt in conversation, L., occasionally raising voice enough for all to hear. These outbursts come as counterpoint to Eve's voice.

EVE. This must be das Problem. No noble savage here. (Reads.) The passage from the state of nature to the civil state produces a very remarkable change in man, by substituting justice for instinct in his conduct, and giving his actions the morality they formerly lacked--

ARDENT. Civilization can never ultimately repress it--

EVE. Then only, when the voice of duty takes the place of physical impulses and the right of attitude, does man, who so far had considered only himself, find that he is forced to act on different principles, and to consult his reason before listening to his inclinations--

ARDENT. Conscience as a guiding force in the human drama is one of such small reliability that it assumes very nearly the role of a villain [p. 349]--

- EVE. Although, in this state, he deprives himself of some of the advantages which he got from nature--
- ARDENT. By nature, a murderer--
- EVE. --he gains in return others so great, his faculties are so stimulated and developed, his ideas so extended, his feelings so ennobled, and his whole soul so uplifted, that, did not the abuses of this new condition often degrade him below that which he left--
- ARDENT. --the burning flesh of Jews--
- EVE. --he would be bound to bless continually the happy moment which took it from him forever, and, instead of a stupid and unimaginative animal, made him an intelligent being and . . . a man (She looks at Mary. Mary winks at her.)
- BLUNT (Sotto voce to Ardent and audience. Interrupted contrapuntally by Eve, still reading to Mary.) But the Eskimo still baffles me. A complete carnivore he is, and raw meat his dish. The greatest hunter of them all. The bloodthirsty ape in sealskin clothing. Yet look what Old Birket-Smith says here. Difficult for the average Eskimo to assert himself against others, he says--
- EVE. The social compact substitutes, for such inequalities as nature may have set up between men, an equality that is moral and legitimate. Men, who may be unequal in strength or intelligence, become every one equal by convention and legal right--
- BLUNT. And hunting grounds are the property of all and none, *res nullius*, he says, which not even the tribe can lay claim to. Something else: the Australian Aborigines. Sir Arthur Keith destroyed the Freudian fraud of the primal family by pointing out the Aborigine's larger-than-family society, and we'd go along with that, but you wouldn't want to talk about an Australian band's exclusive territoriality from what I read on these shelves--
- EVE. We must clearly distinguish between possession, which is merely the effect of force or the right of the first occupier, from property, which can only be founded on a positive title.
- ARDENT (loudly). Dammit, these ethnology shelves are useless. What do the Eskimo and all the other timid, shy, cringing, gentle, gauzy, wistful milquetoasts hiding out from mankind on the ice or in the jungle, what do they mean for pristine man? Precisely nothing, and far less that is than the strutting jackdaw. More harmless people, suffering because of their timid dispositions. Who disputes the Eskimo his blubber, his long night, his home built of ice cubes? No one. By adapting himself to a way of life supremely unattractive to Sioux or Apache, a shy creature has insured his survival in perfect confidence that he will escape the notice of all but romantic anthropologists. All that has been actually demonstrated by this (indicating bookshelves) loosely disciplined but immensely popular raid into the outposts of man's nature has been that timid people tend to live at unfashionable addresses. [pp. 149-150]
- ANYONE. Right again, Ardent. And it goes for Sioux blubber too. They cried when they met people, it says here, in order to manifest the lively joy which they felt in meeting them.

KUNG. Crying can have its own vocabulary.

ARDENT (sneers). Now a little child of nature shall lead us.

KUNG. It can happen to people--depends what they call the child. . . You know, the white shaman comes around and says to me--me, the magician from way back--I have something new, he says. The latest power, he says, the greatest magic. What, I say. The spell begins like this, he says: in the beginning was the Word. (Bemused.) Oh, I tried hard not to laugh, not to his face. Oh, that's great stuff, I said, great stuff. Then he asked me to eat his god . . . and I gave him some of mine. And so I saw the white shaman was far behind the camp of his own people: they had known it all long ago. . . You know, there on the veldt are little white stones on the ground. Now baboons know about these stones, find them lying there. But it's just stones--hard, white, scratchy. To white man they're that too: the same touch, the same color as for the baboon. But then they're something the baboon never will understand--they're diamonds. And not only that--they're wealth: worth getting and giving. And not only that--they're power and they're good, or to some they're power and they're hateful. A whole world of name-ideas. More important, more real than the touch of it, than the sight of it, than the smell of it. So the white men came to the veldt because of it. And they fought together because of it, and worked together because of it. White men who had been good became bad. Bushmen, who had been bad . . . now they were good: come work for us, nice man, in our holes, they said. The Bushman still smelled as before the stones, as when they drove him out. Now they want us. . . It depends a lot on names.

ARDENT (exasperated). Names, names, names. I'm sick of names. The plaintive, inexhaustible primate voice, desperately trying to dupe inexorable vertebrate drives. It's the primeval gene that bursts my spleen, but names will never harm me! (Flies angrily at shelf, flinging books helter-skelter.) Oh, just let me get my hands on something we can really use. Some real weapon! I'll forge a knife of prose that will rip those. . . I'll kill the romantic fallacy. I'll murder-- (He finds a small pamphlet. Oakley's, Man the Tool-Maker. Shrieks in triumph. Laughs hysterically.) Oh, what fools we've been! Taken in by a name--by the same damn device the romantics use to deceive themselves! See this Museum handbook: Man, the Tool-Maker. (Sarcastic laugh.) Tool-Maker. Do you think the British Museum would ever, ever in a million years of orthodox folly, ever, ever publish a handbook called Man, the Weapon-Maker? [p. 205] Look at these tools. (Sneer.) Tools, Ha! Cudgels! Weapons! (Dramatically.) But to suggest that we find in the competition of weapons the most exhilarating human experience would be blasphemy. Would the Museum dare to provoke in the House of Commons the question period of heroic proportions? [p. 205] And for a hundred responsible anthropologists gathered in a Rhodesian town to admit--to admit when Blunt put it to them--that Australopithecus had systematically used weapons would be to invite a cultural definition of man as the creature who systematically makes them. Never! Never! Ha-ha-ha (waves pamphlet) but just you wait, Professor Higgins, just you wait. (Menacingly.) No matter how eloquently you say it, no matter what you call it, a weapon by any other name will kill as neat! (Leaps to desk, others gather round, except

Kung, who slips out door and runs off.) Comrades . . . we have been tried and not found wanting. . . This is our finest hour. We have tempered the sword of revolution in the very rose water of the romantic brainwash. (Exhorts.) And now I say to you, surrounded as we are by the pressing weight of what passes as evidence for those who choose to delude themselves, I say to you. . . Man delights not me--no, nor women neither!

They exit, chanting, Ardent leading:

Ardent:	Chorus:
Man-is-evil	Man-is-evil
Mammalian-boll-weevil	Mammalian-boll-weevil
Was - arboreal	Was - arboreal
Became - predatorial	Became - predatorial
And - carnivorial	And - carnivorial
Also - territorial	Also - territorial
Sta-tus-seeker	Sta-tus-seeker
Property-keeper	Property-keeper
Instinct-lies-deeper	Instinct-lies-deeper
Here-to-stay	Here-to-stay
Won't-go-away	Won't-go-away
No matter-what-you-say	No matter-what-you-say
No matter-what-you-say	No matter-what-you-say

Faucet, lingering, sneaks back, hides a copy of Current Anthropology in his jacket, and hurries out to join the rest.

CURTAIN

Act III

An apartment in lower Manhattan, late afternoon. One room flat. Door to hallway at rear. Door to bathroom L. Table and chairs R. Other furniture. Ardent, Anyone, Eve, Blunt and the Faucets draped disconsolately about, Ardent sitting on table, feet on chair.

- ARDENT. I should have known better than to take that Bushman into the revolutionary movement.
- ANYONE. I still say the Bushman couldn't have known. He ran off before we set up the plan to change the labels on the Paleolithic tools--the cudgels, I mean--in the British Museum.
- ARDENT. So my gallant band, here we are. Deported victims of the primate British urge to defend a precious isle of ignorance against the shining sea-terrors of truth.
- FAUCET. What time is it?
- ARDENT. So little time . . . for it is the time of man, the time out of mind, the time of animal slime beyond all present memory, the time of vertebrate-hate-thy-neighbor, the time--
- EVE. It's five o'clock.
- FAUCET. Tea-time. No wonder I feel so weary.
- ARDENT. What really governs the English--and their out-heroding colonials? Is it a protoplasmic urge to ingest? Oh no. A feudal-primate

dominance order? Oh no. Big Ben. Ding-dong! Ding-dong! Ding-dong!  
Ding-dong! Ding-dong! Drink-tea! Drink-tea! Drink-tea! Drink-tea!  
Drink-tea!

FAUCET. By God, Ardent, I've had enough! It tolls for thee. To impugn mankind is one thing, but to impugn Britons . . . quite another!

BLUNT. Quite!

MARY. Hear, hear!

ARDENT. The territorial poison quite o'ercrows your spirit.

FAUCET. Ardent, I've long had my doubts--and so have Mary and Blunt, I daresay--about your tactics, but now I question the issue, the whole flimsy revolutionary line. Maybe you've just hit the point. Everyone needs to eat. But we eat at five o'clock, you at six; we tea and crumpets, you ravioli and lemon coke. How does the compulsion account for that? What does govern man, not man in the abstract, but man as he presents himself, man as peoples. Perhaps all men fight and all enjoy pointing the gun, but what governs the historic moment, the episode that is war, and who tells man the direction to point the gun?

BLUNT. In-group amity, out-group enmity, you say, as if it were all so obvious--the modern nation the counterpart of the primate horde. Well it isn't obvious. Do explain to me a nation, Ardent. Act out for me the drama of its beginnings after a million years of tribal history. For the nation is a standing miracle, an evolution, a development of human society that went on record as a denial of the tribe, a denial that the tribal tie is stronger than Americanism, that the stranger was not the fellow. Oh, I'll grant that the nation did not abolish strife, only concentrated it. But if men can live peacefully within the nation after a million years of tribal mistrust, who shall say we have reached the limits of the human conception?

MARY. Once, Ardent, the definition of man was a tribal identity. Navaho means people, Eskimos call themselves the men. But who denies today that he is a member of a planetary race? Man has discovered humanity. And our vaunted ultimate weapon, which shall it strengthen in the long run, the fibers of the nation or the fibers of the world, the idea of a chosen people, or the realization that we're all in this bloody thing together?

ARDENT. A troop of howling monkeys, you three. Poor little monke-ties, lost their crumpe-teas, and they began to cry.

FAUCET. Oh, how tired I am of your secular religion of original sin, without redemption and without morality. What if man's bad? What if he has an urge to possess? Could any human society long survive that didn't define, constrain and satisfy that compulsion on its own terms. What if, as Freud believed, man has a natural propensity to mate with anything in sight? Was ever any human society established on that basis? (Enter Kung, quietly, unnoticed.) The urges are repressed, sublimated, twisted this way and that, until in the end man lives in spite of his innermost self. He wars on the playing fields of Eton, dominates by being nicer to others than he is to himself, hunts with paint brush.

KUNG. That's right, you underestimate your player, Ardent.

ARDENT (and the others). Bushman! (Hubbub.) What are you doing here? (etc.)

KUNG. I'm teaching. Primitive religion, at N.Y.U. I just got my Ph.D. at Columbia. In anthropology, of course. Wrote a thesis on the world distribution of theophagy. But I can't say I learned much I didn't know, just a few more names for it. Apparently, you haven't learned much either, Ardent. Bad show, Ardent. The character's still too flat, too stereotyped, the essential villain. And the play, you know nothing about. Like I said, man names things, makes a reality that isn't there, builds it into a system: motherhood, God, fair price, president, twenty dollars or thirty days. And he lives in that reality. It has a name too, I find out . . . culture. I don't believe culture is an inevitable tragedy.

ARDENT. What the hell do those romantics teach in anthropology these days? All the world's a stage? The play's the thing? Well, tell me this: what makes a drama? Do the characters make the play, or the play the characters? Whoever denied that man learns, or that he reasons, or that he can suppress, for a while and in a way, an animal urge? But the frail voice of reason and the timid gesture of the learned response--they are as nothing against the deep command of instinct. And I'll tell you what happens when a basic instinct is held at bay: its energy releases itself through another urge to make its play more terrifying and more irrational. When the Bolsheviks abolished private property, they decreed for themselves a reign of naked power, unleashed a dominance drive that made the English industrial revolution look like a Sunday afternoon picnic on the Thames. The instincts lie deep. They line the human flesh. They are the chemistry of the genes. Cultural instincts, waiting their day. Like a desert river, vanished perhaps season after season, and then, then in a flick of a thunderstorm it comes ripping and raging out of the inscrutable earth. Yes, man builds his own realities. Do you know what it means to believe in the existence of things that don't exist? Self-delusion. All hail, man's unique capacity . . . self-delusion. And against it recollect the ease with which Adolf Hitler brought about in a generation of German youth his education for death. [p. 203] Was this the implanting of a learned response . . . or the release of an instinct? Defend one's own, Lebensraum, hate thy-- (Knock at door.) I'll get it. (It's Shapiro, carrying a large challah and balancing a plate of gefüllte fish.) You have the wrong apartment. We didn't order anything. Get out!

SHAPIRO (politely). Oh no, you'll excuse me, please, it's the right apartment O.K. Mr. Arbenz? You only today moved in?

ARDENT. Ardent, Ardent--get the name right. Yes, we moved in. We paid our rent. It's our apartment. So beat it!

SHAPIRO. Well, you see, we live down the hall. Shapiro, 2B. And Sarah for the weekend just happened to be making some gefüllte fish. So she says to me, Hymie, why not take some fish to our new neighbors. It's Friday night, maybe they're Catholics? Get acquainted she says, welcome them to the building. Mr. Arbenz, she says, he looks so pale, so bloodless, eat some good . . . Oh, but you'll excuse me. Please, if you're busy, why don't you just take the plate and the bread--

EVE (coming to door). Please won't you come in, Mr. Shapiro? It's really so nice of you. (Thank you, thank you, he says, and she and he manage somehow to get the food to the table.) So thoughtful--

SHAPIRO. Nothing really, absolutely, Mrs. Arbenz. You know, when Sarah and I moved in, Mrs. Cassidy, she used to live in this very apartment, she brought us some preserved pig's knuckles that first night. Such good people in this building, so considerate of the others. You know . . . anyhow, taste the gefüllte fish, it's Sarah's best special dish.

EVE (setting out food). Here you are, Faucet. Tea-time, old boy. C'mon Blunt, Mary, Anyone, Bushman. (Aside to Ardent.) Robert, don't sulk. You'll make him feel bad.

Ardent comes to table and starts to cut challah.

SHAPIRO. You'll excuse me, Mr. Arbenz, for taking the liberty. Challah is a kind of bread tastes better it should be torn apart. Here . . . by the nubbles.

BLUNT. How barbarian!

MARY (sarcastic). The knife is so much more civilized.

SHAPIRO. Sure, sure, you're right, yes. Then I'll cut it for you. Ve too had problems with the pig's knuckles. Oi! (cuts finger, sucks blood) It's nothing, nothing. Eat, eat. Like my mother used to say: eat, Hymie, eat . . . or I'll kill myself. (Sets plate of fish and bread before Faucet.)

BLUNT. Faucet, you're pale as a ghost.

FAUCET (running in screaming anguish to bathroom). Yeeah! There's blood on the challah!

ANYONE. Did it release his animal instincts?

MARY. His lunch.

SHAPIRO. Vell, you should enjoy yourselves. Sarah said for me I should come right home if they're goyem . . . I mean if they're going to be busy. Come in any time. Shapiro, 2B.

ARDENT (going to door with him). Yea, sure, sure . . . and to you the same. I mean, the same to you, you come over here. (Slams door after Shapiro but then regrets it, so opens it quickly and shuts it again lightly.)

BLUNT. I wouldn't eat that bloody challah. What's more, I'm fed up with this whole bloody revolution. It's about time, you knew, Ardent. The Faucets and I turned in that fool scheme of changing the museum labels on the Paleolithic tools. It is a science, you know. Just doesn't change like that. Not kosher, you might say.

ARDENT. I was beginning to suspect it. The betrayal, I mean. Incurable romantics. I suspected you all along, all of you. . . Betrayed, betrayed. Who among us--

BLUNT. Just a second before you produce a new drama, Ardent. Let me tell you just why I'm fed up. It's your mad theory of cultural instincts and compulsions. Vanished like a desert river and then springs up.



Shall I grow a long canine soon, or part the hair of my tail behind? But never mind that. It's just too neat, that's the principal part of it. When we're good to our neighbors, it's the in-group amity of a social species, when we're bad, a primeval urge comes out. When there's no war, the instinct's just in hiding, and when there is war, it springs loose. Let a theory violate my beliefs. Let it even violate credulity. It doesn't matter to me. Nor am I afraid to go against the average opinions of geneticists, physiologists, paleontologists, anthropologists, Rousseau, Marx, Jefferson, or Queen Elizabeth. (Faucet: Come, come.) But I must fear to entertain a hypothesis if I can't imagine a situation in which it would fail to stand up. I must be bale to conceive its failure. It's not a hypothesis if it can't be tested.

ARDENT (shouting). Of course it's not a hypothesis. You know very well what it is, Blunt. Remember well what I put to you the day you first showed me the evidence of man's ancestral depravity. Dare you tell the world, I asked. Dare you tell a world on the brink of international disaster that man is an innate killer? We have tried everything else, you said, why not try the truth for a change. It's no hypothesis, Blunt. (Screams.) It's the truth! The Revolutionary Truth!

MARY (calm). No wonder it's proved so immune to evidence. The gorilla--

ANYONE (sneers). How does that so-called evidence compare? You know very well what the world is like . . . the Bolshevik terror, racism, the Hungarian Revolution, the burning flesh of Jews, the hundred megatons . . . I know it, and you know it.

MARY. Yes, of course you know it, Anyone. Let's go, gentlemen.

(She takes Faucet by one arm, King by the other. They leave, followed by Blunt, who before he goes, says:)

BLUNT. Good-bye, Eve. You too, Anyone. Ardent, a horde of gibbons guide thee to thy rest. You can forget the fiver you owe me.

(Exit)

ARDENT. Betrayed, betrayed . . . the revolution betrayed. How ungrateful! I was doing it for them. What dogs. What worse-than-dogs. Would a dog betray? Never! (A thought strikes him) . . . never. You know, a dog couldn't. Only a man. (Amazed.) By God! By God! By God!

EVE. Oh Robert, Robert, oh hast thou slain the Jabberwock? Come to my arms, my beamish boy! Oh frabjous day. Callooh, Callay!

ARDENT (musings. He has seen the light.) Remarkable animal. . . Only he betrays . . . and only he is betrayed. (Grins sheepishly at Eve. They embrace.) Ah, Eve. In sickness and in health, in poverty or wealth, a smash or a flop, til death do us part . . . the Eve to my Adam, the Damon to my Pythias, the Horatio to my Hamlet--

EVE. The Sancho to your Quixote.

ARDENT. And Anyone. Dear friend, Anyone. I could always count on you, couldn't I? You'd always believe in me, Anyone. (Snaps out of it.) C'mon, it's six o'clock. I'm hungry. I'm taking you both to

dinner: a nice, bloody raw steak. On Blunt's fiver. Ha! And then . . . then to a show. West Side Story! (Puts on Anyone's hat and Eve's coat.)

ANYONE. Ardent, while you're in the mood, you know I would like to see the United Nations. I've never been in New York before.

ARDENT. No, no, Anyone. Broadway. You'd never understand the East Side Story without the West Side Story. Never.

EVE. Anyhow, the East Side Story'll have a longer run.

ARDENT. Only because it makes war so well. No, the play's the thing. (Takes both by the arm and shepherds them out the door, saying:) West Side Story. It's got everything. [pp. 330-33] Natural man. All the instincts right there. The whole damned animal legacy: the timeless struggle over territory, the gangs of primates, the rigid dominance order, the mutual protection of the horde, the collective hate of the others, and then. . . then . . . the unique contribution of man: the supreme dedication to the switch-blade. Absolutely great. West Side Story. Life follows Art!

CURTAIN