

Tekst 5

Monkeys behaving badly

Michael Bywater reviews *Macchiavellian Intelligence: How Rhesus Macaques and Humans Have Conquered the World* by Dario Maestriperi

- 1 Primate books are good for us. They remind us that we're primates, too. And the embarrassing primate books are best. *Macchiavellian Intelligence* is an excellently embarrassing primate book, and just the thing to make us blush and shuffle our feet.
- 2 Some primates are fine. We can be proud of our kinship with the sociable mountain gorillas. Chimpanzees are affable, on a good day; the gibbon cheers us up with his Great Morning Call; even the baboon, despite that purple bottom business, can inspire us: diligent and skilful, the baboon can be a hard worker, an expert shepherd. Bonobos – our nearest relatives, along with the chimpanzees – have much to offer, despite not being quite as impressive as was once thought. They have fashionably pleasant habits like compassion, altruism and vegetarianism.
- 3 But most of these primates are under threat or confined to small areas of the planet. If we want to see large-scale primate success, the most obvious example for us is the notorious rhesus macaque. Described by Dario Maestriperi as being the sort of thing we think of when someone says "monkey", the macaque manages to flourish just about anywhere it finds itself, or wherever we put it.
- 4 And it does so by being nasty. Rhesus macaques are despotic and nepotistic¹⁾. They are, in short, sods. The males hang around sullenly, get into fights, emigrate to other groups, get into more fights and lead lives of violence and aggression which, as Maestriperi explains, is because they want raw power. Power gets you everything. It's worth the price.
- 5 The life of male macaques seems a hell of uncertainty and violence, much like the life of a prisoner. When we wonder why, with all else stripped away, men in prison don't make the best of it by being pleasant to each other, the parallels, as Maestriperi points out, are illuminating: it's about fighting – literally – for whatever power remains to be had.
- 6 There are military parallels, too. Maestriperi writes about his experience when joining the Italian Air Force: "I had been turned into a rhesus macaque who had just transferred into a new group," but goes on to note: "Soldiers who are highly motivated to protect their own selfish interests and those of their buddies... make perfect war machines. So a despotic and nepotistic organisation makes an army a perfect war machine..." Rhesus macaque groups seem to be structured and to function according to the same rules.

- 7 Perhaps, as he suggests, both the macaques and we "have a history of violence as a species and it comes back to haunt us all the time". But if that underlies our success, then aggression and violence, despotism and nepotism aren't abnormalities, to be corrected by the calming influence of democracy, but instead are here to stay, whether in the American political system, or in a bunch of monkeys behaving badly.

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noot 1 nepotistic: vorm van machtsmisbruik door familie en vrienden voor te trekken

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- 1p 12 What becomes clear from paragraph 1?
Michael Bywater suggests *Macchiavellian Intelligence*
- A gives people better insight into themselves.
 - B has too many vulgar and sensational elements.
 - C is just as boring as other books on primates.
 - D is too sexually explicit for sensitive people.
- 1p 13 What is the main function of paragraph 2?
- A To explain that primates differ more from humans than we used to think.
 - B To give examples of primate behaviour that people like.
 - C To illustrate that primate research is very popular.
 - D To show that humans are related to both bigger and smaller primates.
- De situatie van de resus-makaak is anders dan die van de meeste in alinea 2 genoemde apen.
- 1p 14 In welk opzicht is dat zo volgens alinea 3?
Vul de volgende zin aan op je antwoordblad: *De resus-makaak...*
- “And it does so by being nasty.” (begin alinea 4)
- 1p 15 Welk woord in alinea 3 verwijst al naar dit feit?
Citeer dit woord.
- “It’s worth the price.” (einde alinea 4)
- 1p 16 Wat is de prijs die resus-makaken voor hun streven naar macht moeten betalen, volgens alinea 4?
- 1p 17 What becomes clear from paragraph 6?
- A Aggressive behaviour is functional in establishing a strong group mentality.
 - B Human communities are differently organised from macaque groups.
 - C Maestriepieri regrets the negative way in which macaques are described.
 - D The Italian Air Force copied its successful strategies from macaque tactics.
- 2p 18 Geef van elk van de volgende mensen, dieren of instellingen aan of die volgens het artikel wel of niet dezelfde kenmerken als de resus-makaken kunnen vertonen.
- 1 Dario Maestriepieri (author of *Macchiavellian Intelligence*)
 - 2 “Bonobos” (alinea 2)
 - 3 “men in prison” (alinea 5)
 - 4 “the American political system” (alinea 7)
- Noteer elk nummer, gevolgd door “wel” of “niet”.