

The Animal Within Us: Lessons about Life from Our Animal Ancestors

Jay D. Glass

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If you prefer to believe that biology dictates human destiny, you'll enjoy reading *The Animal Within Us*. But if you think humans are a bit more complex than that, you might want to pass.

With a background in psychology and neurobiology (dual doctorates) as well as the world of business and finance (he founded the largest single-person venture capital fund in the United States in 1987), Glass presents a series of lessons linking animal bio-behavioral imperatives to human need for prayer, dominance in business, sexual behavior, and social deviance, among others. For example, advertisers are simply appealing to the human need to dominate; the triumph of global capitalism can be laid at the door of territorialism and drive to protect personal possessions; prayer comes from our "God genes" and need to display submission to a "supreme being."

Glass's explanations are extremely simplistic, more often than not begging the question and locking us back into essentialist arguments about "survival of the fittest."

Glass's intent is a worthy one, but his text is further marred by inept editing. Perhaps, biology is destiny, but to engage a mind tired of jargon-laden discussions of contemporary crisis and malaise, Glass needed to go into greater depth and provide more enlightened examples to support his argument.

BRONWYN JONES (September / October 1998)

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