

“Reading Marc D. Hauser’s *Moral Minds*”

Session 13: chapter 7 (pp. 357-418)

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In session 13, we read chapter 7 (pp. 357-418). Satoshi Kudo presented the former half of this chapter (pp. 357-392), and Naohiko Noguchi presented the latter half (pp. 392-418). In this chapter, Hauser investigates general principles of cooperation and harm in the animal world. This is an evolutionary approach to human moral ability which particularly focuses on cooperative and social aspects. After looking at the animal world, Hauser tries to compare animals with humans.

Why does the natural world show us altruistic behavior which looks useless for adaptability? Hauser starts to investigate parenting action, regarding it as the origin of altruistic behavior, and finds several similarities between animals and humans.

After introducing some studies on reciprocity in several animals, Hauser states that we can see reciprocity in animals only under an artificial condition with low frequency and instability. As a conclusion, if the animal world has reciprocity, it differs from the human world in that it lacks generality and abstractiveness.

In the last section of chapter 7, Hauser investigates human distinctive character. It seems that some part of our moral ability is shared by other animals, but another part is human distinctive character. Humans inherit a suite of abilities genetically evolved from primate ancestor. However, it might be said that our uniquely developed ability has a significant role in maintaining large-scale collaborative relationships. The moral dilemma that we face today greatly differs from that of ancient human beings in savanna, as we can see in some cases. Hauser concludes as follows:

“The conclusion is straightforward: The systems that generate intuitive moral judgments are often in conflict with the systems that generate principled reasons for our actions, because the landscape of today only dimly resembles our original state” (p. 418).

The Rawlsian creature will shoot its intuitions, and the Kantian creature will punch back principled arguments against intuitions. They are reflective equilibrium. The Humean creature will be in the middle of the Rawlsian and the Kantian creatures, and attempt to back and forth between these two moral poles (Rawlsian and Kantian).

As a whole, Hauser’s discussions leave many unclear points. However, he suggests some interesting point for our understanding about morals, particularly an

analogy between Chomsky's linguistics and the Rawlsian creature. In this seminar, I am interested in disciplinary boundaries. This is because most of us are philosophers, but Hauser is not a philosopher (He is an evolutionary psychologist). Although it is not easy for us to comprehend his discussion, in my opinion, a desire to know different types of approach is an important thing for our co-existence.