

Spirit of Avidyapolis

O. Guy Morley

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If you didn't know, Avidyapolis is one of the largest cities in the world. And, I am the spirit of the city. Did you get it? I am the **spirit**, yes, the *creator* of that city! People here don't really know me "in person." Only a small number of smart folks faintly suspect my existence. But of course, I exist. You need a proof? Sure, no problem. I think and also act; therefore, I am. You are used to that kind of proof, aren't you?

If you don't like my proof, try this. You are collection of cells. None of your cells "think" that you exist. But of course, you *know* that you exist. Did you also know that "you" are made of both your own cells and equally numerous microorganisms? "You" are not as simple as you think. Now, you are one of my "cells." It is no wonder if you can't easily discern my existence.

Like anybody else, I have my own goals. They are just two: To stay alive and to get big. If you didn't know, I'm one of the most successful among my colleagues. Some of them are barely surviving and unfortunately, many of them had died. I don't want to become another dead city like Persepolis or Heliopolis. I don't want to stay small like Gallipolis or Metropolis. Are these in Ohio? I can't even remember. I bet you understand my feeling.

For a long time, my ancestors had trouble increasing the size of primate colonies. Then, some of them had a brilliant idea. They picked humans and created a special condition so that humans could learn language. It took a while, maybe tens of thousands of years. But it surely paid off. Nowadays, humans are one of our favorite creatures on land, along with termites.

Building a colony is a challenging task. Its growth depends on a lot of complex factors.

Since I'm a pragmatist, I use whatever tools and methods that might work. Unlike some of my colleagues in the past, I don't overly depend on authoritarian figures. People don't like to be bossed around by someone else. You like freedom, right? Your wish is granted, as long as you stick to my game. Our favorite mode of operation today is capitalism. It's easy to set up. People simply chase money directly or indirectly. Adios to authoritarian figures. Well, there always are some exceptions, though. You will see.

Now, people just try to make more and more money. They try to get a high-paying job, get into a prestigious college, etc. Their ideals. Or, you might just hook up with a high-paying spouse. That's all right too. Of course, people start this process early: maybe from kindergarten, maybe prenatal. So, it's always a good idea to choose the right parents. Anyway, the best part is this. People *really* believe that they are working based on their own free will. Just pursuing their dreams. Isn't this fabulous? As they work hard, the growth of my colony comes naturally as a *desirable* side effect.

Well, I said I'm pretty good at doing my business. But there are some others who are as good as I am. So, there are natural competitions. Watch out for London, New York, Tokyo, Beijing, and some more. Do you remember that I said I want to stay alive and get big? Well, frankly, that's lame. I want to stay alive l-o-n-g-e-r and get **bigger** than my colleagues. So, I need to play games wisely. At the same time, I cannot grow all by myself. I need to deal with my colleagues all the time. So, it's the balance between competition and cooperation.

Of course, you, people, too do that all the time: competition and cooperation. You like winning and you also like helping, at least sometimes. Telling the truth, I'm not really concerned with your state or mind. I just want all of you to work for me. Still, occasionally, I need to intervene.

Unfortunately, not everyone is up to my expectation. Many folks have a certain inferiority complex. For example, imagine math phobia. With such a complex, they may have difficulty achieving their goals. In that case, I play some tricks. I know that everyone has some pride. I elevate their pride a little bit higher. Then, do you know what would happen? They blame someone or something else for their complex. If they cannot come up with a good one, I will help. How about ... "my teacher was terrible." Now, these folks need to raise their children. Of course, to win the competition, their children must be math whizzes. Why not? So, I push these parents a little further. The parents push their children more. Voilà! They are on track now. Of course, human lives are complex. So, things may not go so well all the time. But I will worry about that later.

Well, not everyone has complex. Some folks are excessively proud of themselves. Normally, they are well off. So, these people tend to be good at contributing to my growth. But once in a while, even these folks can slack off. In that case, I again play some tricks. How about pairing them with disadvantaged people? Then, these proud folks will immediately feel sympathy for the poor folks. The proud folks will help the disadvantaged. Charity! I know that this always happens. The proud folks need to boost their pride by helping the

disadvantaged. These proud folks have plenty of sympathy. On the other hand, most of them don't have much empathy. Many of them are incapable of feeling the pain and suffering of the disadvantaged and actually rather indifferent. But that's none of my business. As long as they work for me, that's fine.

So far, so good. And I don't really want you, people, to be too creative. Obviously, there is a perfect place to enforce this. You know, schools. When I was focusing on factories and wars, I didn't pay much attention to school. Some older folks may remember those days. They had more freedom in schools. But now, I realized that I need to manage schools more tightly. Why? Children can be excessively creative! That can be disruptive. So, I need to put some limit. Like I said, I no longer heavily depend on authoritarian figures. Instead, I use a more subtle set of control: local Department of Education, Board of Education, education companies, and what not. Once these are set, parents will be on board automatically. The strategy is simple. Create a bunch of policies and regulations, and add some standardized tests. I do this as if these are for the children to pursue their dreams. Good life and good college. A lot of money in the end. Eliminate hazards, such as recess; children can get distracted. And of course, there are children who are distracted regardless. Bring in the recent advancement in Psychology. Label properly and medicalize those children. They will be on track. Negative side effects? I don't have room to worry about that yet.

Occasionally, the so-called "progressive" education proponents try to destroy my setup. They call for more freedom for children. You know what? They are not so successful. My mainstream folks are pretty good at ignoring and resisting them. This is basically the same for all sorts of progressive or liberal movements.

Recently, there was an unexpected turn. Some people attacked capitalism. Holy cow! What are they thinking? Do they really want, eh, socialism? I didn't like that at all. I thought about many different ways to tackle this. But I chose a method that I never thought I would use. I picked an authoritarian mayor candidate. I "suggested" to a group of conservative people that this mayor would save their faces (if not their lives). Of course, this worked. Those poor conservatives had been ridiculed by highly-educated progressives. The poor folks hailed the authoritarian figure and made him the mayor. He will attack the progressives. So, I came to realize that the old trick still worked ... once in a while. In the end, I will definitely dump this inept mayor. But for now, everything is working for me just fine.

Do you know my biggest concern now? As I said, some smart folks "sense" my existence. Some of them reason but most of them have just intuition. It's extraordinarily difficult to sense my existence analytically. There is no valid proof. Well, recall the trick I used earlier. The only practical way might employ some advanced mathematics. But I won't get into that to confuse you. On the other hand, it won't be too difficult to get a glimpse of my existence through your intuition. Recall the you-and-cell analogy I mentioned. Once you get it, you should be able to explain a lot of things more easily referring to my existence.

Well, well, these smart folks tend to resist me. They don't want to be controlled *implicitly* by my setup. They are afraid of me. Sometimes, they use the movie *Matrix* to warn other people. What can I say? That's a pretty good one. They might even discuss the dangerous rate of my growth. But of course, there is a limit. I will be able to grow only so much. I also respect the balance with my colleagues. Anyway, I shouldn't be too afraid of them. This population is extremely small. And the majority of people are still comfortably under my influence. There is no legal offense such as LUI, right? That's Living Under Influence. I like that.

One related note. This time, let me demonstrate how smart I am. I can "sense" the existence of this *super*-spirit who is overseeing and managing all of us, the spirits. Impressed? But I'm only as smart as this much. Frankly, I have no idea what this super-spirit is thinking about and doing to us. I'd rather stick to my own business.

So, you are most likely busy just chasing money. It's rather amusing for me to see people work for me without a slightest idea of what they are actually doing. As far as I'm concerned, that's fine. Very fine. I don't give you explicit orders. Compare this with a dictator. My approach is so much more tasteful. My suggestions are exquisitely subtle, completely transparent, and, I have to say, incredibly clever.

So, greedy folks. You think that you are simply trying to maximize your net worth. You may be. I simply take advantage of your ambition and make myself bigger. Thank you for contributing to my success. Please keep up with the good work.