Why Nonviolence is Human¹
David Dwyer, November 21, 2006

Abstract
Our ability to interact symbolically has resulted in the uniquely human capacity to comprehend the other as equal. This in turn has led to another fundamentally human development, that of cooperative social contracts and institutions. Contracts and institutions offer humans an alternative to the animalistic use and the threat of the use of violence and have transformed human interaction into one which is primarily nonviolent and operates on concepts of fairness and justice. The emergence of social institutions has also led to new forms of structural violence with which humans have to contend. But with the concepts of fairness and justice, which also arise from contracts and normal institutions, humans have the ability to resist institutionally based violence and to construct an entirely nonviolent world in which to live.

The question of human nature
Are humans inherently violent or are they gentle? Or alternatively are they evil or good, selfish or generous, and so on? In this essay, I argue that the question should not be posed in either/or terms, but rather as a dialectical opposition of two types of selves, one an animalistic, selfish self and the other a human, social, and nonviolent self which has evolved in humans, but not in other species. Thus in humans we find a unique opposition or dialectic between an animalistic self and a nonviolent human self. I do not mean to denigrate the nature of the animalistic self, but I do wish to extol the potential of the newly evolved and uniquely human self.

Much of the thinking on this paper arose from my work on examining the evolution of language in the context of its coevolution with culture, the human body and self. In the context of this project, I have begun to understand how

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humans evolved to rely on nonviolence as the primary mechanism of human interaction.

**The awareness of others**

The logic of the paper draws on the evolution of the awareness of others. This progression derives from a proposal by Dennett (1987) termed “orders of intentionality,” but which I prefer to call stages in the awareness of others. Accordingly, I have renamed, but not really recharacterized, Dennett’s stages as: the “other-as-thing” stage, the “other-as-being” stage, and the “other-as-equal” stage.

**The other-as-thing stage**

At this stage Dennett says that the individual has a mind that possesses knowledge and can reason about causal effects. However, at this stage, the individual has no conception that the other has a mind, and consequently views the behavior of the other as no different from other things in the environment.

To be sure, at this stage one can see that there are cause-and-effect relationships with the other such as “if I say snake then it runs up a tree.” But this is no different from one’s understanding of other things in the environment like “if I throw a rock in the water, it will make a splash. I call this the “other-as-thing” stage because the other is viewed no differently from other things.

There has been a good deal of research on the linguistic ability of apes (especially chimpanzees and bonobos) and monkeys and their linguistic abilities as well as some work on the awareness question. Chaney and Seyfarth (1990), who have conducted their own research and reviewed most of this research, report that almost all the behavior of monkeys and apes can be seen to reflect the other-as-thing stage of awareness even though they “do occasionally act as if they recognize that other individuals have beliefs.” Nevertheless, “even the most compelling examples can usually be explained in terms of learned behavioral contingencies without recourse to higher-order intentionality” (253).
The other-as-being stage

At this stage one recognizes the other-as-an animate being with a mind that is distinct from other things and the individual begins to realize that the other can act on what he knows rather than simply react to stimuli. This represents a huge intellectual leap for now the individual can understand the actions of others as a consequence of their knowledge or lack of it. This development allows one to make a far better assessment of the other’s intentions than at the “other-as-thing” stage and increases the individual’s interest in what the other knows thus making one’s interactions with the other more predictable.

The awareness that the other has a mind creates the potential for new ways of interacting. Two of the most important of these are mutually beneficial arrangements and deceit. The logic of a mutual beneficial arrangement is a reciprocal linkage of two understandings.

He knows that if he scratches my back, I will scratch his back.
I also know this.

Mutually beneficial arrangements evolve because both parties understand that they gain more from participating than they would by not participating. But these arrangements can not be characterized as true contracts because such arrangements lack a mutual agreement been the two parties. The most we can say is that, like symbiosis, each of the parties understand that the relationship is personally rewarding. True cooperation will be found at the next level.

This “other-as-being” stage also leads to the awareness that, if the other knows, or doesn’t know, something, it will act in certain ways. And if I tell, or don’t tell, the other something I can control the behavior of the other.

If I tell him that snakes are near, then he will climb a tree.
If she doesn’t know that I have some food, then she will not follow me.

These types of deception cannot be characterized as true deceit for they lack the bad faith intentions found at the next stage of the awareness of other.
A theory of mind also needs to recognize the differing degrees of knowledge that one can attribute to the other. For example, I can believe that you have the same knowledge base that I do. Or I can understand that you possess knowledge that is either more or less complete than my own but otherwise compatible with it. Finally, I can recognize that your knowledge is incompatible with that of my own. Each of these levels of understanding of the mind mark huge conceptual differences and represent fundamentally different potentials. The first level is indistinguishable from the other-as-thing stage. The second level allows for the understanding of the other’s actions as a result of what the other knows as well as a limited version of cooperation and deceit. The last level does not appear until the next stage.

Language plays a crucial factor in the evolution of the awareness of the other because it can greatly assist in understanding that the other not only has knowledge, but in understanding what kind of knowledge the other has. The term language includes a range of systems of symbolic interaction. Following Dwyer (1986) I distinguish between “paratactic” (two word, compound-like) sentences and true “syntactic” sentences, that which humans use today. I suggest that paratactic sentences, which can also be produced with training by chimpanzees, would enable the other-as-being stage, but it would take true syntax to enable the other-as-equal stage. The proliferation of cultural diversity at around 35,000 years ago suggests that true syntax did not develop until that time and may enable the other-as-equal stage.

The other-as-equal stage

At this stage one becomes aware that the other also believes that the one also has a mind and is analyzing one’s behavior in the same way that one is analyzing the other. This development leads to the discovery that the other has a mind that is fully equal to one’s own and that together we are distinct from other animals. The consequences of this
development are profound, including the development of the complex self, social contracts and institutions.

This stage leads to a reflexive dimension because it invites one to take the perspective and to look back at one's self. Because I know that you are analyzing my behavior on the basis of what you think I know, I will also look at my behavior to understand what you know about me. To get a better understanding of how you are looking at me, I may adopt your position and try to examine myself, reflexively, from that perspective and I may even adjust my actions for the express purpose of influencing your interpretations of me, even though those actions don't truly reflect what I wish to do or feel and put on a public face. Goffman (1963) called this activity “facework” and we find that as humans, it consumes a good deal of our time.

As a result of this process, we develop two dimensions of ourselves; one that we intend for public consumption and one that we prefer to keep private. Embarrassment arises when others discover discrepancies between our public and private selves. We also see a development in a curiosity about others and the capacity to see things from their perspective and even compassion for them.

**Social Contracts**

In contrast to the incipient form of cooperation that is possible at the “other-as-being” stage the “other-as-equal” stage enables true cooperation through social contracts where participants develop a mutual understanding of the obligations involved for each party and the expectation that the benefits will outweigh the obligations. Hobbs (1651), Locke (1690) and Rousseau (1672) referred to this willful entry into the cooperative agreement as “the social contract.” However, for these philosophers, the agreement was seen as between the individual and the state in which the individual voluntarily cedes some of his rights to the state in favor of the benefits that a state can provide. However, for the purpose of understanding cooperative arrangements more
broadly, the proposal by Proudhon (1851) that the social contract is between individuals, rather than between the individual and the state, is more useful.

At the heart of the social contract is the understanding that by agreeing to work together two parties can accomplish more than either can by acting individually. Most contracts take the form of if you do this, I will do that. This means that duties and responsibilities of each of the parties are different, but this does not mean that they are unfair because each participant stands to gain more by participating than by not participating. When individuals enter into the social contract they understand that in order to gain the benefits they have certain duties to perform. Because they enter voluntarily, individuals need to understand that the contract is fair, that the benefits that all participants receive are proportional to their efforts.

However, the fairness of a contract needs to be negotiated along with questions of cost and benefits. Furthermore, these negotiations will also involve what the philosopher J. L. Austin (1962) called “perlocutions,” speech acts of persuasion and justification (or legitimation), as the participants negotiate the details of their cooperative adventure. This understanding necessarily involves the weighing of costs such as the extent of obligations involved and loss of freedom against the benefits. And while language may enable negotiation to take place, it does not guarantee that it will be successful, either because the participants do not agree on the issues of fair distribution of benefits or because of mutual misunderstanding.

Symbolic interaction (language) is the primary mechanism through which the mutual understanding of obligations and benefits of contracts are developed. Language not only enables this intersubjective or shared understanding, but also facilitates negotiation of the details of the contract. Negotiation is useful because participation in a contract is
voluntary; participants participate only if they believe that it is to their benefit to do so.

The success of the contract depends on each participant understanding the fairness of the contract and the reliability or trustworthiness of the participants. Those with a history of untrustworthiness will find it difficult to enter into new agreements. Thus we find that each participant is not only monitoring the other in this regard, but is also aware of being monitored by the other. This reflexive awareness imbues the individual with a sense of responsibility to the contract, because if one wants the benefits of this contract, then one needs to fulfill one’s obligations to the other for the success of the contract. And reflectively seeing this, one can infer that the other will do so too. This mutual understanding is the basis for what we call good faith. Operating in good faith also contributes to an individual’s good face.

There are other characterizations of the concept of good faith. John Searle (1979), when describing the expectations that people have in conversations with each other, uses the term “the cooperative principle.” For example, we expect the other to be truthful, to be relevant and to be accurate. Without the cooperative principle in place, there would be no point in interacting symbolically with others for there would be no reason to believe that what was said was truthful, relevant or accurate. The most important point about the cooperative principle is that this (truthfulness, relevance and accuracy) is the normal way that humans interact because much of their daily lives are filled with cooperative agreements and the sharing of information. It is also important to realize that the cooperative principle is a human universal, but it is not a genetically based universal, as is assumed for most linguistic universals, but rather is based on the pragmatic logic that we can only to communicate meaningfully with our peers and enter into cooperative agreements with them if we act in good faith which is the basis of the cooperative principle.
To be sure, following this innovation, there were no doubt developments that favored the selection of those individuals carrying a genetic disposition to be cooperative and interested in others. In addition, it should not be surprising that pets, especially dogs, who have been cohabitating with humans for some 100,000 years or so (Vila et al 1997), have also been subject to a similar selectional process that they have developed an interest in the other, in this case humans.

Searle also adds the crucial point that before people can act in bad faith, which is the foundation for deceit, there has to be a foundation of good faith. A lie will be meaningless unless the cooperative principle is assumed because the lie is spoken with the intention that be taken as a good faith statement. I mentioned above that prior to the “other-as-equal” stage, a lie is not really a lie because no cooperative principle has yet been established and consequently no presumption that one needs to be truthful, relevant and accurate and without this principle, a lie has no cost.

**Pristine Institutions**

Pristine institutions evolve from contracts through the replacement of individual agents with generic roles. This process involves the coalescence of a set of analogous contracts. For example, suppose several families living in the same area have developed similar practices to deal with household management, such as childcare, food gathering and shelter. Because of their proximity families are likely to share their experiences and in the process evolve contracts that are so similar, in terms of agents, goals and practices, that the creation of generic roles for the analogous agents is but a small step.

Like contracts, institutions vary in size and could be as small and as simple as a greeting, or larger as a family, or even larger still an educational system. Institutions are often interrelated such as the teaching profession, the classroom, the school and the university.
Pierre Bourdieu (1982) used the metaphor of a game to illustrate the properties of the institution. In this metaphor, each institution has a field of play and defines and delimits the roles of different players with different defined roles, such as goalie and striker. Each institution defines a goal which the players are to achieve and the rules by which it is played. Playing the game requires knowledge, such as of one’s family tree, chemistry, or edible fruits, and skills such as how to greet someone, run a classroom, host a dinner party or elect a president. In particular, because institutions are so closely connected with language, each institution is usually associated with distinct ways of talking known as discourse.

But it is the institution, not the contract, which lies at the heart of the cultural system. Despite many similarities between the institution and the contract there are crucial differences.

Most importantly, humans encounter and participate in the world through the lens and framework of the institutions to which they belong. They negotiate their world using what Bourdieu terms “capital,” such as knowledge, money, position, most of which is institutionally based. The activities of these individual agents also restore and maintain the vitality of the institution.

While contractual arrangements are fair (because they are voluntary), they are usually asymmetrical (because they involve a division of labor. And because pristine institutions evolved from social contracts, they also are fair and often asymmetrical. And with the exception of the family, where the role of the child is not voluntary, the roles of all pristine institutions are voluntary.

When individuals participate in contracts they agree to specific obligations and restrictions, and understand from the negotiating process that in order to receive the benefits of the contract, they will give up some of their freedom and submit to self control. But participation in institutions has to be accepted as given, for unlike a contract, no negotiation is
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possible. Thus, when individuals enter into the world of institutions, they enter a world of imposed control, for institutions not only provide ways of doing things which would be difficult to accomplish otherwise, they also proscribe the way in which it should be (or not be) done.

With our transformation of encountering the world not directly but through the filter of the institutions we have developed, we discover that we have added a new dimension to our reflective self. In the process of developing a face, we have learned to look at ourselves as others do. With the development of institutions we now evaluate our actions from the perspective of our institutional expectations. This second dimension of the self, which Mead (1934), drawing on the work of William James, calls the “I” and the “me.” For Mead, the “me” is the social self which examines and controls the behavior of the self by adjusting one’s behavior to meet the expectations of the other. For example, if I share my food with you (even though I am hungry), you will think I am a well mannered person.

And determining whether this outcome is desirable, or not, will guide the actions of what Mead calls the “I” part of the self. This is the part of the self that acts and takes care of the needs and desires of the self. Without the self-preservation dimension of the “I,” the self-interest of the self would be lost. It is also in the “I” that the natural, animalistic self is lodged including such things as emotions like hunger, thirst, anger, affection, desire are lodged.

We need to be careful not to see the “I” as purely animalistic for in the process of humanizing, that we have been describing, these emotions may have modified and entered our habitus and perhaps subsequently changed our nature through natural selection. Needless to say, there is variation between the balance of the “I” and “me” in individuals. And it seems reasonable to assume that some of this variation is genetically based and that natural selection
may have favored individuals with the capacity to develop a curiosity about the other.

Legitimation

As mentioned above, pristine institutions arise from the formalization of social contracts and as such begin on an egalitarian basis and involve roles that are perceived as fair even if they are asymmetrical and do not bestow the same privileges to each role. However, with the establishment of the institution comes the loss of the history and authorship of the contract from which it evolved and consequently the institution has no rational or justification for being and appears as an imposition to which the individual must submit. This means that participants, if they are to participate voluntarily, need an explanation as to why this institution and its procedures are to be preferred to alternative ways of accomplishing the same thing.

Legitimation is the name given to explanations that justify specific institutions using a variety of strategies, beginning with explaining the practical value of the institution. Pristine institutions, because they derive from contracts, are justified on their fairness and effectiveness. In fact, all institutions use this type of legitimation. Other legitimations, known as secondary legitimations, show how each given institution fits into the constellation of institutions that makes up the individual’s community (it is what we do). Legitimations can also defend the practices of an institution against those of competing institutions by extolling its virtues or denigrating competing institutions. Other legitimations resort to higher authorities such as the divine or science to justify the legitimacy of an institution, e.g., “we are God’s people” and “violence is genetic.”

An individual’s first legitimations come from the period of primary socialization during which the child learns to interact nonviolently with others and learns to operate within institutional structures. It is also during this period that the child learns about the authority of the significant others and
their ability to legitimize the institutions in which they operate.

The emergence of a nonviolent world

In his quasi-evolutionarily analysis, G.H. Mead spoke of other species as “infrahuman.” I prefer the term “nonhuman”, because it suggests difference rather than inferiority but agrees with Mead that nonhuman's lack of language (symbolic interaction) and the intersubjective capacities that language enables. In addition to Mead’s argument, I argue that this symbolic interaction developed sense of the awareness of others as equal and led to the capacity for two important mechanisms of nonviolent interaction, contract making and institution building.

For nonhumans we find that much of their social interaction involves the use of the threat of force, displays of dominance and subordination and the maintenance of dominance hierarchies. Importantly, the controlling factor is not the use of force, but the threat of the use of force. To be sure, the way the use of the threat of violence is manifested differently in different species is a result of different natural selectional histories of individual species.

We also find a limited kind of genetically-based cooperation which is better characterized as symbiotic, in that while both individual (organism) interact in mutually beneficial ways. This behavior is not contractual, for neither has a clear understanding of why they are behaving this way, neither has negotiated the behavior, and neither participates voluntarily. Cheney and Seyfarth (1990) report that there is little evidence of successful contractual behavior in apes.

In contrast, with the development of the self, which enabled cooperative arrangements and subsequently institutions, humans developed a fundamentally new way of social interaction. Superimposed on the (instinctive) violence-based mode is a new mode of interaction which is based on the concepts of a nonviolent cooperation, equality, fairness, and negotiation. When it first emerged in human
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evolution, this mode was no doubt merely an occasional alternative to the violent mode, but through time, it became the exclusive mode of human interaction. Thus humans experience the world not directly as other species do, but indirectly through the filter of the institutional worlds which define their existence.

This does not mean, however, that humans have developed a totally nonviolent mode of existence for with the development of the institutional world come new forms of violence that are institutionally based. However, at the same time, we need to recognize, as humans we have developed a unique mechanism that allows us to deal with social interactions in a different way.

**Violence arising from an institutional framework**

Violence is a term that refers to harm and suffering done to an individual. Prototypically we see violence as physical and direct, one person hurting another. But for some, the concept also includes indirect violence (situations in which someone gets hurt, but without an easily identifiable perpetrator of the harm) and for others nonphysical violence (where suffering, but not physical injury, has occurred).

Within the institutional framework violence takes on a different character. To be sure, there is still the typical animal aggression that can occur from frustration because one perceives that the other is not acting in good faith. But in addition we find new types of violence arising from the existence of institutional structures. In particular we recognize five types of violence associated with the institution, abuse of office, institutional corruption, ideology, institution-maintaining violence, and otherizing.

**Abuse of office**

In some institutions, we find that one role has dominance and power over the other. This is true, even of institutions that are fair, such a teacher-student relationship in which the teacher has the power to assign tasks for the student and evaluate the student’s performance. This exercise of power is
understood as legitimate as long as the teacher restricts him/herself to requests that fall within the domain prescribed by the role of teacher. However, if the incumbent asks the student to do something outside that domain, like mowing the lawn or making coffee, then the privilege of power accorded the teacher has been abused. Because this abuse results in pain or suffering, it is a form of violence.

**Institutional Violence**

Institutional violence, also called “structural violence” (Paul Farmer 2005 and elsewhere) refers to the inequalities that are imposed by institutional structures. While some inequalities may be trivial, others may prevent access to important resources to clean water, healthy food, health care and discourse. The result of this corruption is that one group unjustly suffers poor health, lack of employment, and even death. In extreme forms of institutional violence, like slavery, one role may even permit the bestowing of physical violence on others.

The term “corrupt” is used here, not only as a value judgment, but as an analytical category with special properties. The most obvious aspect of corrupt institutions is their lack of equity because of a skewing of the distribution of power, property and rights with the result that there is a privileged role which operates at the expense of an oppressed role as illustrated in the role pairs of master/slave, king/vassal, and farmer/surf. Corrupt institutions tend to be involuntary, at least for the oppressed role. Along with this inequity come additional legitimations, termed “ideological” not found in normal institutions that justify the institutions, not on the basis of their fairness and utility, but on the basis that this was meant to be, whether as the will of god or a fact of nature as revealed by scientific inquiry. Furthermore, corrupt institutions are a major source of violence in the human world.

Corrupt institutions can be manufactured or can arise from change in a normal institution. Change is possible
because institutions are renewed by the process of use. When individual agents participate in institutional roles, their very actions renew the structure of the institutions and conversely, if no one participates in a given institution, it will cease to exist. Now, because individual agents are creative and innovative, they may redefine their role to more closely meet their needs. For example, although previously, teacher-student interactions were restricted to the classroom or teacher’s office, as a teacher, I choose to expand the field of interaction by inviting students to my home. If this practice catches on with some of my other colleagues, home visits may become part of the teacher-student institution.

Institutional corruption arises, when the change involved has the effect of privileging one of the roles. Take, for example, the employee/worker institution. In a normal institution, the worker exchanges his/her labor for money on a voluntary basis. There are institutional expectations of both the employer and worker, but at this stage, both roles stand to benefit from the arrangement. There may come a time when the employer, knowing that jobs are scarce, will impose additional tasks on the worker. The worker may recognize this oppression and may choose to quit. But given that jobs are scarce and he/she needs money to buy food, the worker may decide, despite the oppression, to submit to the oppression. In time, this oppression may become institutionalized. Institutional violence is based on the privileging one role at the expense of another, providing some access to resources such as clean water, health care, education, a safe habitat while denying the same resources to the others.

Submission to oppressive institutions

If humans have a sense of fairness and justice that arises from the making of contracts and participating in normal institutions, we need to explain why people would agree to participate in a corrupt institution. First, since the individual is interested in maintaining a positive face or honor, and
because the refusal to join an institution may result in a loss of honor, the individual may feel obliged, due to this peer pressure, to enter into institutions even though he would prefer not to. Thus, despite the oppression of the institution, the cost of not participating is greater than participating. Second, even though the institution has become corrupt, it may still produce legitimations that justify it as fair and just. (We are a democracy.) Third, although the individual may feel that the imposed role is unjust, the individual is persuaded by legitimations that claim that this inequity was meant to be.

I characterize such privileging legitimations as ideological, following the Marxist use of the term, though I differ from Marx in thinking that the ruling class is not the only privileged group so that legitimations justifying the privileging of men over women, whites over blacks and the like are also ideological. The point here is that while institutions may lose their egalitarian basis, they may still hold together because of the strength of the ideological legitimations. Ideology in this sense can be seen as a symptom of corrupt, illegitimate institutions.

One may ask why these ideological legitimations are so convincing. A partial answer is that they rely on some powerful authority such as significant others, the supernatural or science. If god says that it is our responsibility to rule or be ruled, we find it difficult to challenge, lest we offend god. If science says we are inferior, or that this was meant to be, how can we defy our genetic make up? If social scientists tell us that the poor will always be with us or that violence is natural, we are likely to accept this even though we may not like it.

Institution-maintaining violence
And if the legitimation of such institutions fails, those holding the privileged roles may resort to the use of violence to maintain their privilege, as in the case of the police state or maintaining the institution of slavery. And when institutions become based on ideology rather than equality, the use of violence
becomes natural and acceptable. But this approach is costly for a number of reasons and eventually breaks down. In addition, it is possible for the privileged to hold so much power, that they no longer see the value in participating in institutions of equality at all and at this point the principle of good faith is no longer needed.

**Resistance to corruption**

Because people primarily participate in normal institutions which are based on fairness and justice, they have a sense of what is fair and just and can recognize institutional inequalities and injustices when they arise. Even so they may continue to participate in these institutions for reasons cited above, but they do so with skepticism because they are aware that the institution is not living up to its legitimations. This awareness can lead to alienation but it can also lead to resistance and to change. If they point out the discrepancies between the ideal laid out by the legitimation and institutional practice, they may embarrass the institution into reform. This publicity may also lead to a greater awareness of the corruption and even greater support for reform. This awareness of the failing legitimation may lead the empowered to violence or to the illusion that physical violence can be justified to maintain the institution.

**Otherizing Violence**

Otherizing is a byproduct of institutions. Otherizing arises when an institution encounters another institution carrying out a similar function. Examples include different nationalities, religions, political systems, sexual practices, universities, academic departments and disciplines, peace groups and the like. The existence of a competing institution challenges the legitimacy of one's own institution. Here are people who are getting along just fine, but who are not doing things our way. Is our way not “the” way? What’s going on? Otherizing is a form of legitimation that justifies an institution by demonizing its competitors. They do it differently, but they are wrong, bad, evil, and possibly not
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even human. While it is possible to be tolerant (they do it differently, but it is just not our way), there is a tendency for us to see the other as a real danger to our institutions, to which we are loyal and to ourselves. Thus otherizing may lead to violence against the other, be it physical in the form of beatings, incarceration or war or structural in the form of denial of rights accorded other citizens.

At the same time, there is another process, which I feel is the stronger of the two, what I call inclusion, a process in with others and otherized groups are reclassified as members of one’s own group. My own experience has seen the inclusion in my community of Catholics, African Americans, women, Jews, Muslims, homosexuals, and the diminution of national loyalty as a fence against others. As a peace corps volunteer in Cameroon, I noticed that many of my fellow volunteers initially referred to Cameroonian as “they,” but later switched to “we” when talking about community members.

**The incomplete self**

A final type of violence arises because of a failure of the individual to develop a sense of the other as fully equal. In the case of monkeys and apes, Cheney and Seyfarth (1990 253) note that

[They] do occasionally act as if they recognize that other individuals have beliefs, but even the most compelling examples can usually be explained in terms of learned behavioral contingencies without recourse to higher-order intentionality.

What little evidence there is suggest that apes, in particular, may have a theory of mind, but not one that allows them to differentiate clearly or easily among different theories or different minds.

Is it not possible that some humans never get beyond the other-as-being stage? As Cheney and Seyfarth point out, it is possible to disguise a lack of an other-as-equal stage. If so, then it may be the expectations institutions actually impose behavior that forces some individuals to act as if they are operating in the equal stage when they really haven’t developed to this level. Surely this happens in the case of
psychopaths, but the question arises, is it not possible that this phenomenon is even more widely spread in our society? Are there not people who act as if they value the other as equal, but do so only because it is expected of them? If this is the case, these individuals may have a mind that recognizes the other as being but not as equal. If so, then the normal process of entering into contracts and institutions is always done from a me-first perspective, and this may be one of the motivating forces behind institutional corruption. This possibility may help explain the some individuals do not have the ability to put themselves in the place of others and why they fail to support egalitarian institutions.

**The basis of human nonviolence and violence**

This evolution of the awareness of the other has opened the door to a new understanding of human nature. Previous debates over whether humans are inherently (instinctively) violent, evil or the like versus whether they are inherently nonviolent, good, etc. presume that these are the only possibilities. This investigation proposes a third, which recognizes that humans are both. More specifically I conclude that a nonviolent mode of interaction is superimposed on a generalized nonhuman dependency on violence as a means of regulating social behavior. Consequently, when dealing with others, humans, unlike any other species on the planet, have a choice of interacting either violently or nonviolently. Furthermore, when we view the myriad of daily interactions of humans we find that almost all are conducted nonviolently using the cooperative institutions and agreements that they and their predecessors have developed over generations.

But humans do not always live nonviolently, and in fact the development of the institutional world in which they now live contains new forms of violence which I have labeled: abuse of power, institutional corruption, ideology, institution-maintaining violence, and otherizing. These forms of violence differ from the type of animal violence described
above because they all derive from some institutional abnormality.

This violence, however, is not inevitable; it is not as some ideologies would have it a biological fact of human nature. Rather, this violence is associated with the institutions that humans constructed and furthermore is the result of self-centered human activity. And just as corrupt institutions can develop from healthy ones, so can corrupt institutions be reformed. This is because the normal institution, which is based on fairness and equity, is the predominant institutional form in all human societies and as a consequence the principles of fairness and equity is a concept with which all humans are endowed when they enter institutional life so much so that the qualities of fairness and justice, and compassion are seen as the definitive qualities of our humanity.

History is filled with examples of the overthrow and reformation of corrupt institutions large and small and history tends to record those associated with violent resistance, even though it often fails to record the failures of this violent approach. Zunes, Kurtz and Asher (1999) have addressed this lacuna by documenting the numerous successful, nonviolent repair in all parts of the globe, from the overthrow of colonial power in India and Zambia, Apartheid in South Africa, dictatorships in Bolivia in 1982 and Haiti in 1985, and male sovereignty in the United States. With the exception of violence, nonviolent resistance requires the same qualities usually associated with military engagements, but results in positive change more likely to be permanent and with considerably less suffering.

Most importantly, however, this debate is not simply an academic one. If one takes the stance that humans are by nature violent, one can argue that violence in humans is inevitable and that as humans we need to accept violence as a normal part of our existence. In fact this view that humans because they live primarily non violent lives in normal
institutions are not only primarily non violent, but because they have the institutionally derived concepts of fairness, justice (responsibility?) they are also capable of resist institutional corruption.

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