Chapter 4: The Pervasive Presence: Conflict

The suggestion that the peace-as-absence view is attractive for suspiciously profound reasons can only be explored by examining some fundamental features of our culture.

We are not gods and we cannot see things whole or view them from the standpoint of eternity. To speak of something like "our culture" is to engage in a series of oversimplifications-- oversimplifications which can, of course, be of varying use.

For our purposes, it will help to begin by considering a rather extreme oversimplification which has the merits of brevity, clarity, and an element of familiarity:

In our culture, we conceive of life in evolutionary terms as a competition governed by the survival of the fittest. This conception pervades the ways we have structure our institutions. Every individual and every species is thought to be in conflict with every other. To live is to endure, and to endure the organism must assimilate and grow. It must eat others and prevail over competitors. This is as true in human society as it is in the jungle. To act is to fight for a future. To live is to conflict.

Because our culture conceives of all life activities as forms of conflict, this limits the way we can conceive of peace. Whatever peace is, surely it is at least an absence of conflict. But if conflict is essential to life and each life activity is a form of conflict, then peace-- as an absence of conflict-- must involve the absence of life activity.

Particular forms of peace must simply be the absence of particular forms of life activities. The most extreme and ultimate form of peace would be the peace in which the dead are supposed to rest.

And what is death? A nothing which is not anything, an essentially negative state-- a state that can only be defined as an absence. If Life is War, and Peace is Death, then there is nothing to be said of peace beyond the fact that it is an absence of conflict and "War." Because we, in our culture, conceive of life as conflicting in its essence, we can only conceive of peace as an absence.

This way of characterizing our culture greatly over emphasizes the historical influence that the evolutionary metaphor has actually had on our thought and practise. It overlooks implications that the notion of symbiosis has for spelling out that metaphor. It leaves out the important distinctions between nonviolent modes of conflict (which might be said to be "peaceful" forms of conflict) and more physically dangerous or morally objectionable ones. It sketches our thought in monochromatic dullness.

But the sketch clarifies the relation between conflict centered views of life and concepts of peace. If we suppose that conflict is an essential and ever present aspect of human activity, then we will find it difficult to conceive of peace as anything beyond a simple absence of conflict. For it is surely at least as
an absence of conflict. And if conflict is essential to life, then to eliminate the one we must eliminate the other, leaving... nothing, nothing but death. So peace then at most can only be an absence of conflict. Limited forms of peace will simply involve limited forms of constraint of life-- limited forms of activity we withdraw from in order to avoid the particular forms of conflict associated with them.

We sometimes encounter a simple and extreme version of the conflict view sketched above. There are people who constantly bark that "This is a dog eat dog world" and who act on that assumption. But conflict centered views of human activity can take a variety of forms, and they can have intellectual grounds of a variety of types.

One index of the prevalence of the conflict view of human nature is the centrality it is given in the branch of contemporary research that is referred to as "peace studies," "peace science," or (significantly) "conflict resolution." In a recent article, Walter Isaard, one of the leaders in this field, attempts to provide "A Definition of Peace Science" which he argues is "The Queen of Social Sciences." He tries to do it by crystallizing theory in this field with a "step-by-step development of a broad conceptual framework."

He introduces the very first step of theory construction in a remarkable way. To build a theory of peace he says: "Begin with a basic production subsystem, with simple conflict among two participants over the joint action." I After starting by picturing the simplest and most social primitive interaction as a case of "simple conflict between two participants over the joint action," Isaard then proceeds to add various economic, political, and other aspects to the theory. From the very first, he takes conflict to be essential to the human activities that provide the subject matter of social sciences in general and of peace science (their "Queen") in particular. Issard’s work is representative. His assumption is not arbitrary. There are good reasons why it should seem plausible to suppose that conflict is an invariant feature of human activity.

When we examine the conceptions of rationality, social knowledge and human action that are dominant in our culture, as well as the institutions which elaborate these and reflect them, we find that they provide us with a thick web, a whole network of conflict centered views of human life. This family of conceptions provides reasons for finding the absence-style definitions of peace attractive. To put the point differently, this family of conflict centered views provides profound features of our thought which radically obscure the nature of peace, leading us to define peace in terms of what it is not.

There is not, of course, just one single set of assumptions that provide the conflict centered view of our culture. There are clusters of views in varying degrees of connection. Many share some common ancestry and have relations of family resemblance and familial interdependence. Ideas and institutions are a bit like people-- in a sense, all belong to one great family. Still, we can (for various reasons) choose to write genealogies centered around the origins and interrelations of particular families. And we can group people or ideas and institutions in networks or family trees.

The problem we are interested in-- the obscuring of peace-- Gives us a kind of genealogical perspective. We are interested in the roots of a particular family of ideas and institutions-- a family of conflict
centered views. This family is extended rather than nuclear and it admits no single test of membership or simple definition. But it does form a reasonably clear focus for our study.

In piecing together an account of this family’s characteristic features and forms of interdependence, we will identify a kind of genetic syndrome. And we will find the markings of what may be offered as a kind of diagnosis of our culture, an account of how and why our culture radically obscures the nature of peace. There will be a fundamental symmetry between this diagnosis and the later constructive account aimed to eliminate the obscurity of peace. For in seeing how peace is systematically obscured, we will see what must be done if we are to eliminate this obscurity. The diagnosis offered in Part II shows that to formulate a conception of peace as a positively distinguished activity (as Part IV will attempt to do) we must reconstruct our conceptions of rationality, social knowledge and human action-- and reconstruct the dominant institutions and practices of our culture as well.

Part II: The Culture of Conflict

Civilization is not an incurable disease, but it should never be forgotten that the English people are at present afflicted by it.

Mohandas K. Gandhi

INTRODUCTION: HOW DO WE SEE DIFFERENCES?

In our culture, hostility, confrontation, violence, aggression, and war are common. It has been suggested, in fact, that conflict is a growth industry. It is surely an industry that gets plenty of press--not only because of its intrinsic importance and human interest but, further, because of the nature of our media.

Different kinds of events take different lengths of time to happen. The British philosopher R. G. Collingwood argued: "If an historian had no means of apprehending events that occupied more than an hour, he could describe the burning down of a house, but not the building of a house; the assassination of Caesar but not his conquest of Gaul." He added: "We can even say to some extent what kind of differences there would be. In general, making things takes longer than destroying them. The shorter our standard time-phase for an historical event, the more our history will consist of destruction, catastrophes, battle, murder, and sudden death." The news media of our culture operate with a "standard time-phase" that introduces a bias of just this sort.

The increasing frequency and prominence of conflict makes ours a culture of conflict-- in something like the sense in which it is a culture of cars, televisions, cancer and heart disease. But there is a further and more profound respect in which we live in a culture of conflict. It concerns our dominant world view.

*What* we see depends to a considerable extent, of course, on what there is to be seen. But the *way* we see
it depends largely on our assumptions and the way we look. Business people see not only lots of costs and benefits, they tend to see things as costs and benefits. Painters tend to see things as aesthetic objects. Scientists tend to see things as causes and effects. In our culture, how do we tend to see human differences-- differences in plans, beliefs, and concerns?

Suppose two people on the bus strike up a conversation about the U.S. role in Central America. One notices that the other is reading a newspaper editorial on U.S. militarism. The talk starts like this:

Daye: You know the Soviets have a huge military investment in Afghanistan.

Knight: But they have deep fears about the security of their borders.

Daye: Well look, we’re concerned about the security of ours in Central America. And the Soviets are supplying aid to insurgents trying to topple governments that have safeguarded free enterprise and U.S. investments.

Knight: But the CIA is supplying the same kind of aid to Afghani rebels. And the U.S. government has refused to allow a socialist government gain power in Latin America democratically and keep it in the same way, so socialists there have no real alternative except to resort to force and appeal to Eastern bloc countries for aid.

We can imagine various ways in which the conversation might continue. They might, for example, start arguing about the precedent set by Chile or begin to squabble about the legitimacy of Castro’s Cuba.

But suppose Daye replied by saying: "Well then, it seems that we are completely agree on all these points so far." Then Knight responds: "Yes. But what is your view of the situation in Bolivia right now?"

If this happened, we might be very tempted to say: "What? I thought you were disagreeing!" It did seem as though they were having an "argument." But notice something. All their claims could be true together. There is nothing contradictory in believing that the Soviets are aiding Latin Americans and the CIA is aiding Afghani. Daye and Knight might very well have been discovering they were in complete accord.

Still, because they were saying different things, it seems only natural to suppose they were engaged in arguing for conflicting things.

We tend to see differences as conflicts. In our culture, we have assumptions and practices that commit us to conflict centered views of life. It is not just that we tend to see lots of conflicts around us. Because of these basic assumptions and practices, when we look at things we tend to see them that way. We tend to see whatever we look at as conflict. In that sense our dominant world view entrenches us in a culture of conflict.

A wide variety of conflict related views have been proposed, promulgated and adopted with varying
levels of commitment. We will focus here on central ones in the dominant currents of our culture. They concern things such as reason, social knowledge, and intentional action.

These things might at first seem to have little significant bearing on our views about the place of conflicting human activity. But it turns out that it is just these sort of very basic elements in the chemistry of our civilization that make us prone to react to differences as oppositions and conflicts.

Chapter 5: The Strife of Reason in Defending Claims (And What I Learned Near the Broccoli Dip)

One key set of conflict related assumptions concern prevailing views of the self, reason, feeling, meaning, and truth. These assumptions have historical roots that reach back through the Middle Ages to the Golden Age of Greece.

The forerunners of the early Greek philosophers were called sophists. Sophists refined the art of verbal combat. They often worked as the Greek equivalents of lawyers and public relations agents. To win court cases and elections they employed a rhetoric for reasoning that was rich with metaphors of physical combat and war.

It is a rhetoric with which we are all familiar. We often employ military and pugilistic terms in reasoning. We "defend positions," "counter-attack," make "charges," offer "ripostes." We adopt "strategies" and "tactics" in order to "win" and emerge as "victors" in argument. We seek to "defeat opponents" by "outmanuvering" them with alternative "lines of attack" and by "nailing" them when we spot an opening in their defense. These metaphors reflect a distinctive view of what reasoning is, one Aristotle long ago gave the label "eristic," a term whose root-- eris-- meant strife.

These metaphors do not just ornament our speech. They structure our understanding of what a rational argument is and they guide the ways we reason. They are metaphors we live by. In a discussion of "Conceptual Metaphor in Everyday Life," George Lakoff and Mark Johnson have argued this point in a forceful way:

It is important to see that we don’t just talk about arguments in terms of war. We can actually win or lose arguments. We see the person we are arguing with as an opponent. We attack his positions and we defend our own. We gain or lose ground. We plan and use strategies. If we find a position indefensible, we abandon it and take a new line of attack. Many of the things we do in arguing are partially structured by
Chapter 4:

the concept of war. Though there is no physical battle, there is a verbal battle, and the structure of an argument-- attack, defense, counterattack, etc-- reflects this. It is in this sense that we live by the ARGUMENT IS WAR metaphor in this culture; it structures the actions we perform in arguing.

This style of reasoning that Lakoff and Johnson focus on is perhaps especially prominent amongst lawyers and philosophers. Many people have a distaste for the more piercing forms of verbal violence. But they still operate with the eristic concept of reasoning; amicable combat is still combat. It is generally supposed that good reasoning is critical reasoning in the pointed sense of the term. Even if we don’t always defend our views against attacks, we typically suppose that we should do so and that our beliefs are rational only insofar as they can be given such a rational defense. In that sense, the eristic view of reason is dominant in our culture.

It would be wrong, however, to suppose that the eristic style of reasoning is the only one with which we are familiar. Personal experience drove this point home for me in a rather vivid way.

My experience involved conversation at suburban, middle class cocktail parties-- the kind with crackers, cheese, and broccoli dip. The guests would generally divide up into two groups and the one I normally joined would typically get discussions going when someone announced a claim he believed. It might concern polotics, sports, or economics or occasionally religion, modern art, or something else of importance. People would choose up sides and begin to argue the point.

It was really rather like a game, and the point of the game was to win points and prestige. To score, people would demand precision in definitions and pick claims apart. They would treat each sentence like a little soldier sent out to the front lines to be shot down. It was supposed that each claim had a clear and definite meaning and it marked out a position that was either held or lost. Each sentence was either true-- and a winner-- or false.

Part of scoring involved saving face by keeping your feelings masked. When pinned in a particularly untenable position, you bluffed. Feelings were considered irrelevant to the logic of rational argument and, worse, betrayals of personal weakness.

People would demand reasons for the claims, evidence for the reasons, and sources of documentation for the evidence. They would treat each other as quite separate and autonomous antagonists who were individually responsible for their own words. The disputants would concede a point only under severe fire and only when an honorable retreat of some sort was available. They would remain on the attack until their drink needed a refill or suppertime had arrived. It was a lot of fun.

My problems arose when I went for the broccoli dip. Another group would be talking and I would try to join in. But I could not follow the conversation. I could understand each sentence, but I could not follow the discussion.

They would start off talking about a new doctor in town, a dying mother, or a child reaching puberty.
They would get excited about it and all would seem to throw in their two cents, and then they would calm down a bit and suddenly be off talking about something else. When I tried to participate, I suddenly felt like a basketball player on the wrong court—dribbling a volleyball under the volleyball net while everyone else stared, nonplussed. I would query: "Just what do you mean by ‘a good doctor’ here?" and get puzzled expressions. I would insist: "I don’t think we’ve really settled the last point yet because..." and draw blank looks. So far as I could see, these people did not appear to be willing to rationally discuss things. They were simply babbling along in an irrational way.

Two things made me draw back from this conclusion. The first was that these people were typically female (and the first group almost uniformly male). I thought of myself as liberated. I cringed in thinking that this experience might somehow suggest that deep down I really believed half the human race might be irrational. The other thing that gave me pause was this: these women seemed to know what they were doing. They all talked in concert, as though they were following rules. But what rules?

I began to hang around the cheese and crackers and listen with care when women talked in this style. I came round to the following view of these non-eristic conversations.

The point of them was not to win points and prestige. The point was to share and cultivate important information and insights. Value judgements were used to decide how important and relevant a point was. These value judgements were reflected in people’s gestures and feelings. Also, feelings and expressive gestures served to provide initial expressions of budding interests and growing understandings of how facts fit together.

Meaning was treated as a communal affair, something the group constructed or gathered and kept a sense of collectively. It was holistic and dynamic. People were not interested in pinning down definitions or dissecting them. The aim was to help ideas grow and mature by letting them take on a life of their own. People would use the first person plural pronoun to try to sum up "what **we** are saying"—in stead of insisting on "What **I** meant when **I** said that."

Truth was something cultivated and shared as it emerged in this cooperative process. It was not a static flag marking out a position to be taken by a victorious disputant. Sentences were not thought to be "simply true or false. People would talk about how there was "some truth" in what one person said and "a lot of truth" in some other remarks-- and they would look for connections and try to build upon them.

Furthermore, the conversationalists’ self-concepts seemed remarkably interdependent. People were playing fluids roles in a shared activity, rather than staking out their positions and guarding their flanks. They might even voice a view or concern of someone who had not spoken or who was not present because they thought it was important for that voice to be heard-- even if the view or concern was not one they themselves shared.

There is not technical term in philosophy that neatly fits this second style of reasoning. For example, the style differs in important ways from the type of method that Socrates practiced, though it also resembles
it in key respects. Socrates was a master of sophistry and would sometimes compete in the most strife-filled eristic arguments one could picture. But he often tried to engage in a cooperative cultivating of shared insights. He would engage in an open dialogue in which he tried to serve as a "midwife" who helped new ideas and insights through the birth process. To contrast with "eristic," that kind of open dialogue is sometimes called "maieutic." The word’s Greek root is *maieusis*, which means "midwifery."

"Maieutic" will be a useful label to use here not only because it may suggest the idea of open Socratic dialogue but also because the birthing process is an excellent example of a way of dealing with human differences without viewing them as conflicts. A child, it's mother, and her helpers are all engaged in an intense, painful process that deals with the most basic human difference of all-- the separate integrity of physical bodies. Yet the struggle is not a fight and there are no victors. There is simply cooperative success or failure for all concerned.

In some ways the maieutic style of reasoning described here resembles the style of ethical reasoning that psychologists like Carol Gilligan suggest may be characteristic of women. However, women often excel at eristic reasoning and many men excel in maieutic reasoning. In general it is very difficult to generalize about any sex-related differences of any kind. It is unnecessary to attempt to here. The point of describing these two styles of cocktail party conversation is not to demonstrate facts but to illustrate concepts.

The two particular groups of conversationalists provide concrete examples of two distinct sets of assumptions about truth, meaning, feeling’s relation to reason, and the individual’s relation to the community. The eristic view adopts the "correspondence theory" of truth. It supposes that truth consists in a relation of correspondence between individual claims (which we can dispute) and a fixed reality (which the claims either match or fail to fit). Further, claims are thought to be governed by the logician’s "law of the excluded middle." They must either be true or false. There is no third range of possibilities which provides alternatives. The maieutic view adopts an emergent version of the "coherentist theory" of truth. Truth is an overall characteristic of emergent networks of insights and perceptions of fact in their various relations. Claims are expected to be partially correct and incorrect rather than simply true or false. Truth is thought of as something emergent-- something in a process of birthing and growth that can be nourished. Put differently, truth is thought of as something that can be gathered and woven together, or cultivated and harvested.

On the eristic view, feeling and reason are quite disparate things. At its best, argument is disinterestedly unemotional-- apart from a keen desire for victory or, perhaps, truth. Feelings are irrelevant and non-
rational responses that obscure reasoning. On the maieutic view, feeling is viewed as continuous with reason. Emotions are viewed as cognitive in character. They are first approximations to sound moral and descriptive judgments and articulate insights. And they are also intrinsic elements of the expression of such judgments or insights once they are fully understood. (On this view, an emotional detachment when offering a description of a profound truth or a moral dilemma is, on the face of it, evidence that one has not fully understood the truth or the dilemma.)

The eristic embodies a view of the individual reasoner as an atomic self, a body with a mind of its own which functions as an autonomous and completely independent agent with a private will seeking to realize personal desires such as winning points and prestige. The individual is the basic unit of social reality. "The community" is just a convenient verbal fiction used to talk about a collection or juxtaposition of such real individuals. The maieutic style embodies a view of the self as something defined in terms of the functions it serves in a communal process to which it is internally and organically related. The things a person means, the values she or he holds, and the actions that are performed are inherently communal in character. Individuals are related to one another in community in something like the way that heart and lung and brain are related to one another in a body. They are interdependent; their relations to one another are supposed to be crucially determinative of who each is. On the maieutic view, it would make as much sense to say that the community is a convenient fiction as it would to say that the "human body" is just a convenient verbal fiction used for clumping organs together when we talk of them.

In general, the eristic style is characterized by atomism, discreetness, and fixity; the maieutic style is characterized by holism, continuity, and emergence.

Each style rests on a relatively coherent set of assumptions which can be adopted in sophisticated practices of thinking pursued with high degrees of excellence. Skilled lawyers and debaters can provide examples of this for eristic, skilled committee workers and consciousness raisers can do so for maieutic reasoning. We could, of course, ask which forms of rationality seems to have the most worthy aims: Is it better to pursue points and prestige or share information and cultivate insights? But this way of evaluating the two styles does not do justice to the eristic one because it could plausibly be argued to be aimed most fundamentally not at individual glorification but at the discerning of truth.

But truth of what kind? It would seem that what we have here are two distinct modes of rationality which need to be evaluated in terms of the plausibility of their assumptions about such things as meaning and truth. In Part III, we can return to a consideration of the merits of such assumptions. For now, let’s focus on a thread of thought in our historical traditions closely tied to the eristic view of reasoning but worth considering in detail on its own. It is a view of feeling, emotion and desire -- a type of view which takes these affective elements of life to be a root source of oppositions, something that makes conflict an essential feature of human activity.

Chapter 6: Feeling, Passion, Emotion, and Desire

A fairly clear and common view of emotions is that they are irrational brute forces that come unbidden.
Chapter 4:

We just "get" them. We get feelings that tear us apart, emotions that leave us torn between reason and desire, and passions that push at each other's throats. An emotion is just a "given," a piece of data about ourselves which we must simply accept-- passively, rather than actively. It is a "passion" we suffer rather than an action we choose. This view of emotions has been called "the myth of passions." It is a "myth" with a venerable lineage and it has had an enormous influence.

It is one of the central views making up our culture of conflict. A brief history of its development will serve to clarify its key assumptions and the roles they play in our culture. It will also enable us to neatly locate the flaws in the view and to clarify the ways in which we ought to revise our understanding of feeling, emotion, passion, and desire.

Part of the view originated with the Greeks. They saw sexual lust, pride, and anger as brute powers within a person-- powers often overcoming his reason and leading to excesses that could twist a life in tragic ruin. The lust of Clytemnestra wrecks the ship of state. Oedipus is blinded by his pride and anger. In the *Iliad*, Achilles cannot bring himself to obey the wise advice of Oddyseus, Phoenix, and Aias-- advice that would have saved the life of his most beloved Patroklos. He acknowledges that their words seem "spoken after my own mind. Yet still the heart in me swells up in anger"-- an anger that cannot be controlled.

The ideal for the Greeks was, of course, lack of emotion (apathy), but moderation. Emotions were likened to horses that must be bridled and restrained by reason. They were reactions or "pathe" caused by external events the way a startled jump may be caused by a loud noise or sunburn caused by solar rays. (This is the origin of the contrast between "passions" and "actions" and our conception of emotions as something we passively undergo.) The Greeks thought we were responsible for the pathe of anger in the same way we are responsible for the pathe of sunburn. Some people have thin skins and bad tempers just as some have tender skin that are easily burned. As individuals, we cannot help this: it is part of our heredity. But we can choose to build characters or suntans that inure us to the causes of anger and sunburn. Also we can choose to avoid situations in which they are likely to cause us harm. Through such deliberate choice, reason can thus gain a control over emotions-- a control that is real though indirect.

In early Christian thought, emotions are likewise likened to horses in need of bridling, the man subject to their power was likened as well to a ship tossed in a gale, and they were seen as the source of conflict of all sorts. James asks:

Where do these wars and battles between yourselves first start? Isn't it precisely in the desires fighting inside your own selves? You want something and you haven't got it and you are prepared to kill. You have an ambition that you cannot satisfy; so you fight to get your way by force.

Unlike the Greeks, the early disciples thought that the cure for this was not a Reason that would moderate but the Christ who could transform. Through Christ we could be cleansed of the dark world of sin in all its lusts and conflicts, for "God is light: there is no darkness in him at all... If we live our lives in the light, as he is in the light, we are in union with one another and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us all from..."
But there is a crucial question here which the New Testament did not seem to answer clearly. Can we achieve union with this light of God in this lifetime (through the Christ who is in our midst wherever two or more are gathered) or must we wait in faith and patience for a redemption after death and accept a fate of life in sin and conflict during the interim (because Christ is not of this world)?

The first answer underlay the pacifism of the early Church and was taken up by later sects such as the Quakers. But the second view was adopted by writers such as Augustine and the founders of the medieval Church.

On this second view, the emotion of pride was identified as a cardinal sin and emotions in general were viewed as lusts which were central to our condition of sin. Emotions were a kind of brute given in a double barreled way. They were given, on one hand, by our carnal nature as animals. But, further, our lusts were grounded in that distinctly human state of original sin devolving upon us from Adam and Eve.

In giving up the earlier hopes for perfection in this world, the proponents of this lust model of human nature conceived of human activity as inherently conflicting:

With the passing of the hope of Christian perfection was coupled the vanishing of the dream of peace on earth. Swords had never been beaten into plowshares and never would....On our earthly pilgrimage we pant after peace, yet are involved in constant strife-- with the pagan, with the heretic, with the bad Catholic, and even with the brother in the same household. One may grow weary and exclaim, "Why should I eat out my life in contention? I will return within myself." But even there one will find that the flesh lusts against the spirit. Peace will not come until this corruptible puts on incorruption, and then only for the redeemed, because hell is the perpetuation of unresolved conflicts. Perfect peace is reserved for heaven, where there shall be no hunger nor thirst nor provocation of enemies.

This view led Augustine to develop a doctrine that is now time honored and widely adopted, the "just war doctrine." Godly men could kill others in wars if their cause was righteous and they fight in moral ways. Indeed, in some cases, duty might require us to fight. For if conflict governs this life, then we must forego hope of divine order for now and seek whatever human forms of justice we can muster with the institutions of the armed state.

Constantine tied the spiritual authority of the Church to the temporal power of Rome. Early Christian pacifism was forgotten and the practise of war was justified as a tool of a politics which was the "result of an agreement between imperfect men to make the best of a bad job." It was thus that "the influence of the dogma of original sin led many of the Church Fathers to conclude that political authority was a consequence of man’s corrupted nature, a punishment and at the same time a remedy for his sins." Among the means legitimately employed by this remedying state was war-- albeit war carried on in a spirit of love and in accordance with rules and with the intention of righting a wrong and restoring peace.
Chapter 4:

The influences of the doctrine of original sin and the lust model that went with it were long-lasting. In many religious communities traditional versions of the lust model of humanity are still held in rather intact form. Perhaps even more importantly, this view is continuous with later, similar ones which have become especially widespread in our own day. After the intellectual revolution we associate with Copernicus and Galileo-- after medieval theology had started burning oil and science had replaced it as the central moving force of our intellectual history-- the lust model of humanity kept running like a car with a new engine.

In some respects, the work of the eighteenth century Scottish philosopher David Hume provides the neatest way to pinpoint the core of these continuities. Impressed by the success of Newton’s science, Hume made a clean break with the religious tradition in his *A Treatise on Human Nature*. There he offers "an attempt to introduce the experimental method of reasoning into moral subjects."

He depicts human nature as rather like a Newtonian system of bits of matter acting and reacting according to natural laws-- only the bits are the "impression" and "ideas" of the mind, images that come in bundles we refer to as perceptions of parents, tables, and frieplaces. Book II, which provides the central third of the work, is a discussion of the passions, and the account he offers is in many ways simply a naturalized and non-perjorative version of the old lust model. He does not see pride as a sin, but he does see it as the foundation of a natural egoism that defines the self.

Hume supposes that feelings of pride enable us to distinguish ourselves from the other bundles of impressions and ideas we take to be other persons or things. I form a concept of myself by feeling proud of the nice clothes, the strong father, and the big house that are mine. I am the being to whom these things belong. This ego or self born of pride is one that the Christians considered worldly and depraved but which Hume takes to be quite natural.

Not only did he think it inevitable and normal, he also thought it essential for the development of morality. I care about other people’s welfare because I take pride in my reputation. The just man is one whose character is molded by public opinion. The paradigm of such a man is the just magistrate, someone whose character is formed by the public eye in which he acts. He is a man who seeks an approval in which he can take pride.-- and someone who is, moreover, an agent of the state which policies itself and employs military might.

In general, Hume agreed with Augustine that our passions govern us. But he thought that this is as it should be and that we should not describe this human condition as a "state of sin."

Further, he held that to speak of a conflict between reason and passion (as the Greeks did) is misleading: "We speak not strictly and philosophically when we talk of the combat of passion and of reason. Reason is and ought to be, only the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them." Reason is but the instrument of an egoistic self pursuing desires and avoiding objects of pain.
Hume goes on immediately to note that "as this opinion may appear somewhat extraordinary, it may not be improper to confirm it by some other considerations." In introducing these, he provides a very concise statement of the two central features of our common conception of emotion, "the myth of the passions." Using the word "passion" to refer to emotions of all sorts, he says: "A passion is an original existence, or, if you will, modification of existence, and contains not any representative quality, which renders it a copy of any other existence or modification."8

By saying they are "original," he means that emotions come upon us unchosen as a kind of brute given that is a raw and uninterpreted bit of experience. On the other hand, in saying that emotions contain no "representative quality" he means that they do not refer to anything or provide us with any information. They are inherently non-cognitive. He goes on, in fact, to argue that they cannot conflict with reason because they are a different kind of thing. Reason provides knowledge, emotion does not.

The relationship of this view to the eristic style of reasoning should be clear. Both view emotion as inherently non-rational. The view has an important place in the scheme of post-Renaissance ideas concerning science and action and we will look at its relations to these in the next section. Before going on, however, we should pause to contrast this view of emotion with an alternative, one that is more compatible with the maieutic conception of reasoning. Now that we have the "myth of the passions" neatly stated we can see that it is a myth. It is demonstrably false, and false in ways that will prove quite relevant to the central aim of this book-- the task of conceiving peace as a positively distinguished activity.

Emotions are neither brute givens that are passively undergone nor non-cognitive elements of experience. The reason is that they are interpretive or, as philosophers would put it, "intentional."

Emotions typically (perhaps always) involve some bodily tingling or tangling of feeling with a physical immediacy. But an emotion like anger is not simply a buzzing of the blood and a constriction in the chest. It also involves an object, some person or thing we are angry at. The same is true of frustration, delight, love, hate, sadness, pride, envy, and fear. In each case the bodily feelings we have do not enter consciousness like unconnected atoms bounding in a void. We are aware of them only as interpreted. We are aware of them only when we consciously-- and, in that sense, "intentionally"-- think of them as related to something which is their cause or consequence or object in some way. When we have emotions we find that we are always already to understand our feelings in terms of something-- however vaguely conceived-- which we are sad about, proud of, frustrated with, fearful for, or delighted in. The judgement that some unfortunate state of affairs is actual or likely is not just a frequent appendage to the emotion of sadness or fear. Judgements are intrinsic and essential elements of the emotions themselves.

Perhaps the most compelling way to appreciate this point is to note that it is not just emotions that are interpretive. Every sensation, perception, fleeting image, and bit of experience of every kind is as well. The standard way of explaining this point is to say that our experience of sensation would be blind without the conceptual interpretations that judgements provide. If we were given an uninterpreted and brute visual sensation we would not know what we were seeing. We would not see it as a piece of a book or as a white patch or as a corner of a rectangle or as anything at all. In that sense, we would see nothing,
Devoid of pre-conceptions or prior intentions, the experience would be devoid of significance. As soon as we experience something as one kind of thing rather than another, we have made some judgement of it, categorizing it in some way. We have interpreted it, projecting or "intending" some view of it. (When philosophers say that all experience is "intentional" in this sense they do not mean that it is carefully and deliberately chosen. They simply mean that it is interpreted, whether or purpose or by habit.)

The same point applies to emotions. They are always intentional in the sense that they involve some projected interpretation of experience. This point has two important consequences.

To see the first, suppose that you are feeling something, but are not sure what it is. This happened to me the morning I was given an oral examination for the defense of my dissertation. I had some jumpy flash-of-heat here and constriction-of-muscle there sort of feelings. They were hard to pin down and feel clearly, let alone classify. It seemed that the might be anxiety and a fear of the coming interrogation or that they might, instead, be an eager desire to share the results of my three years of work-- and perhaps even shine a bit.

I thought the orals were likely to go better if I chose the second interpretation, and I did. Doing that gave me sense to the feelings, organized them, made them more continuous and directed. The jumpyness took form in the bodily gestures of jumping into an explanation. The constrictions of muscles were given shape and rhythm in the grasping of hands and the rising to an erect posture which both aided and expressed concentration on the issues at hand. The flashes of heat took shape as a general alertness and eagerness. I found myself actually having the desire to get on with the exam.

If I had chosen to read the feelings as anxiety and fear, they would have gotten organized in a very different set of ways-- as the jump of flight, the constriction of withdrawl, the flash of panic.

For most of our feelings, we have pre-constructed interpretations with which to organize them, and we apply these in a habitual way. As a result we overlook the fact that when we have emotions we are choosing interpretations and making judgements about ourselves and the world. But once we see this is the case, a second important point emerges: emotions are cognitive in character and continuous with more explicit verbal reasoning.

Suppose a door will not unlock. When I feel frustrated at the failure of the key, I am making a cognitive judgement just as much as when I see that a falling tree is breaking the branches of the bush on which it lands. I organize my experience in terms of judgements about what-- faulty key or falling tree-- is causing what-- jammed lock or broken bush. These judgements may be wrong, of course. The point is that they are cognitive judgements and subject to critique and revision in the light of further evidence. My frustration with the key may be revised into anger at my housemate if I discover the lock is not preventing the door from opening but a bolt on the inside is-- especially if I suppose she just thoughtlessly locked me out. But if I acquire more information and adopt other beliefs, then the
Chapter 4:

frustration may be revised to jealousy (because I believe there is a man in the house with her) or spirited playfulness (because I think she is putting the finishing touches on a surprise party she is about to spring).

The continuity of reason and emotion does not simply lie in the fact that judgements constitute definitive features of our emotions. The subtlety of feeling can be cultivated. Skill in responding to complex situations with complex emotions can be acquired. And for the people who acquire the knack of this, their emotions serve as a central and often indispensable vehicle of cognitive insight and judgement.

A lawyer unable to follow out "hunches" about a case lacks a basic skill. A personnel officer who has no "intuitions" about people belongs in another line of work. These kinds of feelings about things and people can often go wrong-- that is precisely what is meant in saying they are cognitive. They involve judgements that can be refined or revised. They can be adopted or rejected in explicit verbal judgements. They are not exercises of some mystical power. They are implicit judgements with which we respond to a complex environment, feelings with which we think.

Because emotions are interpretive, they are actively chosen (rather than merely passively undergone) and they are cognitive and continuous with explicit verbal reasoning (rather than non-conceptual and non-rational). But to say that emotions involve chosen interpretations is not to say that they are always the result of deliberate and responsible choice. In our culture they often are not.

In fact, we commonly suppose that emotions cannot be chosen to voluntarily revise because we view them as "passions" that are merely passive reactions to our environment. But we can assume responsibility for our emotions and decide which to have and how to revise them. We can evaluate the hunches they encapsulate or the intuitive judgements they express. In the maieutic style of reasoning, this is done.

It is, of course, possible to make honest errors or even dishonestly deceive ourselves when we choose or revise our emotions. They are clearly cases when choosing to interpret pre-exam feelings as eagerness is a mistake and I hang on to this interpretation only by lying to myself. This is an important kind of point to which we must later return. But now we need to pick up and complete the account of some other key assumptions in our culture of conflict.

Chapter 7: A World of Fact and Preference: Galilean Science and Instrumental Action

There are times when people seem to act without purpose, responding blindly with no aim or end in view. There are also times when they seem to act without giving thought to the efficacy of the means they adopt. They know that they want the kid to stop crying but they have simply not paused to consider carefully whether a slap and a shout will still the screams. But it seems that though such behavior is
Chapter 4:

action it is not *rational* action. It seems as though a rational action is one in which we deliberately adopt what we believe is the most efficient instrument or means for causing the end we happen to prefer.

This "instrumentalist" conception of a rational action is wed to a particular conception of knowledge-- a scientific one.

The seventeenth century saw the birth of a new view of the way the world is and how it is best known. We associate this view with Galileo. Our theories of the world have changed markedly since that Italian’s day. But there is a core view-- a theory of what theories are-- which has persisted and still dominates popularly held conceptions of science. It is a view of what science is about and how it is best done. In our science dominated culture, this is tantamount to saying that it gives us our view of what reality is and how it can be known. Though this view may have little connection with products of contemporary physics-- or current histories and philosophies of science-- it remains the ruling ideology of contemporary social science. I It is a view that commits us to a conflict centered view of human activity.

Before saying how this is so, it is worth noting how it is *not so*. In two ways, quite the opposite is true.

First, in many contexts, the employment of an instrumentalist view of action leads to the prevention of violence and the amelioration of conflict. There is considerable truth in the motto of Salvador Hardin, the mayor in Isaac Asimov’s *Foundation*: "Violence is the last refuge of the incompetent." Violence is often a blind reaction, an irrational response of frustration and rage. Brute force is often expensive and ineffective. Moreover, cooperation often pays. When we look to our own interests and the long run, we often find it wise to suppose that each of us will benefit most when the interests of others are promoted.

Second, the process of scientific research itself-- at least in principle and in the ideal-- provides one of our best models of cooperative and emphatically non-conflicting human activity. As the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein once noted, "Mathematicians do not fight over proofs-- they look and see." When scientists differ in their views they do not reach for their pistols. They reach for their telescopes and test tubes. Scientists suppose that their differences of opinion simply pose shared problems that can be solved cooperatively by appeals to objective tests and standards that are independent of any individual’s will or desire. Science-- understood as the kind of thing Galileo and Einstein did-- marks an extraordinary advance in the methods for resolving differences of opinion. The censorship of the Church and the mind control of the state are set aside. Instead of reliance on the auto-da-fe and the power of the police, people who disagree reason together about public data until they discover the truth.

But science has also provided us with a particular world view in which such cooperative inquiry is severely restricted in its scope. The most important concerns of life are left in a non-cognitive no-man’s land where force alone can decide. And it has provided us with an instrumentalist conception of action which portrays the human condition as a state of ineliminable, irremediable conflict.

In the Middle Ages, nature was viewed as the creation of a purposeful God who designed each part of it for some end. It was compared to the Bible and treated as a second text of divine revelation, The Book of
Chapter 4:

Nature. A literary, poetic language was used to describe nature in terms of alchemical symbols, metaphors, and analogies. The basic pattern of explanation was purposive or "teleological." And nature itself was believed to be structured in a hierarchy of values.

For example, a plant would be described as having leaves the shape of a liver. Such a fact was explained by viewing it as a means God had used to achieve one of his goals; he used it as a sign to tell men that the plant was designed to cure liver disease. And plants, river deltas (which were created to promote civilization), and metals (like mercury which was thought to cure venereal disease because its sign was the same as that of the houses of ill repute) were all part of a wondrous organic whole which God created to serve the lower needs of animals, the higher moral ends of man, and-- above all-- the divine goodness of God himself.

Modern science developed a very different view, one in which nature is conceived of not as a book to be read but as a machine to be manipulated-- an instrument to be used. It was thought that this machine might have been originally set in motion by God but that it has been left, in any case, to work itself like a wound-up clock-- running on its own according to mechanical laws.

Galileo’s new kind of science called for the use of a mathematical language to describe nature. It adopted a different basic pattern of explanation-- one that appealed to uniform laws that made one event follow another through "efficient causality." And nature was viewed in completely value neutral terms-- as an unfeeling mechanism that was entirely indifferent to the goodness or evil of its events.

For example, to study the laws of motion, Galileo observed metal balls rolling down inclined planes. He did not note the zodiacal sign of the metal or the analogies between its spherical shape and the shape of the eye. He attended to measurable quantities rather than poetic qualities. He determined their weight, speed, and the angle of the incline. Then he looked for mathematical correlations between these quantities. He did so because he believed that "nature speaks mathematics."

What he was looking for were correlations between the initial conditions and the subsequent ones they caused. He had adopted a new concept of cause. Instead of viewing later events as goal that (teleologically) explained why the earlier events occurred as a means, he viewed the earlier events as simple givens-- brute facts-- which explained why the later events occurred-- later events which were blindly but "efficiently" caused. When other scientists began to study geography in this Galilean way, they supposed that the existence of river deltas was not to be explained by appeal to God’s goal of fostering civilization. Instead, the development of civilization was to be viewed as a kind of accident that the brute reality of river deltas helped explain. Given the existence of a delta, the increased probability of civilization could be predicted.

In social science, it has turned out to be extremely difficult to develop predictive theories as simple and powerful as those of physics. In fact, even at this late date, we find distinguished social scientists like Seymour Martin Lipset confessing: "None of the social sciences can predict worth a damn."2.s severely restricted in its scope. But social scientists have not yet given up hope. Like the characters in Samuel
Chapter 4:

Beckett’s play *Waiting for Godot*, they are "waiting for their Galileo." They labor in hopes that some genius will provide them with the kind of simple but powerful explanatory theories that Galilean natural scientists have developed. The standard model for such a theory is Newton’s system of laws which explained motion and gravity.

Its explanatory laws of efficient causality were distinguished by four things. First, they were *laws* rather than rules of thumb. They claimed to govern some clearly specifiable types of events universally and without exception. Newton’s third law claims that every "action" of one mass on another always yields an equal and opposite reaction. Second, they were *causal* laws in the sense that they explained what made things work. They did not just describe what happened to be actually true, they also explained what was possible and what was necessary. Third, the laws could be expressed in strict and unambiguous mathematical formula such as "force equals mass times acceleration" or "F= M x A." Fourth, they each belonged to a *system* of laws. With equations that combined them, they could be used to predict and explain a wide variety of things-- the ways in which pendulums swing, tides roll, and planets sweep around the sun.

The new, Galilean science was value neutral because it made no reference to purposes (divine or otherwise) in its descriptions and explanations. It was completely indifferent to the moral worth of the events it explained and the laws to which it appealed. There was no consideration as to whether the law of gravity was a good thing, and, if so, what it was good for. It was simply the law.

Judgements of value were extraneous to the knowledge that science could provide. At best they were an irrelevance, at worst an encumbrance that biased research. Nature as known by science was a world of fact and law; values were simply not part of the reality studied by science. Or rather, if they were studied, by social scientists, they were to be treated as mere facts about people-- facts to be causally explained. They were not taken to be normative truths, only truths about norms.

For example, a Darwinian might discover what caused people to be sympathetic to others, but this did nothing to show us that we *should* be sympathetic or that group solidarity was a good thing. As scientists, researchers were observers or spectators who sought to mirror nature with their theories. They were not participants who made value judgements about reality or gained ethical knowledge from their study of it.

The view just sketched provides the central ideology of contemporary working social scientists. Most working political scientists, economists, and sociologists seek to use experimental and statistical analysis to discover a simple and powerful set of mathematical functions that can explain social activity in terms of efficient causes. They attempt to make value neutral studies of the complex mechanism of social reality and them view themselves as disinterested observers.

They have attempted this not only to find out how society works but to learn, also, how to work it. Social science provides a central part of our world view, one that proposes to tells us how to punish criminals, run our schools, distribute health care, and bring an end to war. As an ideology, social science has been an enormous success, one that has laced our culture with a conflict centered view of life-- though as a
branch of research, it has been a rather dismal failure.

Its Galileo has not arrived. Key terms like "status" and "power" continue to elude clear and unambiguous definitions that could be used to describe society in rigorous, mathematical terms. The quest for value neutral knowledge has come, increasingly, to seem like a hopelessly Quixotic enterprise. Above all, in terms of Galilean standards, "the social sciences are almost or perhaps completely devoid of achievement. For the salient fact about those sciences is the absence of the discovery of any law-like generalizations whatsoever." Rules of thumb and statistics that describe--but do not explain--abound. And sociologists have invented formula claiming things like behavior is a function of genetics and environment, formula like "B=F(G+E)." But such formula are only pseudo-mathematical. "F" and "+" do no stand for the mathematical operations that can be computed algebraically. They are just a shorthand way of saying that there are important connections between these things.

The one social science which might seem to be an exception, economics, is not-- for reasons we will see in Part III. We will also see there why Monsieur Galileo has not arrived and cannot. But at this stage, the key point to note is that he has been expected, and social scientists’ expectations have projected a view of human life in our culture which pictures it as essentially conflicting in nature.

To appreciate this, we need to consider two ways that human beings enter into this picture of science, as things known like other objects in nature and as knowers who act to pursue their ends in rational ways.

As objects of scientific knowledge, humans are thought to be the same in principle, as rats and monkeys. Our behavior is to be observed, experimented with, and explained by mathematical theories which have the same sort of structure as those used to account for rodents in the lab and primates in the field. Our behavior is not rationally chosen, it is mechanically caused. Furthermore, from a scientific point of view, there is nothing right or wrong about what we do. There are only various facts about our behavior and various efficient causes and natural laws that explain them.

But as knowers we must view ourselves differently. Scientists demand that their own theories of human behavior be responsibly and rationally chosen in order to achieve the ends of explanation at which they aim. Despite the way they view their experimental "subjects," scientists are committed to viewing themselves as rational actors whose research is to be understood in terms of purposes and means employed to achieve these. When we attempt to apply scientific knowledge in rational actions, we are committed to viewing ourselves in the same way.

The Galilean world view tells us that reality is a mechanism we must manipulate by intervening in series of causes that produce effects. For our actions to be rational, such intervention must be intentional rather than haphazard. The rationality of such intentions can be assessed in two ways. First, we can ask if it is rational to value the ends which the intervention intends to bring about. Second, we can ask whether the form of the intervention chosen is a rational (or the most rational) way of bringing about these intended effects.
On the first score, science cannot tell us what our values and purposes should be, because it itself is supposed to be value neutral. Economist, for instance, emphasize that they cannot-- as economists-- tell us whether it would be better to lower inflation or raise employment. (They can only tell us how to do one or the other.) Such value judgements do not lie within the domain of scientific knowledge. There is no objective realm of the ideal to which they can be empirically known to correspond-- the way judgements of fact can be shown to correspond to the realm of the real.

Value judgements can be criticized as irrational in one very limited way. We can demand that they be coherent. Economists put the point by saying that rational actors must have "consistent sets of preferences." By this they mean that if you prefer A to B and prefer B to C then you should prefer A to C. Whether you ought to value A at all, however, is not thought to be something rationally decidable.

Or, at least, it is not rationally decidable by science. It is possible, of course, that values may be the object of some other sort of knowledge such as the humanistic studies of art and history and philosophy. But do English professors and philosopher really know anything at all? It is not clear. Their intuitions and arguments are notoriously controversial. Disquiet about such lack of consensus has led many humanists themselves to emulate the methods of natural science in order to reach toward some sort of objectivity. In the process, such humanists typically seek to achieve a value neutrality in their work analogous to the scientists’. But this kind of value neutrality then disqualifies them from providing precisely the kind of knowledge that would fill the gap at issue here-- the lacuna of ethical knowledge.

The view widely advocated and which tends to prevail in practice is that for want of any agreed upon method for demonstrating which values are right we must treat values as subjective, as matters of non-rational, individual choice. Judgements of good and bad are considered non-cognitive dispositions of individuals rather than matters of fact. There is no truth about them which can be discovered by science or any other branch of knowledge with a similar legitimacy and objectivity.

However, if we do have some values-- be they what they may-- science does purport to tell us how to realize them in a rational way. It claims to tell us how the world works, and so it claims to tell us how the things we consider ideal can be made real. Knowledge is power. If we want some satisfying condition (SC) to occur, the laws of science tell us it will follow as a subsequent condition if we adopt as our instrument or means whatever initial conditions (IC) efficiently cause it. Often it turns out that there is more than one way to skin a cat. The choice of means can then itself be assessed rationally by using science to answer factual questions about the causal consequences of the means we are considering. (What are the effects of skinning it one way rather than another?) We can then let value judgements about which consequences are to be preferred get decided by our (hopefully consistent but otherwise non-rational) preferences.

Insofar as we adopt the Galilean view of knowledge and reality sketched here, then we must suppose that rational actors will be instrumental actors. They will be individuals manipulating things-- and other people-- as means to their preferred ends. The extent to which such actors are more or less rational will depend upon the consistency of their preferences and the extent to which they can justify their empirical
beliefs about how the world works and about how their chosen means will yield their preferred ends.

People concerned with ecological problems have criticized the Galilean/instrumentalist view of knowledge and action on the grounds that it pictures humans as pitted against nature and seeking to master it-- rather than acting as stewards of organic processes which need to be nurtured and cultivated in holistic fashions. Further, some ethical theorists have argued that the instrumentalist model of action-- at least in the version of it described here-- leads us to misunderstand much of what is really going on in human affairs. But, overall, the view provides us with a rather neat and very attractive account of rational action.

However, it is an account with a widely recognized implication of an unpleasant sort: In a world of scarce means and differing preferences, conflict is inevitable. And insofar as values are viewed as non-cognitive and subjective, appeals to reason cannot determine who is right.

A typical sort of illustration of the point would be the two islanders and the one coconut. Both want it; only one can have it. The result? Tension, hostility, confrontation, conflict, violence, "war"-- all the things of which peace is said to be the absence. This illustration, once abstracted from the tropical details, is precisely the kind of simple production system which Walter Isaard begins the construction of his theory of "peace science, the Queen of the social sciences."

We can see now why Isaard’s starting point is so plausible. Conflict can be eased, but cannot be eliminated. Breakthroughs in technology, discoveries of new resources, compromise, symbolic enactments of violence, and a variety of other techniques can be used to prevent the hostilities from getting unpleasantly physical. But the Galilean/instrumentalist view of reality, knowledge, and action commits us to the belief that these steps are but stopgap measures. In individual cases, these steps may resolve specific conflicts, but they can do nothing to eliminate the underlying structural conflict that is an inevitable feature of life. Wherever two or more are gathered, in their midst there shall be differences of preference that place them in opposition-- an opposition that reason may ameliorate but never resolve.

Some social scientists try to temper the implications of the Galilean/instrumentalist view by arguing that much human activity does not, as a matter of fact, place us in opposition to others. Kenneth Boulding, for instance, has argued that many activities (like dancing and praying) do not involve us in conflict.

Non-conflict includes such things as eating, drinking, sleeping, working, procreating, reading, learning, walking, travelling, and so on. It constitutes by far the larger proportion of the activities of the human race. Conflict activities are those in which we are conscious that an increase in our welfare may diminish the welfare of others or an increase in the welfare of others may diminish our welfare.

This point seems to be plausible and somewhat comforting. But there are two basic problems with it. A tipoff to the first is provided by Boulding’s qualifying phrase. He say that conflict activities are those "in which we are conscious" of differences our choices make in the subsequent welfare of ourselves and others. But our acts constantly affect others. We live in an intricate ecosystem in which each act of
commission or omission has a spreading subsequent influence. In principle, all our actions may be viewed as causes of redistributions of welfare.

When you and I eat meat or drink coffee, we consume resources that might otherwise have fed people in the third world. In turn, when those people in the third world procreate, they place demands on the world’s resources which affect the welfare of others around the globe. If a parent of an ill baby chooses to sleep through the night, his decision may well be in conflict with the interests of the other parent who must remain awake and care for the child.

In many cases, conflict may remain latent. We may not be conscious of it and we may not engage in it purposefully. But it still provides an underlying structure of all our activity which results from the differing of preferences about the future and the ecological ramifications of whatever we choose to do or not do. As we become conscious of these different preferences and ramifying consequences, open conflict ensues. Ignorance can sustain the bliss of pacification. But once we find out what other people are actually doing and what effects it will have, disputes begin to arise and wax ugly.

The second problem with the line Boulding takes is that it offers no assurance that we will find non-violent ways of resolving conflicts once we become conscious of them. If we are lucky, some "win/win" solution to the dispute may be found-- or at least some way of arbitrating it which is acceptable to all the parties involved. But on the Galilean/instrumentalist view of knowledge and action, it would seem that the final court of appeal for nations remains war. For other groups and individuals it remains their equivalent of war.

So the view seems to commit us to a conception of human activity which understand "non-conflict" to be simply action in which conflict is merely latent and not yet an object of conscious concern. And we are committed to taking "peaceful conflict" to simply be conflict in which there is an absence of war and violence so far.

In either potential or actual form, conflict and violence are seen to be essential features of human activity and of rational life itself. And so it would appear that peace must be conceived the way social scientists do in fact conceive it, namely, as an absence. It would seem difficult to conceive human activity in ways which do not make conflict an essential feature of it. In this sense, we live in a culture of conflict and, for us, it remains difficult to conceive of peace in any way other than as a static absence.

But these ideas are not just theories that intellectuals adopt and which affect our concepts. They are founding principles entrenched in many of our institutions and they affect the details of our lives.

Chapter 8: The Practice of These Preachings: The Institutionalization of
Conflict Assumptions

While most of us usually do not seem to talk about what we know and do in tidy Galilean and instrumentalist terms, there is still a strong tendency to think that our knowledge and action take these forms. For these seem to provide the clearest and most legitimate rhetoric for justifying our beliefs and plans.

People who resist describing their insight or activity in these terms are usually thought to be doing something peculiar-- at least from a cognitive point of view-- probably suspect. For example, many historians claim to have a distinctly non-Galilean, "narrative" understanding. But their insight is often dismissed as "merely anecdotal" and is widely supposed to not embody genuine (i.e., scientific) knowledge. To take a second example, artists often refuse to explain their work in instrumentalist terms and they deny their works have any goal-- or at least no goal like the sort served by street signs, anatomical drawings, or advertisements. But many people (perhaps most) do not consider art a source of authentic knowledge-- at least not any public knowledge which can play a legitimate role in deciding issues of public concern.

When differences of opinion give rise to problems and we need to think about what we believe and do, we try to think out answers in Galilean and instrumentalist terms-- and we end up construing these differences in plans and opinions as conflicts. Further, when we find we need help and we turn to experts for advice, we tend to expect their knowledge to be as scientific as possible. We do not want to listen to stories and poems. We expect their proposals for action to be rational ones based on accurate, instrumentalist assessments of the costs and benefits of the alternatives available. We want professional advice.

There was a time, however, when people had no modern professionals to consult. There was no AMA, ABA, NEA, AFT, or Triple A for motorists. If they needed advice, people turned to elders, lords, priests, and people who could tell old stories well. That has changed, and with the change have come alterations in the fabric of our culture. These alterations have tailored the institutions of our society to fit with assumptions that provide a conflict centered view of human activity.

It is somewhat difficult to say what things were different in the Middle Ages, but it is clear that they were different. Tradition laid claim to being the chief source of genuine knowledge. When questions arose, people appealed to venerable custom or turned to texts whose authority rested on divine or classical authorship. These were rarely cut and dried. Europe was a crazy quilt of culture, and customs governing people’s acts were highly varied and often quite specific to local communities. But evaluations of people and their actions were made in terms of functions that were thought to be natural to them. Choices were based on beliefs about the customary, natural purposes of things-- not on the basis of cost/benefit calculations.

There were two great shifts which changed all this. The first was led by the class of capitalists, the class Karl Marx critiqued. It was a class whose power derived from the control of the means of economic
production. The second shift was led by the professionals, "the new middle class." This second class played the historical role Marx had wrongly assigned to the working class "proletariat." It was a class whose power derived from control of the means of the production of authoritative opinion.

This second class arose because of a cultural lacuna created by the displacements brought on by the activities of the capitalists. People were uprooted by capitalism, uprooted from jobs, homes, communities, consumption patterns and traditions of all sorts. The new professionals organized, sectored off domains in which they could claim expertise and gained the support of the state and public opinion for their claims to authority. They delivered the non-material goods, the beliefs and practices that fill our culture today. Both the capitalists and the new professionals employed three techniques which radically transformed our culture: abstraction, standardization and aggregation.

In the Middle Ages, workers, their labor, and its products were connected in a complex network of parochial and often intimate ties to a variety of natural, social, political and religious aspects of the community. With the coming of the industrial revolution, worker and labor and product were increasingly divorced from these ties. To the purchaser of coal or cloth in London, the details of who produced the goods and how were irrelevant. What mattered was that it be the kinds of coal or cloth they desired. The low cost of mass produced goods placed a premium on treating things in mass ways, abstracting from their origins and standardizing them. The same premium was placed on the standardization of workers and their labor. Workers got identified by job types and labor was characterized in terms of production routines.

Such abstraction and standardization were the economic analogue of the process of generalization occurring in the sciences. Galileo ignored the origins of the objects he rolled down inclined planes and science overall sought to classify things in terms of general types. The "initial and subsequent conditions" governed by causal laws were not complete conditions; they were not describable by taking into account the sorts of features of things attended to in the Middle Ages. Coal became, for the capitalist and scientist alike, a standardized substance. Likewise, for the social scientist, capitalist, and social worker human beings became standardized entities as well-- "Cockney adolescent males," "semi-skilled lorry drivers," or "head-of-household welfare clients."

In Western Europe, the chief force at work to effect these changes was the market system. But since Stalin it has become clear that markets are not essential; a command economy can serve to move a culture into the modern era. What is essential is that things be dealt in standardized types and considered in abstraction and moved in a flow of goods and services which is aggregated by some centralizing mechanism. The net result is a vast and complex social mechanism serving the desires and aversions of people who manipulate it in instrumental ways.

The economic transformations brought a variety of social problems. In response, non-economic aspects of society have been abstracted, standardized, and aggregated in analogous ways. Social welfare is administered to types of clients who qualify in specified ways and are dealt with en masse. Schools, medical facilities, penal systems, and other institutions have been developed along similar lines.
We have, in effect, developed a culture which institutionalizes the patterns of regularity and the ideals of mechanical efficacy which are projected by the Galilean view of knowledge and the instrumentalist view of action. There are other kinds of knowledge and action which enable the system to run-- the "wisdom" of the Mayor Daley variety, the "art" of good teaching, and the "knack" of negotiating good business deals. But the social system in which we live is presented as a network of standard cases governed by general rules. It is pictured as a network of means and ends.

In this sense, we live in the midst of a social reality whose practices commit us to Galilean and instrumentalist ideas seem natural, inevitable and correct without question. Of course knowledge must be scientific! Of course rational actions are ones we have chosen carefully to make the best means achieve our preferred end! What else could useful knowledge or rational action be? And this picture of the way reality works commits us to assumptions that spell out a conflict centered view of human activity.

Two other ways in which conflict views of human activity are embedded in our culture are worth note, one because it is so obvious and familiar, and the second because it is so basic and pervasive. The first is a common conception of negotiation. It is a view characterized (and critiqued) rather neatly by Roger Fisher and William Ury in their Getting to Yes

Whether a negotiation concerns a contract, a family quarrel or a peace settlement among nations, people routinely engage in positional bargaining. Each side takes a position, argues for it, and makes concessions to reach a compromise. The classic example of this negotiating minuet is the haggling that takes place between a customer and the proprietor of a second-hand store:

Customer: How much do you want for this dish?

Shopkeeper: That is a beautiful antique, isn’t it? I guess I could let it go for $75.

Customer: Oh come on, it’s dented. I’ll give you $15.

Shopkeeper: Really! I might consider a serious offer, but $15 certainly isn’t serious.

Customer: Well, I could go up to $20, but I would never pay anything like $75. Quote me a realistic price.

Shopkeeper: You drive a hard bargain, young lady. $60 cash, right now.

Customer: $25

Shopkeeper: It cost me a great deal more than that. Make me a SERIOUS offer.

Customer: $37.50. That’s the highest I will go.
Shopkeeper: Have you noticed the engraving on that dish? Next year pieces like that will be worth twice what you pay today.

And so it goes, on and on. Perhaps they will reach agreement; perhaps not.1

This is a familiar and in many ways classic type of positional bargaining. These are two sides trying to agree on the distribution of some goods or sources of welfare (like crockery or cash). The players assume that the distribution can be described in terms of a linear continuum measured, for example, by quantities of money. The players also suppose that an increase in the welfare of one requires a decrease in the welfare of the other-- and, in that sense, that their interests are opposed.

Metaphors from physics of movement tend to structure the understanding of this kind of negotiation: people push, pull, resist, hold back, create friction, acquire inertia and so on. We can think of bargaining as a general type of game that can be played in many contexts and in different styles. The stakes at issue may be household goods in a divorce settlement or work hours and wages in a labor negotiation or missiles and warheads in an arms treaty. Players can adopt a hard bargaining strategy and hold out to maximize their wins in the current round of talks or they may adopt a soft bargaining strategy to maximize amicability in this and future talks and expedite the reaching of a settlement now.

This particular picture of negotiation-- classic positional bargaining-- is very prominent in our thought and practice. It influences the ways in which people practice law, make real estate deals, settle on wages and salaries, dicker over legislation, and barter for international treaties. It is deeply entrenched in a wide variety of institutions such as courts, corporations, and Congress. It is at work in local yard sales and arms negotiations in Vienna. It is laced through our language as well. When people want to reach an agreement with us and they make a proposal, we find them offering "to make a deal" and we listen for "their first offer" and we adopt an initial "position" and then wonder who will give in the most and who will win on this round. In countless ways we act as though life is a game whose essence is conflict-- and the name of the game is "Winning."

One other conflict-related view central to our culture concerns a way of understanding the overall character of our relations with other human beings. We tend to view them in terms of the category of "the Other." The French philosopher Simone de Beauvoir introduced this phase in The Second Sex. Though her analysis can be generalized to a wide variety of relations between groups, her analysis there is directed toward relations between men and women. Her central thesis is that women have been traditionally defined and treated as "the Other" and, by this, she means a number of distinct things.

Perhaps the simplest and most central kernal of the notion turns on a distinction that arose in post-Kantian philosophy and out of which Sarte and other existentialists got in a good deal of mileage. It is the distinction between persons and things-- or "subjects" and "objects." Persons are rational and thinking agents who interpret their world, synthesizing it in judgements that define the things they encounter. Things are objects that are thought about.
Martin Buber articulated this distinction by speaking of the "I/Thou" relations in contrast to "I/it" relations. In one case we deal with other people with whom we converse and share a sense of joint responsibility; we take our talk and interaction to involve a reciprocity or mutuality. In contrast, in "I/it" relations we deal with things which we have defined and which we manipulate but which we can take to be neither free nor responsible nor capable of conversing with us. Typically, when a prosecutor and defense attorney discuss the case of a child or insane person with a judge, they address each other as "I" and "you" but simply talk about the child or insane person as "he" or "she" or "it." One way to put de Beauvoir’s thesis is to say that woman has been defined as an object, as "the Other" which men talk about but do not address and share genuine conversation with.

But this grossly oversimplifies de Beauvoir’s analysis. For she does not mean to say that women are never in any way conversed with, only that viewing them as object (for voyeurism or intercourse or breeding or housework or cheerleading) is a prominent motif-- one which women as well as men have adapted to and learned to exploit. Further, it is a motif in complex thematic relations to other ways men view women. For instance, woman is also "the Other" in the sense that she is the outsider. Part of the contrast here is between that which is same and that which is different (or other). Men are the same as "us"; women are different, unlike, strange, mysterious, incomprehensible...

Notice that we sometimes count: "one, then the other, then the third..." Women are "Other" also in the sense that they are second-- second in worth, second in importance. On de Beauvoir’s analysis, women are "secondary" in the sense that they are lesser and deprived-- less fully rational, strong, and courageous. They are the second by contrast (as well as privation) because they rely on feeling rather than reason, physical charms rather than physical strength and manipulative abuses of dependancy rather than courageous self assertion.

There are a variety of analogues de Beauvoir explores to try to capture features of ways men have related to women, analogues which are similar and yet importantly distinct: master versus slave, capitalist versus proletarian, adult versus child, white versus black, civilized versus primitive, and Protestant versus Jew. Other analogues could be explored as well: professional versus client, priest versus layman, sports participant versus spectator, and chair versus committee member. All the analogues can, in turn, be illuminated by comparison and contrast with relations between men and women. "The Other" names of a kind of social syndrome which occurs in various ways across a broad spectrum of social divisions we commonly construe in terms of conflict.

These various relations are not just metaphors which social researchers can use to build theories. These are metaphors employed in practice by participants in our social world. In some cases the employment of the analogue is quite explicit, in others it is perhaps more subliminal. Some men quite literally and self-consciously conceive of women as outsiders; some simply patronize them in the distinctive manner of professionals dealing with clients (thought they have never given the analogue any conscious thought). These metaphors we live by can operate in a wide variety of ways.
Chapter 4:

To speak here of "the Other" is not to offer a neat and well defined concept but to employ a kind of motif which gives direction and thematic unity to these varied ways of relating to groups of humans who differ from ourselves. The dominant thread to which the theme of the Other serves to give prominence is a distinctive way of understanding difference between people-- namely, by understanding them as oppositions.

In this regard, the notion of the Other serves as a kind of leit-motif for all of the conflict categories we have discussed in the foregoing chapters. Those categories form a complex family relating in various ways. But all understand difference as opposition. It is as thought they suppose that a kind of "law of excluded middle" holds for all human difference. When there are two different choices or responses made to a situation, it is thought that one must be acceptable and the other not acceptable. There is a right one as over against...the other.

The list here does not exhaust the assumptions and practices relevant to the conflict centered views in our culture. But at this point we have seen that a strong case can be made for the following summary conclusion. We live in a culture in which predominant conceptions of reason, feeling, meaning, value, truth, and the self characterize activity in terms of conflict, and this view is buttressed by conceptions of knowledge and action which are entrenched in the dominant institutions of our society. We find it difficult to conceive of human activities in ways which do not make conflict an essential feature of it. In this sense, we live in a culture of conflict and, for us, it remains difficult to conceive of peace in any way other than as a static absence.

It would seem, then, that we face an alternative. Either these practices and assumptions are realistic and correct and peace is, in fact, nothing more than a static absence or the nature of peace has indeed been radically obscured... and deep rooted assumptions and practices in our culture are flawed.