

SPACE LIZARDS AND POD PEOPLE

*Reclaiming liberty from the [central controlling entity]:
a conversational revision to the SNaP*

by Brian Wright

Introduction

Some of my readers know that in February 2009 I published a monograph entitled the Sacred Nonaggression Principle, in which I attempt to project a world where people and governments learn to practice the nonaggression principle as a matter of the highest moral achievement. Sales have not been encouraging. Upon some self-criticism of the work, I found that it lacked the conversational style that might make it more inviting to the average reader. What follows is the new map of the next substantial revision of the Sacred Nonaggression Principle, and its first chapter rough draft. I'm offering it on the Coffee Coaster in hopes of garnering some constructive criticism and comments. Please convey these to me via email, or through a subscribing and posting to the Coffee Coaster Blog. Thanks. — bw

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Map of the New Sacred Nonaggression Principle

Here's where I "tell you what I'm going to tell you" in the book:

Chapter	Description
1: Kindergarten Lessons	Leading off with notions that hail from the simplest maxims humans learn from childhood. Robert Fulghum's book <i>Everything I Know I Learned in Kindergarten</i> spells it out: 1) Don't hit, 2) Don't steal, 3) Be honest. By another name the Kindergarten Rules are the nonaggression principle. It makes sense to hold them in the highest regard in society.
2: Nonaggression 101	This chapter describes what aggression is and what it is not; It also develops the nonaggression principle as an offshoot of the historical growth of psychological independence in human beings. I expand on the connection between spiritual enlightenment and the NaP, as well as the NaP's foundation of core values, especially in America.

3: Big Universal Problem	The problem today: political tyranny. This chapter focuses on the more concrete level of what ails (particularly American) society these days: just who benefits from the NaP. How does the BUP get foisted on basically decent humanity. Space-lizard theory basics.
4: "We" and "They"	The full theoretical framework behind the Nonaggression principle. Why aggression proliferates via collectivist ideologies. The origin of Space Lizard psychology, how it relies on massive deception to turn humankind toward the dark side. The Julian Jayne concept of the "bicameral mind" for origins of authoritarianism (necessitating pod people).
5: Benefits of the NaP	As identified in some of my writings on the Coffee Coaster Website and on deaggress.org, the three main benefits of raising the nonaggression principle to the highest order are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Peace <input type="checkbox"/> Safe streets <input type="checkbox"/> Abundance Chapter 5 explains these primary benefits, some ancillary benefits, as well as the overarching gain in spiritual growth we may expect.
6: Strategy and Tactics	Chapter 6 deals with ideas for quickly spreading the NaP meme into society. Some tables and graphs also provide intellectual ammunition for acting effectively locally... building a society without coercion from the ground up. Practical tools.
Glossary of Terms	Mainly for the benefit of those unfamiliar with the "libertarian industry."
Appendices	More NaP field guide type tools.

Note: The first edition began with a statement of the problem—the Big Universal Problem (BUP)—and argued from the abstract to the concrete: almost as a mathematical proof. And while some people's minds do work that way (mine, for instance), probably I lost many readers at "Hello." This second edition starts by

socializing a self-evident truth from our childhood experience, then buttresses that truth as a universal, applicable among adults in any decent civilization.

Then when I discuss the theoretical elements of my argument—namely the psychological roots of the BUP (how and why the natural inclination of normal humans toward nonaggression has been thwarted)—I use a couple of metaphors to imaginatively enhance these psychological causes of legitimized aggression in society: Alien Space Lizards and Pod People. [No, I do not actually believe aliens and pod people exist, masquerading as humans... well, hmmm. George W. Bush? Barack Obama? (Man, if Dick Cheney isn't a liz, who is?)]

1: Getting Started: Kindergarten Lessons: Some simple rules of childhood

Summary:

Leading off with axioms of proper behavior that hail from the maxims most humans learn from our earliest days: 1) Don't hit, 2) Don't steal, 3) Don't lie. Let us respect, even 'worship,' these ideas as adults.

Definition:

The simple nonaggression principle holds no human being—or organization of human beings—shall initiate the use of force against others. The simple NaP becomes 'sacred' when regarded as the highest moral principle in society.

The above definition of aggression is fairly conventional in libertarian circles, and banning "the initiation of physical force" uses phrasing from the nonfictional writings of Ayn Rand and her supporters. It's very precise wording that leaves little room for misunderstanding as to what aggression is or is not.

Let's Pretend We're Five-Year Olds

Remember. in the Tom Hanks movie Philadelphia, the attorney character played by Denzel Washington. He is investigating the conduct of Hanks' company, the nature of the AIDS disease, and applicable law. When Denzel thinks some authority in these matters is being obtuse or trying to snow him, he says "Hey, pretend I'm a five-year old." In other words, don't beat around the bush, give me the facts in plain English a child can understand. Conveniently, the basic idea I'm trying to convince you of is something most of us learned when we were five years old.

Kindergarten Rules

What is aggression? I've found that the best starting point comes from a marvelous book by a Mr. Robert Fulghum called, All I Really Need To Know I Learned in Kindergarten. The book is a collection of some of his life experiences, from which he usually distills a moral.

In the particular short story that lends the book its title, Fulghum concludes that kindergarten mainly taught him the following moral:

The Rules:

- Don't hit
- Don't steal

❑ Don't lie

As I recall, "Don't lie" was formulated as "Keep your promises," but you get the message. Sure, there are several related lessons Fulghum remembers from kindergarten—such as cleaning up your mess, putting things back where you find them, washing your hands, flushing, etc. But these simple Kindergarten Rules have been popularized among journalists and pundits as the common-sense way to get along in society.

Times have changed and I have no idea if the Kindergarten Rules are still stressed, especially in the government schools. There, for all I know the average teacher dispenses prescribed doses of Ritalin and Valium, then when the children calm down, heads to the teachers' lounge for a Prozac cocktail.

So where did "the Rules" come from, and what makes them so special? I write from an American context, and my possibly parochial judgment is that the Kindergarten Rules are a distillation, for children, of the fundamental truths embedded in the country's founding: the Inalienable Rights of Man and equality before the law.

In other words, because it is right for every individual to take action required for life and happiness, let no one else—especially the state—wrong the individual by forcibly interfering with those actions... by aggressing upon or coercing the individual. In a child's world aggression or coercion are primarily seen as "hitting, stealing, or lying."

Moral Tenets

Religious and secular-philosophic foundations also exist for ingraining the Rules in kids' minds. The Abrahamic religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—all have injunctions against stealing... whether the object of theft is a golden chalice, a shekel, or carnal knowledge of someone else's wife. [They also proscribe killing, unless God gives you the green light.]

All great systems of moral thought require as a minimum that you follow the Golden Rule (at least among your own people). Accordingly, the formal, enforceable rules of conduct—i.e., laws—in every civil society are based on each individual (well, okay, males) at least being able to keep his stuff from being ripped off by the force or fraud of other individuals. Then—as we proceed thru the Enlightenment's concept of liberty—monarchs, oligarchs, and governments are also restricted from taking your things or infringing on the peaceful being of you.

The latter paragraph expresses reasons for practicing the adult principle—the nonaggression principle—but it's easy to see how these reasons apply on the playground: "Johnny," the teacher says, "I think you can see by not starting the use of force (that is, hitting Joey, taking lunch money from Sam, or turning in Lisa's homework as your own) your world becomes better. Not only do you escape punishment from me; others will tend to give you the same respect you give them."

Core Values

Closely related to the moral premises of civil societies that disallow aggression—premises that the Kindergarten Rules embody—are the "sacred" values that all good citizens in a given society intuitively understand and accept. In the United States today there's even a "Core Values" movement, but let's just pick some of the standard phrases that we regard as key American ideals:

- ❑ Rule of law
- ❑ Equality of rights
- ❑ Life, liberty, and property
- ❑ Popular sovereignty
- ❑ Separation of powers
- ❑ Sanctity of family
- ❑ Home as a castle
- ❑ Justice is impartial
- ❑ No legal privileges
- ❑ Respect for authority
- ❑ Honoring our elders And so on.

The logical path from the behavioral axioms of childhood, the Kindergarten Rules, leads thru religious tenets and core values to the prescription for the Big Universal Problem (BUP): the nonaggression principle. [I'll make that argument later.]

Growing Up to the Nonaggression Rule

As we put away childish things, and if we've largely abided by the Kindergarten Rules, then the adoption of the nonaggression principle becomes second nature to us.

Free State grassroots master-philosopher Dan Stuart (frequently consulted in the writing of this book) suggests that human societies warrant a secular, generic ceremony marking the entry of an individual into adulthood. "Today, I become self-responsible. I shall practice the nonaggression principle of my own free will. From now on, no one is the boss of me... and vice versa."

As an all-American thought experiment, please consider, out of all the people you've met in your adult life from every social station, how many would steal directly from another human being... or beat them or defraud them: How many? One in a hundred? One in a thousand?

The point is—whether the number of persons is 1/100 or 1/1000—darned few of us believe in or practice one-on-one, human-to-human aggression. Moreover, the average person absolutely detests anyone who would intentionally commit the smallest act of assault, theft, or dishonesty.

Thus, as Americans, as a consequence of the Kindergarten Rules, then later as we embrace—through moral tenets and core values—those rules more conceptually in the form of the nonaggression principle, we overwhelmingly will not directly initiate force against another. I repeat, 99.9% of Americans, one on one, will not aggress upon and despise the 0.1% who would.

Not Under Any Circumstances

Let's return to kindergarten and recall that a key element in the teaching of the Rules was "no wiggle room." In other words, Johnny didn't get a special allowance to use Lisa's homework on only one particularly difficult problem... or 1/2 a problem or 1/4 a problem. Or let's say he "meant well" and his parents assert convincingly that the

community will be wondrously benefited by Johnny receiving an A on his report card. Nope. Under the Kindergarten Rules, such shading, quibbling, and evasion don't cut the mustard.

Life is simple, don't aggress.

The idea of "no exceptions" is closely tied to the adult practice of the nonaggression principle, too. In our thought experiment, do you think any of the 999 people care one whit that someone's sad childhood gives him a craving to hurt others. Not at all; we all have to play by the same rules. So long as you wish to remain in society, the nonaggression principle is an absolute. Indeed, a willingness to abide by the nonaggression principle is the condition a society typically applies to the right of enjoying freedom.

No Privileged Ones

I remember once in fifth grade when the teacher accosted me for disrupting the class, I pointed to my partner in disruption and said, "What about Suzy? She started it!" I admit it's not a great example; I'm basically ratting out my friend... and a girl at that. What a wimp! [Plus it didn't turn out well for me: the teacher was a reform-school psycho-enforcer type who grabbed me by my shirtfront and literally threw me out the open door like a shuffleboard weight.]

But the idea is that nobody should be exempt from the Rules simply because they're a teacher's pet or—in the grownup world—because they provide special services for a policeman, prosecutor, judge, or politician. On the broader scale, consistent with the country's founding, "No titles of nobility" shall be granted that enable one class of people to subordinate or loot the wherewithal of another class. Equality before the law = a core value.

QED

We have the Kindergarten Rules (KRs) on the one hand for children and the nonaggression principle (NaP) on the other for adults. I believe it's straightforward to show that a) the KRs—practiced absolutely and equally—result in the best of all possible political worlds for children, and b) the NaP—practiced consistently and equally—results in the best of all possible political worlds for everyone.

First an Important Concept: Justice

Before demonstrating the ideal outcome of applying the KRs and the nonaggression principle system wide, let's develop the important ancillary concept of justice. We can be confident that the NaP society—to the extent everyone accepts the NaP—will be a just society. But here's the rub: "Utopia is not an option." Some people are going to violate the NaP. Justice is the process of restoring as much as possible society to its nonaggression principle condition in nature.

So justice is a) a condition in society where an individual is free from the initiation of force by others and b) suitable compensation for the victim when (in an imperfect world) aggression occurs. I'm only bringing this up to satisfy those who may claim that I'm not considering reality in proposing a NaP-based system. So there will still be criminals—simply defined as individuals who violate the NaP—and systems to deal with them. But the miniscule justice system will be like night and day compared to our current aggression-embedded system, where governments are composed of hundreds of

thousands of legalized aggressors (true criminals)... at the prosecutorial, police, legislative, and judicial levels.

KRs => Best for Children

Clearly justice is served in a Kindergarten Rules system to the extent the KRs are adhered to by the greater number of children. Without the fear that they will be abused by a gang or another individual, the young people go about their days with a larger measure of confidence and joy in the creative process. Hence, creativity is enhanced. Individuals feel less fear in expressing themselves and establishing their unique interests... and, yes, differences from others.

Some of these individual qualities may further distinguish the young person in the degree of skill manifested in them relative to others. In a KR-conforming system, excelling at one activity is not a threat to others, because nothing about that ability—let's say firearms' proficiency or martial (or an activity that however indirectly may be used aggressively)—poses a threat to the common principle: we, as human children, do not "hit," "steal," or "lie."

Finally—and this is especially necessary to comment upon today with the prevalence of psychological collectivism—children tend to learn who they are. They are much more receptive to being individuals; indeed they welcome this healthy form of nonaggressive egoism just as they delight in the differences with their peers. Indeed, this "delighting in the differences"—which is a corollary of the KRs—becomes icing on the cake of the universal desire for and accomplishment of a wonderful individuality.

Our joy in being different unites us.

NaP => Best for Everyone

Everything we see in the children's world in which the Kindergarten Rules are applied rigorously can be observed in an adult society in which few people aggress AND in which virtually no act of systematic legalized (i.e. government) aggression ever occurs. Imagine that sort of society for a brief moment.

My Own Brief Vision of an Aggression-Free World

I envision the end of destroying people's lives with the American prosecutocracy and especially the drug war; none of my friend's sons or daughters get shipped overseas to get killed and maimed for the real war machine; children are liberated from the state-school indoctrination system, and finally learn to read and to write; so much productive energy is released that scarcity no longer exists (food and medical care are as freely available as television sports), people, now freed from state aggression, accelerate their intelligence to reach the next evolutionary stage of consciousness; systems of transportation (absent the compulsory automotive mode) enable you quickly travel anywhere for next to nothing, without having to handle a car; around the world there are no more prisons qua concentration camps and no more torture anywhere (including the United States); geographic boundaries no longer exist except to define voluntary associations called communities; I can cross the tunnel from Detroit to Windsor, Ontario (Canada), and back, the same as going from Detroit to Flint and back; people—possibly from a spirit of pride now that have escaped being part of a dirty government-run looting and killing system—take care of themselves far better and care for their appearance; longevity science ends disease and aging (for those who wish to embrace the therapies); green technologies, no longer shackled by corporate-state protection rackets, sweep the

world; human colonization of the near planets and asteroid belts commences immediately upon the establishment of an aggression-free social system.

What's your vision?

[Some transitional verbiage, from the concrete to the abstract principles that are confirmed.]

The Adult World of Nonaggression

[In this subsection, I'll discuss the differences between the Kindergarten Rules and the adult world of the NaP. Also the logical connection, such that the KR's are a reasonable foundation for the NaP axioms in full society. Even though the KR's function in the context with a "teacher as ruler," that doesn't mean she's a monarch. Similar to minimal-government for adults, she's only there as a vehicle to assure the NaP.]

[Also note the NaP is a minimum LCD, many more virtues are desirable and proper. On to NaP 101.]

So that's my first chapter and outline of the revised SNaP. Does it grab anyone? Does it step into the subject?

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