

The naked ape essay

[Sociology](#), [Violence](#)



The Naked Ape Essay My question is " After all we've evolved from, why can we still not control some of our animal-like instincts? " One possible answer is that no matter how much we evolve, we will always just be fancy apes.

Desmond Morris said himself " Homo Sapiens have remained a naked ape nevertheless. " (The Naked Ape, page 9). To me, this is quite sad. However, I'm far from disagreeing with him. Apes can be extremely vicious and very easy to anger. Don't we all know humans like that? And while not all people are like that, deep down, I'm pretty sure we all have a dark, ape-like side. I know that if people could read my mind, I would have been arrested a long time ago. The fact that most people can contain the violent thoughts they have is a sign that we have evolved from the apes, at least a little bit.

However, there are still some people that act on these violent thoughts. How could some humans evolve from apes more than others? My thought is that maybe the humans that try to contain their violent instincts are attempting to hide who they truly are: fancy apes. Maybe the people that we call sick, crazy monstrosities are the only true human beings. The quote " His old impulses have been with him for millions of years, his new ones only a few thousand at the most - and there is no hope of quickly shrugging off the accumulated genetic legacy of his whole revolutionary past. " (The Naked Ape, page 9) supports this thought. I often wonder why we try so hard to pretend like we're this great, superior species, when in all actuality we're really not that different from other animals at all. Sigmund Freud said " It is a general principle, then, that conflicts of interest between men are settled by the use of violence. This is true of the whole animal kingdom, from which men have no business to exclude themselves. " (Why War?, page 8) I

completely agree, and frankly, I think it's kind of pathetic that so many people try to pretend that they aren't as savage as their fellow animals. Another possible answer is that deep down, maybe we don't want to evolve. One of my favorite things to do is to play the role of a villain in a play. I get to be bad, and I don't get in trouble for it. And really, who enjoys being good all the time? I know I don't. Is that my ape-like nature showing? Morris said " It is a fact that the most level-headed intellectuals frequently become violently aggressive when discussing the urgent need to suppress aggression. " (The Naked Ape, page 146) I'm not a very violent person, but one time I caught this kid picking on my baby brother, and I punched him as hard as I could right in the gut. I didn't regret it then, I don't now, and I never will. That's pretty ape-like, isn't it? It is, and I couldn't care less. It seems like I don't really want to change my ape-like behaviors. It's the same thing with parents. If someone's child is threatened, what are they going to do? They're going to protect them at all cost. I once had a teacher look at my whole entire class and say with a straight face " If anyone ever hurt my son, I would put him in a meat grinder feet-first. I would go to jail for the rest of my life, and I would wake up smiling every morning. " That's horrible, right? Or is it just who we are? Morris said " The prolonged dependency of the young, forcing us to adopt pair-bonded family units, demanded yet another form of self-assertion. Each male, as the head of a family, became involved in defending his own individual home base inside the general colony base. " (The Naked Ape, page 148) Morris claims that loving and protecting your family was evolved from self-preservation. Self-preservation is an animal instinct, is it not? So it's ape-like, but do we want to change that? Of course

not! Freud said " In union there is strength. " (Why War?, page 9) That means the only reason I love my family and I want them to be safe is because deep down, I know that I wouldn't be as safe without them. I hate to think that that might be true, because that makes me feel like a terrible person. But then again, aren't all humans just a big ball of selfishness? A third possible answer is that maybe we just don't have the capacity to change. This differs from my first answer because my first answer suggests that we haven't really evolved as much as we think we have. This third answer suggests that some animals might be able to become " greater" than they are now, but humans can't. Maybe this is as good as it gets for our species. It almost makes me angry, thinking that a chimpanzee might eventually be able to accomplish more than me. I mean, I'm a human. I'm part of the smartest species in the world, right? If that's true, why am I not able to suppress the urge to hit someone in the gut as hard as I can? Morris said " Basically, they (apes) either switch off the signals that have been arousing the aggression, or they switch on other, positively non-aggressive signals. " (The Naked Ape, page 157) An ape can calm itself down, and I can't? Not just me, either. There are tons of people in the world with anger issues. We're actually almost more ape-like than apes themselves. Now, that's pretty pathetic. When I get mad at someone, all I want to do is hit them. I usually choose not to act on it (maybe because I'm subconsciously in denial of my ape-like nature as well), but that still doesn't hide the fact that attacking said person is my natural animal instinct. Morris said that when apes are threatened, they " simply calm the dominant animal down...send out signals that stimulate a non-aggressive response... (and) involve the

arousal of the mood to groom or be groomed. " (The Naked Ape, pages 157-158) When you're mad at someone, do you try to groom them? No, you most likely don't. Apes are smart enough to realize that violence isn't a good thing, and we aren't. That's very sad, in my opinion. We should be able to control our instinct to fight and kill, like the apes can. We should, in theory, be more like the apes. So maybe my question shouldn't be " After all we've evolved from, why can we still not control some of our ape-like instincts? " Maybe my question should be " After all we've supposedly evolved from, why can we still not be more like the apes? " Freud said " Domination by whoever had the greater might — domination by brute violence or by violence supported by intellect. " (Why War?, page 9) Is that really what we live by? Is brute violence all we know? If so, then I'd much rather be an ape. In conclusion, human beings just flat-out aren't the best species in the world. I'm not sure what species is, and I'm not sure I will never know. Some people might think that I'm cynical for thinking this. Maybe I am, but do you not have doubts about our species as well?