

“JOE SOMEBODY”: THE SOCIAL ORIGINS OF COLLECTIVE VIOLENCE

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ABSTRACT

This research examines factors that lead ordinary people to commit extraordinarily evil acts in war, genocide, and collective violence. Collective violence is by definition a collective problem; it takes over large parts of whole societies. It takes numbers of willing, ordinary perpetrators to commit collective violence, ordinary men like Josip Budimcic – an accused war criminal from Croatia who now operates a handyman business on Salt Spring Island under the trade name "Joe Somebody". Part I of the paper examines approaches taken to answer the question of extraordinary evil, from pre-Enlightenment ethics to modern sociological accounts of genocide and collective violence. Findings from psychology and social psychology are synthesized to provide an account of social conditions and psychological defence mechanisms that enable ordinary perpetrators to quickly and easily adapt to the moral norms and principles of a Culture of Cruelty, and to justify the perpetration of violence against target groups.

Part II of the paper examines the evolution of moral agency in humans, which is mirrored by the development of moral agency in the individual. As evidenced by numerous findings from social psychology, the local and immediate social environment primarily governs our behaviour, including moral judging and moral decision making. The social environment takes precedence over character and personal dispositional factors, religion, and cultural worldview. It operates in the short-term, and is very malleable. Moral decision making, as with our cognitive abilities generally, evolved in the human lineage to develop within and to respond primarily to this close social environment. The cognitive representational structures of modern humans developed out of the primordial episodic representational mind of primates and the early hominids. Upon the early episodic mind, which categorizes and adapts to the local and immediate environment, is built the particularly human mimetic representational mind which further abstracts from the episode the representation of the social environment as a whole. The social order, social roles and expectations, and third party norm reinforcement are all quintessentially human products of the mimetic representational mind.

Sentiments are largely unconscious mimetic projections that enable humans to automatically classify, make judgments, and adapt to a dynamic and complex social environment. Sentiments are distinguished from the episodic emotions upon which their cognitive forms are based. The sentiments held by those who engage in altruistic and pro-social

behaviours, as exemplified by rescuers in Nazi-occupied Europe, are then contrasted with those held by bystanders and perpetrators of collective violence and genocide. The main difference between these three groups lies in the nature of the sentiments developed in early childhood within the family and reinforced by the individual's immediate social environment. Rescuers had a strong sense of acceptance, expressed in universal and expansive sentiments of sympathy towards others. Unlike bystanders and perpetrators, rescuers did not hold sentiments of victimization, hatred, or repugnance towards target groups. Rescuers had a strong sense of personal conscience, with an integrated and centrovverted personality. This points the way towards transformations that could affect both personal and group consciousness to prevent and heal groups threatened by collective violence.

Keywords: psychology of genocide; sociology of genocide; emotional cognition; neuropsychology; evolutionary ethics; neuroethics.

Subject Terms: Genocide – Psychological Aspects; Genocide – Sociological Aspects; Social Sciences and Psychoanalysis; Emotions – Social Aspects; Cognition and Culture; Ethics, Evolutionary.

DEDICATION

For my Husband, who is ever a hero to me.

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PREFACE

I came to this project after many years of questioning why human beings come to commit collective violence, why so many people so willingly participate, and why the stories I heard - from the Holocaust, from the judgments of international tribunals, from the refugee claimants I encountered in my law practice - were so similar, separated as they are by country, by culture, and by decades. I asked why it could be that these crimes are so readily excused, both by our culture and by the courts our culture has founded to establish accountability, and why these gravest of crimes are so readily set aside - relegated to Clausewitz's "fog of war" -even by those institutions tasked with ending their impunity and writing their histories upon the collective memory.

I also came to this project as a practicing lawyer, embarking upon a journey of inquiry that would take me through such disciplines as history, moral philosophy, social psychology, psychoanalysis and evolutionary theory. I do not pretend to be an expert in any of these disciplines, as any expert will readily discern, nor have I sought to provide an exhaustive review of the arguments and controversies currently taking place within those disciplines concerning the subjects discussed. Instead, I have chosen to examine the findings from these various disciplines to wield them into one account of the social origins of collective violence. As such, I have begun with the most important commentators and the most accessible works, those works most useful for a new entrant into this area of scholarship. From there, I followed up sources and worked my way through them concentrically until I found some illumination on the questions I was asking. As such, I hope the reader will forgive the many omissions I have made of some very valuable sources, some important commentators, and many relevant journal articles in this area. I certainly hope that the present synthesis is enlightening, but I cannot hope to claim that it is exhaustive.

Incidents of collective violence and the political dislocations they engender can throw us up, scatter us to foreign places, and force us to resettle and piece our lives back together. They sear themselves into the memories of the survivors and their descendants. From the pogroms of Russia, to the Holocaust of WWII, to the Gulf War and its violent aftermath of Shiite rebellions and government reprisals, these stories we tell of these events explain why we came to live where we live, why we came to love whom we love, why we have the children that we do. They are also stories of rescue, of fortitude and deliverance. We tell the stories of how my husband

risked his life to bring some water and apples to the starving residents of his besieged neighbourhood. We tell the stories of how he simply walked into the fortified compound of the occupying military commander and demanded the commander release his kidnapped neighbours. There are the stories of how those same rescued neighbours denounced him as a conspirator of the old regime, so as to better ensure their freedom under the newly-reinstated one, and of how easily he shrugs this off. There are the stories of how he took his little brother by the hand and led him to safety through streets of blood and over bodies the Prince has the luxury to decree never existed. Even as they defy the official version of events, stories of collective violence in their telling and retelling shape our characters, inform our sentiments and transform our cultures, and they belong to the generations. This is just one story.

Tracey Leigh Dowdeswell
Kingdom of Kuwait, December 2008

1 "JOE SOMEBODY": THE SOCIAL ORIGINS OF COLLECTIVE VIOLENCE



Figure 1. Serbian paramilitary soldiers rejoice after taking Vukovar in 1991 (BBC News, 9 March 2004). Photo: Associated Press.

2 INTRODUCTION



Figure 2. Map of Eastern Slavonia, including the Ovchara pig farm.

On 1 November 2005 the residents of Salt Spring Island had cause to turn their minds to Vukovar.

Vukovar was a moderately prosperous, sleepy, provincial town in eastern Croatia, near the border with Serbia in a region known as Eastern Slavonia (Patros). It was a town known for its picturesque baroque architecture (Patros). When the war for Croatia's independence erupted in 1991, the town became an important strategic objective for the Serb-dominated Yugoslav army (Ibid.). During the three-month siege of Vukovar, until its fall to Serbian forces in November 1991, the town was subject to some of the most intense shelling of any inhabitants in Europe since WWII, leaving Vukovar utterly devastated - a devastation so extensive as to lead some observers to dub it the 'Stalingrad of the Balkans' (Ibid.).

Regular Yugoslav officers and professional soldiers fought alongside irregular Serbian militias in the siege of Vukovar (Little). Citizens of Vukovar, including women, the elderly, children, and pregnant women crowded together in a basement by the hundreds, without food or water. They could not bury the dead. Women could only sneak bodies above-ground and leave them in burned-out buildings before scrambling back to safety and the cover of darkness (BBC News). On the last night of the siege, young men, not much more than boys, made a dash through the overripe cornfields in the dead of night to the neighbouring town of Vincovci to take shelter (Ibid.). When they learned at dawn that the town had fallen, and that they were the last to make it out, their grief was unspeakable (Ibid.).

Over 1,600 citizens of Vukovar were captured and killed; those who fell into the hands of the Serbian irregulars were never seen again (Little). The irregulars were described as being out of control (Little). They were accused of beating, torturing, and executing numbers of prisoners of war (Little, Patros). Dozens of irregulars have been indicted in war crimes trials in Croatia,

The Hague, and, most recently in Serbia, as that country struggles to come to terms with its own war record of atrocities (Little). Three Yugoslav army officers, Colonel Mile Mrksic, Major Veselin Slijvancanin and Captain Miroslav Radic, later dubbed the “Vukovar Three” by The Hague Tribunal, acting in conjunction with the Serb paramilitary forces, oversaw the removal of about 400 people from the Vukovar hospital, including wounded patients, hospital staff, civilians, and Croatian political activists (Patros), many of whom had taken refuge in the hospital pursuant to an agreement of sanctuary earlier negotiated between the Yugoslav army and the acting government (Patros). Instead, they were removed by soldiers and military police from the Yugoslav National Army and bussed four kilometres outside of Vukovar to a pig farm at Ovcara. There, they were left in the care of Serbian irregulars, and within hours they were beaten, tortured, executed, and ploughed into a mass grave (Little, Patros).

Before the war, Serbs and Croats lived in Vukovar in roughly equal numbers, lived in Vukovar as neighbours: “We lived door-to-door with our Serb neighbours and never had any problems until 1991”, says Josip Jugec, one inhabitant of Vukovar (Kovac). When the war came, many Serbs left Vukovar or were driven out, some to fight in the irregular militias alongside the Yugoslav army (Kovac). After the fall of Vukovar, Croats were systematically cleansed from the area (Patros), with reports of over 20,000 forced deportations (Ibid.). Croatian militias have in turn been accused of massacring at least 500 ethnic Serbian residents of Vukovar and the surrounding areas during their retreat (Ibid.). Along with Srebrenica, Vukovar has become for many a symbol of the atrocity, horror, and ethnic cleansing that characterized the Balkan wars of the 1990s.

On 1 November 2005, a media firestorm erupted on Salt Spring Island when media reports surfaced that the prosperous island of seaside resorts and sailing boats was now home to Josip Budimcic, an alleged war criminal who had been convicted in absentia in a 1996 trial in Croatia for crimes against humanity and crimes against the Geneva Conventions. He was accused of torturing and executing prisoners of war as part of his service in the Serbian paramilitary forces during the siege of Vukovar (Roberts, and Riedlmeyer). A Croat, Budimcic had fled with his Serbian wife and two children, first to Serbian-controlled Eastern Slavonia in 1991, and later, after Eastern Slavonia was transferred from Serbian control to the Croatian government as part of the Dayton Peace Accords, to Canada where they made a successful application for asylum in 1995. After leaving Saskatchewan and then being fired from BC Ferries when his past came to light, he was now running a business as a mobile mechanic and all-around handyman on Saltspring Island under the trade name “Joe Somebody” (Roberts).

Budimcic denied the allegations against him, stating that he had never interrogated

prisoners or held a gun (Burkette). He stated that he was, “born in the wrong place at the wrong time (Roberts).” “People have a cancer,” he said, “and they have to live with the cancer. People have a hurricane; is it their fault they are living there? I was born in the wrong place at the wrong time. Why did my country have to have a war?” (Burkette).



Figure 3. Alleged photo of Josip Budimcic (far right) with Serbian irregulars at a detention camp for prisoners of war at Vukovar, during the siege of autumn 1991 (*Fokus*, 28 April 2006).

When the news broke, the residents of Salt Spring Island that spoke to the media expressed that they were not shocked. They knew all about Budimcic's past and they were standing by him (Roberts). They were impressed with the criticisms of human rights groups that war crimes trials in Croatia failed to meet international standards (Roberts). Islanders rallied around Budimcic (Sherrin), such as long-time islander Dan Lee, who said of Budimcic, “I trust him implicitly. He'd do anything for anybody that's the way I know him” (Sherrin). Lee said Budimcic was candid and open about his past, “He would describe how everything was fine and then, the next thing you know there's a civil war going on and you're on the wrong side of the line” (Sherrin). Al Friesen of Saltspring Auto Parts said Budimcic was, “a nice guy... easygoing, cheerful, always volunteering his help” (CBC News). Friesen had not heard about Budimcic's conviction for crimes against humanity, and did not know what to make of it, “I don't believe it, what happened back there, well, he was doing his job maybe? I don't know” (Ibid.). Four days later, Friesen claimed that the allegations surrounding Budimcic's past came as no surprise to those who knew him (Roberts). “He's busy, outgoing, the soul of a model citizen,” said Friesen. “For people who know him, this is no surprise – and the community's behind him” (Roberts). Friesen added that Budimcic's murky past was a long time ago and a long way away, a different

time and a different world (Roberts). Budimcic's landlord Merv Wald was angry with the media for misrepresenting Budimcic and for exposing him (Roberts). The community was raising a legal defence fund on his behalf (Roberts). Islander Kathy Scarfo said of the community's soul-searching, "Are we the kind of community that is compassionate and willing to give the person the benefit of the doubt?" (Roberts). Walde expressed the same principle when he stated, "We knew what he'd been up against all alone. The fortunate thing is that he's living in a community that cares and that will support him... That's what community is all about, looking after our own members" (Sherrin).



Figure 4. Vukovar after the siege in 1991 (BBC News, 1 June 2004).

The residents of Saltspring Island had cause to turn their minds to Vukovar, but they did not.

International war crimes tribunals spend the bulk of their time and resources prosecuting high-ranking political and military officials, such as the "Vukovar Three", who were indicted by The Hague Tribunal after the forensic investigations into the mass graves at Vukovar were completed. It took more than fifteen years to conclude their trial for war crimes. Clearly it takes

more than a small number of military and political elites to prosecute a war or to commit a mass atrocity; collective violence is, by definition, a collective phenomenon. It takes large numbers of ordinary, ordinarily busy and cheerful, human beings to carry out such acts. Were they acting under compulsion, or just carrying out orders – just doing their job? Were they moral agents, responsible for their actions, or do these acts without actors just melt away into the “fog of war” (Clausewitz, Book 2, Chapter 2, Paragraph 24), recede into the murky place from whence they came - into a fairy-tale land of long ago and far away? Why is it so difficult to hold such ordinary perpetrators to account, and so easy to deem them not culpable for their actions? Who do we punish, and why should we punish them? What lessons can we learn from studying ordinary perpetrators that may help us to prevent and to heal cycles of dehumanizing and harming behaviour? These are the questions that this paper will address. If we are to condemn atrocity, then what happened at Vukovar is surely an atrocity; if we are to rail against evil, then it is hard to deny that evil was perpetrated at Vukovar. Atrocities and evil cannot take place without the actions of vast numbers of willing, ordinary, busy “Joe Somebodies.”

3 ORDINARY PERPETRATORS: A STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The monstrous is not infrequently contained in what is normal, in what is felt by the majority to be quite normal and natural. ~Miller

The problem of atrocity and collective violence has marred the twentieth century. Estimates vary of the number of casualties who have fallen to war, atrocity, genocide and collective violence. Eric Hobsbawm estimates that 187 million people died in the short twentieth-century due to what he terms “government decisions” (Hobsbawm). Milton Lietenberg of the Centre for International and Security Studies estimates that deaths in the twentieth century due to war, atrocity, genocide and politically-motivated violence, including deaths due to Soviet collectivization and the Cultural Revolution in China, to be 216 million people.

An atrocity is defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as an extremely wicked or cruel act. The word atrocity has come to be used to describe what are known in international law as war crimes and crimes against humanity. War crimes laws govern the treatment of civilian populations and prisoners of war, the conduct of warfare, the rules of engagement, and the crime of aggression. The crime of genocide is defined in Article 2 of the 1948 *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* as the commission of certain acts “with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such”, including “killing members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; and forcibly transferring children of the group to another group”. Crimes against humanity have been defined by the consensus of the international community and codified in the 1998 *Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court*. Crimes against humanity are defined by Article 7 of the *Rome Statute* as the commission of certain acts “directed against a civilian population that are widespread or systematic, and that are part of an organizational policy, or condoned thereby”. Crimes against humanity include such acts as murder and extermination, but also enslavement, deportation or forcible transfer of a population, unlawful deprivation of liberty, torture, rape, enforced disappearance and any other inhumane act of a similar character that intentionally causes great suffering or serious injury to a person's bodily or mental or physical health (*Rome Statute*, Article 7).

The above numbers estimate only the number of deaths, whereas the problem of atrocity

and collective violence involves the perpetration of these other kinds of harm as well. The total numbers of victims must therefore be much larger than the above estimates. If the casualties outnumber the dead by a factor of five, the twentieth-century may have given us as many as a billion victims. Imagine a factor of ten, or more. The math is atrocious. These actions cannot be carried out by a few leaders, a few instigators, a few sadists. Notwithstanding even the large numbers of passive bystanders involved, carrying out these atrocities takes many perpetrators, takes boots on the ground.

The atrocities that have characterized the twentieth-century, and which continue today, have produced new needs. The need to heal affected populations and prevent further outbreaks of violence exists alongside the need to hold perpetrators accountable. It has been difficult to achieve accountability for atrocities even in the most minimal sense of considering such behaviour to be the morally blameworthy acts of responsible moral agents. Widespread collective violence, a general moral malaise and climate of moral ambiguity, and the recognition of the fact of the Holocaust of WWII as the inevitable failure of the project of modernity, have all cried out for a new ethic.

In the present work, I take a syncretic approach by presenting in Part I current thinking from several disciplines on the causes of perpetrator behaviour and examining each discipline's strengths and weaknesses in explaining perpetrator behaviour and in promoting accountability. Part II, will examine theories of culture and the development of moral agency with a view to synthesizing the lessons learned to see where we might find an ethic that resituates moral agency within the individual in such a way that accountability for perpetrator behaviour can co-exist and support the compassion and healing that are necessary to reconcile past atrocities and prevent new ones.

4 PART I: ACCOUNTS OF PERPETRATOR BEHAVIOUR

*“O where are you going?” said Reader to Rider,
“That valley is fatal when furnaces burn,
Yonder’s the midden whose odours will madden,
That gap is the grave where the tall return.”*

~W.H. Auden, *O Where are You Going?*

Waller points out that most perpetrators of atrocities and collective violence are ordinary, willing participants:

Except for a small number of architects and a few sadists who enjoyed taking part in it, most of the perpetrators of the Holocaust and other mass killings were extraordinary only by what they did, not by who they were. There is no single demographic categorization, perpetrators are not distinguished by background, personality, political affiliation or behaviour. To ask this question is to probe into the darkest recesses of who and what we are. (Waller, 8)

Ultimately, mass killings and genocide happen because individual human beings kill and harm other human beings in large numbers and over extended periods of time (Waller, 14). The rank-and-file killers are the ordinary men and women at the bottom of the hierarchy who carry out of the killings: “These people were so ordinary that, with few exceptions, they were readily absorbed into civil society after the killings and peacefully lived out their unremarkable lives” (Waller, 14).

Newman points out that we very much would like to believe that nice people do not commit genocide, but “such indiscriminate collective violence has been a persistent feature of human history” (Newman, 43). To think that the perpetrators are twisted and evil and not like one’s self or one’s neighbours would be what Newman calls “an act of unconditional intellectual surrender” (Newman, 43).

German political philosopher Erich Voegelin reminds us of “the simple man, who is a decent man as long as the society as a whole is in order but who then goes wild, without knowing what he is doing, when disorder arises somewhere and the society is no longer holding together” (Voegelin, 105). Much literary, theological and philosophical thinking about the nature of evil in the Western intellectual tradition has rested on the assumption that evildoing is the product of strong passions – pride, ambition, envy, or hatred (Millar). Evil therefore rests within the individual, in dark passions and evil dispositions, characters, and habits. With the Enlightenment and its conception of the social contract came the view that society must place constraints on our passions and innate aggressions, lest they erupt and cause harm to others –

ethics then becomes the constraints we place on individuals acting in groups lest our baser natures break free to cause havoc (Leopold, 26). Unrestrained passions and evil dispositions are what lead to evil behaviours, and what make our actions culpable. Civil society contains and constrains our harmful passions and behaviours.

From the Enlightenment to the modern era, ideas of the nature and importance of society in governing our behaviour and, ultimately, our moral choices, lead to the view that evil grew less out of our dark passions and more out of unjust social conditions (Millar). This view moved moral agency away from the individual and resituated it in social structures and institutions. Following this line of thinking came schools of thought such as social learning theory, which posited that all behaviour is learned. Experiments in social psychology demonstrated that social conditions and contextual, situational factors were more important in motivating harmful and dehumanizing behaviour than dispositions, passions, or pre-existing beliefs and ideologies. These views are widely critiqued, even by their most committed theorists, as being profoundly exculpatory of perpetrator behaviour.

This tendency of using social conditions to excuse and exculpate behaviour is due to our age-old beliefs which situate culpability in the individual, unified self and its evil passions and dispositions. These beliefs are incongruous with the findings of modern fields of inquiry, such as psychology, sociology, and biology. Any discipline which breaks down the idea of the unified self, uncovers evil in social and contextual factors, or provides a biological correlate, provides an easy justification for wrongdoing and can easily take on the character of determinism. The swift pace with which developments in these disciplines have constructed our postmodern accounts of identity and culture also contributes to the inability of ethics to adjust to the rapid developments being made in other fields of inquiry.

5 THE ORIGINS OF VIOLENCE AND AGGRESSION

How fragile are the bonds of civility that keep any kind of human community from utter collapse. ~Rabbi Richard L. Rubenstein

5.1 *Violence and Aggression Are Innate Passions*

Commentators on aggression and human nature often begin with the proposition that violence is innate in human nature, and must be restrained by forces outside the individual. This thinking has been addressed in accounts of perpetrator behaviour in the debate over whether and to what extent such violence and aggression are, in fact, innate. Where aggression is viewed as being innate, then restraint is usually sought, either by the leavening influence of religion and redemption, or by some form of social contract as in the Enlightenment thinking of philosophers such as Locke and Hobbes. Even outright coercion and the use of military force are frequently posed as a solution to the problem of the ‘extraordinary evil’ of collective violence. In the following accounts of the origins of collective violence, it is this Hobbesian state of nature (Hobbes, Chapter XIII) that is unleashed when the normal institutions of the social contract and our civil society break down under the strain of factors that promote collective violence.

In the twentieth-century, ethologist Konrad Lorenz posited that aggression towards out-groups is a product of our evolutionary heritage: "The human has in his heart the aggression drive inherited from his anthropoid ancestors, which this same intelligence cannot control" (Lorenz, 40-42). "Hostile neighbouring hordes" were the target of "phylogenetically programmed aggression" that needed to be controlled by responsible morality (Ibid.).

Freud posited that violence and aggression are innate, as in his famous statement that "Men are not gentle creatures who want to be loved" (Freud, 58). The social contract is impressed upon each individual anew, as civilization and its means of prohibition through socialization and institutions are the necessary regulation of otherwise uncontrollable natural individual aggression (Whitmer, 27). For Freud, the mind was a place of continual conflict between our animal impulses and our social reality (Ibid.).

5.2 *Behaviourism and Social Learning Theory*

The proposition that violence is innate in human nature was contradicted by the Behaviourist revolution of the 1920s, in which formless human nature was given form by reward

and punishment (Waller, 142). For the behaviourists there was no instinct, only environment and culture (Waller, 142).

Today, the mantle of behaviourism has largely been taken up by the social learning theories, also called the Standard Social Science Model (SSSM), as expressed by such commentators as Ashley Montagu and Albert Bandura. In contrast to Behaviourism, social learning theorists posit that all behaviour is learned, but that not all learned behaviour is enacted (Whitmer, 42). Individuals can acquire, retain and possess the capability to act aggressively, but this behaviour may rarely be expressed if it has no functional value, or is negatively sanctioned (Ibid.). Learned aggression then awaits appropriate circumstances to be unleashed (Ibid.).

Montagu describes the highly developed capacity for learning in human beings, and the continuous nature of this learning and its continuous dependence on culture. As neuronal branches and their connections differ between humans, are constantly changing, and must be maintained, so humans must learn to be human through culture (Montagu, 16). The real sources of aggression are the false contradictory values by which humans in a disorderly world attempt to live (Ibid.).

Social learning theorists are bolstered by the finding that only certain individuals in a given culture, and only under certain circumstances, will enact aggression. For example, S.L.A. Marshall interviewed hundreds of infantry companies in the central and pacific theatres of WWII. The results showed that no more than 15% of the soldiers had fired at the enemy; only one quarter of an infantry unit could be expected ever to strike a blow in an engagement with the enemy unless compelled to do so by overwhelming circumstance (Kohn, 49).

Postmodern critical theory, in keeping with critical theory's desire for reform, also claims that all behaviour, including violence and aggression, are learned phenomena (Whitmer, 1). If violence is learned, then this deligitimates social responses to control violence that are themselves violent (Whitmer, 1). As one critical theorist stated, "The notion of innate violence creates a permanent enemy, that justifies the immense amount of resources spent on war" (Whitmer, 11).

5.3 Evolutionary Psychology

In the late nineteenth-century, Spenserian Social Darwinists began to argue that aggression is the innate outcome of the survival of the fittest (Whitmer, 24-25). This theory has been followed up by sociobiologists such as Richard Dawkins in his book *The Selfish Gene* and E.O. Wilson in *Sociobiology*. Sociobiologists aimed to explain human society solely in terms of bio-

logy and evolution (E.O. Wilson, 1). With rapid advances made in the last few decades in genetics and neurology, this quest extended to the desire to explain human cognition and social behaviour in terms of our evolved biological structures, in what has become the field known as evolutionary psychology. Evolutionary psychologists posit that, under certain circumstances, our inhibitions break down and our “true” nature emerges: our brutality unleashed, we descend to the level of our animal ancestors (Zajonc, 224. See also Gustav le Bon.). As with the Freudian pleasure-principle and the Hobbesian state-of-nature, sociobiologists posit that aggression is an innate and compelling urge (Zajonc, 226). While Sociobiology, and its successors in evolutionary psychology, has been justly termed one of the big ideas of our time - albeit often simplified and vulgarized in the popular understanding (Zajonc, 222) - actual evidence for its claims is scanty (Ibid.).

Zajonc illustrates the lack of explanatory powers of such reductionist theories through the example of the horrors perpetrated during the Rape of Nanking. When the Japanese occupied Manchuria on 13 December 1937 (Zajonc, 224), the troops tortured and killed as many as 300,000 civilians in just a few weeks, a massacre characterised by the extreme cruelty with which it was undertaken (Ibid.). The stories recounted of that time are truly horrible. Zajonc asks:

Is the behaviour at the Rape of Nanking *anything like* any chimpanzee behaviour ever described? Rather, the unspeakable atrocity seen in human massacres surpasses any observed animal aggression by many orders of magnitude and finds no counterpart in the animal world (Zajonc, 227)... Some instances, such as when people kill their own family members and children, contradict the sociobiological principles that such aggression against out-groups seeks to maximize kin selection and reproductive fitness. (Zajonc, 227. Italics in original.)

Zajonc concludes that the use of the animal term “bestiality” in describing human violence is an offence to non-human species (Zajonc, 233). Similarly, evolutionary theorist Steven Jay Gould concluded that, “The statement that humans are animals does not imply that our own specific patterns of behaviour and social arrangements are in any way directly determined by our genes” (Gould, 415). However, many authors in the field of evolutionary psychology rely on strict materialism and genetic reductionism to found their claims about the evolution of humanity's moral sense:

[P]sychological differences between people boil down to the *genes*, of course (where else could rules for mental development ultimately reside?). (Wright, 9)

Evolutionary psychologists often rely on the assumptions that evolution takes place in small steps and that all evolutionary mechanisms are adaptive and progressive:

Every single, tiny, blindly taken step either happens to make sense in immediate terms of genetic self-interest or it doesn't. And if it doesn't, you won't be reading about it a million years later. (Wright, 56)

Humanity's finer sentiments therefore evolved piecemeal over the eons, because they assisted our selfish genes to propagate into future generations, and not because they benefit other humans:

Altruism, compassion, empathy, love, conscience, the sense of justice – all of these things, the things that hold society together, the things that allow our species to think so highly of itself, can now confidently be said to have a firm genetic basis. The bad news is that, although these things are in some ways blessings for humanity as a whole, they didn't evolve for the "good of the species" and aren't reliably employed to that end. Quite the contrary: it is now clearer than ever how (and precisely *why*) the moral sentiments are used with brutal flexibility, switched on and off in keeping with self-interest; and how naturally oblivious we often are to this switching. (Wright, 13. Italics in original.)

In this way, human goodness becomes merely a form of rational self-interest, and both our sentiments and our sensations of our sentiments – our 'qualia', which are the introspectively accessible, phenomenal aspects of our mental lives (Lycan) – fade into irrelevance, if they ever existed at all:

[E]ven in the more recent past, after the arrival of language and self-awareness, there has been no reason for every evolved behavioural tendency to fall under conscious control. In fact, sometimes it is emphatically *not* in our genetic interest to be aware of exactly what we are doing or why. (Wright, 36-7. Italics in original.)

Human consciousness and human morality then become merely a surplus epiphenomenon, responsible only for poetry, art, music, and much of civilization. As such, this genetic reductionist approach fails to address any of the important questions about human nature: from whence come our finer sentiments, and from whence our baser ones; what is the nature of our consciousness, our conscience, and the cultures that humans have built therefrom.

Other commentators of modern evolutionary psychology take a less reductionist approach, seeking to bridge the gap between theories of innate aggression versus social learning by positing that our evolutionary heritage leaves us with innate *potentials*, including a potential for aggression and cruelty that are present in every individual, but may only be expressed under certain conditions. Such thinking helps to overcome the obvious failings of sociobiology as it also seeks to counter the claims of social learning theory that all behaviour is learned (Waller, 143). Rather, evolutionary psychologists seek to discover and understand the design of the human mind in terms of evolution (Waller, 145).

According to current thinking, human behaviour is driven by a set of universal reasoning circuits that were designed by natural selection to solve adaptive problems faced by our ancestors in our environment of adaptation as hunter-gatherers (Waller, 145). Effective adaptations

increased survival and reproduction among our ancestors (Ibid.). In this view of evolutionary psychology, natural selection does not produce *emotions* or *behaviours* per se (Ibid.). It is not behaviourist, nor is it inflexible or genetically rigid (Ibid.). Rather, it leaves us with psychological *potentialities*: “The statement that humans are animals does not imply that our own specific patterns of behaviour and social arrangements are in any way directly determined by our genes. Potentiality and determination are different concepts” (Gould, 415).

Evolutionary psychologists, in seeking to found our human nature in our evolution from our proto-hominid ancestors, are eager to correct the more specious claims posited by earlier thinkers in the field, the first of which is that genes control human behaviour:

It is important to be quite clear at the beginning of this discussion that genetic research has not been able to show that any gene or set of genes is responsible for any aspect of human behaviour... In the face of this complete lack of direct evidence, socio-biology has postulated a hypothetical gene-behaviour model. (Megarry, 70)

Megarry points out that behaviour is not genetically determined in humans, and even in much complex animal behaviour, such as bird song or bee recognition of flowers, "both innate and learning processes are combined in order to achieve a complete behaviour pattern" (Megarry, 60).

Megarry reaffirms such key concepts in Darwin's theory of natural selection, sometimes ignored or outright contradicted by sociobiologists, that natural selection favours better, faster, stronger, *more*. The reproductive potential of any species is vastly greater than that required to maintain a constant level of population (Megarry, 33). Therefore, reproductive numbers alone will not guarantee the survival of a species; no species ever achieves its full reproductive potential, and surely no species could survive long if it did so.

There is not an "ideal" or "fittest" version that an organism can aspire to. Rather, to be fit means to be fit in a particular local, immediate, and inherently dynamic environment:

[T]he variability of characteristics in a species population or the transmutation of species does not imply that the individuals who survive are the most fierce, fast or large. There is no 'improved model' of an organism that can be said to embody progress and nor can some animals of the same species, containing roughly similar individuals, be seen as competitors who are better adapted because of their strength and size and therefore more fit to supersede others... Evolution by natural selection means constant undirected adaptation to an environment that is itself changing, and such changes could favour simpler, smaller or weaker variants. (Megarry, 41)

In one demonstration of this responsive and reversible adaptation, two populations of fruitflies were artificially selected with opposite and extreme reactions to light, but as soon as artificial selection was relaxed in both populations, these extremes of behaviour were lost. Natural selection

had produced a population with an *optimum adaptability to the environment as a whole* (Megarry, 59), including a few variable individuals at each extreme of behaviour. Adaptation, both genetic and behavioural, therefore means a responsive and frequently reversible adaptation to changing local and immediate environmental conditions.

If human behaviour is founded in our proto-hominid roots, it follows that our environment of evolutionary adaptation has been constantly and continually modified by that very behaviour:

The original ancient environments that were natal to human ancestors have been transformed by cultural activities to the point that any attempt to relate modern humans to a 'natural' environment becomes meaningless. We have long since abandoned these habitats. (Megarry, 47)

In this way, culture itself becomes the crucible for further evolutionary adaptation. Evidence for this view can be found for example in the rapid evolution of the early hominids known as the *Australopithecines*:

Hominid "thalamic nuclei evolved in a "mosaic" pattern, that is, with different nuclei progressing at different rates. This would suggest they did not evolve in unison as part of a diffuse increase of brain size but differentially as part of a highly specific pattern of change. Since mosaic evolution sometimes proceeds at an accelerated pace, especially at times of speciation, this suggests that many different brain structures may change simultaneously, or at least concurrently, as the evolving population encounters complex selection pressures. (Donald, 185)

The rapid and concurrent evolution of the many different brain structures involved in cognition and language, along with the facial and thoracic adaptations necessary for speech, could not have been possible if the "environment" of evolutionary adaptation is limited only to the relatively stable and slowly-changing geographical environment; it must include the complex and rapidly-changing hominid social environment, as well (Ibid.).

Waller makes the oft-neglected point that our adaptations change all the time because our environment is changing all the time (Waller, 145). Our adaptations are not perfect, and often take on the quality of being 'jerry-rigged' on an *ad hoc* basis as we continually face new adaptive challenges (Ibid.). Most of our adaptations were designed to deal with the adaptive challenges we faced in the hunter-gatherer context, and can be maladaptive in our modern environments (Waller, 149).

As *scientists* of human nature, evolutionary psychologists will not admit to making moral claims:

Science is guaranteed to appear to eat away at the will *regardless* of what it finds, because the scientific mode of explanation cannot accommodate the mysterious notion of uncaused causation that underlies the will. (Pinker, 54. Italics in original.)

Waller concludes that only by recognizing science and morality as separate spheres of reasoning can we have them both (166). So, evolutionary psychology can never bridge the gap between the “is” of science and the “ought” of morality, so it cannot make moral pronouncements regarding the moral culpability of perpetrators. However, Waller admits that the claims of evolutionary psychology end up looking very much like original sin (Ibid.), only now the new-found 'scientific' basis for our behaviour is regarded as deterministic and thus exculpating.

In its present form, evolutionary psychology adds to social learning theory only the postulate that some fundamental forms of reasoning and behaviour might be adaptive, but at our current state of knowledge, it cannot tell us with certainty what those forms of reasoning and behaviours might be, under what conditions such potentials are expressed, and how they may be maladaptive in our present environments.

5.4 *Evil Dispositions: The Search for the ‘Nuremberg Mind’*

If, as in much of pre-Enlightenment belief systems, evil and moral culpability rest within the individual, in a unified personality that encompasses evil characteristics and dispositions, then great evil must be the product of an especially evil and twisted personality. This belief has survived, even in social learning theories, in which it is used to condemn only those with truly evil dispositions, and to exculpate individuals of ‘normal’ disposition who are merely responding to social conditions.

From 20 November 1945 to 1 October 1946, 24 leaders of the Nazi Party were tried in Nuremberg before the International Military Tribunal. Twelve subsequent trials were held before the U.S. Nuremberg Military Tribunal. The judgment in the *Einsatzgruppen Trial* - the trial of the Nazi mobile killing units, or Einsatzgruppen - states:

[The facts] are so beyond the experience of normal man and the range of man-made phenomena that only the most complete judicial enquiry, and the most exhaustive trial, could verify and confirm them. Although the principal accusation is murder, [...] the charge of purposeful homicide in this case reaches such fantastic proportions and surpasses such credible limits that believability must be bolstered with assurance a hundred times repeated. (Nuremberg Military Tribunal, Einsatzgruppen Trial, 411)

With the world's eyes on Nuremberg, there was a desire and an expectation that the evil

behaviour of the Nazis could be explained by their evil dispositions – by the finding that the Nazis were violent, mad, authoritarian, aggressive and, it might be hoped, even insane.

It was with this hope in mind that personality and IQ tests were administered to the Nuremberg defendants being held in pre-trial detention. The IQ tests showed high IQs in the range of superior intelligence (Waller, 59). These results were as surprising as they were uncomfortable for the experimenters (Ibid.). Rorschach tests administered to the defendants during their pre-trial detention, though administered using controversial and unstandardized methods, were inconclusive. The original data was given to 10 of the world's leading Rorschach experts for their review. Presentations were to be made at the 1947 International Congress of the World Federation of Mental Health in London. Not one of the experts admitted to having reviewed the materials, citing lack of time and personal commitments (Waller, 62). Unlikely to be true, this may instead indicate a profound discomfort with the task or, as Waller posits, with what the data failed to reveal (Ibid.).

The original Rorschach data was only re-examined thirty years later by Florence Miale, a world renowned Rorschach expert, and Michael Seltzer, a political scientist. They concluded that the Nuremberg Mind was psychopathic, characterized by depression and a proclivity for violence (Miale, 286). The Nazis therefore had a shared evil personality structure (Ibid.). However, Harrower, another Rorschach expert, examined the same data and concluded that the Rorschachs of the Nuremberg defendants could not be distinguished from those of normal individuals, and showed greater variation among one another than similarity (Harrower, 76). Later, studies by Zilmer showed the subjects to be able, intelligent, high-functioning individuals. There was no evidence of personality disorders or psychiatric conditions. In the end, not a single clinical pathology or abnormality could be uncovered (Zilmer, 194).

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders of the American Psychiatric Association (DSM IV) states that anti-social personality disorder (referred to elsewhere as psychopathy or sociopathy) is a personality disorder characterized by a persistent disregard for and violation of the rights of others, rebellion against authority, extreme inconsistency and unpredictability (Waller, 69), as well as shallow emotions and a lack of empathy. Psychopaths are estimated to comprise about 4% of the population (Waller, 69), with one U.S. Survey finding psychopathy among 5.8% of males and 1.2% of females (National Comorbidity Survey). Such numbers spread across a society are not enough to carry out a genocide or an episode of collective violence (Waller, 69). In fact, roughly the same proportion of sadists and psychopaths has been found to exist across cultures in an amount of around 4% (Waller page 47).

Similarly, Leon Rappaport notes that “in each of the camps, there was usually only one,

or at most a few, SS men known for their intense outbursts of sadistic cruelty” (Rappaport 1994, 76). Even those who acted brutally did not do so outside the camps, and later showed very low rates of criminal behaviour (Rappaport 1994, 76). Finally, Browning in his seminal study of the men of Battalion 101 of the Einsatzgruppen found that they were normal, ordinary working men, who had no special commitment to or training in either Nazi ideology or anti-Semitism, and that they were initially quite reluctant to engage in the killings (Browning). The Nazis were quite simply a representative cross-section of the normal distribution of human characters, (Waller, 86), and they carried out a genocide not in spite of, but because of this.

6 MODERN ACCOUNTS OF COLLECTIVE VIOLENCE

*Cruelty has a Human Heart,
And Jealousy a Human Face:
Terror the Human Form Divine,
And Secrecy the Human Dress.*

*The Human Dress is forged in Iron,
The Human Form a fiery Forge,
The Human Face a Furnace sealed,
The Human Heart its hungry gorge.*
~William Blake

With the social and political reform movements of the nineteenth-century, such as the movements to eradicate poverty, disease, and overcrowded urban slums, Western thinkers began to suggest that evil grew less out of the dark passions that inhabited our souls and more from unjust social conditions. This belief sounded a more hopeful note: it held out the possibility of eradicating evil through social and political transformations (Waller, 98). However, while such theories may provide hope for curing social injustices, they have been criticized for excusing perpetrators who act in response to these social conditions.

6.1 *The Public Health Approach to Collective Violence*

The public health approach to collective violence is perhaps the clearest example of the application of social reform thinking to the problem of collective violence. The *World Health Organization World Report on Violence and Health* is an example of the public health approach to this problem. The Report states that violence is ever present, and social institutions are ideally meant to try to limit violence (WHO, 2). Conflict is precipitated by a loss of normativity, as normal community structures are disrupted or break down altogether (Ibid.). Economic, political, and cultural conditions that gave rise to the social breakdown can be altered to ameliorate their pernicious effects, just as they were with pregnancy complications, workplace injuries, and infectious diseases (WHO, 3).

The editors of *The Coming Age of Scarcity* also take the view that atrocity is a public health concern, and can be prevented in the same way we have treated other social problems, like sanitation. The editors note that:

[I]f scholarly efforts are to contribute to the improvement of the human condition by

preserving life, in the case of genocide and mass deaths we can no longer conceive of them as random and rare historical phenomena. (Dobkowski, 2)

The editors highlight the seriousness of the problem while affirming that ameliorating unjust social conditions can prevent the spread of collective violence.

The public health approach assimilates the Hobbesian claim that violence and aggression are indelible features of human nature, only waiting to be unleashed by the breakdown of social norms. The predictability and inevitability of this makes blame impossible, less because it provides a convincing explanation for the causes of such behaviour than the simple fact that in this account there are no individual perpetrators to be held accountable. The emphasis is on populations, not on perpetrators. Responsibility is diffused among whole societies or subsections of societies, as well as among the international community, which is accused of standing idly by and allowing atrocities to take place despite the fact that they were predictable and foreseeable. Only high-ranking military and political instigators, such as the “Vukovar Three”, are brought to trial before prestigious international tribunals, thus leaving the bulk of those who carried out the violence to face the uncertain justice of local courts, or to be conveniently forgotten altogether.

The prevention of collective violence follows directly from the “rigorous application of the scientific method” (Ibid.) to uncover risk factors and conditions that unleash our Hobbesian collective violence. These risks are then ameliorated by creating stronger institutions, such as good governance and more accountable and transparent decision-making (WHO, 221). Globalization and new communication technologies offer new solutions to ameliorate collective violence and promote democratic institutions:

The new technologies that are appearing provide new means not only to exchange ideas but to also pressure decision-makers to increase the accountability and transparency of governance and to provide redress for social inequalities and injustices. (WHO, 228)

Perhaps not surprisingly, increased surveillance and documentation activities are also necessary to prevent conflicts and to provide humanitarian assistance during and after conflicts (WHO Report, 232).

For proponents of the public health approach, the factors which contribute to the recurrence of collective violence throughout history are scarcity, poverty, and the lack of control over resources that attend scarcity (Ibid.). Ideology, politics and historical factors are all important in assessing the causes of collective violence, but much neglected are the social effects of scarcity. These form the context in which such struggles swiftly intensify, including in

particular population growth, resource depletion, and environmental degradations (Ibid.).

The public health approach therefore explains collective violence as a result of unjust social conditions that lead to a breakdown of civil society and its institutions and moral norms. It follows that ameliorating these conditions must take place at the institutional level, and include such public projects as improving economic conditions, stopping environmental degradation and resource depletions, and ensuring a more equitable distribution of resources through increased globalization. They also require improving the democratic institutions that keep our innate violent behaviour in check, such as good governance, transparency, accountability, and better bureaucratic structures that lead to enhanced surveillance of and documentation of populations.

6.2 Sociology and Functionalism: Identity, Ideology and the Cycle of Harm

Social and political scientists have taken what is often termed a functional approach to delineate the factors that lead to intergroup conflict and collective violence, focusing on the functions played by identity, ideology, collectivism and authoritarianism, and how the disequilibrium of these factors operating in a given social system can promote a cycle of harming behaviour.

Perhaps the most complete functional model of collective violence and intergroup conflict has been developed by noted researcher Ervin Staub, who discusses the role played by identity, ideology, and feelings of victimization and trauma in producing what Staub terms 'the cycle of harm'.

Staub agrees that perpetrators are affected by severe economic problems, political disintegration and rapid social changes (Staub 2001, 160). While these changes may actually be for the better, the rapid pace of change places pressure on the society to adapt (Ibid.). These social pressures result in the frustration of basic needs, including the need for security, positive identity, effectiveness and control, connection with other people, as well as a meaningful comprehension of reality and one's place in it (Ibid.). This frustration of basic needs leads to psychological and social processes that turn one group against the other, thus identifying and elevating the group by devaluing other groups (Ibid., 161).

Feelings of victimization and perceptions of threat, whether or not accompanied by actual threatening or harming behaviour, can change and even produce group identities. Group identification not only provokes violence against other groups, but is itself produced and altered by violence and threats of violence (Staub 2001, 164). Staub analyzes this dialectic between feelings of victimization and group identity by examining the interplay between personal and

social identities (Ibid.). Personal identity is a sense of self; social identity is an individual identity connected to a group (Ibid.). This group self-concept is in turn a socially shared way that members perceive and experience their group (Ibid.).

Staub discusses three broad categories of social identity: autonomous identity, connected identity, and embedded identity (Staub 2001, 166). Those individuals who hold an autonomous identity are characterized by their lack of connection to others and the primacy they place on individual autonomy, as is typical of modern industrialized democracies (Ibid.). Those who hold an embedded identity evince a strong connection to others, a dependence on the group, and an inability to separate from others (Ibid.). Between the two extremes are those who hold a connected identity, which is characterized by a connection to others, yet an ability to stand on one's own and be separate (Ibid.). A connected identity evinces a more moderate sense of self (Ibid.).

Individuals who hold an embedded identity tend to give themselves entirely over to the group, even when the group is engaged in collective violence. Embedded identities are also likely to perceive any attack against or devaluation of their group as a threat against themselves. Staub argues that authoritarianism is characterized by obedience, passivity, and a wanting to be lead, and often contributes to the development of embedded identities (Staub 2001, 166).

On the other hand, those who hold an autonomous identity are not less likely to engage in collective violence, as they have a tendency to lose themselves completely when faced by a threat (Staub 2001, 166). Because of this, holders of autonomous identities are also susceptible to feelings of victimization and a struggle to exert control under conditions that provoke fear (Ibid.). As a result of their perception of a loss of control and the threat this poses to the autonomous-oriented ego, they may be even more likely to cling to leaders who promise to save them from the perceived threat and to excoriate the threatening target group (Ibid.).

In contrast, Staub argues that those who have developed a connected identity are less susceptible to feelings of victimization, and are less likely to become passive bystanders when collective violence erupts, as they are able to speak out, to question and to criticize (Staub 2001, 166).

Collective violence is most readily sparked when identities are characterized by feelings of weakness and vulnerability and, at the same time, superiority (Staub 2001, 168). When a group feels that it has been victimized in the past, without significant healing, it has an increased likelihood of becoming the perpetrator of mass violence. Insecurity and fear make perpetrators experience the threat as more intense than it actually may be (Staub 2001, 171). On the other hand, a moderately positive self concept is strongly associated with sensitivity and responsiveness

to other people (Staub 2001, 170).

Though he draws these three categories of identity with a very broad brush, Staub also recognizes the limitations of using such ideal categories by noting that identities not only produce violence, but they respond to, and are even produced by violence and feelings of fear and victimization. Identities can arise solely in response to conditions of trauma and fear. For example, recent historical atrocities such as Stalin's Terror, the Cultural Revolution in China, and the killing fields of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, show that mass fealty can be whipped up by a totalitarian leader, operating in an atmosphere of state terror, without any solid, pre-existing group identities at all (Waller, 46). In other cases, pre-existing group identities co-exist for long periods of time without any particularly deep, preceding hatred for one another.

Group identities can very quickly come to incorporate hatred and fear of out-groups in response to violence or perceived threats, as happened with the Serbs and Croats who co-existed peacefully and frequently intermarried before the Balkan war. Similarly, the August 31, 2005 stampede of Shiite pilgrims on a bridge over the Tigris River in Baghdad led to Sunni youth jumping into the Tigris to save the drowning pilgrims (Ghosh, 15). The rescuers were held to be heroes, examples of the goodwill that existed between Sunni and Shia neighbours (Ghosh, 15). When collective violence erupted in response to the bombing of the Shiite Mosque of Al-Askari in Samarra on 22 February 2006 – just six months later - those same rescuers were filled with shame for what they had done: “If I see a Shiite child about to drown in the Tigris now, I will not reach out my hand to save him” (Ibid.).

Autonomous, connected, and embedded identities can be held by the same individual at different times and in response to different social roles. Josip Budimcic, the accused war criminal living on Salt Spring Island, was ethnically a Croatian who had married a Serbian. Mixed marriages of this kind were common before the Balkan war, as they were common in Iraq before the bombing of Al-Askari (Ghosh, 20). Budimcic may have identified with ethnic Serbians, the project of Yugoslav nationalism, or simply with his own family. Love and family almost always provoke an embedded identity *vis-à-vis* one's loved ones. Love is embedded.

Group identities are constantly evolving and changing in response to social conditions, as happened to the residents of Salt Spring Island when faced with the perceived threat that the media was accusing them of harbouring a convicted war criminal in their community. They responded by re-casting their identity in terms of a community that values tolerance and caring, one that “looks after its own”.

Staub posits that individual and group identities can quickly evolve into a cycle of harm in response to perceived threats. Individuals and groups change as they harm others (Staub 2001,

162). They justify their actions by devaluing their victims more and more (Ibid.). They become desensitized to the suffering of their victims (Ibid.). The standards of acceptable behaviour change, allowing and even encouraging violence (Ibid.). Institutions change or new ones are added that serve discrimination and violence (Ibid.). Staub claims that a reversal of morality takes place, where ordinary moral norms and values are inverted in such a way that killing or harming the enemy becomes good instead of evil (Ibid.). Unless halted by bystanders, the violence evolves in intensity (Ibid.). Passivity encourages and reinforces the cycle of violence (Ibid.). Staub claims that this cycle of violence is more likely in societies with a very high respect for authority, as it is more likely in monolithic societies with a limited range of values than in pluralistic societies (Ibid.). Unhealed wounds and feelings of victimization also contribute to the escalation of the cycle of harm, as does an increase in social identity in response to past episodes of violence (Ibid.).

Harming changes the perpetrators themselves, and the society as a whole, and prepares perpetrators for more harmful acts, in an escalating cycle of violence and cruelty, driven by feelings of fear and victimization on the one hand, and a dehumanization and devaluation of those harmed on the other (Staub 2002, 11). Harming causes the perpetrator to devalue the victim, which in turn leads to further harm and devaluation (Ibid.). This cycle of harm is mirrored by the pro-social cycle of helping behaviour, discussed below (Ibid.).

Ideology plays a role in shaping the group identities of perpetrator and victim groups, and in devaluing and dehumanizing victimized groups. For Staub, an ideology is a vision of social arrangements that tells people how to live life (Staub 2001, 164). It defines the group and gives it and its members a positive social identity; in this way, it makes people feel effective and in control (Ibid.). Staub is keen to distinguish ideology from culture. He posits that ideology is a consciously held set of beliefs, in contrast to an existing culture which has a system of beliefs, meaning, values, valuation, symbols, myths, and perspectives that are shared without conscious awareness (Staub 2002, 50).

In Staub's view, an ideology is consciously created and imposed on a population, whereas cultural systems grow and develop over a long period of time, involve extensive socialization from birth, and are living, changing, systems of meaning and value (Ibid.). In this view, there are no *peoples* or *cultures* that foster cycles of violence and dehumanization, only ideas and ideologies. Not Serbs nor Croats, Sunnis nor Shiites, are to blame. Rather, collective violence is the product of failed leadership, passive bystanders, and the power of instigators and propagandists to shape feelings of fear and victimization into a cycle of escalating violence, hatred and dehumanization. This resituates blame in ideas and ideologies, as opposed to peoples,

cultures and religions. This assists in preventing the further dehumanization of the groups to which the perpetrators belong while at the same time it catches within its net of exculpation the individual perpetrators themselves.

Ideological commitment on the part of perpetrators has clear limits in explaining evil behaviour (Waller, 120). Ideologies are rarely coherent, nor are they consistent (Ibid.). Ideological commitment on the part of perpetrators has not been shown to be a predictor of mass killing, as in Browning's studies of the men of the Einsatzgruppen (see Browning), and Lifton's studies of the Nazi doctors (see Lifton). Neither hatred nor ideological commitment is a prerequisite of perpetrator behaviour (Moshman, 194). On the other hand, as will be discussed below, a strong commitment to a set of normative principles *has* been shown to be a predictor of heroic helping and rescuing behaviour.

6.3 *Collectivism, Authority and the Power to Exculpate*

Along with the power of ideology and identity, functionalist thinkers have also addressed the role played by collectivism and authority in shaping collective violence. Staub posits that collective violence is more likely in authoritarian and monolithic societies than in democratic and pluralistic societies (Supra). Other thinkers have followed suit, seeking to explain collective violence in terms of the dynamics of collective behaviour as exhibited by the mass behaviour of large crowds and of cultures with a value frame that promotes collectivism as opposed to individualism. As with the public health approach, these views can be profoundly exculpatory by focusing on the power of collectives to constrain the individual and to compel the expression of innate violence.

Thinkers of the late nineteenth-century demonstrated an increasing interest in the psychology of crowd behaviour and sought to explain it in terms of atavistic regression. In 1895, French sociologist and journalist Gustav Le Bon addressed the newly-popular psychology of crowds when he wrote *La Psychologie des foules*, in which he put forward the thesis that individual psychology is subordinated to the collective mentality. In the crowd, civilized man becomes a barbarian, a creature acting by instinct (Le Bon, 12). There is a fusion of the crowd into a collective intelligence, and a lowering of its intellectual capacities (Waller, 25).

At the same time, Freud also attempted to explain the behaviour of crowds as a regression of the ego into the id from whence it came (Freud 1921, cited in Waller, 31). In Freud's analysis, the superego is externalized or transferred to the leader of the group (Ibid.)

Modern thinking on collectivism has followed suit, characterising collectivism in terms

of the subordination of the individual will to a collective mentality, often driven by an imposing and authoritarian leadership. Collectivism has been defined as a cultural frame whose central values are “obedience, tradition, safety, and order” (Oyserman, 167). *Collectivism* is opposed to *individualism*, here defined as a cultural frame whose focus is on the individual and which is characterized by the valuation of personal independence and freedom of choice, personal uniqueness and an emphasis on personal achievement (Oyserman, 167). In a culture with an individualist value frame, will and agency is located in the individual (Ibid.). In an individualist culture, relationships with persons and groups are unstable and fleeting (Ibid.), entered into temporarily to fulfill certain personal goals (Oyserman, 170). Groups are seen as “constraining freedom and removing personal responsibility” (Oyserman, 172). In contrast, collectives are seen by their members as permanent and their obligations can demand or “promote extreme self-sacrifice”, as well as violence and conflict toward an out-group (Oyserman, 179).

Prunier, in his analysis of the Rwandan genocide, applies similar categories of individualism and collectivism to explain the genocide and he thus exculpates the mass of its perpetrators. This is a consequence of Prunier writing from an individualist culture frame, and applying the label of collectivism to another culture: the other culture is viewed from the individualist frame as constrained by authority and a collective mentality, with the consequence that will and moral agency are thereby removed from the individual perpetrator.

Prunier views the Rwandan genocide as being a particularly modern phenomenon, requiring a well-organized civil service, a small, tightly-controlled land area, a disciplined and orderly population, and reasonably good communications (Prunier, 238). In this, Prunier draws on studies showing a similar bureaucratic structure at work in Nazi Germany. Prunier is keen to point out that Rwandans were most emphatically *not* a disorganized and primitive people (Prunier, 238). On the contrary, the genocide was facilitated by Rwanda’s organized and efficient bureaucracy, in which orders from above were carried out via the local administration (Prunier, 244). Like the Germans, particularly under the Nazis, the Rwandans had an authoritarian tradition and obeyed orders they received (Prunier, 245), apparently without question. Similarly, Gourevitch states of Rwanda that:

Conformity is very deep, very developed here. In Rwandan history, everyone obeys authority. People revere power, and there isn't enough education. You take a poor, ignorant population, and you give them arms, and say, 'It's yours. Kill!' They'll obey. (Gourevitch, 23)

In this view, the genocide was conceived by the powerful, ordered by the bureaucrats, and carried out by a poor and ignorant population.

Who, then, were the real perpetrators of the Rwandan genocide? Prunier is profoundly disturbed by this question, as he evinces a very deep regard for the Rwandan people, and cannot reconcile this with the fact that large numbers (but by no means the majority) of Rwandans actually carried out the slaughter. Some of the killers, according to Prunier, were militias composed of Hutu refugees returned from Burundi (Prunier, 246), others were a low-class, drunken sort of street people who had been given liquor and guns by the regime (Prunier, 243). Prunier also lays a good deal of the blame on Rwanda's efficient bureaucracy, resulting in his claim that almost the entire civil service should be charged with crimes against humanity (Prunier, 244). Prunier cannot, however, avoid addressing the fact that the majority of the killers were ordinary Rwandans themselves (Prunier, 247).

In defiance of the claim that the Rwandan genocide was impelled by authoritarian or collectivist frames of reference, there were areas in which a spontaneous movement of the population to kill Tutsi occurred without any kind of compulsion or incentive to do so (Prunier, 247). Prunier exculpates these killers by stating that they were ordinary people defending themselves and their families (Prunier, 247). As above, love of family is often cited as a cause of collective violence when one's loved ones are perceived as being threatened or potentially victimized. For Prunier, the essential causes of the genocide are indoctrination and ideology as conceived by the instigators and forced on an unsuspecting and unwilling population (Prunier 247). This is profoundly exculpatory, and Prunier intends that it be so (Ibid.). Instead, Prunier places responsibility for stopping genocide in the hands of the educated and the powerful bystanders, both those in Rwanda and in the international community.

Among the educated and powerful bystanders who bear the brunt of the blame for the murders, Prunier includes the Catholic Church, an institution of great consequence in Rwanda. He blames the Church for its role as a passive bystander, as well as certain Church members who participated more directly (Prunier, 251). More than this, he blames the Church for the way it spoke about the genocide as it was happening, for the language it used in its dispatches that gave the surrealistic impression that the murders were committed by armies of ghosts whose faces are forever blurred (Ibid.). Of course, Prunier makes the same mistake himself, showing how difficult it can be for us to lay blame for atrocities, and our profound need to exculpate.

On the other hand, Prunier also points out the need for an explanation of the extraordinary cruelty and brutality displayed by the perpetrators of the Rwandan atrocities, acts carried out spontaneously by large numbers of ordinary Rwandans (Prunier, 256). Prunier is right to state that “these things cannot be treated as just another piece of realpolitisch business as usual” (Prunier, 257).

To explain this, Prunier adopts the term, first coined by Jean-Pierre Crétien, “innocent murderers”. These innocent murderers betray themselves by at once attributing their actions to the propaganda they have heard, even as they recognize this same propaganda to be false (Prunier, 247). The causes of perpetrator behaviour cannot therefore be laid entirely at the door of propaganda, ideology, and authoritarianism, and must be looked for elsewhere.

Recent studies into collective behaviour have revealed that most crowds are not, in fact, frenzied or irrational (Waller, 33). Crowds are not inherently uncaring, irrational, primitive, or atavistic. Crowds can promote altruism, the helping of others, and oppose destructive ideologies and practices (Waller, 34), such as ending a war or promoting civil rights. What makes a crowd or collective evil or violent is a pre-existing propensity among the individuals that make up the crowd for violent or philanthropic behaviour (Ibid.). Groups act on individuals, but individuals also act on the group (Waller, 35). Waller argues that groups reveal, even as they alter, who we are (Ibid.). Psychological experiments show that group behaviour intensifies opinions, positions, tendencies, and makes them more extreme - whether they be bigoted or philanthropic. Crowds and groups therefore act merely as a social amplifier (Ibid.), and lower our threshold for acting (Ibid.). It is not the nature of the collective but of the individuals who make up the collective that determines its behaviour (Waller, 36), and in this way, Waller relocates will and moral agency in the individual, including the individual acting as part of a crowd or within an authoritarian or collectivist cultural frame.

Nations, cultures, identities, and ideologies, after all are like the corporations of Baron Edward Thurlow: they have neither bodies to be punished nor souls to be condemned (Poynder, 2). The roots of good and evil, of moral agency, are not situated in such things, but in the human heart, its hungry gorge.



Figure 5. Photo of a Southern lynching, c. 1930. Kohn describes not only the self-satisfaction of the mob, but also the normalcy, and even affection, the lynchers display:

“Eight or nine of the white people are facing the camera, several of them smiling as if they were at a picnic; one man points with his index finger so the viewer should be sure not to miss the two dead men or his own satisfaction with what has been done to them. In the lower left – and this is the area I keep returning to – stands a young couple. They are both looking at me and grinning.

They seem friendly, the sort of folks I might enjoy having dinner with. She is holding her right hand behind her back and he is grasping her thumb affectionately. How can this be?” (Kohn,143). Atrocity can and does sit alongside normal, prosocial, affectionate, and even empathic behaviour.

7.1 Postmodernism: Fragmentation, Context, and the Culture of Cruelty

*“O do you imagine,” said Fearer to Farer,
“That dusk will delay on your path to the pass,
Your diligent looking discover the lacking
Your footsteps feel from granite to grass?”*

~W.H. Auden, *O Where are You Going?*

In contrast to the public health and functionalist approaches, postmodern and post-structuralist thinkers in the psychological and social sciences argue that the individual is a fragmented, disunified being, influenced more by situational and contextual factors than by broad social conditions, identities, or ideologies. Leon Rappaport argues that postmodern culture will not only tend to absolve, but will generally be tolerant of or indifferent to acts of atrocity:

There is no other plausible conclusion to be drawn from our present knowledge of postmodern culture and personality. All of the relevant cultural factors – the language, climate, and imagery of moral ambiguity – suggest that a growing desensitization is at work. And all of the relevant personality theory and research suggest that the multiplicity characterizing post moderns facilitates the adoption of desensitizing stress-coping or defence mechanisms. (Rappaport, 282)

This climate of moral ambiguity results in a malleable and therefore highly manipulable normative framework, shifting identities, and resulting lack of connection to others. From this, Rappaport concludes that the postmodern identity is morally weak, characterized by its malaise, in need of a new ethic. Moreover, in postmodern thinking there is no longer a vision of a single, centralized, unified and coherent self that is the locus for will and moral agency (Waller, 121). Rather, we have a community of selves which have been created to relate to different aspects of our multi-faceted lives, with no central, true and good, personality which is in control (Ibid.). There are only multiple and fragmented selves that form and reform in response to a complex relational field (Ibid.).

To counter this, Rappaport seeks to save what can be saved from our cultural heritage, and to put the fragmented pieces back together again into a synthetic, universal, New Enlightenment ethic:

[Are there portends of] a movement toward a new Enlightenment, in which a privileged postmodern minority will find the means, however slowly and tentatively, to save what can be saved while expanding the world culture base for a liberating multiplicity? (Rappaport, 282)

A postmodern ethic must, of course, include a coherent account of moral agency and moral accountability within its 'liberating multiplicity' to avoid Rappaport's critique of desensitization and moral malaise.

The following account seeks to synthesize the above functionalist accounts of perpetrator behaviour with current findings from the fields of psychology and social psychology to see how a Culture of Cruelty¹ can come to be created through situational and contextual factors and driven by desensitizing stress-coping individual defence mechanisms. Part II combines these lessons with the evolution and origins of mimetic morality and humans as mimetic cultural actors to synthesise the key findings from these various disciplines, and to discover what steps can be taken to break the Culture of Cruelty and to foster the development of an active empathic moral agency in individuals.

7.2 *Defence Mechanisms and Moral Refurbishment*

Goldhagen's 1996 book *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* was deeply influential in that he sought to place the perpetrators at the centre of the inquiry and to explain their actions (Goldhagen, 375). Goldhagen explained the participation of large numbers of ordinary Germans in the Holocaust in terms of a pre-existing ideology of eliminationist anti-Semitism, the German control over European Jewry due to conquest, and the removal of normal social constraints due to the war (Goldhagen, 375).

Goldhagen points out that the cruelty exhibited by the perpetrators was nearly always voluntaristic, and that opportunities to exit from such institutions and practices were available to perpetrators, who rarely availed themselves of these opportunities (Goldhagen, 378). Knowledge on the part of the Einsatzgruppen that they did not have to kill was extremely widespread (Goldhagen, 381). Overt forms of coercion were not found, even after extensive examination of the historical records and extensive investigations for the defendants at Nuremberg (Goldhagen, 379). No German was ever executed, killed, or sent to a concentration camp for refusing to participate in Nazi atrocities (Ibid.).

Goldhagen eschewed a functionalist or structuralist analysis. He did not write about leadership, organization and authority, and instead focused on ordinary Germans (Newman, 44). Goldhagen eschewed a social-psychological account of perpetrator behaviour as well, as he considered such models of human behaviour to be overly exculpatory (Newman, 45). Goldhagen

¹ The earliest reference for the use of the term "Culture of Cruelty" that has been suggested to me by Dr. Brian Burtch is Conniff, Ruth. "The Culture of Cruelty." *The Progressive*, September 1992, p. 16-18.

does acknowledge that social psychological pressures were at work, such as when some members of the Einsatzgruppen only feigned at hitting Jews, and only in the presence of other Germans, but he downplays their importance. He argues that social psychological pressures are only effective if the majority of the people support the undertaking and exert the pressure (Goldhagen, 383). He finds support in this for his central thesis, that the primary motivator of the perpetrators was eliminationist anti-Semitism. His work, profoundly inculpatory of Nazi culture and the German people, was a runaway bestseller.

Since his book was published, Goldhagen's controversial use of social psychology has been criticised by social psychologists. Newman contends that Goldhagen is, in fact, using social psychology in his analysis, but it is social psychology that is ill-informed and out-of-date (Newman, 45). Social psychologists conclude from extensive experimentation that a pre-existing hatred towards certain individuals is neither sufficient nor necessary to produce unspeakable violence (Newman, 52). Rather, situational and contextual factors take precedence over identity, ideology, and individual dispositions and character traits and habits. One of the central claims of social psychology is that personal, or dispositional, characteristics and situational factors are dynamic and dialectical – they continually interact and mutually transform one another (Newman, 51). Social-psychological explanations have power in that they can account for the prevalence of collective violence across cultures and throughout history, the ease with which ordinary perpetrators can come to participate in a Culture of Cruelty, as well as the extreme brutality that characterises collective violence across cultures and epochs, and which cannot be adequately explained by functionalist theories of the role played by ideology, identity, collectivism and authority.

The following section will examine the dynamic role played by situational and contextual factors in producing a Culture of Cruelty, as these factors act upon the individual and are in turn acted upon by the individual in a mutually-transforming dialectic. These contextual factors and individual ego defence mechanisms transform the perpetrator's moral principles and norms rather than breaking them down or displacing them. Perpetrators thus refurbish their moral principles, rather than dispense with them altogether. The moral refurbishment that perpetrators cultivate is an active but gradual process of detachment by which some individuals or groups are placed outside the boundary in which moral values, rules, and considerations of fairness apply. Moral disengagement from violence and its victims requires moral justifications that seek to redefine the perpetrator's actions as being necessary for their safety and security. In this way, violence against a target group can become morally justified or even morally imperative. Justifications include preserving one's self and one's family, protecting the cherished values of the community, fighting

ruthless oppressors, preserving peace and stability, and saving humanity (or a part of it) from subjugation (Waller, 186). Moral refurbishment thus plays on feelings of victimization and trauma to promote self-serving and utilitarian moral principles.

7.3 *The Stanford Prison Experiment & Stanley Milgram's Electroshock Experiments*

In Philip Zimbardo's famous Stanford Prison Experiment, conducted in August of 1971, twenty-one undergraduate males were randomly assigned to play the role of prisoner or prison guard. The experimenters selected among those who were screened as being the most stable and mature and the least likely to commit anti-social acts. In the words of research assistant Craig Haney, they were “abnormally normal” (Zimbardo *et al.* 2000, 225). Almost immediately, several of the prisoners became resigned, ineffectual, apathetic, submissive and depressed. Three of the prisoners had to be released within the first four days because they were developing acute situational traumatic reactions as hysterical crying, confusion in thinking, and severe depression (Zimbardo, 161). Despite their knowledge that they might just as easily have been assigned as prisoners, about a third of the eleven guards took on roles characterized by cruel, callous, sadistic, dominating, authoritarian, tyrannical, coercive, and aggressive behaviour, including placing paper bags on the prisoner’s heads (Zimbardo, 169), forcing the prisoners to shout abuses at each other (Zimbardo, 172), likening the prisoners to animals (Ibid.), and sexual humiliations (Ibid.). These guards became extremely hostile, arbitrary, and inventive in their forms of degradation and humiliation, and they appeared to thoroughly enjoy the power they wielded when they put on the guard uniform (Zimbardo, 184). Some of the men even wanted to take the uniform home with them (Waller, 222). Due to the rapid daily escalation of brutality, the experiment had to be terminated after only six days (Zimbardo, 171).

Stanley Milgram conducted electroshock experiments in which he found that about 65% of the participants were willing to administer electric shocks to a “victim” (who actually received no shocks) to the point of death or near-death simply because an authority figure told them to do so. There was no pressure placed on them, and they were told that they were free to discontinue the experiment at any time (Newman, 48). Milgram's basic findings have held in numerous experiments over the years, without regard to age, gender, or level of education of the subjects in a range of obedience conditions, replicated many times over many years (Waller, 127). International studies have indicated a cross-cultural potential for destructive obedience (Waller, 127). Even those who refused to shock their victims did not come to their assistance (Ibid.).

The Culture of Cruelty that arose almost spontaneously under the situational factors

generated by Zimbardo and Milgram can occur between a few individuals, or overtake entire societies. It is driven by the ego defence mechanisms practiced by the individual perpetrators acting within the Culture of Cruelty. These ego defence mechanisms produce a gradual and steady moral refurbishment, whereby pre-existing beliefs, norms, and moral precepts are reshaped, reworked, and reserviced to meet the needs of the individual acting within the Culture of Cruelty.

7.4 Cognitive Dissonance and the Just World Phenomenon

Why did the subjects of the Milgram and Stanford Prison experiments comply so readily with harming behaviour in the absence of any external commands or inducements to do so? How did the guards in the Stanford Prison Experiment escalate so rapidly in their cruelty? Social psychologists explain these results by the application of the psychological defence mechanism of cognitive dissonance. Cognitive dissonance occurs when people engage in behaviours that violate their normal standards, and thereby change their attitudes and beliefs to reduce the discrepancy between their behaviour and pre-existing beliefs (Newman, 53). Strong pressures and motivators, such as benefits like money and position, or threats and heavy-handed pressure, tend to produce less dissonance: the person knows exactly why they are behaving contrary to their beliefs. *Subtle* pressures and motivators to behave in counter-attitudinal ways produce *more* dissonance, as the person's behaviour seems insufficiently justified to him or herself, and therefore produces a greater re-adjustment of the person's beliefs in response to their behaviour (Newman, 54).

In a Culture of Cruelty, cognitive dissonance is also expressed in what has been termed the Just World Phenomenon. The Just World Phenomenon demands that we reconceive the people we harm as having deserved it, in order to reduce our dissonance and allow us to resituate ourselves in a fundamentally just world (Newman, 54). This produces a cycle of justification, leading to increasing dehumanization, leading to ever more justified and brutal behaviour (Newman, 55). Those people who do not see the world as a fundamentally just place, but as one where benefits and suffering are arbitrarily handed out, are less likely to see victims of violence as having deserved their treatment.

People believe in a just world with different degrees of conviction (Waller, 250). The stronger the belief in a just world, the greater is the susceptibility to cognitive dissonance and the less likely one is to exhibit compassion for victims generally (Ibid.). For example, in one electroshock experiment, participants who controlled the fate of the victim described the victim in

more positive terms than those who had no control over the electroshocks the victim was to receive; the participants who had no control denigrated the victim so they could justify the harm they had witnessed (Lerner). Blaming the victim allowed the perpetrators to maintain their belief in a just world (Waller, 251), which in turn contributed to the participants' dehumanizing their victims.

A strong belief in a just world is associated with a rigid application of social rules and a belief in the importance of convention (Waller, 252). Cognitive dissonance and a belief in a just world assist perpetrators and bystanders to engage in moral refurbishment by rearranging their perception of people and events so it seems everyone is getting what they deserve: the victims are evil, or their suffering is serving a higher cause (Waller, 254).

7.5 Escalating Commitments: The Foot-in-the-Door Syndrome

The gradual process of moral disengagement that perpetrators undertake has been described in terms of a series of escalating commitments, also called the “Foot-in-the-Door Syndrome”. A perpetrator's agreement to comply with an initial request breeds compliance with a larger request, even when the second request concerns a different topic than the first, the requests come from different members of the group, and the time between requests is varied (Waller, 205). There is thus a generality to the perpetrator's compliance, and an initial, relatively inconsequential act can make later evil-doing easier (Waller, 205). This is also discussed by Lifton, who describes the slow emergence of the Nazi self, followed by a series of escalating destructive actions (Lifton). The road to extraordinary evil often takes the form of a series of escalating commitments – a sequence of small, innocuous, incremental steps (Waller, 205). The initial compliance is most effective when it is voluntary, and not coerced by threat or bribe (Waller, 205), and this is precisely what creates a mounting momentum of compliance.

7.6 Shadow Selves: Dissociation and Doubling

The psychological defence mechanisms of dissociation and doubling also contribute to the moral refurbishment that takes place in a Culture of Cruelty. Psychoanalysts such as Lifton and Cohen speak of our shadow self: through socialization we learn to bury in our shadow self those qualities that do not fit our self-image (Waller, 113). This includes not only negative emotions and behaviours but also unexpressed potentials of all kinds, including undeveloped talents and gifts that the unconscious personality chooses to neglect, forget, and hide in the

unconscious shadow self (Ibid.). Within the conscious mind, dissociation can also occur when groups of mental processes are split from the remainder of the person's mental activity (Waller, 114).

Cohen describes denial as one such dissociative defence mechanism, in which the individual's fragmented self both knows and does not know that which is denied:

Denial is a presence that evaporates, the nearer you get to defining it. Unconscious defence mechanisms, splitting of the ego, cognitive paradoxes, self-deception, bad faith, inferential schemata: these constructs spin away into their own spaces. As it moves further from the rich Freudian and Sartrean originals, the academic discourse becomes shallower than the thoughts of even the most minimally self-conscious adult – let alone the sense of knowing and not-knowing to be found in literature. (Cohen, 49)

Denial of this kind involves a dissociation in which different compartment of the self co-exist, or evolve, to account for the simultaneity of knowing and not knowing.

Doubling is another kind of dissociative defence mechanism that facilitates perpetrators' behaviour. Lifton defines doubling as “the division of the self into two functioning wholes, so that a part-self acts as an entire self” (Lifton, 418). In Lifton's study of the Nazi doctors, he found dissociative doubling to be the most frequent psychological adaptation utilized by the Nazi doctors. Lifton describes this dissociation as involving a dialectic, or awareness, between the split selves. The split self is “both autonomous and connected to the prior self that gave rise to it” (Lifton, 419). This is distinct from multiple personality, which is a lifelong pattern of distinct selves in which the selves are consciously unaware of one another (Lifton, 422). Doubling is rather a temporary defence mechanism that assists in the avoidance of guilt “whereby conscience is transferred to the doubled self to protect the primary self” (Lifton, 421). The doubled self is a complete functioning self with its own intellectual and moral standards (Waller, 118). As Lifton describes the situation at Auschwitz:

Part of the schizophrenic situation was the ability to mobilize the Auschwitz self into perverse actions in which it could not itself believe. The feeling was something like: “Anything I do on planet Auschwitz doesn't count on planet Earth. And what one does not believe, whatever the evidence of one's own actions, one does not feel. (Lifton, 447)

Lifton concludes that this is why one doctor, Dr. Tadeusz S., “could say, of Nazi doctors, with bitter irony: ‘They have no moral problems.’” (Lifton, 447).

Postmodern psychologists posit that we have no single, coherent self. Rather, we have a community of selves which have been created to relate to different aspects of our multifaceted

lives (Waller, 121, and Rappaport and Oyserman, *infra.*). There is thus no truly central personality, only a “system of multiple and fragmented selves that form and reform in response to a complex relational field” (Ibid.):

Such dissociation of personality is a particularly disturbing phenomenon because it calls into question a basic assumption about human nature – namely, that for every body there is but one person; that each of us, despite the passage of time, remains the same person, with a single biography and store of memories. (Waller, 114)

Cohen agrees that a certain amount of fragmentation and dissociation is common in our everyday lives:

Psychopathological mechanisms such as 'splitting' are too dramatic to convey the everyday forms of role distancing, compartmentalization and segmentation by which people separate themselves from what they are doing. We all do this normally, and we are normally aware of what we are doing (Cohen, 93)... Our societies encourage and reward the successful practice of splitting; dissociation and numbing are integral parts of late-modern cultures of denial. (Cohen, 93)

Fragmentation, compartmentalization and segmentation of our cognitive processes are thus a part of the normal functioning of the human mind.

This everyday fragmentation, segmentation, and dissociation of personality that we all engage in to some extent is used by perpetrators to construct new social roles and identities in which unpleasant facts are hidden from other parts of the self and in which moral norms and beliefs that are unpalatable to other parts of the self can be contained. However, it is a finding that significantly diminishes individual moral responsibility, in that we have lost the sense of an individual, coherent personality that was once the locus for will and moral agency.

7.7 *Dehumanization*

Humans have an enormous capacity to dehumanize one another, a capacity characterized by the great ease and rapidity with which it is realized. Dehumanization involves the creation of in-group and opposing out-group identities, along with factors that allow us to exclude members of out-groups from our community of empathic moral concern. The fact that many killers are neighbours or even relatives of their victims can attest to the power of dehumanization in the refurbishment of the moral norms employed by perpetrators.

Tajfel studied our capacity to form in-group and out-group identities by performing a number of minimal group experiments in which participants were assigned randomly to groups based on arbitrary or trivial criteria. The persons remained anonymous to one another, and there

was no contact or interaction among the participants. The experiments did not include an element of competition. Participants showed bias, discrimination and a competitive orientation in favour of the in-group and against the out-group. Tajfel found that we rate in-group members as more pleasant and likeable (Waller, 241). A negative bias against the out-group will often, but does not necessarily, follow (Waller, 241). The mere perception of belonging, of social categorization *per se*, is sufficient to trigger intergroup discrimination in favour of the in-group; bias and discrimination emerged from meanings the participants themselves imposed on the minimal groups (Tajfel, 38).

The meanings persons give to isolated out-groups are strongly influenced and reinforced by feelings of fear and victimization, real or imagined. In a Culture of Cruelty, target groups are stigmatized and memories of their past misdeeds, real or imagined, are activated by the dominant political or social group (Waller, 245). This is reinforced by propaganda that visualizes the victims as representations of all that is bad in the world (Waller, 248). Since victims are often portrayed as highly threatening, extreme measures must be taken in order to avert the potential danger they represent (Waller, 244):

Our cause is sacred; theirs is evil. We are righteous; they are wicked. We are innocent; they are guilty. We are the victims, they are the victimizers. It is rarely *our* enemy or *an* enemy, but *the* enemy – a usage of the definite article that hints at something fixed and immutable, abstract and evil. (Waller, 243. Italics in original.)

In this way, target groups are deprived of their identity and excluded from our community of empathic moral concern, making their destruction seem morally justified and even necessary in order to protect ourselves and our families from the perceived threat we imagine they present.

Victims themselves are also redefined in ways so they seem to warrant the aggression directed against them (Waller, 246). Perpetrators enact this in Cultures of Cruelty by brutalizing, mocking, or torturing their victims in order to dehumanize them and make them seem deserving of their treatment. For this reason, such dehumanizing behaviour often precedes actual killing. It also occurs when victims are forced to live under dehumanizing conditions such as are often created in prisons and concentration camps.

To reduce their feelings of guilt and empathic distress, passive bystanders will also distance themselves from victims, thus devaluing and dehumanizing the victims in ways similar to that of the perpetrators themselves (Staub 2002, 24). In this way, Cultures of Cruelty can gradually take over whole populations *en masse*, as in the Armenian genocide when most Turks either accepted or supported the persecution of the Armenians, and in Cambodia when, once the Khmer Rouge won the civil war, most people who were not victims were perpetrators (Staub

2002, 26).

7.8 *Ego Needs: Self-Esteem and Self Interest*

Under the military junta in Greece from 1967-1974, the junta selected and trained its torturers from the population of general military recruits. As in the selection of participants in the Einsatzgruppen and the Stanford Prison Experiment, there was nothing in their personality profiles or past histories that would indicate a propensity to sadistic, criminal or abusive behaviour, nothing to differentiate them from the population at large (Gibson, 50). In the course of their training, they were physically brutalized, told how lucky they were to belong to such an elite organization, and subjected to torture themselves (Ibid.). They were first assigned to guarding prisoners, and were then gradually moved up to hitting prisoners, observing torture, and, finally, themselves committing acts of torture (Ibid.).

In addition to deindividuation and dehumanization, the above example shows that the torturers were also schooled to associate feelings of high-self esteem and elitism with their membership in the Culture of Cruelty, a phenomenon that seemed to arise spontaneously among certain guards in the Stanford Prison Experiment. Like Staub, Baumeister claims that high, and not low, self-esteem and feelings of superiority are more likely to lead to aggression (Baumeister, 25). Perpetrators of violence usually think very highly of themselves, though some of this self-esteem may be compensatory (Waller, 193).

High self-esteem and ego needs are thus often exhibited by perpetrators of atrocities acting within a Culture of Cruelty. Prunier makes reference to the role played by self-interest as a motivator of perpetrators' actions in the Rwandan genocide, when he points out that social envy came together with political hatred, and for some may even have taken precedence over political hatred, as a motivator (Prunier, 232). Self-interest is often a central motive in cases of mass killings of indigenous peoples (Staub 2002, 29), as it was in the European resettlement of the Americas, and in more recent examples from Latin America such as the persecutions of indigenous peoples as part of the conflicts in Guatemala, Chiapas, and Columbia.

People choose certain organizations or norms because these organizations meet their pre-existing ego needs, and organizations and norms also shape and change the actors themselves, giving them new ego needs. Moral refurbishment in the Culture of Cruelty occurs when an individual adopts the ego needs consistent with those organizations and the attitudes, beliefs, values and morals principles that support them (Waller, 221).

7.9 *Deindividuation, Diffusion of Responsibility and Bureaucracy*

Diffusion of responsibility among a group in a Culture of Cruelty assists perpetrators to sidestep personal responsibility (Waller, 212). In large, complex groups, responsibility can be divided up into such small parts and pieces that no one seems to blame even if extraordinary evil acts are the result (Ibid.). One example is Adolf Eichmann, the ultimate efficient bureaucrat, who claimed that “I did not personally kill anybody” (Ibid.) Once activities are routinized into detached sub-functions, perpetrators shift their attention from the morality of what they are doing to the operational details and efficiency of their specific job (Waller, 213). Specialization of labour and functions into groups allows people to behave more efficiently, but also allows for the compartmentalizing of responsibility and fragmentation of conscience to the point where it disappears. There is a depersonalized regression from individual morality to an organizational morass of non-responsibility (Waller, 215).

Cohen speaks of the means-end dissociation that can occur in organizations with a clear division of labour, and where many fragmentary tasks seem harmless in themselves (Cohen, 94). Morality is easier to suspend if these routine, fractional contributions are isolated from the function and eventual end-product. You concentrate less on the effect of what you are doing than on doing a good job, such as drawing up train timetables and fare schedules of prisoners en route to Auschwitz with the same efficiency and regularity as a travel agent (Ibid.).

Deindividuation is a closely related defence mechanism that refers to a state of relative anonymity in which a person cannot be identified as a particular individual but only as a group member (Waller, 216). This may include the wearing of a special uniform. Victims, too, are often stripped naked or dressed in uniforms as one way to deindividuate and dehumanize them. The individual is submerged in situation-specific group norms, and ceases to evaluate their actions thoughtfully (Waller, 216). In this way, social and contextual forces shape our choices in ways that make it seem as if we are passive characters in a larger moral drama as that has no author (Lantos, 131):

When it is thrust upon them, they may use all the subtle psychological powers they possess to try to disguise the accountability, to share it, to defuse it, work to transfer it to someone or something other than themselves. [They] are trying to play-act a scenario in which their own individual wills disappear and they become the passive agents of a larger, external, inexorable force. (Lantos, 164)

This dispersion of individual moral will is therefore a choice individuals make, so as to displace moral blame from themselves and diffuse it instead among a nameless, faceless, group.

For an individual acting within a bureaucracy or other deindividuated environment, focusing on the operational details and efficiency of their specific job is a way of feeling that they are doing a good job. This is one way that individuals maintain their humanity while meeting their ego needs within the Culture of Cruelty. An example of this is a report by Obersturmbannführer Dr Strauch, discussing how he employed mobile gas vans to reduce the pernicious effects on his troops that arose from having to shoot so many people:

I cannot say whether I had misgivings about the use of gas-vans. What was uppermost in my mind at the time is that the shootings were a great strain on the men involved and that this strain would be removed by the use of gas-vans. (Klee, 193)

Perpetrators thus retain guilt, morality, responsibility and hold on to social norms *vis-à-vis* other members of the Culture of Cruelty. The harm caused to those who are outside their community of moral concern is just simply a non-issue.

There is nothing to render deindividuated acts inherently or necessarily aggressive; deindividuated acts can also be prosocial (Waller, 216). For this reason, each and every individual in the group must hold themselves directly responsible for the behaviour of the entire group of which they are a part (Peck, 218).

7.10 *Language and the Culture of Cruelty*

The euphemistic relabeling of evil actions is part of perpetrators' refurbishment of moral norms in the Culture of Cruelty, to use sanitizing language to obscure, mystify, to redefine (Waller, 188). Some powerful examples have included:

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| *target | *special treatment (Germany) |
| *surgical strikes | *ethnic cleansing (Bosnia/Kosovo) |
| *shock and awe | *cleaning up the city (Latin America) |
| *collateral damage | *draining the fish from the water (Mao) |
| *the tea party (torturers) | *bush clearing (Rwanda) |

Perpetrators often speak of their atrocities in the third person rather than the first (Waller, 189), as Josip Budimcic did when he referred to his role in the war with the statement “People have a hurricane; is it their fault they are living there?” (Supra, 4). Perpetrators do not necessarily believe or need to believe the prevailing propaganda, it just allows them a little moral distance

(Waller, 189), as in the examples of the “innocent murderers” cited by Prunier (Supra).

Raul Hilberg discusses how language assists in the repression of conscience that allows perpetrators to exclude values from outside the group and its Culture of Cruelty, so that the local values of the Culture of Cruelty predominate (Hilberg, 23). Debate and discussion of certain topics is silenced, step-by-step. One example of how silencing can readily become internalized even by new-comers, is given by Katz. Katz describes the diary entries of Johann Paul Kremer, an SS physician reluctantly assigned to Auschwitz. At the beginning of his stay, Kremer writes about a mass gassing of prisoners in which he was forced to participate: “By comparison, *Dante's Inferno* seems almost a comedy” (Katz, 52) He never again mentioned the horrors of Auschwitz in his diary, focusing instead on the mundane day-to-day routine of his short stay in the camp (Katz, 52). As Hilberg notes, “There are some things that can be done only so long as they are not discussed, for once they are discussed, they can no longer be done” (Hilberg, 23).

The following chapters will address the nature of refurbished moral principles that allow such things to be done, as I examine the development of moral sentiments in the Culture of Cruelty.

8 SENTIMENTS IN THE CULTURE OF CRUELTY

8.1 Directed Reasoning and Moral Decision-Making

*Act only according to that maxim whereby you can at
the same time will that it should become a universal law.*
~Immanuel Kant. *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 3.

*Use every man after his desert, and who should 'scape whipping?
Use them after your own honour and dignity:
the less they deserve, the more merit is in your bounty.*
~Hamlet, in *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, Act II, Scene ii

There has been a long dispute in Western thought as to whether emotions are irrational and a barrier to judgment, or whether they are central to moral judgment and the good life (Ricken). Aristotle believed that correct sentiments played a central role in ethics, whereas this was strongly denied by Kant (Wallace). The philosophers of the enlightenment were fascinated with the subject of emotion and the role that it played in the individual's moral and social existence (Evans, xi). Philosophers such as David Hume, Thomas Reid, and Adam Smith in his first book *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), thought that emotion was reason's ally, and that a full treatment of morality would be incomplete without an adequate account of the human passions (Ibid.), a view which was again rejected by the Romantic movement of the nineteenth century, which returned to the earlier view that reason and passion were opposed, only now it was *reason* that was *passion's* enemy (Ibid.). Emotion as a field of enquiry again showed great promise following the work of Darwin in the nineteenth century and that of Freud and the psychoanalysts at the dawn of the twentieth, but this progress was retarded by the advent of behaviourism in the 1920s and the rise of cognitivism in the 1950s, which returned to the view of emotions as "irrational, inaccessible, and refractory to scientific investigation" (TenHouten, xi).

This debate has played out in the question of the respective roles that reason and emotion play in moral judging. In the twentieth century, the role of directed reasoning in moral judging was privileged by the pioneering work of Lawrence Kohlberg. Following Jean Piaget's seminal theories of the stages of cognitive development in children, Lawrence Kohlberg developed a theory of the developmental stages of moral reasoning. In Kohlberg's view, children progressed through the stage of rote obedience to a rule, to the full internalization of rules in the form of universal ethical principles. In this, Kohlberg also followed Immanuel Kant, and the universal prin-

ciples Kohlberg saw in children who displayed the highest stage of moral reasoning bear a striking resemblance to the categorical imperative of Kant, as stated above:

Lawrence Kohlberg argued that people, as they grow up, move from lower stages of moral thinking (for example breaking a rule is bad if you are punished for it) through higher stages (for example you have a duty to obey rules even if you are not punished for breaking them) toward the highest stage, that of universal ethical principles (for example, the Golden Rule). In his version of the highest stage, Kohlberg was following in the footsteps of Immanuel Kant, to whom moral obligation had to rest on pure reason and in particular on the degree to which the maxim of one's own action could be made a universal principle. (Wilson, 192)

For Kohlberg then, the highest stage of moral reasoning involved the internalization and the application of universal moral principles to solving ethical dilemmas.

But is moral judging solely a matter of directed reasoning, and do individuals make moral judgments in the absence of emotion? To discern whether human moral judging is prior to and more fundamental than the logical universals of rational culture, we must return to first principles and examine how it is that humans actually come to form moral judgments. Lawrence Kohlberg and his critic Carol Gilligan, after all, examined the application of ethical principles to artificial dilemmas in an interview setting. They were not claiming to observe human moral reasoning *in situ*.

It is this *in situ* moral reasoning that moral psychologists seek to observe in examining everyday moral decision-making, and thus to develop a descriptive account of moral agency. Jonathan Haidt is a researcher from the University of Virginia who has written extensively in the area of emotions and moral agency, and has produced a lengthy review of the empirical evidence in favour of the view that moral choices are based primarily on emotion and intuition. Haidt concludes that the development of moral agency is as innate as it is socially learned:

Morality, like language, is a major evolutionary adaptation for an intensely social species, built into multiple regions of the brain and body, which is better described as emergent intuitions are therefore both innate and enculturated. (Haidt 2001, 17-18)

Haidt concludes that moral decision making arises out of a lengthy period of socialization and enculturation, which develops the potentialities encoded in the brain and the body by evolution and biology.

Haidt also reviews studies that have shown no relationship between the ability to reason morally, as per Kohlberg's Defining Issues Test, and observed positive moral behaviour:

Hart and Fegley and Colby and Damon both compared highly pro-social moral

exemplars to non-exemplars, and found that the groups did not differ in their moral reasoning ability assessed by Kohlbergian techniques... The relationship between moral reasoning ability and moral behaviour therefore appears to be weak and inconsistent, once intelligence is partialled out. Emotional and self-regulatory factors seem to be more powerful determinants of actual behaviour. (Haidt 2001, 15 [Citations omitted])

The ability to engage in directed moral reasoning is therefore not correlated with the ability to behave in ways that are morally pro-social. Rather, pro-social behaviour is correlated with emotional and self-regulation. Moral psychologists posit that emotions, rather than directed reasoning, play a large role in forming judgments, including moral judgments:

The affective system has primacy in every sense: it came first in phylogeny, it emerges first in ontogeny, it is triggered more quickly in real-time judgments, and it is more powerful and irrevocable when the two systems yield conflicting judgments. (Zajonc 1980)

There is thus a good deal of empirical evidence that humans do not employ directed reasoning in the absence of emotion, in forming their moral judgments. Principles derived from directed reasoning are invoked only in an *ex post facto* manner to justify one's behaviour to oneself and the world at large, and to reduce the individual's own cognitive dissonance and to justify an 'intuitive' moral choice.

8.2 Emotional Cognition and Moral Decision-Making

In these respects my very reason obliges me to permit my feelings to be my criterion. Whatever excites emotion has charms for me; though I insist that the cultivation of the mind by warming, nay almost creating, the imagination, produces taste, and an immense variety of sensations and emotions, partaking of the exquisite pleasure inspired by beauty and sublimity. As I know of no end to them, the word infinite, so often misapplied might, on this occasion, be introduced with something like propriety.

~Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Short Residence in Sweden*, 128.

Are our intuitive and emotional moral choices therefore irrational, or is our emotional decision making a kind of reason? One possible answer to this question can be gleaned from Merlin Donald, a cognitive neuroscientist at Case Western Reserve University, and his thesis regarding the evolution of the representational mind. Donald begins his argument by postulating the evolutionary development of successively higher layers of cognitive representation, beginning

with the primordial episodic representational system employed by the apes and the early hominids which represents the event, or episode. From this, is built higher levels of specifically human cognitive abstraction, beginning with the mimetic, followed by the mythic or narrative, and culminating finally with the logo-scientific, algorithmic, theoretic mind. Moral development and moral decision-making can be postulated to be found in the mimetic mind, and the sentiments formed in mimetic cognitive representation.

Mimesis begins with episodic and mimicry, but as a representational system it is qualitatively different from the primordial cognitive structures upon which it is built:

Mimetic skill or mimesis rests on the ability to produce conscious, self-initiated, representational acts that are intentional but not linguistic. These mimetic acts are defined primarily in terms of their representational function. Therefore, reflexive, instinctual, and routine locomotor acts are excluded from this definition, as are simple imitative acts and conditioned responses (Donald, 168)... Mimesis adds a representational dimension to imitation. It usually incorporates both mimicry and imitation to a higher end, that of re-enacting and re-presenting an event or relationship. (Donald, 169)

Mimesis is thus characterized by its intentionality, as well as by its inventiveness, or generativity. It is this intentionality and generativity that allows the mimetic mind to organize episodes and mimicry into intentional and novel, specifically human, cognitive structures.

Merleau-Ponty captures the physical, embodied, aspects of mimetic social iteration that is embedded within the primordial episodic mind:

Mimesis is the ensnaring of me by the other, the invasion of me by the other; it is that attitude whereby I assume the gestures, the conducts, the favourite words, the way of doing things of those whom I confront... I live in the facial expressions of the other, as I feel him living in mine. (Merleau-Ponty, 145-146).

Mimesis is physical, phenomenal, and socially embedded, and it is prior to the linguistic mode of representation that is characteristic of the narrative mythic mind and the theoretic logo-scientific mind which, later, will be built upon it.

In Donald's thesis, each successive layer of representation is a quantitatively higher level of abstraction and comprises a completely novel cognitive strategy, one which arrived all of a piece with the advent of mimesis in *Homo erectus* (Donald, 163). In this, Donald's thesis is subject to the same criticism that can be leveled against the similar work of Jean Piaget, the developmental theorist who described the successive and quantitative levels of cognitive ability that develop in the human child, namely that these models postulate the existence of unified and quantitatively higher levels of cognition that fail to account for intervening cognitive forms. One such critique is provided by French cultural theorist and literary critic René Girard, who wrote extens-

ively about mimesis, and who argues that the transition from the animal to the human is not a discontinuous process involving a sudden cognitive illumination:

One great characteristic of man is what they call neoteny, the fact that the human infant is born premature, with an open skull, no hair, and a total inability to fend for himself. To keep it alive, therefore, there must be some form of cultural protection, because in the world of mammals, such infants would not survive, they would be destroyed. Therefore there is reason to believe that in the later stages of human evolution, culture and nature are in constant interaction. The first stages of this interaction must occur prior to language, but they must include forms of sacrifice and prohibition that create a space of non-violence around the mother and the children which make it possible to reach still higher stages of human development. You can postulate as many such stages as are needed. Thus, you can have a transition between ethology and anthropology which removes, I think, all philosophical postulates. The discontinuities would never be of such a nature as to demand some kind of sudden intellectual illumination. (Muller, 11)

In this, Girard agrees with Donald that the early cognitive forms employed by humans are prior to language, and are in constant interaction with the surrounding culture. Mimesis can thus be conceived as a range of associated cognitive domains that are prior to language and which interact with the surrounding culture to create specifically human cognitive forms that are essential for uniquely human social acting and cultural production.

Piaget may agree that cognitive forms arise in the child's development piece-by-piece, and that such cognitive forms must be integrated in the mature mind of the adult. Piaget describes the bipolar nature that reality takes on for the child who lacks the ability to abstract the episodic information at a higher level, and notes that the child's ability to move beyond an egocentric episodic mode of cognition lies in the child's awareness of his social environment (Piaget, 244).

The higher levels of abstraction that are built up gradually in the mind are fragile and fleeting, and so the fragmented nature of reality that is built up the early mind of the child are ever present in the mind of the adult. The fragmentation, dissociation, and doubling that occurs in the mind (See Lifton and Cohen, *Supra*) is a part of how our minds come into being. The discomfort which arises from the contradictory nature of the un-integrated cognitive forms remarked upon by Piaget is precisely the phenomenon of cognitive dissonance. Transduction and condensation thus come easily to the adult as an appropriate response to cognitive dissonance, as they always and ever have been at service in the cognitive structures of the mind, and they are employed with greater ease and facility than the higher levels of abstraction which have not fully overtaken them. Thus, it is with great ease and facility that "Planet Auschwitz" can sit alongside the rest of the perpetrator's world, and the ease and facility that perpetrators have in responding to

radically different social environments and social roles without generalizing any contradiction between them. Such dissociations thus arise out of normal, and not abnormal, functioning of the human mind.

8.3 From Episodic Emotions to Mimetic Sentiments

Antonio Damasio describes emotion as a natural means for the brain and mind to evaluate the environment within and around the organism and to respond accordingly and adaptively (Damasio, 54). This places emotion in the realm of the episodic mode of cognition. Emotions are episodic adaptations that the individual makes in response to environmental changes, and “the human environment is above all else social” (TenHouten, 113). The objects of emotions are typically other people, whether those particular people whom we encounter in our immediate environment, or categories of people (Ibid.). Even when the emotional object is the self, the self is often thought about in terms of its social relations with other people (Ibid.).

The episodic emotional adaptations are abstracted, in the mimetic representational system, into the *sentiments*. TenHouten cites Steve Gordon’s definition of the sentiments as “socially constructed patterns of sensations, expressive gestures, and cultural meanings associated with a socially constructed fact, relationship, role, person, etc.” (Ten Houten, 5). Socially constructed facts may include a physical gesture, a marriage, a family, a category of people, a community, an institution, a country. Similarly, Dylan Evans, a philosopher of emotion at King’s College London, uses the concept of *higher cognitive* emotions, which are shaped by culture and are more culturally variable than the basic, universal emotions, which are also present in many higher animal species (Evans, 29).

Greenspan provides an account of the development of the interpersonal modelling of emotion from its episodic roots. Emotions are first modelled episodically, for example in animals and infants:

This first aspect of emotional evaluation is something we can attribute unproblematically to infants and to nonhuman animals that seem to be capable of emotion. It's also something humans can pick up from each other without much prior understanding of the content of an emotion or the grounds for it (if any)--just by imitating the bodily responses of agents in one's surroundings, for the less reflective form of empathetic transfer known as "emotional contagion." (Greenspan)

The episodic modeling of emotion is an empathic mirroring of the emotions of others, which can arise simply from mirroring our companion's physical expressions. Antonio Damasio, too, details the evidence showing that psychologically unmotivated and “acted” emotional expressions have

the power to conjure up the kinds of feelings and thoughts that have been learned as consonant with those physical emotional expressions (Damasio, 71). Our facility to imitate the bodily responses of those with whom we interact in turn produces in us those same emotions, in the “emotional contagion” that Greenspan has defined as being empathy – “feeling with” another.

Empathy begins in emotional imitation, which captures the physical and embodied nature of mimesis, as described above by Merleau-Ponty. But the mimetic mind is not only imitative, it is also symbolic, and it recognizes the functions of social objects, social facts, and social relationships (Donald, 167). This mimetic modeling of emotions is fundamental to the development of the nascent moral sense; it inculcates a sense of self and other, right and wrong, acceptance and rejection:

Moral emotions seem to be prior to moral thoughts; or perhaps one should say they're the original form of moral thinking. Consider how we teach a child the judgment of moral wrong. We react with various forms of disapproval to this or that lapse: "Bad boy!" said in an angry or disappointed tone, and the like. We're appealing here to the child's felt sense of ease with himself and others, as something communicable wordlessly from early on, via interpersonal acceptance or rejection, the allocation of positive or negative personal attention, or even just pleasant or unpleasant forms of holding and skin contact. (Greenspan)

The display of emotions and their learned associations with social facts is thus an important dimension in developing the nascent mimetic mind of the child, and is intimately connected with the early development of judgments of right and wrong. Lutz expresses a similar characterization of the role played by emotions in mimetic human moral judging when he states that "emotions are a primary idiom for defining and negotiating social relations of the self in a moral order" (Lutz, 417).

Bickhard discusses the construction of such social representations; each construction is in the context of prior constructions both as components and as loci for further variations, and in this way constructivist representations are recursive (Bickhard, 30). In human beings, the processes of construction are themselves constructed, and these processes are also recursive, in what Bickhard refers to as a kind of metarecursivity (Bickhard, 30). Bickhard describes how this metarecursivity functions within the immediate social situation:

Each agent's conception of the situation thus depends not only on their self-conception and their conception of the perspective of the other agent, but also on how the agent construes the other's representation of their own self, the goal being to quickly establish a construct of the situation, of self, other, and other's conception of self that is mutually consistent. (Bickhard, 32)

In this way, Bickhard's definition of metarecursivity is able to provide a description of how an individual interacts mimetically with their local social environment in such a way as to preserve the individual will and agency of each actor even as the situation quickly evolves to much more than the sum of its parts.

Bickhard also emphasises the unconscious, yet immensely malleable, nature of these mimetic interactions:

[W]hen *agents* are dealing with each other, the interactive potentialities that each affords to each other are largely hidden from perceptual access. Much of the interactive potentiality afforded by an agent is constituted or determined by internal representational and motivational processes that are not directly accessible and that can change over relatively short time spans. (Bickhard, 32. Italics in original.)

The generativity and malleability of these mimetic representations is therefore a result of the intentionality, the *agency*, of the actors.

Bickhard's metarecursivity of mimetic social interactions is often described in psychological literature of pro-social behaviour in the notion of “perspective taking” (See, for example the review of this literature by Kohn). Perspective taking has become an important concept in the psychological literature concerning development and pro-social behaviour, as it is seen as the heart of what makes us social beings and moral agents:

[P]erspective taking is understood as an important process by which we come to know that other persons are people with minds of their own, intentional agents whose goals, strategies, commitments and orientations both bear similarity to and are different from our own. Perspective taking is ontologically constitutive of us as social, psychological persons and rational moral agents. (Martin, 43)

Martin defines perspectives as representations that model and interpret relations between persons and their biophysical and socio-cultural world (Martin, 47), and with this definition perspective taking is another way of describing mimetic social interaction and the mimetic representations that are thereby constructed. Martin also draws on the work of Piaget to locate his mimetic perspectives as representations that are constructed at a higher level of abstraction:

[T]his involves more than mere information processing but a way of integrating and coordinating various perspectives of self and others to enable progressively higher forms of understanding and functioning, as per Werner and Piaget. (Martin, 45)

Because of this, mimetic representations are able to unfold dynamically as situations continuously emerge and transform (Martin, 47). Martin echoes the idea of metarecursivity posited by Bickhard, which in turn gives rise to the generativity and malleability of situational mimetic

representations.

The human facility for mimetic engagement is established early in life, and is markedly greater than that of other primates, which indicates that this facility has a biological as well as a social genesis. From a very early age, human infants have unique skills for sharing psychological states with others, and this plays a crucially important role for cultural learning and cultural creation (Behne, 66).

As discussed above, it is the subtle pressures that produce the most ready acceptance of group norms and behaviours. As Bickhard's model of meta-recursive social interactions shows, individuals also must actively and intentionally generate their mimetic representations of their social environment.

Stanley Milgram's experiments confirm the powerful normative influence that mimesis has on the individual. In Milgram's electroshock experiments, compliance was high even though most subjects were very distressed at the harm they thought they were causing, and despite the fact that no overt pressure was placed on them to continue (Supra). Compliance increases when the individual is given a familiar and meaningful social role to model (Zimbardo, 273), when the person is deindividuated (Zimbardo, 302), when responsibility is diffused away from the individual (Ibid.), and when justificatory semantic descriptions and ideologies are provided (Zimbardo, 274). In contrast, almost all demographic factors, including age, gender, political belief, and socialization into an 'authoritarian' or 'collectivist' culture have no impact on rates of compliance (Zimbardo, 275). Compliance was actually found to be *lower* in Apartheid-era South Africa than in America (Ibid.). On the other hand, having even one person, not necessarily in a position of authority, raise even minimal objections dramatically reduces compliance in almost all cases, as the individual now has other social roles and expectations to model (Ibid.).

A large body of social psychological research has been amassed that confirms Milgram's findings: the immediate situation, the local social scenario in which the participant finds himself, is far more important in determining behaviour than the dispositional characteristics of personal temperament, or the demographic characteristics of age, gender, religion, political affiliation, and adherence to theoretic ethical principles. This is the central assertion of the field of social psychology, and the evidence for this, as described above, is profuse and robust. This, too, attests to the primacy of mimesis in regulating our social interactions and our moral choices.

As Milgram's experiments indicate, mimesis also takes precedence over such demographic factors as age, gender, political affiliation, and ethnicity. Cultures with authoritarian and collectivist value frames such as South Africa did not, in fact, show higher rates of compliance than individualistic cultures like America. Turiel confirms that the evidence does not support a char-

acterization of cultures as collectivist or individualist, and that this does not influence their social conventions and moral constructions:

The body of research on the domains of morality, social convention, and the personal indicates that cultures cannot be characterized as mainly oriented to collectivism or individualism. (Turiel, 270).

Turiel concludes that in all the cultures in which moral decision making has been studied, individuals make judgments about morality, conventions, and persons that do not fit conventional characterizations of societies as oriented to personal needs, power, prudence, authority, or the conventionally constituted system, including social duties and roles (Turiel, 270). The ideological, the world view or *Weltanschauung*, also does not govern the social construction of moral judgments and behaviours. As described above, mimesis is more important than theoretical norms and principles in governing human judgment and moral reasoning.

One's privately held judgments are directly shaped by the judgments of others (Haidt 2001, 7) in one's social environment. Moral judgments and behaviours are primarily mimetic; they have their genesis in the mimetic mind, they are transmitted through mimetic social interaction between actors in the immediate social environment, and they are shaped and given meaning by the mimetic sentiments, which primarily operate at the unconscious level of unself-reflective awareness, and so they are often referred to as 'intuitive'.

Schreiber describes the generative and malleable nature of the construction of mimetic sentiments in the following terms:

Experiments show that using subtle signals about the beliefs of others, it is shown that a subject's automatic attitudes and preferences can be quickly influenced, especially when the subject likes the other people. This finding runs contrary to the supposition that automatic attitudes and preferences are the result of lifelong processes and are difficult to alter. (Schreiber, 69)

Enduring processes, such as temperament or social ideology, therefore have less impact on an individual's preferences and decisions than the signals the individual interprets from other actors in the social environment, particularly when the individual has respect and affection for those actors. Attitudes and preferences, even those about morality, are therefore not the result of enduring lifelong processes governed by personality and social ideology, but can be altered relatively quickly given the encompassing mimetic environment:

The most widely discussed method of triggering new intuitions is role taking. Simply by putting oneself into the shoes of another person one may instantly feel pain,

sympathy, or other vicarious emotional responses. This is one of the principle pathways of moral reflection according to Piaget, Kohlberg, and other cognitive developmentalists. A person comes to see an issue or dilemma from more than one side and thereby experiences multiple competing intuitions. (Haidt 2001, 8)

Empathy, modeling, and perspective taking are the primary routes to the kind of moral reflection that can overcome the situational influences of the Culture of Cruelty.

Attitudes and preferences can change rapidly, once the individual again changes his environment. This means that moral reasoning is not a contained, unified, cognitive skill that can be taught, and thus transferred from one context to another. Haidt presents a body of research that shows that moral reasoning ‘skills’ cannot be taught in a classroom:

However, attempts to directly teach thinking and reasoning in a classroom setting generally show little transfer to activities outside of the classroom, and since moral judgment involves “hotter” topics than are usually dealt with in such courses, the degree of transfer is likely to be even smaller. (Haidt 2001, 22 [citations omitted])

The reasoning skills taught to students in the classroom were not integrated by the students, and once they left the classroom and found themselves in a different social environment, the skills they had learned earlier were not applied. Again, this lends support to the proposition that mimetic judgments are characterised by a high level of generativity and malleability, and are not directly governed by the narratives handed down by authority figures, in this case teachers.

As Haidt postulates, there is indeed a moral Rubicon that only Homo sapiens appears to have crossed: widespread third party norm enforcement (Haidt 2001, 18). Pleasure centres of the brain are activated when subjects punish norm violators (Schreiber, 63), resulting in feelings of well-being from the reestablishment of the culture's norms and social order. The following two sections will examine two sentiments that are important for establishing and reinforcing third party community norms in the Culture of Cruelty: repugnance and hatred.

8.4 *Repugnance: The Sentiment of Civilization*

Disgust is widely considered to be one of the basic, primary, emotions (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Haidt 2004, and Evans, 7). The typical physiological disgust response, characterized by nausea, grimacing and gagging, can be found in animals and very young human infants (Haidt 2004). On the other hand, many common elicitors of disgust, such as feces, vomit and decay, universally evoke a disgust response among all human cultures, yet this same disgust response does not occur outside of human society, and is not present in young children (Rozin,

646). In a review of feral humans, raised without a human social structure, none displayed signs of disgust to these universal disgust elicitors (Rozin, 646). There is thus a typically, and universally, human social meaning given to these universal elicitors of disgust, which meaning presents in the sentiment of repugnance, a sentiment abstracted from the primary emotion of disgust and, as with all sentiments, repugnance is found only in humans (Haidt 2004).

Haidt and Rozin have created a pioneering body of research into the sentiment of repugnance and its central role in human moral judgment. Haidt traces the evolution of disgust from its roots in the typical food avoidance reaction that is seen among many animals, including especially primates, and that has evolved to help animals avoid dangerous foods (Haidt 2004). The human sentiment of repugnance, which Haidt refers to as the social functions of disgust, has become much more than an adaptive food-avoidance mechanism:

But if disgust evolved to serve these important adaptive functions - food selection and disease avoidance - then it is particularly surprising that the disgust response is almost totally lacking in young children. Indeed, young children will put almost anything into their mouths, including feces, and the full disgust response (including contamination sensitivity) is not in place until around the age of five to seven (Rozin, Hammer, Oster, Horowitz & Marmara, 1986; Rozin, Fallon & Augustoni-Ziskind, 1986; Siegal, 1988). Contamination sensitivity is also not found, so far as we know, in any non-human species. Caution is therefore warranted in proposing that disgust is important for biological survival. The social functions of disgust, which we will consider shortly, may be more important than its biological functions. (Haidt 2004)

The social functions of repugnance, then, are quite unconnected with the core episodic survival functions of disgust in avoiding disease and dangerous foods. Repugnance has developed out of disgust into a fundamental rejection system that patterns the human social environment into broad categories of acceptable and unacceptable:

If the heterogeneous class of disgust elicitors is linked together by a set of shared schemata, then the elaboration of disgust, from core through socio-moral, may be explained by the mechanism of "preadaptation" (Mayr, 1960). Mayr suggests that the major source of evolutionary "novelties" is the co-opting of an existing system for a new function. We suggest that core disgust be thought of as a very old (though not uniquely human) rejection system. Core disgust was "designed" as a food rejection system, as indicated by its link to nausea, its concerns about contamination, and its nasal/oral facial expression. Human societies, however, need to reject many things, including sexual and social "deviants". Core disgust may have been preadapted as a rejection system, easily harnessed to other kinds of rejection. This harnessing, or accretion of new functions, may have happened either in biological evolution or in cultural evolution (Rozin, 1976; Rozin, Haidt & McCauley, 1993). Human societies take advantage of the schemata of core disgust in constructing their moral and social lives, and in socializing their children about what to avoid. (Haidt 2004)

Repugnance has thus gone beyond its core survival functions of avoiding disease and dangerous foods, and has become an embodied domain of cognition that uses patterns and metaphors to give meaning to human social life:

The answer may perhaps be found in a controversial but growing view of human cognition: that it is embodied (Varela, Thompson & Rosch, 1991; Lakoff, 1987), and that it may involve metaphors and pattern-matching more than propositions and reasoning. Margolis (1987) argues that language and propositional reasoning are so recent in the evolution of the human brain that they are unlikely to be the basic processes of human cognition. He proposes that cognition, for humans as well as animals, is primarily a matter of quick and intuitive pattern matching, in which patterns get "tuned up" gradually by past experience. This view of cognition is consistent with current research on neural networks, which do not process information by manipulating symbols. Rather, we apply past patterns of action or recognition, quickly and intuitively, in new situations that resemble the original cuing conditions. (Haidt 2004. Underlining in original.)

Embodied human cognition is pre-linguistic and uses the meaningful patterns and chords abstracted out of episodic experience to generate new forms of meaning. Repugnance could then be thought of as an embodied sentiment in the mimetic domain of human cognition.

Repugnance embodies the meaning of opposites - good and evil, acceptable and unacceptable - and often plays out in as a kind of sympathetic magic:

Disgust is triggered not primarily by the sensory properties of an object, but by ideational concerns about what it is, or where it has been. In fact, we conceptualize disgust as a distinct form of food rejection, different from rejections based on bad taste or on fear of harm to the body (Haidt). In its ability to spread from one object to another, disgust follows two laws of sympathetic magic first described by E. B. Tylor (1871/1974), James Frazer (1890/1959) and Marcel Mauss (1902/1972). (Haidt 2004. Underlining in original.)

The contamination of disgust spreads from one object to another, from one person to another, as a kind of sympathetic magic that prompts the need for purification. Repugnance is manifested in revulsion to contact with even the objects of strange, ill, deformed, or otherwise morally objectionable people, even when those objects were laundered or sterilized (Rozin, 643). This employment of ritual and sympathetic magic to embody meaning is typical of the mimetic domain of human judgment.

The mimetic sentiment of repugnance sorts the human world into opposites, of acceptable and unacceptable, of good and evil, of what fascinates, attracts, and repels:

We have also noticed, in the course of our own research, that when we ask people "do you want to see something disgusting?" the answer is usually a cautious "yes." In

sum, the domains of core disgust and animal reminder disgust show a similar tension between interest and fear, between sensation-seeking and disgust. (Haidt 2004)

The fascination and attraction of disgust stems from its close association with its antithesis, acceptance, in its primary emotional domain.

The social function of repugnance goes to the core of sorting the human world into the opposites of “human” and “not human”. Haidt posits that repugnance was first adapted from its core function as a means for humans to separate ourselves from the episodic animal world from whence we emerged:

One of the most widely shared features of disgusting events, we believe, is that they remind us of our animal nature. Human beings in many cultures feel the need to distinguish themselves from animals (Leach, 1964; Tambiah, 1969; Ortner, 1973), and to hide the markers of our animal nature behind humanizing rituals and practices. If you wanted to convince yourself that you were not an animal, your body would confound you in certain domains: you would still eat, excrete, and have sex, and you would still bleed when your outer envelope was breached, or when you menstruated or gave birth. Every culture prescribes the proper human way to handle these biological functions, and people who violate these prescriptions are typically reviled or shunned. (Haidt 2004. Underlining in original.)

The proper handling of animal and bodily products, such as food, the slaughter of animals, the handling and management of bodily fluids, of decay, of corpses, correct ways of covering the animal body, is therefore a fundamental component of socialization and humanization. It goes to the heart of how humans separate ourselves from the animal world and come to conceive of ourselves as having a particularly *human* kind of dignity.

Repugnance can be contrasted with fear, also a primary emotion, and which is also present in other species. Unlike fear, repugnance is a means to protect not simply the body but the human soul, in its fundamental human dignity:

Rozin (1990) contrasts fear, which guards primarily against physical threats to the body, with disgust, which guards against more subtle threats to the "soul". We would like to re-emphasize that contrast here: disgust involves a vertical dimension of degradation-elevation and a link to notions of purity and sacredness, which are not found in fear. Becker's thesis is that the fear of death and insignificance is the greatest fear haunting humans. Human culture and heroism are, in large measure, attempts to deny or repress the fear that, ultimately, human life is pointless and brief. *Miasma* involves a distancing from divinity, contagion, and a kind of threat or danger that cannot be explained as a rational fear of harm from the object itself. Parker specifically states that *miasma* resembles the English concept of disgust in uniting both the "physically repugnant" and "what is morally outrageous". (Haidt 2004. Italics in original.)

Whereas fear is the guardian of the mortal body, repugnance is the guardian of the sanctity of the human soul (Rozin, 644), of the nascent human consciousness, and which serves the social function of separating it from the episodic world of the animals from whence it sprang.

Haidt and Rozin's research participants often described repugnance as giving meaning and value in such a way as to blend together opposites into a middle way of desirable behaviour:

Food and sex taboos may have a further similarity in that the middle-distance is often the preferred range. Tambiah (1969) reports that in the Thai village he studied, animals cannot be eaten if they are too close to humans (pets, monkeys, humans), or too distant from humans (invertebrates and other "anomalous" animals; wild animals of the forest). And sexual partners cannot be too much like the self (same sex, same nuclear family) or too distant (animals, people of other races). In many societies the existence of an incest taboo combined with a preference for cross-cousin marriage exemplifies this preference for the middle distance. (Haidt 2004)

This integration of the opposing elements of acceptance and disgust is often seen in the social consequences of repugnance in various cultures.

What is repugnant in every society is clearly associated with what is *immoral*, what cannot be accepted, what is in any way outside the bounds of accepted social meaning. An example is provided by a member of the Hopi tribe, as narrated to Haidt:

Anything that would be deviant to Hopi teachings and belief could be seen as disgusting to some degree. The Hopi way of life was handed down to us by Massau'u, and it is important to keep to the right path. Often this is believed to be opposite of the White way, no offense. But it can be found that most Hopi believe there are two ways of life in the world, the traditionally good way of the Hopi and the way of the White man. (Haidt 2004)

This feeling, that the ways of others are disgusting, that they handle animal and bodily products in an incorrect manner, and that they assign social meaning and value to disgust elicitors in an incorrect manner, is found to be nearly universal among human cultures (Ibid.).

Repugnance is the sentiment most closely linked with immorality in most cultures studied (Rozin, 643). What is hygienic is often associated with what is moral, of which the Kashrutic laws of Judaism and the Hallal laws of Islam are clear examples. The plasticity of embodied repugnance is great, and what is repugnant often changes as between cultures and epochs; what is found to elicit repugnance can also change within a culture and within an individual. Rozin terms this process that of "moralization", or what we might also call "repugning"², as a process whereby what was a mere preference becomes a moral norm simply by recruiting a disgust response (Rozin, 644). In moralization, a primary emotion is used to recruit a moral sentiment to a social fact

2 The verb "to repugn", is derived from the Latin verb *repugnare*, "to fight or oppose". The present participle of *repugnare* is also the root of the word "repugnant" (American Heritage Dictionary).

which was previously unconnected with that sentiment. Rozin cites smoking as a recent example of repugning by recruiting the disgust response, and thus bringing smoking within the realm of what is repugnant, immoral, and socially unacceptable (Ibid.).

The malleability of embodied sentiments like repugnance can be brought to bear to lend a 'moral' or an 'immoral' character to nearly anything. We can as quickly become desensitized to formerly repugnant social facts as we can come to repugn others - as happened with common-law marriages, inter-racial marriages, homosexuality, test-tube babies, breastfeeding, and on the other hand, smoking, religious head coverings, the wearing of perfume, and so on and so forth - as social facts are repugned and depugned all according to ever-shifting needs of our dynamic, mimetic, social life. And often we cannot provide a convincing theoretic justification as to *why*.

The mimetic sentiment of repugnance is an important domain of human cognition, one that sorts the world into opposites of acceptable and unacceptable, human and inhuman, moral and immoral. At a still higher level of abstraction, it partakes of the human world-making power to integrate those opposites into the *Weltanschauung* of Myth. It is ever-present in civilization, and makes that very civilization possible. As such, repugnance is *the* pre-eminent sentiment of civilization (Rozin, 649).

Repugnance is also the pre-eminent sentiment that forms the moral basis for the refurbished moral norms of the Culture of Cruelty. That out-group devaluing is not a necessary consequence of reference group formation is evidenced by the minimal group experiments performed by Tajfel, described above (Supra), who found that sorting participants into in-groups and out-groups based on minimal criteria is not necessarily associated with negative attributions toward out-groups. Instead, Tajfel observed a strong positive association that participants attributed to the in-group. This positive association with the in-group was not necessarily or inevitable associated with participants repugning the out-group. After all, bus drivers often wave to other bus drivers out of fellow-feeling for a shared way of life. However, they do not thereby *devalue* the drivers of other kinds of vehicles, they do not *repugn* them, and they are not seen to take machetes to those same repugned drivers. The road from having positive feelings about one's own reference group to committing wholesale violence and destruction of target out-groups is a long road to travel indeed, and it cannot be explained solely by the mere fact of an "us" and "them" mentality.

The devaluation and dehumanization of out-groups usually requires that the target group be made threatening and inferior. It is also necessary that the target group be made *repugnant*, for it is precisely in this repugning that the target group is set outside of the human community, the moral community, the community of those to whom our ordinary moral principles should apply.

Albert Bandura found that a mere passing mention that a group of hypothetical shock victims were “animals” was enough to dehumanize them and result in the administration of much more harmful shocks (Zimbardo, 308-9). Dehumanized groups are also repugned as “vermin” (Nazi Germany), as “cockroaches” (Rwanda), or “sand-monkeys” (Iraq). The repugned community is re-characterized as a community that does not share our values, that cannot be negotiated with, that is not like us, that is not fully human, that has no *human* dignity.

Genocidal propaganda intended to repugn a target group often depicts images of the target group as particularly evil, or animal, and thus inhuman. Common examples include images and words that designate the target group as beasts, reptiles, insects, barbarians, criminals, torturers, and rapists (Gulseth, 49). In the course of the Rwandan genocide, for example, radio speech often depicted the Tutsis as animals, cockroaches, dogs, barbarians, guttersnipes, wicked savages, and killers (Gulseth, 99). Thus is the animal bound up in the domain of repugnance with what is evil and animal, and thus immoral.

One tactic used by the Nazis to repugn the German Jewish community took place in September of 1941. On the first of that month, the wearing of the yellow star was made mandatory (Bytwerk, Zeichner). Towards the end of the month, an anti-Semitic propaganda pamphlet was published, prominently displaying the yellow star with the title, “When You See this Symbol...”, thus constructing a symbol and then clearly associating the propaganda contained therein with the, now mandatory, symbol of the yellow star (Ibid.). The repugning of the Jewish community was now clearly associated with a visible symbol attached to the physical person of each individual Jew. To maximize the assimilation of that symbol and all of its consociations with the sentiment of repugnance, the pamphlet was distributed at the end of September to every single German with their monthly ration card (Ibid.).

It is common in prisons and concentration camps for prisoners to be repugned by the guards. This often takes the form of disrupting the prisoner’s bodily functions, such as preventing the prisoners from washing their bodies and their clothing, placing them in filthy conditions, and by controlling normal bodily functions such as sleep and elimination. The guards in the Stanford Prison Experiment quickly and intuitively adopted these behaviours towards the prisoners. The guards were showered and pressed in neat uniforms daily, whereas the prisoners could not shower, wear underwear, or launder their smocks - which were very short so that when they bent over their buttocks were exposed (Zimbardo, 40). Some of the favorite dehumanizing rituals of the guards were to march the prisoners to the toilet, to not let them empty their chamber pots, to soil their bedding and line it with burrs, and to otherwise prevent them from sleeping (Ibid.). Similarly, when Frontline pieced together the documentary *Memory of the Camps* in 1985, the

liberating allied forces found the Nazi guards at Belsen plump and neat and pressed, while the prisoners were forced to exist in a nightmare-scape of corpses, lice, and typhus (Frontline). The allies immediately provided food and medical care, but they also provided the survivors with showers and clean clothes (Ibid.). These were denied to the guards, who instead were made to enter the bodies, in an effort to repugn the guards and to rehumanize the survivors (Ibid.).

The dehumanizing effects of repugnance need not be accompanied by a strong affect in order to produce devastating effects. The sentiment of repugnance functions at a quantitatively higher level of cognitive abstraction than the primary emotion of disgust upon which it is based. The physical, embodied, repugning practices of the Nazi concentration camp of Treblinka show how the sentiment of repugnance can function in the absence of emotion:

The Reception Area included the platform where the trains arrived, a large barrack in which the men undressed, and a large barrack in which the women undressed and had their hair cut off. The Jews, who had just spent days crammed into airless freight cars without food, water, or sanitary provisions, were told they were headed for showers and disinfection. After the forced separation of families, the public undressing and humiliating searches for valuables, and the cutting off of the women's hair, they were brutally directed through "The Tube" to the Extermination Area. (Moshman, 191).

Moshman points out how we need to remind ourselves that this soulless, faceless, industrial killing-machine was a human institution, designed and run by human beings (Moshman, 191).

Moshman also points out that neither hatred, nor anger – nor, indeed an intense affect of any kind – is necessary for the dehumanization of repugnance to work its worst effects (Moshman, 193). Franz Stangl, the Commandant of Treblinka, evinced no hatred for Jews at all, and was motivated neither by ideology nor a commitment to anti-Semitism (Ibid.). Moshman quotes an interview with Stangl in which Stangl describes the repugnance he felt towards the prisoners, whom he saw as cargo, as cattle, as not really human (Ibid.). Sereny, the interviewer, while listening to Stangl's narrative about Jews, the trains, about cattle cars, about seeing cattle being taken to slaughter, suddenly points out to him, "You said 'tins':

"... I couldn't eat tinned meat after that. Those big eyes... which looked at me... not knowing that in no time they'd all be dead." He paused. His face was drawn. At this moment he looked old and worn and real.

"So you didn't feel they were human beings?"

"Cargo," he said tonelessly. "They were cargo." He raised and dropped his hand in a gesture of despair. (Sereny, 200-201. Italics in original.).

Neither Nazi ideology, nor the Nuremberg laws, nor anti-Semitism, were required for human beings like Stangl to design and run the killing machine that was Treblinka. It only required a sentiment of repugnance toward Jews, one connected by Stangl with its roots to its core affect of disgust and its origins as a food rejection mechanism, in its associations between animals, cargo, cattle, and other human beings, all unconsciously consociated together as of a piece and summed up in the avowal that “I couldn’t eat tinned meat after that.”

Of all of the 'social facts' of civilized humanity, none are more easily repugned in our efforts to reassert community norms and reestablish community sentiments and notions of dignity than *other human beings*. This goes to the core of the sentiment of repugnance as a mechanism for sorting humans and human relations into categories of acceptable and unacceptable, dignified and sullied, good and evil, putrefaction and purification. The Final Solution was expressed in the concentration camps as a kind of 'disinfection'; genocide in the Balkans is referred to as 'ethnic cleansing'; mass campaigns of extermination in Latin America in the 1980s were referred to as '*La Limpieza*' - 'the Cleanup'.

As repugnance mediates human relations and sorts and classifies what is good, clean, dignified, what is most *human*, it is most often other humans who within its 'bending sickle's compass come'. The third-party norm reinforcement that is the heart of the normative function of the sentiments demands that the sullied and offending beings be rejected, removed, and sometimes even outright killed, in order to reassert the humanity of the remaining group members.

Death, decay, and what Haidt describes as envelope violations – any wounding, breaking, or violation of the bodily envelope - (Haidt 2004), are all common elicitors of repugnance, though they are not connected with the core function of disgust as a food rejection mechanism, and in this they are given meaning only in the realm of sentiment. As Rozin states (Supra) fear is the guardian of the body, whereas repugnance is the guardian of the soul, and so the meaning given to envelope violations in the realm of repugnance is not one of fear and survival, but one of *uncleanness*. This explains the curious fact of how death, violence, and cruelty towards other human beings is often *less* repugnant than violations of norms which are seen as much more fundamental to the integrity of the community. Incest, for example, can be far more repugnant than the murder of one's own child. A recent murder took place in a village in India in which a young couple got married, despite the fact that they were from the same *gotra*, or social group, which was considered by the villagers to be a form of incest (Bhatia). The young couple was killed by the woman's own brother, uncle and cousin, and the killings were widely approved of in the village as a fitting retribution for the unholy union (Ibid.). A Chicago man recently murdered his daughter, son-in-law, and their children because his son-in-law was from a lower caste (Holusha).

The repugnance with which these transgressions were held far trumped the repugnance of violence and death, as well as other sentiments of love, parenthood, family, and even the supposedly unremitting orchestrations of selfish genes.

Thus, sentiments about sexuality, about cleanliness, about distinguishing ourselves from the animal world as something particularly human, go to the heart of sentiments of repugnance and the third-party norm reinforcement that they muster. Sexuality and cleanliness are more closely associated with core sentiments about our particularly *human* dignity that separates us from the animal world than are death, violence, and envelope integrity. These sentiments can even trump other sentiments about love, family, and the protection and care of our own children, and thus we can witness the ease with which the dehumanizing aspects of repugnance can provoke the - much less repugnant - violence that is invoked in order to reassert the community norms and sentiments of human dignity held by the perpetrator groups. The violence of Treblinka - which saw the destruction of perhaps more than 750,000 human beings - was after all not disgusting enough to warrant a complaint or an arrest, or even the condemnation of the international community until well after the Nazi capitulation, but only disgusting enough to avoid the eating of tinned meat.

8.5 *Hate: Sentiments of Shame and Anger*

*Rest you, my enemy,
Slain without fault,
Life smacks but tastelessly
Lacking your salt!
Stuck in a bog whence naught
May catapult me,
Come from the grave, long-sought,
Come and insult me!*
~Steven Vincent Benet, *Elegy for an Enemy*

Whereas the sentiment of repugnance is derived from the primary emotion of disgust, there has been much more debate about the primary emotions which produce hate, which shares with disgust its ability to provoke and justify aggression and even mass violence toward target out-groups. A rough consensus can be found from a review of the evidence, however, that hate is a tertiary emotion comprised of anger, and shame, which is in turn comprised of fear and sadness. Sentiments of hate, like repugnance, involve an intense, persistent devaluation of the target (Staub 2005, 51), and are built up into sentiments of shame regarding the identity of victimization held by the perpetrator group (Staub 2001 and 2002, discussion *Supra*).

Staub argues that fear is an essential component of hate. The target is also represented as

a threat to oneself or one's group or to important values (Staub 2005, 52), which Staub has discussed as contributing to the cycle of harm (Supra). Fear is therefore an important component of hate and its dehumanizing and aggressive effects.

Hate has been described by Berkowitz as a secondary emotion composed of the primary emotions of anger and fear:

[H]ate involves anger (fight) and fear (flight). Anger-aggression can become dominant both when the danger appears to subside, as well as when it becomes so intense that escape seems impossible, as in the so-called cornered rat syndrome. (Berkowitz, 161)

Anger is associated with outward acting behaviour, superficial and rapid decision-making, a lowered sensitivity to risk, and an orientation toward action (Huddy, 209).

Hate is also described as having shame, a secondary emotion composed of fear and sadness, as one of its primary components. In Royzman's extensive empirical review of phenomenal experiences of hate, many subjects expressed a sense of being trapped, shut in, inhibited, powerless (Royzman, 17). Many people who reported hate episodes experienced them towards persons who had more power, and were of higher social status (Royzman, 17). People described feeling powerless and ineffectual (Ibid.). Humiliation, Royzman concludes, thus appears to be the most commonly acknowledged antecedent within the hate script (Royzman, 18). This connects hatred with feelings of shame, humiliation, and a loss of social status.

Indeed, members of a group who are in a relatively good economic or social position in society are especially likely to become the objects of genocidal violence driven by hate, such as Jews in Germany, Armenians in Turkey, and Tutsis in Rwanda (Staub 2005, 53), again connecting hate with feelings of shame, anger, and an assertion of social status over a target group.

As Plutchik and TenHouten have posited, adaptations concerning hierarchy within a social group are mediated by the antitheses of *anger* and *fear* (TenHouten, 22), whereas adaptations concerning gain and loss are mediated by the antitheses of *joy* and *sadness* (Ibid.), and together they compose the secondary emotions of pride and shame. In this way, hate is situated along an emotional spectrum involving these two emotional cognitive domains, and is primarily directed towards reasserting social status and gain, while avoiding loss and a diminution in the social hierarchy. Many studies show that violent individuals tend to have a very positive self-concept, and they often engage in violence as a response to a sense of wounded pride (Berkowitz, 177). Baumeister also finds that aggression results from threatened egoism, where a perpetrator's positive self-view has been threatened by a negative evaluation (Baumeister, 93).

Shame and pride both come into play in provoking violence, as the perpetrators reassert their social status and self-concept of pride.

Emotions of hate are given social meaning whereby they come to produce sentiments of hate toward target groups, sentiments based on shame, pride, fear, threat, and therefore victimhood. Staub has described (Supra) the role that victimhood and its emotions of perceived threat play in constructing the cycle of harm. Sentiments of victimhood therefore play a role in provoking violence, but the connection between the sentiment and its target is diffuse and malleable, as is characteristic of the cognitive functioning of the sentiments. Humiliation has been shown to induce greater hostility against a previously disliked target, even when the target was not the source of the humiliation (Berkowitz, 162). This happened, for example, when drops in cotton prices in pre-1940 South increased lynchings against African-Americans (Berkowitz, 165). An emotional experience of shame was fed into sentiments people already held about African-Americans, which themselves already incorporated elements of shame and threatened status for white southerners, even in the absence of any causal relationship.

Berkowitz gives examples of perpetrators of hate crimes who believed that their actions would not be condemned by their peers (Berkowitz, 171). The American Psychological Association's 1998 online report on hate crimes shows that many perpetrators believe they have societal permission to assault the minorities they despise (APA). This indicates the mimetic nature of hate sentiments, in which perpetrators of hate crimes see themselves as embodying the sentiments and values of the community and reasserting its norms and place in the social hierarchy.

As sentiments function at the level of the mimetic mind, they are malleable and accretive, and are most strongly influenced by the proximate, local, social scenario. The conditions of the local social scenario are far more predictive of the generation of hate sentiments and the particular form they will take than are long-enduring evolutionary, historical, cultural, or dispositional factors:

Evolutionary, cultural and psychoanalytic explanations describe conditions that predispose individuals or groups to hate, but each of these theoretical perspectives has a dispositional slant that locates hate as part of humans' fundamental make up at the species, cultural, or individual level (Opatow, 125).

Instead, Opatow found that proximal causes are shown to be the major explanations of hate among different social groups, not history or values or ancient hatreds, but present and ongoing grudges (Opatow, 124). The proximal, local, immediate social context governs sentiments of hate:

[T]heories that highlight the proximal context describe hate as a response to immediate, ongoing, aversive circumstances in an individual's (or group's) life. McDougall describes the emergence of hate in rudimentary sentiment, especially fear, aroused by harsh experiences and punishments, often emanating from a consistent source. Fear then combines with other emotions, especially revenge, disgust, shame, and anger, to yield hate. (Opatow, 125, citations omitted)

Hate is thus conceptualized as a compound construct, involving a successive layering of emotions, including fear, anger, shame and pride, the emergence of which is relational, cumulative, and a response to attacks on one's personhood (Opatow, 125). The sentiments of hatred and victimhood that are then built up and given meaning in the prevailing social milieu are then combined with sentiments of repugnance, which operates to then set the target group outside of the community of empathic moral concern. In this way, violence against the hated and repugned target group justified, and even made necessary to re-establish the community's norms and sense of pride and dignity.

Sentiments of hate can be made meaningful and functional in very different social environments than the ones which initially fed them. Individual sentiments of hate can then be absorbed into the more enduring social sentiments which incorporate similar elements and emotions in what Alschuler refers to as the 'projective drama' of the cultural complex. In the 'projective drama', Alschuler describes the projector and recipient as integrating the sentiments of the other and re-projecting them onto one another, in a continuously-developing and mutually-reinforcing dialectic:

Cultural and personal complexes are considered as bipolar, according to Perry's formulation. A cultural complex consists of information and misinformation about society, groups, and classes 'filtered through the psyches of generations of ancestors. A traumatic historical event, such as colonial conquest, is a wounding experience that enlarges an existing cultural complex that, in turn, becomes a vehicle for collective memory and emotions, carrying over many generations. When a renewed trauma activates the cultural complex, members of the group experience 'intense collective emotions'. The individual ego of a group member becomes identified with one part of the unconscious cultural complex, while the other part is projected out onto the suitable hook of another group or one of its members. Intense emotions may include a sense of discrimination, feelings of oppression and inferiority of their own group, experienced at the hands of another offending group. (Alschuler, 75) [Citations omitted])

In this way, the projective drama develops and reinforces sentiments among and between antagonistic social groups, as the sentiments, norms and identities of each are transformed in a way which develops and reinforces the sentiments at play. Each group experiences emotions of fear, shame, and anger at the hands of the other, and incorporates the group's sense of shameful-

victimhood and prideful-entitlement into its collective identity. A group who protests their characterization by the other in the projective drama will find itself further demonized and marginalized by the very appearance of entitlement and antagonism towards the in-group which their protest represents, and may find itself unable to escape this mutually-reinforcing downward spiral into hatred and violence.

9 CONCLUSION TO PART I

I gave them a good boy. And they sent me back a murderer.
~Mother of Paul Medlow, a US soldier who admitted to taking part in the
My Lai massacre in Vietnam, as told to Seymour Hersh (Hersh).

Any mother's son will do.
~Mika Haritos-Fatouros, noted psychologist and researcher
of the training of torturers under the Greek military junta,
when asked who would make a good torturer.

To understand how individuals make choices and decisions within a Culture of Cruelty is to understand how individuals come to make moral choices in any culture, as much as it is to understand how a culture itself comes to make normative moral claims. To inquire into the nature of the moral norms within a Culture of Cruelty and how they take shape, how they are transformed, how they are internalized by and in turn shape the moral conscience of individuals, and how the moral norms held by *individuals* in turn influence and transform the *culture* in which those individuals act, is to revisit fundamental questions of the relationship between individuals and their culture.

Lantos describes how the moral climate of any particular time or place seems intuitively correct to those who live in it – commonsensical, unquestioned and unchangeable (Lantos, 131). Cultures of Cruelty can exist for a short time and among a small number of individuals; Cultures of Cruelty can take over entire societies and social institutions for generations, such as in slave-holding societies, where the moral refurbishment that makes their cruelty seem just and necessary is served by the dominant institutions of a given society and reproduced from the earliest ages through socialization. Every permutation between these two extremes is also possible. A pluralistic society can also incorporate certain institutions and practices that are cruel, and which are supported by refurbished moral principles. Whether the Culture of Cruelty springs up rapidly and dies away just as quickly, or lasts for generations, the refurbished norms and principles that support the cruelty seem intuitive, common-sensical, and unquestionable to the actors in the Culture of Cruelty.

What, then, is the nature of the refurbished norms and principles that support the Culture of Cruelty and which are espoused so strongly and intuitively by the individual actors in the Culture of Cruelty? How can we tell the difference between normal moral principles and refurbished moral principles?

Staub posits that individuals reduce the conflict between their pre-existing moral values and personal goals by replacing the moral value with another value that is less stringent, or that is

not a moral value but is treated like one (Staub 2002, 22). Similarly, Newman points out that individuals and societies also employ new norms to reduce the cognitive dissonance caused by violence; such norms might be justifications such as we are killing to end killing, we are waging war to end conflict and violence, and we are killing in defence of ourselves, our families or our way of life (Newman, 56). What separates these refurbished moral values from 'normal' ones; in what way are these new values not like other moral values, and how does it come to be that they are so readily treated as such? Ordinary moral norms and principles come to be refurbished and placed at the service of the Culture of Cruelty. Waller discusses how moral norms are reservised through the employment of exonerating comparisons. Exonerating comparisons exploit a contrast effect between the inhuman behaviour and the perceived threat or behaviour of the enemy (Waller, 190). Bandura claims that exonerating comparisons rely heavily on moral justification by utilitarian standards (Bandura 193). These comparisons make non-violent options seem ineffective while at the same time presenting one's own injurious actions as preventing more harm than they will cause (Waller, 190). Of course, moral justifications and moral imperatives can mask personal goals such as power, advancement, and the acquisition of status or property (Bandura, 193). The very important point made by Bandura and Waller is that moral norms do not break down, they are just used in the service of inhumanity (Waller, 187). Moral values are made meaningful through culturally constructed, constantly evolving sentiments, including sentiments of love, freedom, the value of family, as well as sentiments of hate and repugnance, which sentiments can quickly come to be seen as intuitive, common-sensical, and universal.

On the road to evil, there are many choice points for each perpetrator (Waller, 135):

Some theorists use words like 'seduced' or 'induced' to describe how people come to engage in harmful, violent behaviours. Why not ask instead why people freely choose to engage in evil deeds? (Waller, 314)

In contrast, there is a tendency to see situational, contextual factors as being normative, as being something 'anybody' would be expected to do under similar conditions (Waller, 316). Morality, empathy, compassion and altruism can also be elicited in situational and contextual circumstances. (Miller, 316), but these are different situations. The key is to learn how we get people to behave morally, compassionately and altruistically even in situations and contexts that promote evil.

The refurbished moral principles employed by perpetrators in the service of the Culture of Cruelty, and so readily accepted by perpetrators and bystanders alike, look very much like the moral values and principles we hold generally, as they recruit widely-held existing sentiments.

These include sentiments regarding our love of family, the preservation of self and family, the preservation of our culture, of our freedom, of our way of life and our very civilization. The fact that these sentiments are ones we ordinarily employ is the fundamental reason why they can be latched on to so readily by perpetrators and willing bystanders. The questions of how we can tell when certain norms and principles are being placed at the service of a Culture of Cruelty, and how we might encourage people to stop doing this even in situations that would otherwise promote cruelty will be explored in Part II of this paper.

10 HEROIC RESCUERS AND CULTURES OF COMPASSION



Figure 6. A Jew, recently apprehended by a Danish Nazi (centre, in black raincoat and hat) is rescued by his fellow Danes. As the Nazi escorted the Jew through the streets, an angry crowd forced him to surrender his prisoner to the Danish police. Once safely inside the police station, the gendarmes helped the Jew escape. The Danish police consistently refused to cooperate with the German occupation authorities (isurvived.org). Photo Credits: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archive.



Figure 7. After the Germans occupied Denmark in 1940, the Danish government resisted Nazi pressure to hand over its Jews. In 1943, however, the Danes intensified their resistance, prompting a harsh Nazi reaction. Imposing martial law in October, the German occupiers began to arrest and deport Danish Jews. Reacting spontaneously, Danes alerted and hid the Jews, helping them to the coast and organizing secret passages across the sea to Sweden (pictured) (isurvived.org).

It is something you cannot plan, this horrible adventure with the devil. They came like a tidal wave. When a wave comes over a village, you are lucky to be alive and be able to save people. You do it – you don't sit down and ask, "Can I do it?" It is part of your body – the will is part of your body – you feel and you do it.

~ Rescuer, Nazi-occupied Europe (Oliner, 229)

Mimesis in human groups is just as likely to produce helping and altruistic as devaluing and harming behaviour. Waller posits that is not the nature of the collective but of the individuals who make up the collective that ultimately determines its behaviour (Waller, 36). Neumann finds likewise:

Universal participation, exteriorization of psychic contents, and the presence of highly charged emotional components combine to produce, in the pleromatic phase, an undifferentiated feeling of oneness which unites the world, the group, and man in an almost bodily way. Although this "submersion in the unconscious" causes a certain disorientation of the ego and consciousness, it by no means unbalances the personality as a whole. (Neumann, 284)

The individual personality remains intact in the mimetic actor, as one models the surrounding situation and makes choices based upon his own inclinations and his own interpretations of the collective will. In this way, Waller and Neumann situate will and moral agency firmly within the individual, in whose mimetic being the collective drama is intentionally generated, shaped, and re-presented in the collective mind. Wherever the ultimate genesis of violence/philanthropy, helping/harming, good/evil, is to be found, it is not to be found in the social, expressive, abstracting mimetic mind, which partakes equally of either.

Rescuers in Nazi-occupied Europe defied an all-encompassing Culture of Cruelty, whose iniquity reached historic proportions and touched every facet of day to day life in the territories over which it swept in the course of World War II. To ask, then, how these rescuers defied a culture and constructed a new one for themselves under such inauspicious circumstances may lend some insight into how this could operate more generally. How do we create a better culture, and kinder, less destructive sentiments? How do we, as human beings, become more intentional, more generative, more *trustworthy*, moral agents? Jung characterized this problem as one of setting up the conscious will in place of the natural impulse:

The loftiness of this ideal is incontestable and should indeed not be contested. Yet it is precisely on this lofty height that one is beset by a doubt whether human nature is capable of being moulded in this way, and whether our dominating idea is such that it can shape the natural material without damaging it. Only experience will show. Meanwhile, the attempt must be made to climb these heights, for without such an undertaking, it could never be proved that this bold and violent experiment in self-transformation is possible at all. Nor could we ever estimate or understand the powers that favour the attempt or make it utterly impossible. (Jung, 434)

An examination of the rescuers of Nazi-occupied Europe may shed some insight into those very powers.

10.1 Rescuers in Nazi-Occupied Europe

The Oliners studied about 6,000 rescuers of Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe. These rescue activities have been authenticated by Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority of Israel. The rescuers were compared with a control sample of similar, bystanders, as well as active resisters to the Nazi-Occupation who did not rescue Jews. The Oliners found little difference between rescuers and nonrescuers. Various demographic factors, such as religious belief, political beliefs and affiliations, knowing or working with Jews (Oliner, 113), knowledge of Nazi intentions towards Jews (Oliners, 116), appreciation of the objective risks involved in rescuing (Oliner, 127), age, geographical isolation (Oliner, 124), occupation and financial resources (Oliner, 128), possessing adequate shelter and having access to an attic or hiding space (Oliner, 129), and access to formal or informal supportive networks (Oliner, 131), did not distinguish those who rescued from those who did not.

What apparently distinguished rescuers from nonrescuers was not their access to, or potential for organizing, such informal networks, but rather the sentiments and behaviours of their networks, of the people who were their most intimate contacts (Oliner, 131-132). More rescuers had reason to believe that their contacts would support them (Ibid.). More rescuers belonged to formal networks that shared their concerns about Jews (Ibid.). More rescuers would assume that their families would help them if called upon, because of their own rescuing or resistance activities (Ibid.). Sixty percent of rescuers' families had at least one member involved in rescue or resistance activities compared with 35 percent of nonrescuers' families – a statistically significant difference that becomes even more dramatic when compared with bystanders' families, among whom only 20 percent included such people (Ibid.).

Sentiments held by rescuers and their social networks were found to have been learned early in life, and formed a framework for acting, even - and even particularly - under the stresses and dangers of the Nazi occupation:

Thus, an examination of the early family lives and personality characteristics of both rescuers and nonrescuers suggests that their respective wartime behaviour grew out of their general patterns of relating to others. Those who were inclined towards extensive attachments – feeling committed to and responsible for diverse groups of people – were predisposed to accept feelings of responsibility to Jews, whatever the danger to themselves. (Oliner, 186)

The sentiments that rescuers had learned, primarily from their families and established in early childhood, were then reinforced by those same families and the social networks that rescuers

developed around like-minded individuals. This is the primary distinction that seemed to determine whether one became a rescuer or not. Rescuers' sentiments were formed by and informed their rescuing activity within the mimetic mind, at the level of the mimetic social acting. The key sentiments at play in rescuer activity, and which will be examined below, are sympathy – sentiments of acceptance – combined with a lack of repugnance towards other people, which sentiments came to motivate and structure attitudes and moral obligations towards the persecuted Jewish community.

10.2 *Mimetic Rescuers*

We had an enormous amount of fun. That sounds strange, but we had to have it. We gave parties. Somebody said, "I still have one tea bag." All thirty-six of us were going to have a feast with one tea bag. Somebody said, "I'm going to get water." At the end, we didn't even have water anymore. You couldn't buy clothes or anything, so everybody wore each other's dresses and the men wore each other's shirts in order to have the feeling of being dressed up. We had fantastic parties in the dark because there was no electricity. Somebody would say, "I still have a candle." Oh boy! A tea bag, a candle, water! What else do you need? We had a party. (Oliner, 104)

~Dutch rescuer in Nazi-occupied Holland (Oliner, 104).

Rescuing was rarely an individual activity (Oliner, 93). Sometimes, this assistance involved receiving support from formally organized social groups. Although rescuers were heavily dependent on others for support, fewer than half of them (44 percent) belonged to organized resistance groups (Ibid.). About 5 percent belonged to groups whose exclusive concerns were Jews (for example, Żegota and the Jewish Military Union) (Ibid.). Approximately 20 percent belonged to groups that included or accommodated helping Jews along with other objectives, such as harbouring fugitives, helping homeless children, and intelligence and sabotage (Ibid.). Rescuers who belonged to such groups turned to them frequently for services (Ibid.). Although formally organized groups that either focused on Jewish rescue or accommodated it provided invaluable assistance to rescuers, this provided at best only a fraction of the support that was needed (Oliner, 96). The majority of rescuers (56 percent) did not belong to any formal networks, although some received sporadic help from such groups (Ibid.). Others worked entirely outside them (Ibid.). One Polish rescuer estimated that saving a single Jew required the support of at least ten people: an organizing unit, neighbours, people who would give shelter, and those who were involved in transfers (Oliner, 98).

Rescuers relied even more heavily on informal social networks to support their rescue activities. Regardless of whether they were or were not members of formal networks, almost all rescuers depended on informal networks to sustain them materially and emotionally (Oliner, 96).

Informal networks were made up first of household members, usually family members (Ibid.). Sometimes, the network was a convent or a school (Oliner, 96). Sometimes, it was a sister who worked in the civil service and who had the means to obtain fake identity cards (Ibid.). At other times, the network was confined to the nuclear family (Ibid.).

Rescuers' social networks, more than anything, helped rescuers by creating a moral climate in which rescue was encouraged. This sometimes supported rescue activities in other branches of the social network, as for example when it shaped the responses of local resistance groups to include assisting Jews (Oliner, 94).

Rescuers made their decision to act immediately (Oliner, 169), often with little reflection, as is characteristic of behaviours that stem from long-established sentiments and patterns of behaviour. They describe their decisions to rescue in terms such as, 'I had to do something about it,' 'I knew they were taking them and they wouldn't come back,' or, 'I didn't think I could live with that knowing that I could have done something' (Oliner, 168).

As with perpetrators, the behaviour of rescuers often depends upon their strong identification with a reference group and its norms, principles and moral values. Many rescuers initiated and sustained their rescue activities in accordance with a social reference group with whom the rescuer identified. The rescuer “perceives the social group as imposing norms for behaviour, and for these rescuers, inaction was considered a violation of the group's code of proper conduct” (Oliner, 199). One example is that of a young German woman named Ilse, whose husband was fighting on the Italian front, and who undertook the very risky activity of providing temporary shelter to a Jewish family in response to a request from her minister (Oliner, 202). Ilse knew little of the plight of Germany's Jews, but she helped because her minister asked her, and because it accorded with what she called her most cherished values: a love of her church, her husband, and helping one's neighbour (Oliner, 202), as well as “unconditional obedience, honouring others, including one's peers” (Ibid.).

The Oliners found that rescuers and nonrescuers had about the same level of knowledge about what was happening to the Jewish community (Oliner, 113). Rescuers more frequently mentioned hearing reports from Jews themselves, and experiencing events in a personal way as a result of their interaction with Jews (Oliner, 121). Nonrescuers, on the other hand, were more likely to refer to “people” telling them, hearing rumours, or knowing vaguely. They were also more likely to have discredited what they heard (Oliner, 121). Rescuers, therefore, did not have different information; instead, they responded to information in different ways. They also had what the Oliners describe as comprehension – something more than knowledge. This something:

[R]equires internal processing of the information, understanding, and interpretation. While these are cognitive processes, they are unlikely to occur without some emotional willingness. Information that is of interest is more likely to be registered and processed than information perceived as irrelevant. Emotional factors also influence interpretation. (Oliner, 114)

While they had the same information as nonrescuers, rescuers paid attention to the information, deemed it to be of importance, interpreted the information, and imbued it with an affective component, all characteristic of the higher-level abstraction of mimetic reasoning. Nonrescuers, who tended to have a lower affective response to the information, simply noted the information and moved on (Ibid.), as is more characteristic of episodic awareness.

10.3 Sentiments of Rescuing: Acceptance into Sympathy

*For Mercy has a Human Heart,
Pity, a Human Face.
And Love, the Human Form Divine,
And Peace, the Human Dress.
~William Blake*

The Fifth Estate documentary, *Run for Your Life*, depicts the torturous journey of young Hondurans as they make the illegal trek from the barrio to “*el norte*”, the prosperous land on the other side of the *Rio Grande*. Much of their journey involves the dangerous practice of hopping on passing cargo trains headed to northern Mexico. In an attempt to deal with the massive problem of migration from Central America, it has been made a serious offense in Mexico to provide assistance to the migrants. In Chiapas, one of the poorest regions of the hemisphere, villagers line up along the train tracks, waiting for the cargo trains to pass with their human cargo crouched on the roofs of the trains, clinging to the sides. The villagers line up with small packages of food and water, which they throw up to the cheers of the migrants as the trains go speeding past. The villagers know the penalties for these small acts are stiff; several have been jailed. They remain defiant, however. Why do they do this?

Rescuers in Nazi-occupied Europe, who risked their lives, who gave up their meagre war rations, and who received no personal gain from their activities, were found to be motivated by something more than the support of their social networks, and their direct requests for assistance. They were also motivated by sentiments of sympathy. Sentiments of sympathy are built up from the attachment in early childhood that exists between the infant and its caregiver, and so is rooted in acceptance, in the accepting and the mirroring that takes place between infant and carer. The

sentiment of sympathy is more than the episodic emotional experience of empathy - the mirroring of another's emotional presentation - and acceptance. As a sentiment, it carries with it a component of classifying and judging social behaviour, it is malleable and can come to encompass new situations and meanings, which can then be applied to novel situations and social facts quite apart from the episodic emotions upon which it is built.

Sympathy is rooted in our familial and social bonds, in the attachments we form in our earliest childhood, and from our capacity (itself the product of the long period of dependence that we experienced as children) to imagine and even experience, vicariously, the joys and sorrows of others:

The innate sociability of the child is the vital embryo in which a capacity for sympathy and an inclination to generosity can be found, and from which parents may help produce a sympathetic adult. Developmental psychologists have drawn a portrait of children who are most likely to help or comfort others and share things: they are sociable, competent, assertive, and sympathetic. They do not crave approval and they are not fatalists. They are typically raised by parents who combine nurturing love and consistent discipline and who themselves help others and share things. (Wilson, 45)

Sentiments of sympathy and the pro-social behaviour they generate are modeled in the care-giving environment of early childhood, where they continue to inform social behaviour and relationships throughout life. The Oliners found that rescuers had learned sympathy early in their childhoods, in the family, through warm and supportive relationships with at least one parent:

Compared to a group of Europeans who were bystanders, the rescuers had been very close to their parents, both fathers and mothers, and had learned from them the importance of dependability, self-reliance, and caring for others. These warm familial feelings extended to others: sympathetic rescuers saw people as basically good and had many close friends. (Wilson, 39)

Thus, a warm and supporting early family environment was one of the few significant differences between rescuers and nonrescuers.

The Oliners also found that rescuers reported that discipline was less frequent and less punitive in their homes as children as compared to non-rescuers; this also was one of the few variables that significantly distinguished rescuers from non-rescuers (Oliner, 179). Rescuers' parents tended to teach their children through a benevolent approach involving empathy, modeling, and role-taking, the essence of mimetic development:

Parents whose disciplinary techniques are benevolent, particularly those who rely on reasoning, are more likely to have kind and generous children, children who behave helpfully with respect to others. Hoffman, who has done considerable research on discipline and prosocial behaviours, says that inductive reasoning is particularly condu-

cive to altruism. Induction focuses children's attention on the consequences of their behaviour for others, drawing attention to others' feelings, thoughts, and welfare. Children are thus led to understand others cognitively – a skill known as perspective- or role-taking – and are also thus more inclined to develop empathy toward others. (Oliner, 179)

As discussed above, perspective- or role-taking is at the heart of the development of the mimetic mode of cognition, and is very closely connected with empathy, mirroring and social modeling. Out of this develops a strong and expansive sentiment of sympathy towards other people, their value and dignity, their acceptance.

Sympathy is a fundamental human sentiment, one that human children are as predisposed to learn as they are language, and this is exemplified by the behaviour of a group of three-year old orphans who had come to Theresienstadt as infants (Oliner, 172). These children were studied by Anna Freud and Sophie Dann upon their liberation from the concentration camp and relocation to an orphanage in England (Ibid.). It is likely that no single person was able to care for the infants for any length of time (Ibid.). And yet, somehow, they survived:

Initially the children were uncontrollable; they destroyed toys, damaged furniture, and in relationships with adults alternated between indifference and hostility. On the other hand, they were highly attached to each other. They sought each others' company constantly and became very upset if separated even for moments. Wherever one went, another followed. Although they quarrelled, they were very sensitive to each other's feelings – they shared their possessions freely, handed food to others before taking it themselves, and looked out for each other's safety. Such kind behaviours were routine; sometimes they bordered on the altruistic. One cold wintry day, for example, two of the children were walking together when one was discovered to have forgotten his gloves. The other gave him his own gloves and did not utter a word of complaint thenceforth. (Oliner, 172)

Warm attachment is necessary for human moral development and altruism to develop. However, as the above example demonstrates, this attachment need not be with adult kin. The children developed their sense of kindness and their altruistic behaviour from their strong attachment with one another. They quickly adjusted to their new adult caregivers, and, years later, were living perfectly normal lives (Ibid.). They developed their sentiments of sympathy neither from an adult caregiver nor from the cultural ideology, or *Weltanschauung*, of the Theresienstadt in which they spent their early childhood. These children had developed a strong sense of attachment, kindness and sympathy at the pre-linguistic stage of mimetic development, even under conditions of severe deprivation, a paucity of adult socialization, and an absence of the narrative constructs of culture: the ideologies, the norms, the values, the world-views, of narrative, mythic culture.

Sentiments of sympathy may therefore have been laid down very early in human history. Sentiments of sympathy are seen to be strong among hunting peoples, who tend to display low levels of aggression and competitiveness. As Megarry notes, the idea of the primordial carnivorous ape, whose blood lust for red meat has sowed the seeds of violence down to modern times has been shown to be false:

Studies of hunting peoples have frequently found that a calm uncompetitive personality usually prevails in such societies and foraging normally implies a non-abusive accommodation with nature. (Megarry, 265)

The archaeological record has likewise uncovered evidence of sympathy among earlier hominids, as well. The evidence is strong that there was medical care for the sick and elderly, as well as burial ceremonies among the Neanderthals:

The most striking discovery here was the discovery of flower pollen by Arlette Leroi-Gourhan (1975) who identified at least eight different species of flowering plant including yarrow, hyacinth, cornflower, ragwort, groundsel and hollyhock. Many of these plants are known to have significant medical uses in the treatment of wounds and rheumatism and as stimulants and purges. (Megarry, 269)

Medical care for non-productive members of society, the medicinal use of plants, and burial ceremonies all speak of sympathy for, acceptance of the value of, others in and of themselves, and quite apart from their social utility. This is evidence that a basic concept of the dignity of the individual is rooted in the nascent mimetic mind of the early hominids and their cultures.

The Oliners conclude that one of the most important factors that initiated and sustained rescuers were values learned from their parents (Oliner, 143). Rescuers stated that the values they learned included patriotism, love of country, law and order, and religion – all values they felt were threatened by the Nazis - but these values were held by rescuers and nonrescuers alike (Oliner, 143). Instead, the values that differentiated rescuers from nonrescuers were their sympathy and egalitarianism, their belief in the universal similarity of all peoples, that “Jews were just people” (Oliner, 143) who deserved to be treated with humanity and dignity. These sentiments of sympathy were characterized by two aspects of acceptance: first, by *inclusiveness*, or a predisposition to regard all peoples as equals and to apply similar standards of right and wrong to them without regard to social status or ethnicity, as well as *attachment*, or a belief in the value of personal relationships and caring for those in need (Oliner, 144).

The concepts of inclusiveness and attachment that characterize the sentiment of sympathy are therefore developed from an early and sustained emotional experience of acceptance, and in particular its emotional experience of warmth, a sense of well-being, and a sense of belonging.

As a sentiment as opposed to an emotion, however, sympathy is quite different from the direct experience of these emotions themselves, and from the emotional mirroring that characterizes empathy. The Oliners found that rescuers did not, in fact, differ from nonrescuers on measures of empathy:

Rescuers scores varied from very high to very low, and were not significantly different overall from the scores of nonrescuers. Rescuers thus did not differ from others with relation to the type of empathy called “emotional contagion” - that is, a general susceptibility to others moods. Rescuers did not any more than nonrescuers become worried just because others were worried or get upset just because a friend was upset. (Oliner, 174)

For rescuers, therefore, the living sentiment of sympathy was able to operate and generate meaning quite apart from its emotional components and its early emotional roots, as is to be expected from its operating at a quantitatively higher level of abstraction.

One example of a rescuer who scored low on measures of empathy toward others, and towards their feelings, characteristics and personal fates, is that of a Dutch rescuer named Louisa. Louisa scored rather low on measures of empathy, and tended to be unconcerned with the personal characteristics and emotional states of the people she had helped (Oliner, 216). Louisa described her reasons for rescuing in the following terms:

We helped people who were in need. Who they were was absolutely immaterial to us. It wasn't that we were especially fond of Jewish people. We felt we wanted to help everybody who was in trouble. (Oliner, 218)

Louisa's sentiment of sympathy was thus highly expansive and inclusive, extending to everybody in need. Louisa's strong sense of inclusivity and acceptance characterized her judgment generally, even her judgments about those who did not rescue or who acquiesced in the Nazi occupation:

People often talk harshly about those people who did not help. I don't think that's right. I don't find it such a courageous thing to do. For certain people it is the self-evident thing to do. For other people it is not evident that they can do it somehow. We have never condemned people, even friends of ours, who did not do it. They couldn't and we could – for whatever reason. (Oliner, 219).

Louisa also notes that they never judged others for giving in to Nazi interrogations, as they were very cruel (Ibid.), and that this epoch was, for her, mainly about togetherness: “We were all for the same thing: to be together” (Ibid.). For Louisa, her sentiments of sympathy were about *acceptance*, of all peoples and all things.

Rescuing behaviour and sentiments of sympathy are neither associated with feelings of self esteem, nor a sense of personal power and responsibility. Rescuers and nonrescuers did not

differ on measures of self esteem (Oliner, 193). One young man named Stanislaus, who lived near the Warsaw ghetto, was found by the Oliners to measure quite below the mean on self-esteem, and evinced as strong sense of fatalism: that outside forces shape our lives, and that there is little we can do about this (Oliner, 197). But his mother had taught him caring and respect for people in a universal sense (Oliner, 198), which Stanislaus expresses in the following terms:

Human compassion. When someone comes and says, "I escaped from the camp," what is the alternative? One alternative is to push him out and close the door – the other is to pull him into the house and say, "Sit down, relax, wash up. You will be as hungry as we are because we have only this bread." (Oliner, 197)

The alternative chosen by Stanislaus and his mother led them to rescue scores of inhabitants from the Warsaw ghetto before it was liquidated.

Low self-esteem, even feelings of shame, did not have an adverse affect on rescuing behaviour. Louisa identified with other Christian people, and felt shame at what they were doing to the Jewish people (Oliner, 216). Her sense of shame motivated her rescuing. It was "something that comes over our people, too" (Ibid.). Many rescuers, like their fellow citizens, suffered grievously the horrors of the war and the Nazi occupation (Oliner, 224). Fear, loss, sadness, and shame, were common experiences at this time. What the rescuers seemed to lack were sentiments of victimhood that can lead to self-centeredness, and even hatred:

Despite their hostility towards Nazis, the majority of bystanders were overcome by fear, hopelessness, and uncertainty. These feelings, which encourage self-centeredness and emotional distancing from others, provide fertile soil for passivity. Survival of the self assumes paramount importance. (Oliner, 146)

Fear is the guardian of the body, and it directs our experiences inwards, into a shameful and self-centered orientation.

Sentiments of victimhood, built up from fear and sadness (shame), characterized bystanders narratives about their experiences during the war (Oliner, 146). The Oliners found that this stemmed from values about the relationship of self and others that bystanders had been taught in the home, thus rooting sentiments of victimhood in early emotional and social experiences. The parents of bystanders were more likely than those of rescuers to have emphasized values relating to self, economic competence, working hard, getting a good job:

Excessive self-interest – self-preoccupation - generally precludes attention to others, reducing not only one's ability to recognize others' needs, but also one's motivation to do so. However much self-interest may guide behaviour in routine situations, it is likely to be accentuated under conditions of severe threat. The willingness and ability

to transcend oneself under such conditions is usually based on sustained habits of orientation to the world, largely developed early in life. (Oliner, 160)

The early sentiments that bystanders had built up incorporated sentiments of shame related to hierarchy - that one has to 'get ahead' of others - tied in with shameful sentiments about victimhood and self-centeredness. This, rather than a low sense of self-esteem or a high sense of personal power, distinguished bystanders from rescuers.

Rescuers also held sentiments of repugnance. In September of 1942, a young member of the Polish underground was chosen to infiltrate the Warsaw ghetto and carry a report about its conditions to London:

In September a delegate of the AK called on me. He told me that two Jewish underground organizations, one socialist and the other Poalei Zion, had learned that I was preparing to go to London. They requested my services on their behalf. Would I be willing to deliver the report to London? I said yes. I was taken to the ghetto to see events firsthand. I was not there more than twenty minutes – I became sick at the suffering. It was beyond belief. (Oliner, 53).

One can compare this with the repugnance Dr. Klemperer felt (Supra) when he first arrived in Auschwitz, and which was quickly suppressed as he realigned himself with the sentiments of the culture of cruelty.

Another Dutch rescuer remembers a Nazi raid in Amsterdam:

They brought many Jews together in the concert hall in Amsterdam. Then they were taken away to the train. I was there when they took them out of the concert hall and put them on the train. It was pathetic, indescribable. People with suitcases – just driven like cattle. (Oliner, 120).

The sight of people being rounded up and forced on to trains evoked exactly the same image of dehumanization for this rescuer as it did for Franz Stangl, but the rescuer's sentiment of repugnance directed their feelings of disgust not to the victims themselves, not to other human beings, but to the intolerable conditions to which they had been subjected.

Similarly, rescuers were distinguished from nonrescuers in their lack of sentiments of repugnance directed at *other groups of people*, including Jews. It was this lack of repugnance towards target groups, rather than a cultivation of positive sentiments regarding target groups, that the Oliners found to be the distinguishing factor. The Oliners found that rescuers were not exposed to positive portrayals of Jews in the childhood home (Oliner, 150). Instead, what distinguished their parents' views of Jews from those of bystanders were fewer negative references, and fewer stereotypical references overall – whether of a positive or a negative character – toward reference groups generally (Oliner, 151). As the Oliners state, “One of the pernicious consequences

of stereotypes – positive or negative – is to obscure and dehumanize the individual, by casting him or her as a 'sample specimen' of a prejudged group. Members of the group become mere 'statistics, commodities or interchangeable pieces'" (Oliner, 151). The absence of stereotypical or repugnant sentiments regarding reference groups is therefore more important in predicting pro-social behaviour than is the cultivation of positive sentiments regarding reference groups.

Wilson notes that everyone has some sympathetic fellow-feelings to one's neighbours. What varies is not that sentiment, but rather the answer to the question, "Who is my neighbour?" (Wilson, 200). Wilson accepts, as do most sociobiologists and evolutionary psychologists, that our sympathetic sentiments evolved to help us ensure the survival of our progeny and our kin and our genes that they carried. This necessarily implies that we have as natural an antipathy to non-kin as we have an affinity for kin. The natural contract of natural selection mandates the Ethic of Care, and it should come as no surprise to us that we hold fewer obligations to those who do not share our genes. However, the above argument also postulates that our sympathetic fellow-feelings - evolved for the survival functions of caring for young children - have a downside:

Tolerance and intolerance are two sides of the same coin, each growing out of the attachment we feel to family and kin... Familial and kin networks are the essential arenas in which sociability becomes sympathy and self-interest is transferred, by a pattern of reciprocal obligations, into duty and fair play. Such in-groups are necessarily defined by a process of exclusion – of strangers, foreigners, enemies – that create out groups. (Wilson, 50)

Wilson posits that this devaluing of out-groups is universal, for "[t]hroughout much of human history, dissimilar cultures, when thrown into contact with one another, either fought savage wars or practiced cruel slavery (Wilson, 50), and that this is a necessary consequence of our early attachment to kin and our antagonism toward out groups.

However, bonds with out-groups were routinely fostered in early human societies:

[C]omplex forms of kinship reckoning and their social meaning and consequences can be used to mark off modern and archaic foraging societies. Another example here is one pattern of marriage prevalent in most hunting cultures, although not among the !Kung, that revolves around cross-cousin marriage... Cross-cousin marriage serves to unify society because cross-cousins are more likely to be the children of aunts and uncles who have left the band of their birth upon marriage because of the rules of residence. This form of marriage therefore ties the separate bands of a hunting society by creating renewed kin bonds in each generation. (Megarry, 214)

Marriage, trade, and cultural interchange have surely been as prevalent as war and slavery throughout the history of humanity. Similarly, sentiments of repugnance and the violence that they generate (Supra) are often applied to close kin, including children and grandchildren, a result

that is all too common, and a fact for which the field of Sociobiology has been unable to account.

On the other hand, the Oliners found that close family ties prevented the dehumanization of target groups; in fact, they were necessary in *preventing* it. The sympathy, benevolence and compassion that rescuers learned in their families extended far beyond the family circle, encompassing, not only but often especially, those who were most oppressed and devalued by the larger society. The warmth and compassion we learn from our family – our original reference group – does not make us antagonistic to out-groups, but rather is necessary in order for us to resist that antagonism.

If our positive 'fellow-feelings' – our sentiments of sympathy - are a social fact, a *choice*, rather than an inescapable and innate moral sense, then the same must be true for the corollary: the repugnance we cultivate for target groups, although readily learned and eagerly embraced, is also a choice. Cultivating repugnance for other human beings is a choice that individuals should be held responsible for, and one whose remedy should not be too much to ask of our fellow humans after all.

10.4 Mimesis and the Cycle of Helping

Rescuers established a self-reinforcing cycle of helping within their social networks. The cycle of harm discussed in Part I is exactly mirrored by the cycle of helping. Like violence, so helping evolves (Staub 2001, 175). People who have agreed to help for short time, or to a limited extent, change as a result of their actions. They become more committed to the welfare of those they have helped and often to the welfare of human beings in general (Ibid.).

Staub is correct to remind us that the cycle of helping is just as innate to humanity as the cycle of violence, and is promoted by warmth and empathy (Staub 2001, 178). Staub also posits that if we are to have any success in promoting cycles of helping and healing and in preventing atrocity, we must begin to educate humans right from the earliest age. Staub's advice includes providing warmth, affection, effective but not putative guidance, allowing children reasonable autonomy, helping them develop a sense of significance and a voice, and guiding children to help and not to harm others, all of which make it more likely that they will develop inclusive caring, connected identities and moral courage (Staub, 178). This is precisely that warm and supportive social environment that the Oliners found in the families of rescuers that helped to produce their strong and universal sentiments of sympathy.

The Oliners found that 68% of rescuers were initially asked for their help, either by the victim or, most often, by an intermediary who was already part of a rescue network (Oliner, 135).

Once they initially agreed, rescuers also found themselves experiencing the “foot in the door” phenomenon:

Those they helped brought or sent others. Intermediaries who had received an affirmative answer once came again. Those who were asked would frequently initiate requests from others. Many rescuers were asked more than once; several were asked repeatedly. (Oliner, 136)

Nonrescuers were asked for assistance much less frequently than were rescuers, and the Oliners found that this was one of the few significant differences between the two groups (Oliner, 137). Notably, the vast majority of nonrescuers who were asked for their assistance also did respond, but they did so in small ways and for short periods of time, or often for payment (Oliner, 138). In this way, their activities met neither the Oliner's criteria for altruistic behaviour, nor Yad Vashem's criteria for rescuing behaviour. It does, however, indicate the power of the cycle of helping, and suggests that helping behaviour was more common than the strict criteria employed by the Oliners and Yad Vashem would indicate.

The Oliners found that most rescuers (52 percent) perceived helping Jews as a means of responding to the perceived values and norms of their social groups and expressing and strengthening their affiliations with those social groups (Oliner, 221). This was not perceived as overt pressure exerted by social groups (Ibid.). The Oliners conclude that this, “suggests the potential power authoritative social groups might have galvanized in the service of rescue had more of them chosen to do so” (Oliner, 221). Thus, the mimetic spread of rescuing activities and cycles of helping throughout and among the various social networks that make up society can, without more, promote helping behaviours, and that this may be a relatively untapped resource for prosocial helping behaviours.

10.5 *Principled Rescuers?*

At times, rescuing behaviour came out of a direct, empathic, encounter with a person in distress. The following story describes the effects of one such encounter, and the restoration of human dignity that was its result:

In 1942, I was on my way home from town and was almost near home when M. came out of the bushes. I looked at him, in striped camp clothing, his head bare, shod in clogs. He might have been about thirty or thirty-two years old. And he begged me, his hands joined like for a prayer – that he had escaped from Majdanek and could I help him? He joined his hands in this way, knelt down in front of me, and said: “You are like the Virgin Mary.” It still make me cry. “If I get through and reach Warsaw, I will never forget you.”

Well, how could one not have helped such a man? So I took him home, and I fed him because he was hungry. I heated the water so that he could have a bath. Maybe I should not mention this, but I brushed him, rinsed him, gave him a towel to dry himself. Then I dressed him in my husband's underwear, a shirt, and a tie. I had to do it for him because I wasn't sure he could do it for himself. He was shivering, poor soul, and I was shivering too, with emotion. I am very sensitive and emotional. (Oliner, 189).

In this encounter, the intimate acts of bathing, dressing, and feeding the man, which she worries may not be seemly to mention, goes to the heart of human dignity and bodily integrity, and contrasts sharply with the cases mentioned in the previous section, in which sentiments of repugnance are directed toward the human body where they trump the repugnance of doing violence to those same bodies. In this case, the rescuer restored and rehumanized the former prisoner according to her sympathetic sentiments, motivated by a direct emotional experience of the man's distress.

In contrast to these emotional, empathic, rescuing encounters, the Oliners described a subset of rescuers who were influenced, not by their personal relationships, but by autonomously derived principles. These principled rescuers were motivated more by internalized principles and by a strong sense of duty to those norms, rather than by empathy towards victims (Oliner, 207). Their principles were not derived from a social group with whom the rescuer identified, but rather comprised a set of overarching axioms, largely autonomously derived (Oliner, 209) from their own intellectual and moral efforts (Oliner, 210). A high independence from external opinions and evaluations is the major characteristic of rescuers who shared this orientation, and so they were more likely to act alone and on their own initiative (Oliner, 209). Personal relationships played no part in their rescue activities, and these rescuers tended to score lower than average on

measures of empathy (Oliner, 213). These principled rescuers therefore appear to conform to Kohlberg's fourth stage of moral development, and would appear to fit the profile of the autonomous theoretical mind, reflecting upon, and then making a reasoned decision based upon the situation-specific application of overarching theoretical principles.

The Oliners describe in detail the experiences of two typical principled rescuers, Suzanne, and Louise. Suzanne had a very close relationship with her family and her brother, who was himself a much-decorated hero of the French resistance. She stated that the principles she learned from her family were “to take care of one's neighbour”, and “to practice and to live a good life” (Oliner, 214). Louisa, like Suzanne, scored very low on empathy measures (Oliner, 216). Louisa described her rescue activities as something she was willing to die for. In explanation, she stated, “I cannot give you any reasons. It was not a question of reasoning. Let's put it this way. There were people in need and we helped them” (Oliner, 216). Like Suzanne, Louisa describes growing up in a close and loving family. She states that her mother, “influenced me mostly by love. She was a warm woman, and we admired her for her wit, her wisdom, and her intelligence. She was our friend and we could confide in her” (Oliner, 219). Of the values she learned from her parents, she said:

If somebody was ill or in need, my parents would always help. We were taught to help in whatever way we could. Consideration and tolerance were very important in our family. My mother and father both stressed those feelings. My father would not judge people who lived or felt differently than he did. That point was always made to us. (Oliner, 220)

Recall that in remembering her rescue activities during the war, Louisa said, “It was a very beautiful time in the sense of togetherness; we were all for the same thing: to be together” (Oliner, 219).

Therefore, even these principled rescuers shared a pattern similar to other rescuers of having a strong attachment to one or more parents, a warm and supportive childhood home, and had learned warm and expansive sentiments of sympathy from their parents. Moreover, these principled rescuers also reported that their rescuing activity was an intuitive, automatic response based upon long-standing sentiments and values, rather than a considered reflection in which they applied a general principle to a novel situation.

The Oliners found that this principled orientation characterized only 11 percent of rescuers (Oliner, 209). However, even for this small subset of principled rescuers, they too describe being motivated primarily by sentiments learned early in the family environment, and not the reflective application of abstract moral principles.

Principled rescuers were motivated by such sympathetic values as generosity, expansiveness, helpfulness, hospitality, and loving concern (Oliner, 164). As with all rescuers, they reported being brought up with these values from an early age to a greater extent than did nonrescuers. On the other hand, rescuers were less likely than nonrescuers to have been brought up with principles such as equity, fairness, and reciprocity (Oliner, 164), principles the Oliners describe as being derived from a contractarian view of social relationships:

Fairness is the focal standard of equitable values. What makes things fair, however, is not the results for others but rather the methods that produce them. If all have equal access to procedures, and if they are applied impartially and universally, then fairness is ensured.

Implicit in the notion of equity is a contractual view of social relationships. People are not asked to abandon self-interest but rather to accede to the fundamental idea that others, like themselves, are entitled to the same. Standards of fairness emerge out of the recognition that societies can function peaceably only when mutual rights to self-interest are recognized. Rationality (reason and thought) rather than emotionality (feelings and subjective reactions) are the basis for equity. Reason serves not only to generate procedural rules but also to evaluate behaviours. (Oliner, 163)

Sympathy, on the other hand, is concerned with the welfare of particular people without regard to fairness (Oliner, 163). Rescuers spoke of pity, compassion, concern, affection (Oliner, 168), and *not* equity, fairness and duty.

Thus, even principled rescuers appear to have been motivated much by a strong orientation to acceptance and sentiments of sympathy, learned during the early mimetic stage of moral development, and not by the application of contractarian principles of fairness, theories, or categorical imperatives. For principled rescuers, then, it is also true as for other rescuers that:

What is of final importance is that receptivity to such diverse catalysts did not suddenly emerge in the context of the traumas of the Holocaust. Rather, preparation began long before in the emotions and cognitions through which rescuers normally and routinely related to others and made their decisions. Thus, their responses were less explicit conscious choices than characteristic ways of attending to routine events. Already attuned to conferring meaning on events through their particular moral sensibilities, they depending on familiar patterns to discern the significance of the unprecedented events at hand. To a large extent, then, helping Jews was less a decision made at a critical juncture than a choice prefigured by an established character and way of life. As Iris Murdoch observes, the moral life is not something that is switched on at a particular crisis but is rather something that goes on continuously in the small piecemeal habits of living. Hence, "at crucial moments of choice most of the business of choosing is already over." (Oliner, 222)

Thus, the image of the heroic rescuer as the exemplar of moral courage, standing alone against the values of the surrounding social environment and consciously rejecting the values of that

society in favour of their own autonomously derived principles, is contradicted by the evidence. Rescuers' moral courage stemmed from warm and sympathetic sentiments, often early encountered and long reinforced in a warm and sympathetic environment. Rescuers tended to surround themselves with warm and sympathetic individuals who shared their sentiments and supported their rescue activities. Their moral courage was of long standing, a part of their everyday orientation towards the world, and daily reinforced by their loved ones, friends, associates, their neighbours. The indigenous villagers in Chiapas gave food and water to the migrants because they saw people who were hungry and thirsty. They did what they have always done.

10.6 *Heroic Rescuers: Conscience and Transcendence*

I start out on a hike with friends. At the end of several hours of walking my fatigue increases and finally becomes very painful. At first I resist and then suddenly I let myself go, I give up... Someone will reproach me for my act and will mean thereby that I was free... I shall defend myself by saying that I was too tired. Who is right? Or rather is the debate not based on incorrect premises?... It ought to be formulated rather like this: could I have done otherwise without perceptibly modifying the organic totality of the projects which I am; or is the fact of resisting my fatigue such that instead of remaining a purely local and accidental modification of my behaviour, it could be effected only by means of a radical transformation of my being-in-the-world – a transformation, moreover, which is possible? In other words: I could have done otherwise. Agreed. But *at what a price?*

~Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness* (Italics in original).

The Oliners found that Western philosophy and psychology, too, have taken up a much-beloved cultural ideal - “The lonely rugged individualist, forsaking home and comfort and charting new paths in pursuit of a personal vision, is our heroic fantasy” (Oliner, 257). Autonomous thinking is often conceived as the only real basis for moral agency (Ibid.):

That few individuals behave virtuously because of autonomous contemplation of abstract principles – a finding that has been reiterated in numerous studies including Adorno's and our own – has not deterred advocates of independent moral reasoning from advancing it as the most morally admirable style. In some sense, rarity may even confirm its value, since it conforms to our cultural notion of the hero as a rather lonely person. (Oliner, 257)

The emphasis on autonomy cited by numerous others as the basis for moral agency and moral behaviour generally is at odds with the evidence (Oliner, 254). The Oliners also point out that independence of thought is no guarantor of virtue – it also characterizes leaders who conceive of

and perpetrate atrocities in the first place (Oliner, 257). As H.J. Forbes said, “independence of mind can have more than one outcome; it may promise the philosopher but deliver the tyrant” (Oliner, 257).

The picture of heroism and moral courage presented by such groups as rescuers in Nazi-occupied Europe, and the indigenous villagers in Chiapas, is not so much a caricature of rugged individualism in defiance of accepted social norms, but a quiet tableau of human dignity and a moral life lived with a deep awareness of and acceptance of the needs of others - a picture of consciousness and transcendence.

Consciousness involves an increased awareness of the unconscious representations, including dehumanizing norms, values, and sentiments as they relate to the encompassing culture of cruelty and its targets. As Alschuler explains, this involves a recognition that our representations and their projection onto outside targets belongs to our own selves, and to our own culture:

Within the theory of complexes, the vocation of humanization may be understood as the tendency toward the integration of unconscious complexes. In reference to complexes, Sandner and Beebe state that 'they are caused by conflict, and they are injuries to psychic wholeness. Yet, once formed, they tend to press for recognition and integration by the ego.' Complexes, as described earlier in this chapter, contain both repressed qualities and potential qualities, originating in the unconscious, that have not yet been part of the conscious personality. The ego's integration of these qualities (good and bad) in complexes begins with the recognition and withdrawal of projections. 'Owning' one's projections means no less than recognizing that what one has projected onto another person belongs to oneself. (Alschuler, 38)

Humanization is “the integration of unconscious complexes” (Alschuler, 38). A person's awareness of unconscious representations and their dehumanizing effects serves to withdraw the dehumanizing projection from the target and to rehumanize them in the light of self-conscious awareness.

Alschuler states that transcendence, “according to Jung, is a new synthesis that emerges when a person avoids a one-sided adherence to either of the opposites in conflict” (Alschuler, 35):

When a person is caught in the tension between consciousness and the unconscious, according to Jung, by holding onto this tension a symbol may emerge that transcends the conflict. That is, the conflict is not so much resolved as reshaped at another level where opposites become compatible. Failure to hold this tension results in taking sides or one-sidedness. Jung developed the technique of active imagination to facilitate the psyche's production of symbols in the transcendent function. (Alschuler, 65)

Alschuler argues that “in an ethnically divided society, the societal-historical correlate and the psychological correlate are analogous” (Alschuler, 80). He continues, stating that “*Liberated consciousness means holding the tension of psychic opposites, where the opposites are images of ethnic groups in conflict*” (Alschuler, 80. Italics in original.). Dispelling the collective shadow projections imposed on target groups that stem from hate, shame, and disgust, is only possible through a liberated consciousness that is able to perceive the self and others in a realistic way:

Only when one's self-image has developed to a sufficient degree can one be in a position to perceive other people's selves as they actually are. If one is not in this happier state, one is inclined to experience people through the veil of one's own imagery, in positive and negative emotional projections. (Alschuler, 17)

“What all this really means”, Alschuler argues, “is that in order to come to terms with shadow projections, the individual and the group must learn to be conscious of and to bear the tension of opposites within themselves” (Alschuler, 74), rather than ascribing their own shadow projections to the fundamental attributes of others. Such a liberated awareness of the reality of others can only stem from a liberated awareness of our own selves.

Jung's view of personal conscience involves the integration of cognitive representations that have produced an internal conflict in such a way that a transcendent solution emerges, one that reaches back to the archetypes, and that produces an individual, transformative solution to the conflict:

Jung's view of conscience belongs to the theory of opposites, which, in this application, are two incompatible duties that a person faces. Jung states, '[t]here is scarcely any other psychic phenomenon that shows the polarity of the psyche in a clearer light than conscience.' The tension arises from two obligations, both consistent with society's moral code that cannot be fulfilled simultaneously. Jung counsels the person in such a 'conflict of duty' to resist the one-sided solution that would result from suppressing one of the opposites. Instead, Jung recognizes that if one is sufficiently conscientious the conflict is endured to the end, and a creative solution emerges which is produced by the constellated archetype and possesses that compelling authority not unjustly characterized as the voice of God. The 'creative solution' is a novel third option that the person recognizes as the appropriate one. The voice of conscience offers a truly individual option, one that may even contravene the moral code of society. The dynamics of conscience exemplifies once more how enduring the tension of opposites promotes the transcendent function. 'The nature of the solution is in accord with the deepest foundation of the personality as well as with its wholeness; it embraces conscious and unconscious and therefore transcends the ego'. (Alschuler, 65-66 [Citations omitted])

This creative solution to the problems of cognitive dissonance and dissociation, which contribute to the perpetrator's acceptance of and decline into the culture of cruelty, can be overcome by

conscious awareness of that same dissonance and the transduction, and the renewed integration of the opposing elements into already existing deep cognitive structures that stem from the archetypes and the foundations of personality. In this way, transcendence is both intentional and generative, as it is at the same time conservative: the transcendent integration is based upon cognitive structures that are already well-laid down in the individual, such as the archetypes and the foundational sentiments.

10.7 Are Contextual Factors Exculpatory?

*“O what was that bird,” said Horror to Hearer,
Did you see that shape in the twisted trees?
Behind you swiftly the figure comes softly,
The spot on your skin is a shocking disease?”*

~W.H. Auden, *O Where are You Going?*

You have a cancer and you have to live with the cancer.

~Josip Budimcic

Evidence from social psychology demonstrates that conducive social conditions, local and immediate, rather than monstrous people or monstrous ideologies produce hatred and atrocity (Miller, 304). Like Goldhagen and Newman, many researchers in this field note the profound exculpatory power of their findings, fearing that they clearly imply a diminished sense of personal responsibility or intentionality on the part of actors (Ibid.). Many also fear that understanding can promote forgiving (Ibid.).

Need social situational accounts of perpetrator behaviour be exculpatory? The libertarian thesis of contra-causal free will states that a free choice has causal effects, but it has no causal antecedents (Churchland, 6). David Hume, on the other hand, realized that the idea of contra-causal free will was muddled and that moral choices are caused by desires, beliefs, hopes, fear, drives, intentions and motives (Churchland, 7). Our preferences are affected by our character, temperament, hormones, and childhood experiences; they are affected by how sleepy we are, how tired or alert, how sick or well we are, by our habits and history (Churchland, 7). Those choices we consider to be free choices, according to Hume, are those that result from our character, needs, habits, and beliefs, and these are the very choices that we hold people responsible for (Hume, cited in Churchland, 7). All choices are caused, and the important question is what are the differences between the causes of voluntary and involuntary behaviour? (Churchland, 8):

The important core of the idea of free will consists not in the notion of uncaused choice, whatever that might be, but in choices that are made deliberately, knowingly,

and intentionally, where the agent is in control. (Churchland, 15)

This is what we hold people responsible for, what we punish.

What, then, is the difference between voluntary and involuntary behaviour? Morse accepts the Humean thesis that free will is not contra-causal free will, and that moral agency is located in the individual's will and the intentionality of the individual's behaviour:

A persistent vexed question is how to assess the responsibility of people who seem to be acting in response to some inner compulsion, or, in more ordinary language, seem to have trouble controlling themselves. Examples from psychopathology include impulse control disorders, addictions, and paraphilias (disorders of sexual desire). If people really have immense difficulty in refraining from acting in certain ways through no fault of their own, this surely provides an appealing justification for mitigation or excuse. But what does it mean to say that an agent who is acting cannot control himself? I have explored this question at length elsewhere, and so I shall be brief and conclusory here. People who act in response to such inner states as craving are intentional agents. A drug addict who seeks and uses drugs to satisfy his craving does so intentionally. Simply because an abnormal biological cause played a causal role, and neuroscientific evidence confirms this, does not *per se* mean the person could not control himself or had great difficulty in doing so. Nor does the presence of an abnormal causal variable mean that the person was acting under compulsion. (Morse, 39) [citations omitted]

Causation, then, is not the equivalent of a compelling condition that ought to excuse conduct – all behaviour is caused but only some behaviour is outright compelled (Morse, 47). When intentional action is excused because we consider it compelled – think of a gun to one's head – the action is excused because it meets hard choice compulsion criteria, not because it is caused (Morse, 47). Hard choice compulsion criteria are, in turn, normative standards within the realm of human choice, and we can and do determine these (Ibid.).

As demonstrated above, perpetrator behaviour in a culture of cruelty rarely meets the standards of hard-choice compulsion criteria; this behaviour is not compelled and is not therefore excusable. The moral norms of a culture of cruelty are normative standards that are within the control of human agents. Even in rare cases when perpetrator behaviour is outright compelled, this, too, is a situation that rests ultimately within the realm of human control.

Leledakis notes that it is particularly at the level of 'micro' encounters and small-scale interactions, those that comprise the realm of the mimetic mind and its cognitive representations, psychoanalytic theory demonstrates the existence of various levels of autonomy in individual agency (Leledakis, 196). Where autonomy fails, where intentionality and generativity fail, the agent fails to question their projections of the other, fails to perceive the contradictions inherent in their transductions, fails to resolve their cognitive dissonance, in ways that enable to agent to

choose a normative framework that gives effect to sympathy, human dignity, and universal moral inclusiveness.

As Leledakis states, “The real dilemma facing social theory concerning the question of agency is how to avoid both a regression into individualism and the assertion of a full and complete determination of the individual by the social” (Leledakis, 196). To conclude that mimetic social actors are responding to forces beyond their control, and that such forces must thereby be exculpatory, is therefore to resolve the issue by asserting the complete determination of the individual by the social. This is what would be expected from any discipline that resolves the issue in this way and places the social above the individual, as in the public health approach and the standard social science model. This is to mistake fundamentally the relation between the individual and the social, and to set too low a bar for human moral agency.

Above and beyond 'instrumental' autonomy, there is a higher level of autonomy open to the individual, the one theorized by Castoriadis as autonomy in the strict sense. It refers to the possibility of putting oneself and the social into question with the explicit purpose of introducing novel forms, ideas, actions. (Leledakis, 197)

This is the realm that rescuers in Nazi-occupied Europe inhabited, as well as the individuals involved in transformative peace-building operations.

The transformative realm requires a higher level of individual autonomy and moral agency:

The possibility of a higher level of autonomy, concerning a conscious project of questioning the very determinations of the self and the social and aiming at social or individual transformation. This level of autonomy can exist only because the modality of the unconscious does not allow any full and final determinations to operate. It is always potentially present, though its actualization remains historically specific. (Leledakis, 190)

Moral agency and moral judging are dependent upon the level of autonomy achieved by the agent, by the degree to which they have come to act upon the totality of the organic projects that they are, the cognitive projects that an individual inherits from their experience, from their culture, from their immediate social environment, from the emotional psyche of the collective unconscious, in an intentional and generative manner. This enables a moral agent to recognize transduction, to reorganize cognitive dissonance, to reject projective identifications of target groups.

To discern whether an actor is, in fact, acting as a moral agent is really just the same as discerning those choices that are intentional and generative from those that are not. It is simply the case that much of our intentional and generative choices are formulated at the mimetic, as op-

posed to the theoretic, level and are largely unconscious and therefore 'intuitive'. If a particular choice is adjudged to be beyond the pale, then we have the right to demand that the agent, as in Sartre's phrase, *pay that price*. It is no excuse to say that those same intentional judgments were caused or constrained by the totality of the embodied projects that we are or by our mimetic response to our social environment, which is ever and always the case. That we find it difficult to decide which actions are indeed beyond the pale and which are not should come as no surprise, therefore, for much of our moral reasoning takes place in the unconscious, and the task of prising these cognitive structures into phenomenal awareness is simply too daunting for a nascent theoretic mind that is only just beginning to become aware of itself. As Neumann states, we are only at the beginning of this stage of our collective individuation, for "This process of rationalization, which enables consciousness to form abstract concepts and to adopt a consistent view of the world, comes at the end of a development that is only just beginning to be realized in modern man" (Neumann, 328).

11 RETURN TO VUKOVAR: WAR CRIMES TRIBUNALS, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND THE FOG OF WAR

During the course of writing this paper, the world has witnessed violent protests in Sudan upon the indictment of President Omar Al-Bashir for genocide and war crimes by the International Criminal Court, with more violence expected (BBC News, 14 July 2008). This is echoed by the vitriolic protests of The Hague Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia for its arrest and extradition of former Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic for crimes of genocide and crimes against humanity (BBC News, 26 July 2008). Demonstrations were held in support of Karadzic by Bosnian Serbs that included candle-light vigils, nationalistic Serbian flags and banners, and posters and t-shirts of Karadzic with the phrase “Serbian Hero” written underneath his picture (Ibid.).

We witnessed ethnic violence between Serbs and Croats in Croatia, in which Serbian homes were trashed and looted, after The Hague Tribunal finally handed down its verdict of the “Vukovar Three” on 27 September 2007 (B92 News, 2 October 2007). In Vukovar, a young man was heard to shout to passing Croats, “Ovcara will happen again!” (Ibid.). He was 17 years old (Ibid.), only an infant at the time the town was sacked.

The violence was the result of the acquittal by the Tribunal of Miroslav Radic, on the grounds that he was not aware of the killings, the release of Veselin Slijvančanin for time served, and the sentencing of Mile Mrksic to 20 years in prison for war crimes. The Tribunal found that on 19 November 1991, Yugoslav National Army (JNA) soldiers who had been patients at the hospital had told Mile Mrksic that there were Croatian Ustasha forces hiding at the hospital disguised as patients (Prosecutor, para. 190). In the early morning hours of 20 November, Mile Mrksic gave the order to evacuate the hospital; staff were gathered and told that they were free to leave, and patients who could walk were told to proceed to the exit, where JNA soldiers separated the women and the elderly from the men, who were then loaded onto busses (Ibid., para. 201). Some male patients who could not walk unassisted were taken by JNA soldiers and loaded onto the busses with the other men (Ibid., para. 207). The busses were driven to the JNA barracks, where the men were made to exit the busses, and run a gauntlet to the barracks where they were further beaten and abused. Later in the day, Mile Mrksic ordered the men to be taken on busses to the pig farm at Ovcara, where they were to be detained in the barns (Ibid., para. 607). Mile Mrksic then left the farm, ordering the JNA soldiers and the military police to withdraw (Ibid., para. 617). The men were then left in the hands of the Serbian irregulars and paramilitary forces. Within a few hours, all were dead (Ibid., para 607).

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was to have taken control of the hospital that morning pursuant to an agreement of surrender earlier negotiated with the acting Yugoslav government, and to monitor the sanctuary agreement that the government had made with those who had taken refuge at the hospital. The ICRC was blockaded on a bridge by JNA forces until just after the JNA had evacuated the hospital (Ibid., para. 211).

Earlier in the day, Major Slijvancanin was reported to have been rifling through the belongings of some patients, and gave some money to two women, telling them that Ruzica Markobasic (a pregnant women who had been loaded onto the busses with the men) would not be needing money any more where she was going (Ibid., para. 590). Money was also taken from the men in the barns by military police and paramilitaries, on the grounds that the detainees would no longer be needing money 'where they were going' (Ibid., para., 597). Other JNA soldiers and paramilitaries were overheard that day telling the men outright that they were all to be killed (Ibid.). A mass grave was dug that afternoon at the pig farm on the orders of a single JNA soldier (Ibid., para. 601).

The Tribunal found that the killings had not been pre-planned, and that there was no evidence of planning, foreknowledge, or a common purpose among the JNA to carry out the killings; rather, the abuse and killings were found to have been a spontaneous action that each paramilitary had taken on his own initiative, after having been left alone with the men at the pig farm that night (Ibid., para. 596). The Tribunal reasoned that the JNA's deliberate blocking of the ICRC earlier that day was only to facilitate the removal of the men from the hospital for further interrogation, and not their eventual slaughter (ibid., para. 604). The Tribunal also reasoned that the orders of the single JNA soldier to dig the mass grave that afternoon was not enough, in and of itself, to show that this was anything other than the initiative of the one soldier, who may in any case have been an irregular wearing some JNA insignia (Ibid., para. 601). None of the evidence was enough to show a common plan among the JNA to have the irregulars kill the men.

The Tribunal also found that the men from the hospital were deliberately, not randomly, selected for detention and further interrogation, stating, "it is important to emphasise that, in the Chamber's finding, the men taken to the busses *had not been randomly selected*" (Ibid., para. 207 [emphasis added]). They were men of 'military age', *i.e.* not elderly, and were thought to have been involved in the Croatian forces (Ibid.). The only evidence for this was the assertion of the JNA soldiers who had been patients at the hospital. This overlooks the fact that all of the men, saving only the very elderly, were taken, that no arms were later found at the hospital by the JNA, and that the refugees at the hospital had already negotiated a surrender with the acting Yugoslav

government.

Common article 3 of the *Third* and *Fourth Geneva Conventions* of 1949 protects persons who are “taking no active part in the hostilities, including members of armed forces who have laid down their arms, and those placed *hors de combat* by sickness, wounds, detention, or any other cause”. Such persons who are *hors de combat* are excluded from the definition of prisoners of war, as given by Article 4 of the *Third Geneva Convention*. Rather than prisoners of war, they are to be treated as civilians and thus protected persons under the *Fourth Geneva Convention*. Article 27 of the *Fourth Geneva Convention* states that protected persons must be treated without prejudice to their state of health, age, or sex - protections which were violated during the JNA triage of detainees, who were not selected randomly during the evacuation of the hospital, but were selected according to their state of health, age, and sex. Article 30 of the *Fourth Geneva Convention* states that protected persons shall have every facility for making application to, among others, the International Committee of the Red Cross, The Red Crescent Society, and any other organization that might assist them, a protection that was breached when the ICRC was deliberately blockaded and prevented from reaching the hospital. Finally, Article 31 states that no physical or moral coercion shall be exercised against protected persons, in particular to obtain information from them or from third parties, thus prohibiting the interrogation of the men removed from the hospital, which the Tribunal found to be the main purpose of their detention. The Tribunal nevertheless treated the men as 'prisoners', referring to them in the judgment only as 'prisoners', and without making any determination as to their proper status under the *Geneva Conventions*.

Even though the Tribunal found that there was a common plan among the defendants and the JNA to detain the men at the hospital that morning, the Tribunal did not make a finding either that the detainees were *hors de combat* and thus protected persons under the *Fourth Geneva Convention*, or that their detention and transportation was unlawful and a grave breach of the *Geneva Conventions*. The Tribunal was thus unable to convict the defendants of grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions under Article 2 of the *Statute of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia*, which states that:

The International Tribunal shall have the power to prosecute persons committing or ordering to be committed grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, namely the following acts against persons or property protected under the provisions of the relevant Geneva Convention:

(g) unlawful deportation or transfer or unlawful confinement of a civilian.

It was not open to the Tribunal to make these findings, as they had never been alleged by the Prosecution (See Prosecutor, Fourth Amended Indictment). As some defendants are too small for the international criminal tribunals, so are some crimes.

The evacuation of the hospital was thus treated by the Tribunal as being a justified detention of enemy combatants, albeit one that had some unfortunate and unforeseen consequences, and not as a collection of grave breaches of the *Geneva Conventions* and the laws of war as regarding civilians and protected persons. This fact has grave consequences for the collective memory of Vukovar: no longer a civilian massacre, no longer 'one of the gravest war crimes of the Balkan conflict', but a legitimate defensive operation that inadvertently went sour, overtaken by circumstance.

Croats are left to struggle with the damage wrought to their collective remembrance of Vukovar, a struggle that has all but destroyed the very credibility and legitimacy of The Hague Tribunal in that country. Stipe Mesic, the President of Croatia, who had formerly supported The Hague Tribunal, called the verdicts outright unacceptable (BBC News, 28 September 2007). The judgment led to outbreaks of ethnic violence in Croatia not seen in a generation (Supra.), and the fact that it took the Tribunal the better part of that generation to conclude its handling of the case comes to be seen as the only positive element of its involvement.

In Serbia, public opinion has always been hostile to the idea that Serbs engaged in anything other than legitimate defence (BBC News, 13 March 2004). As stated by the BBC News, "It has been easy for Serb sentiment to dismiss The Hague Tribunal as part of the international anti-Serb consensus, one more brick in the edifice of Serb victimhood" (Ibid.). The Vukovar judgment, while destroying the credibility of The Hague Tribunal in Croatia, has done nothing to rehabilitate it in the eyes of Serbs, as seen in the recent protests over the arrest of Karadzic. Serbians were, however, slowly struggling to come to terms with their own war record of atrocities, and as part of a remarkable collective soul-searching had instituted proceedings against many of the 'low-level' perpetrators of the Vukovar massacre (Ibid.), precisely those moral agents who, according to The Hague Tribunal, acted solely on their own initiative, and who actually carried out the killings, and who are thus too unimportant to merit the attention and resources of international tribunals. The convictions were overturned by the Serbian Supreme Court in 2005, and are awaiting retrial (Ibid.), retrials which will now have the benefit of the judgment of The Hague Tribunal affirming Serbian sentiment that the actions of their soldiers and irregulars during the war were legitimate acts of defence, and not grave breaches of the laws of war, and that the massacre at Ovchara was a justified military operation that was somehow bungled with somewhat unfortunate results. The kind of soul-searching that can transform collective

sentiments of victimhood and easy justification - necessary to promulgate cycles of hatred, violence, and continued impunity - may therefore have been permanently forestalled in Serbia.

In 2008, the Canadian government sought to vacate Josip Budimcic's refugee status in Canada, and thus pave the way for his deportation to Croatia (*Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness v. Budimcic, Josip*. Refugee Protection Division RPDVA7-00522, Pattee (19 November 2008), Executive Summary [hereinafter the "Minister"]). Member Pattee of the Refugee Protection Division of the Immigration and Refugee Board was asked by the Minister to find that Budimcic had "misrepresented and withheld material evidence relating to his residence, work, and military history" (Minister, Executive Summary). In particular, the Minister charged that in October of 1991, Budimcic had participated in the abuse and torture of captured Croatians in a forest between Sarvas and Tenja, near the site of the siege of Vukovar (Ibid.). The Member noted in the passive voice that, during the course of this mistreatment "two of them were executed" (Minister, Executive Summary). The Member found the witness statements taken from four survivors to be "deficient and unreliable", and therefore there was no credible evidence to find that Budimcic was a perpetrator (Ibid.). Moreover, the Member found that Budimcic was present for a short time only, and that the overall situation was simply "beyond his control" (Ibid.).

And so, Veselin Slijvancanin was reported to have been rifling through the belongings of patients at the Vukovar Hospital, giving away the money they would no longer need, patients he knew *by name* (Supra). Men were taunted on the busses by Serbian irregulars that day, taunted about their favourite football teams, taunted in personal ways, *taunted by name*, by men who knew them, by men described in one instance by the Tribunal as their 'neighbours' (Prosecutor, para. 597). Witnesses reported irregulars asking detainees in the hangars that afternoon for their money, money they would not be needing anymore (Ibid.), men being asked *by name*, by someone who knew them, by men who lived 'neighbour-to-neighbour' in a small town before the war. The impersonal juggernaut of the war machine, of military exigency, of the dictates of realpolitik, of the concealment of the "fog of war", are dispersed in the probable light of a sunny day, at the farm, just outside of town.

12 CONCLUSION

*“Out of this house” – said Rider to Reader,
“Yours never will” – said Farer to Fearer,
“They’re looking for you” – said Hearer to Horror,
As he left them there, as he left them there.*

~W.H. Auden, O Where are You Going?

How does it come about that large numbers of ordinary, ordinarily busy and cheerful, moral, upright individuals come to participate in a Culture of Cruelty and to commit atrocities, despite the fact that many perpetrators initially resist committing the atrocities and find doing so to be soul-destroying? This takes place through a gradual, escalating process whereby perpetrators refurbish their moral norms and principles to adjust to the demands of the Culture of Cruelty and to resituate themselves in what they see as a fundamentally just world. Perpetrators use psychological defence mechanisms to adjust to the new ego-demands of the Culture of Cruelty, both to better succeed within it and also to better survive it psychologically intact. They adjust their moral principles to 'save myself', to 'save my loved ones', to 'help my community and my country', to 'end war', to 'save lives', to 'preserve our very civilization'; they adjust by shunting off the emotion that might otherwise enliven sentiments of sympathetic concern to sentiments of victimization, fear and self-preservation, to sentiments of repugnance for the feared and repugned target group. The utilitarian and self-serving moral principles of the Culture of Cruelty and the norms and institutions which serve them are in fact the same as our ordinary moral principles, norms, and institutions, and this further enables the ease and rapidity of the transition.

The unacknowledged identity of the governing moral principles of the Culture of Cruelty with widely accepted moral principles is what makes perpetrators' behaviour so perplexing and so paradoxical. This cannot be explained by the belief that human evil is the outcome of an evil disposition, of a monstrous and inexplicable personality. On the contrary, the evidence shows that perpetrators are perfectly ordinary human beings, who commit atrocities and evil not in spite of this, but because of this. Personal characteristics, ego defence mechanisms, and situational factors continually interact and mutually transform one another in dynamic that produces the willing individuals who act within the Culture of Cruelty. If culpability is located within an evil character, then any explanation that purports to explain perpetrator behaviour in any other terms will almost of necessity appear to be exculpatory. Explanations are not determinisms, and perpetrator behaviour almost never meets hard-choice compulsion criteria. Rather, it is often the very lack of extraneous compelling factors that produces the most ready compliance with the Culture of Cruelty.

As evidenced by findings from the field of social psychology, it is the local and immediate social environment that primarily governs our behaviour, including our moral judging and moral decision making. The local and immediate social environment takes precedence over character and personal dispositional factors, religion, and cultural worldview. It operates in the short-term, and is very malleable. Moral decision making, as with our cognitive abilities generally, evolved in the human lineage to develop within and to respond primarily to this close social environment. The representational structures of modern humans developed out of the primordial episodic representational mind of primates and the early hominids. Upon the early episodic mind, which categorizes and adapts to the local and immediate environment, is built the mimetic representational mind which further abstracts from the episode the representation of the social environment as a whole. The social order, social roles and expectations, social norms and third party norm reinforcement are all particularly human products of the mimetic representational mind.

The mimetic mind is still the governing representational system of much of modern human cognitive functioning. The mimetic mind begins to develop very early in childhood from the innate structures of the emotional psyche. Emotion developed as an adaptive response of animals with advanced nervous systems to the problems posed by the local, dynamic, and ever-changing environment. From the primordial episodic emotions the mimetic mind incorporates and then builds up the sentiments, which are social projections that incorporate mimetic social norms, roles, judgments that abstract from the social episode as a whole. As such, sentiments operate at a higher level of abstraction than that of the episodic emotions from which they are derived; sentiments are nourished by the emotions on which they are based, but can function, incorporate new information, and encompass new social facts quite apart from their foundational emotional structures. This lends sentiments the malleability and heightened responsiveness that enables them to adapt quickly to changing local conditions, for, just as with the episodic emotions, mimetic cognition is an adaptive response to the changing local environment. It also lends the sentiments their shared social character, which enables them to be shared between consociates and subject to third party reinforcement.

The mimetic mind and its sentiments, little examined and largely unconscious, is the foundation for human social acting, including moral acting and moral decision making. Moral judgments and the moral behaviour that results is based upon long-standing habits, customs, and social norms that seem common-sensical and intuitive precisely because of their largely unconscious and unexamined nature. The malleability of the mimetic mind ensures that in changing and novel social environments, pre-existing sentiments can come to encompass new

social facts, and even these vary novel ideas can immediately come to be accepted as longstanding, intuitive, and commonsensical. This happens quickly in situations of collective violence, even where there are little pre-existing group identities and group hatreds, as happened with Soviet collectivization, the Chinese Cultural Revolution, or the Killing Fields of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia. Even where there are pre-existing ethnic tensions, such as the Balkans and Iraq, sentiments of shame, hatred, and repugnance can quickly be whipped up and used to support violence against target groups where only identity politics and mistrust existed hitherto.

Pro-social behaviour also arises at the mimetic level, including not only the long-standing norms and sentiments that support moral choices and pro-social behaviours, but also the lifelong task of surrounding oneself with the kind of family, friends, consociates, networks and associations that support and encourage pro-social behaviour and reinforce its supporting norms and sentiments on a continuous basis. One striking result of the Oliners' study of rescuers in Nazi-occupied Europe is the lack of clear distinctions between rescuers and perpetrators of atrocities: they cannot be distinguished on the basis of personality characteristics, demographic characteristics, religious or political affiliations, ideology or worldview. The main difference between the two groups lies in the sentiments held by individuals and reinforced by other actors in the individual's social environment. Rescuers held expansive sentiments of sympathy, based upon the primary emotion of acceptance. Unlike nonrescuers, rescuers did not hold sentiments of repugnance towards other humans nor did they hold sentiments of shame and victimization that lead to hatred. On the other hand, sentiments of justice, fairness, self-reliance and the importance of social hierarchy characterized the less sympathetic nonrescuers. At the extreme, violent Cultures of Cruelty are inhabited by social actors projecting onto target groups sentiments of repugnance and victimization. The target group is perceived as threatening, provoking shame and anger, which in turn give rise to sentiments of hatred.

No matter how malleable or short-lived, our sentiments and projections always seem to be intuitive, universal, common-sensical and unquestionable, as they are products of how our mind has developed, of how our cognitive structures ordinarily function, and the adaptive purposes to which evolution has fit our human, abstracting, representational mind. Moral agency and personal conscience are thus a function of how well the representation mind is able to perform. Juvenile cognitive forms, such as transduction and condensation, are rarely eradicated completely in the adult mind, where they continue to give rise to the hateful projections, cognitive dissonance, and dissociations and denials that characterize actors in the Culture of Cruelty. Personal conscience, in the view of Carl Jung, involves the *integration* of these juvenile and unconscious cognitive representations that produce internal conflicts in such a way that a

transcendent solution emerges, one that reaches back to the archetypes, and that produces an individual, transformative solution to the conflict.

Personal conscience is thus the province of the Hero, the mythic figure who is the representative bearer of the group's continually emerging social conscience. Heroes may be poor villagers who defy the law to give a bit of food and water to a dehumanized and repugned group; a hero may be a lonely woman who places a high value on the wishes of her elders and on doing her duty. Such heroes can transform their local social environment; they may transform the group's moral norms or even advance the group's collective conscience, at which point such heroes come to operate at the mythic level of social transformation.

Neumann posits that the recent birth of the individual from the collective psyche, and its weakly differentiated ego, has left the theoretic mind unable to cope with its bifurcation from the unconscious:

[T]he splitting of an unconscious content into its material and emotional components was originally in the interests of conscious development, but now it is one of the critical features of a hypertrophied consciousness split off from the unconscious. (Neumann, 386)

But the hypertrophied consciousness of late modernity may be deficient in autonomy, may have a regressive and stunted sense of moral agency:

The fragmented and isolated self that comes naturally to people in late modernity is apt to be masked by a vision of a nearly omnipotent, self-constructed self that finds real autonomy difficult and makes the choices so freely made and unmade difficult indeed. This self is ultimately a disappointed self denying its own disappointments. (TenHouten, 80)

This real lack of autonomy and difficulty in making free choices should result in a culture that considers it difficult to make choices freely, and difficult to hold decision-makers to real accountability, and it is this exculpatory attitude and moral malaise that characterises the culture of late modernity. Neumann is also distressed by the atomized individual consciousness, and its tendency to become consumed in its inflated private world:

When the individual falls away from the cultural fabric like this, he finds himself completely isolated in an egotistically inflated private world. The restlessness, the discontents, the excesses, the formlessness and meaninglessness of a purely egocentric life – as compared with the symbolic life – are the unhappy results of this psychological apostasy... Following the collapse of the archetypal cannon, single archetypes then take possession of men and consume them like malevolent demons... The grotesque fact that murderers, brigands, gangsters, thieves, forgers, tyrants, and swindlers, in a guise that deceives nobody, have seized control of collective life is characteristic of our time. (Neumann, 391)

This sentiment is echoed even by Sociobiologists like Wright, who sees that postmodern society may be witnessing the collapse of long-tanding social sentiments, such as reciprocity:

People move often, change jobs often. So a reputation for integrity matters less now, and sacrifices of all kinds – even for colleagues or neighbors – are less likely to be repaid far in the future. These days an upper-middle-class man who by example teaches his son to be slick and superficially sincere, to tell minor lies in profusion, to work harder on promise than delivery, may well be equipping him for success. (Wright, 221)

According to Wright, individuals no longer have a stable social structure from which to derive deferred rewards or to be held accountable (Ibid.).

The hypertrophied modern ego with its decreased autonomy may be more, and not less, susceptible to the shadow side of the mimetic collective:

But in mass phenomena the illusory elation is as transient as that induced by hypnosis; it does not impress itself upon the conscious mind by bringing it to a creative synthesis, but leaks away like any other momentary intoxication. Yet even this delusive frenzy of mass possession is zealously desired by an ego emptied of all meaning. (Neumann, 443)

The *participation mystique* of collective humanity gives way to the mass delusion, whereas our stunted theoretic culture has given us as an ideal not the Total Self characterized by integration and centroversion, but the Total Man of theoretic culture, perhaps best exemplified by Robert Oppenheimer who, upon witnessing Trinity - the first explosion of an atom bomb at the Manhattan Project Test Site in Socorro, New Mexico on 16 July 1945 - took a page from the *Bhagavad Gita*, and spoke, "I am become Death, the shatterer of worlds" (Caldicott, 16).

Berman sees our salvation in a move towards the holism of mimesis and away from centralized authority and the stagnation of theoretic culture:

On the political level, decay will probably take the form of the break-up of the nation-state in favour of small, regional units. This trend, sometimes called political separatism, devolution, or balkanization, is by now quite widespread in all industrial societies... This process represents a reversion to original political boundaries that existed prior to the rise of modern nation states: not France, but Burgundy, Picardy, Normandy, Alsace, and Lorraine; not Germany, but Bavaria, Baden, Hesse, Hanover; not Spain, but Valencia, Aragon, Catalonia, Castile, and so on. (Berman, 281)

Writing in 1981, Berman could not have known that Western Europeans would find their self-determination in their greater collectivization as the prosperous and powerful European Union, nor that the Balkanization of Europe would give rise not to the holistic Total State somehow founded on the identity politics of the post-Westphalian system, but the holocausts of Srebrenica, not Yugoslavia; Vukovar, not Croatia; Kosovo, not Greater Serbia; Kurdistan, not Turkey and Iraq; Georgia and Chechnya, not the Soviet Union. And so on.

A world of mimesis is the one that most humans inhabit today, and have always inhabited. Those individuals who have learned formal abstraction are not functioning theoretically outside of the calculus class, the laboratory, or the courtroom – and not much of the time even there. It is

in our mimetic life that we generate attachment, sympathy, morality, culture. Yet mimesis has brought us the *Einsatzgruppen* of Poland, the torturers of Abu Ghraib, and the killing fields of Cambodia, of Rwanda, East Timor, The Congo, Liberia, Algeria, Haiti. And so on.

From whence will come our salvation? Is it to be found in strengthening our weakly integrated theoretic moral principles and reaffirming their universality? The Total Man of theoretic culture has brought us not only the atom bomb, but also Euthanasia and the Final Solution, the violence of the Cultural Revolution and Soviet Collectivization, depleted uranium weapons, the “collateral damage” of “wars of reconstruction”, and all of the environmental despoliation of late capitalism and its associated military adventures. All of which we fail to find as repugnant as the sight of religious headgear or the smell of another's perfume. Or, do we instead require a great cognitive leap forward – one that will transform the totality of the organic projects that are humanity-in-the-world? Perhaps, but as Sartre asked, *at what a price?*

In the meantime, if postmodern culture requires that the unified, self-referential self is a fable that can no longer minister to our ethical needs, then our moral development is no longer a matter of restraining our innate passions and submerging our dark fears and desires to conform to abstemious social norms. Rather, moral development requires reason directed by passion, and passion enlivened by reason in an interdependent and mutually transforming consociation to form moral sentiments, to foster sympathy, to manifest our moral judgments through concrete exteriorized deeds, in a continuous, conscious and cultivated, process of moral *becoming*. From nascence, we can acculturate children to grow up fostering a culture of compassion. And we can educate a generation of common heroes in less time than it has taken our most advanced legal institutions to prosecute the perpetrators of the Vukovar atrocities. *Out of this house.*

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