At The Interface
Cutting-Edge Research

Framing Evil
Portraits of Terror & the Imagination

Edited by

Nancy Billias
&
Agnes B. Curry

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Framing Evil:

Portraits of Terror and the Imagination

Papers Presented at the 7th Global Conference
Perspectives on Evil and Human Wickedness

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Introduction

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The papers in this volume were first presented at the 7th Global Conference on Perspectives on Evil and Human Wickedness, held in Salzburg, Austria for five days in mid-March 2006. The conference and subsequent written volume are part of the ongoing *At the Interface* project, a broad portfolio united by its exploration of cutting-edge ideas and emergent social challenges. The project is resolutely inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary, and the Salzburg conference united psychologists, health professionals, specialists in literature, film and computers, historians, anthropologists, linguists and philosophers in a shared quest to examine the phenomenon of evil in a variety of contexts. Many were colleagues of several years, while others were newcomers to the gathering. The papers herein present a glimpse of the work presented at the conference, at its stage of development at that time.

Evil and human wickedness are by their 'nature' intense topics. Their intensity at once demands and thwarts sustained exploration. While the status of evil as an ontological category may itself be an open question in this postmodern age, the social inducements to and repercussions of human wickedness are readily apparent. Thus the urge to explore both the soil and the flowers, so to speak, arises, in part at least, from a sense of responsibility - the call to understand as a call to respond, to bear witness, and in so doing to repair the frayed fabric of shared humanity. On the other hand, the move to examine and explain can result in intellectualizing the problem away, proffering neatly- tied-up arguments and pat answers that are self-delusional and profoundly cruel to those who suffer evil's effects; in the face of suffering and loss it can seem that most appropriate response is a respectful silence. The investigator thus finds some of the more insidious possibilities for evil at the centre of her enterprise and in her own personal urge to chatter on. More deeply, one must wonder whether a phenomenon that literally shatters experience, and that renders whatever it touches in the heart and in the land at first scrambled and then later flat and empty - absent - can be at all amenable to conceptual explication. Yet succumbing to the shattering seems likewise to further the work of wickedness. Two sorts of silence - the pregnant silence of respectful solidarity and the sterile silence of flattened possibility - thus intertwine. The explorers of evil must continually work to

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disentangle these from one another, enacting the first without strengthening the second.

To persist at the intersection of these opposed imperatives - to somehow make sense of evil, rendering it comprehensible, and to dwell pondering the possibility that such exercises are both dangerous and possibly quite futile - is the chosen task of the project participants. This is a difficult stance to enact, both personally and collectively. Sadness and frayed nerves were situational hazards, remedied problematically in the beer cellars and perhaps more productively in the simple sharing of the experience. In this respect, the choice of venue for this year's conference was quite appropriate and a brief meditation on the contradictions of Salzburg is warranted.

With the oldest part of the city nestled between steep hills and crowned by an immense fortress-castle, Salzburg is particularly conducive to postcard renderings. The fact that the city was the birthplace of the classical composer W.A. Mozart, the nostalgic Christmas classic "Silent Night" and the iconic schmaltz of *The Sound of Music* encourages the tendency to sentimentalize and miniaturize a city that at periods of its history wielded significant power with considerable intolerance. The Nazi annexation of Austria did not decimate a large Salzburg Jewry - but only because the ruling archbishops had expelled them five centuries earlier. While Protestants did not find their lot in Salzburg quite as lethal as those Jews publicly burned near the Augustinian monastery in 1492, they were subjected to repeated expulsions, the most famous of which occurred in 1731 and affected thirty thousand Lutherans, a quarter of whom lost their lives within two years, a few of whom landed as far away as the Carolina colonies.

The year of this conference, 2006, was a particularly interesting year to be in Salzburg, as it marked the 250th anniversary of Mozart's birth. The yearlong celebration meant that conference participants had the opportunity for splendid music every night, an occasion for both succour and psychic dissonance after a day spent considering human depravity. If one was in the mood to continue revelling in contradictions, then after the concert she could visit the Sternbrau Café and take dessert in view of a panoramic fresco of an accused witch being readied for execution.

The papers themselves represent a gamut of concerns and methods. Not surprisingly, given that we were now into the fifth year of a war on terror whose architects (on both sides) had made copious use of the language of good and evil in promotion of their agendas, the topics of terrorism and rhetoric occupied several scholars. The blurring of boundaries between the real, the virtual and the imaginary was likewise a theme, with considerations of online communities, enactments of evil in role-playing games, and the foundations of cyber-ethics. It is noteworthy that several contributors explore ontological issues regarding the nature and status of evil, and the shape of

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evil character, by examining works of imagination such as novels, plays, poems and movies.

The widely varying discussions of the conference presented significant challenges to the editors. At times, themes seemed too tightly interwoven to break into sections; at others, the differences between disciplines, topics and media seemed to resist categorization. At length, the editorial team decided to leave this state of affairs to the readers to resolve, as an interactive questioning of the mystery of evil. Thus, this volume is not neatly balanced. Rather, it begins with a wide focus, which gradually narrows in onto one set of issues. Fully half of the book consists of investigations of evil in a variety of media: evil events envisioned or spoken of in the context of the imagination. The third quarter wrestles with how to speak about current manifestations of evil. The final quarter concentrates on one very salient manifestation of contemporary evil: terrorism.

In the opening essay, Anders Johansson provides a framing interrogation about the presumptions that are operative in looking to aesthetic productions when investigating evil. Is literature perhaps more helpful than philosophy in this endeavour? Johansson examines a film (Michael Haneke's *Funny Games*) and a work of literature (the Swedish novel *Äldreomsorgen i övre Kågedalen* by Nikanor Teratologen), both of which contain narrations of unrelenting evil, to argue Adorno's point that evil cannot be extricated from its human root: in society, in the work of art, or in the individual. Yet perhaps artwork holds some possibility for understanding and even hope, by providing an internal reconciliation which does not undo the violence they explore, by somehow giving us a space from which to observe evil rather than being submerged in it.

Ilana Shiloh continues in the same vein in an exploration of two literary meditations on the nature of evil: Kafka's *The Castle* and Auster's *The Music of Chance*. In each of these narratives, Shiloh maintains, the space of literature allows the reader to stand close to both victims and perpetrators of evil and to bear witness to the subjectivity of both without rushing to judgment. This distance does not, however, enable the reader to maintain an illusion of innocence. We are all guilty bystanders; literature simply allows us to try on both roles, and see how both fit us equally.

Vera Profit's essay on the character of Emmenberger in Dürrenmatt's *Der Verdacht* takes a different tack. Profit attempts to understand how we might learn to recognize evil in an individual or a group, not by looking at the perpetrators, but rather by examining the nature of their relationships with their victims. In this way, she suggests, we may be able not only to identify, but even more importantly, identify with those who carry out radical evil. In so doing, we may reduce the distance between us and the evil 'other', which may be a significant first step in breaking evil down. If radical evil consists of the annihilation of the other, its own destruction must begin

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with the sublation of that annihilation, the acceptance of the subjectivity of the perpetrator of evil.

The volume continues with Luc Small's exploration of another evil character from literature: the misanthropic Captain Claggart from Herman Melville's *Billy Budd.* Like Johansson, Small seeks to draw conclusions about the use of fiction in informing philosophical discourse. While no interpreters seek to establish Claggart as anything other than a figure of evil, widely varying analyses of this figure allow space for reflection, dialogue, and complexity. Small takes these spaces as helpful and hopeful markers of the possibility that evil is not inevitably a smooth-sided, hermetically sealed shaft into which we fall at our peril. Fiction thus becomes a means not only of containing but also of healing evil: a way out of the labyrinth.

In the next essay, Gregory Wilson provides further evidence of the uses of literature in the philosophical tasks of explaining, expressing and combating evil. Wilson explores the influence of the poet John Milton, who was so central to the development of the modern British conscience, on Nathaniel Hawthorne, who was a witness to and documentor of the development of early American values. Each of these writers set the moral tone for several generations with their tales of starkly contrasted good and evil, tragedy writ large on a contemporary stage. The broad strokes of both authors' themes and characters enable their readers to make clear choices between moral extremes, while simultaneously exploring increasingly complex psychological issues. While Milton exhorts and preaches to the crowd, Hawthorne investigates the individual - thus giving the new nation a proving ground on which to develop its own moral codes.

The next essay in this section, however, shows another, perhaps the darkest face of fiction - no longer as a moulder of conscience, but rather as a tool of political propaganda. Carratero-Gonzalez provides a scathing critique of Michael Crichton, accusing him of perpetrating evil in the course of a work of literature. Her paper explores the way in which Crichton uses the eco-thriller genre to support a political agenda. In *State of Fear,* Crichton questions the validity of contemporary theories predicting climatic change. First, his plot is structured around a series of acts of ecoterrorism which cause natural disasters which imitate the effects of global warming. *State of Fear* includes an "author's message", two appendices and a bibliography with almost 200 references, which Crichton uses to justify his reasons for supporting the contention developed in the book, a thesis that he repeatedly defended in public conferences. Since its publication in 2004, *State of Fear* has become more than a fictional work; it has been transformed into a powerful instrument of science politicisation; paradoxically, a danger against which the best-selling author warns the reader in one of the appendices. Carratero-Gonzalez conjectures the worst regarding Crichton's motives, and

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sees in *State of Fear* a (very successful) attempt to use fiction to support and promote evil itself.

The conference delegates were united neither in their choice of media (poetry, literature, film) nor in their ideas on how media is or should be used with regard to evil. Neil Forsyth offers an extension of his thoughts on the nature of evil in literature by focusing on a different sort of activity offered by a different medium. Rather than thinking about the intersubjective interplay between author and reader/viewer, Forsyth explores the interplay between actor and character: between recognising the evil in oneself when confronted with an evil character and inhabiting that character oneself. The creator of a work of art gives us a safe way to look into the mind of the evil subject, a contained space wherein we may explore the points of convergence between the villain and ourselves. Forsyth suggests that this is the task of 'higher' culture: to maintain, as we have seen, a mediating space for reflection. But he goes on to inquire into the nature of so-called popular culture, such as fantasy literature, where one is invited not merely to observe, but to enter into the mind of the villain, and where perspective can so easily be lost. Forsyth compares the use of language about evil in both forms of literature, and worries aloud, as it were, about how the way we speak about evil informs what becomes first categorisable, and then acceptable.

A similar concern about language is evident as we turn to a series of essays on film. First, Ann Marie Cook looks at the use of specifically Christian rhetoric in the Australian film "Bad Boy Bubby", which subverts neo-conservative tropes to reveal their underlying hypocrisy. In a contrast of choices in their own ways as stark and moralizing as those limned by Milton or Hawthorne, this contemporary film presents morally transgressive characters as the source of redemption for a mentally disabled man who has been abused, exploited, and marginalized by his "loving", "Christian" family. Language to, by, and about these characters twists our notions of good and evil and any distance that may lie between them.

An even more sinister motive is at play in Marty Norden's exploration of the disabled body in films. Drawing on Althusser, Hartnett and Freud, Norden delves into the connection so often made in literature between the disabled body and evil, and explores how this trope has been seamlessly incorporated into filmic media on both the small and the large screen. Norden explores the effects of this stereotype on the self-image of disabled children.

In the next paper in this section, Victoria Doyle illustrates Hitler's control of the film industry during the Third Reich as an example of an even deeper political evil. By constructing an identity through film which could then only be realized through the implementation of Nazi strategies, Hitler was able not merely to influence the minds of the German people in a certain direction, but also to set up a nearly unimpeachable and highly desired ideal

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of evil. Doyle argues that this activity went beyond mere propaganda towards a kind of national brainwashing.

Identity construction of a rather different kind is the subject matter of the next paper, in which Marlin Bates exposes certain disturbing trends in online gaming. Bates poses the question: what rhetorical purpose is served by creating and playing characters with an evil identity? In a number of massively multiplayer online role-playing games, each player pursues evil and wickedness for a multitude of reasons. Identity development is intricately tied up with one's success in the game. Bates asks us to consider some of the deeper philosophical questions of such an activity.

The first half of this collection concludes with Silvia Lanzetta's dissection of another kind of game: Wittgenstein's analysis of language. Lanzetta's paper draws together the disparate threads of the various reflections on language, evil, and character development that have preceded it. She looks at Wittgenstein's contentions about the connections between language, freedom, and will. As language-games become more complex, she argues, evil becomes more and more deftly concealed, until finally the word becomes a dead sign, incapable of escaping evil. At the very end, she argues, one may be left only to choose between stoicism and nihilism.

The third quarter of the volume is concerned with the edges of evil: identifying frameworks and boundaries, exploring how we can categorise, identify, remember, and even predict what can be called evil. The common feature of this section is that each essay examines very real and documentable incidents of human wickedness.

The section begins with a most thoughtful meditation on the infamous case of a German cannibal and his willing victim, from the mid-1990s. Roger Davis explores and to some extent explodes the notion of the slain man's victimhood, interrogating the meaning of autophagy as autobiography, as a unique means of attaining subjectivity. Like many of the essays in the first half, Davis delves into the nature of evil subjectivity. The difference here is that we are dealing with an actual, rather than a fictive history of crime, judgment, and punishment.

Staying with this theme, Kristy Buckley next presents the problematic paradigm of our modern justice system - a system that seeks not to repair evil done between individuals or to rehabilitate individual evildoers, but rather simply to be an impersonal vehicle of punishment by the state. As this system as evolved, person and act have been driven further and further apart. Evil has thus been depersonalized, which in turn allows for ever more depersonalising crime. This, Buckley argues, has radically changed the mindset of the individual in modern society. Externalizing justice leads to depersonalisation, and ultimately to the annihilation of the individual.

In the next chapter, Robert Bichler, Christian Fuchs, and Celina extend this theme to the problems of cyberethics. They suggest a

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reconfiguration of moral action in terms of cooperation, and show how the medium of modern technology actually provides a model for a sustainable design aimed at the free exchange of information. Rather than focusing on individual acts and ethics, they argue, information systems lend themselves to the construction of dialectical, interconnected, cooperative systems that may well provide a foundation for a new system of morality in other spheres.

This positive approach is also found in the psychological study that forms the basis for the next chapter, in which two Canadian researchers discuss a project on predicting human wickedness by means of analysing I-D orientation. According to the team, I-D orientation is "a personality variable derived from cultural differences between societies with immediate- and delayed-return systems, can predict certain types of evil behaviours." Evolution has resulted in a shift from immediate gratification to a delayed-return orientation. But with this shift has come a profound and radical change in our subjectivity, which the researchers have isolated into three traits that may seem evil: an unwillingness to become involved in emergency situations; a willingness to obey authority to remain uninvolved; and a tendency to denigrate out-group members. Because these traits appear to be culturally determined, however, the researchers question whether they are, in fact, a reflection of fundamental human nature. So while we may act in evil ways, Bichler et al suggest that we are not fundamentally evil.

A similar concern underlies the next selection, in which Sarah Goode examines the social construction of the identity of paedophiles. Goode asks us to consider paedophilia as an illness with clearly defined symptom manifestation, which has been constructed by society - by perpetrators and victims alike – into a social movement or lifestyle. Goode examines the effects of this shift on the treatment and subjectivity of all parties - and on society itself.

In varying ways, this section explores ways in which evil is incarnated - in systems, in groups, in individuals. The section concludes with an interview with what the researcher, Alejandro Cervantes-Carson, calls the embodiment of political evil: the former president of Mexico, Luis Echeverriá. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Echeverriá presided over the brutal repression of the Mexican people as they strove for self-determination and an understanding of democracy. Three decades later, Cervantes-Carson provides a haunting ethnographic study of his meeting with a man who had engineered and overseen the systematic torture, murder, and disappearance of hundreds of grassroots activists. The political, in this case, became very personal indeed: two individuals in one room, with the spectre of evil between them. Cervantes-Carson raises the spectre of complicity: how far the ethnographer becomes part of the system he is documenting. This question provides a useful bridge into the final section of the book.

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The final section begins with three reflections on language as the primary shaper of evil in our day: the rhetoric of fear, coded abstraction, and posturing that serves to externalise and normalise evil. William Myers and Joshua Mills-Knutsen provide parallel accounts of the use of rhetoric in modern politics and warmongering, and detail the devastating effects of losing track of truth in order to further morally questionable agendas. Myers goes so far as to term this development (or devolvement) of language as a moral catastrophe, that has gone a long way towards destroying Western culture and self-understanding. Such phrases as "collateral damage" constitute "an erosion of our most fundamental humanistic value frameworks, without which civil society cannot exist, an erosion that reveals a prepolitical underlay of nihilism." Mills-Knutsen extends Myers' argument through an analysis of the rhetoric employed by the Bush administration to justify the "War on Terror". In analyzing who benefits and how they benefit from the use of such rhetoric, Mills-Knutsen explains both how any ascription of evil serves as a justification for annihilation, and so fosters support for extreme measures in a limitless pursuit of the eradication of evil.

This discussion continues in Namita Chakrabarty and John Preston's examination of several recent instances in British media of links of repression of political theatre in educational settings. Preston and Chakrabarty argue that transgressive performance, as frightening as it is to neo-conservative imperialism, is a potentially transformative and necessary corrective to that social trend. Drama educators, they maintain, must not allow themselves to be silenced: the theatre of rebellion must remain alive to counter the theatre of fear.

The final four essays in this volume focus on the events of September 11, 2001, as the event which truly ushered in the new millennium and initiated a new understanding of our shared subjectivity in relation to evil, and what steps it may be necessary to envision towards constructing an ethics in response.

In the first essay, Scott Powers helps us towards a new perspective through the lens of Frédéric Biegbeder's novel *Windows on the World*. In that work, the narrator frames his vivid and searing description of the agony of the victims of the event with a broader socio-political critique that undoes a series of assumed binaries between East and West, Islam and Christianity, the sacred and the secular, and ultimately the concepts of good and evil themselves. Extending the emphasis of the preceding chapters, Powers focuses our attention not on wicked human agents, but on the leading role of discourse on good and evil in the perpetration of human suffering. His anaylsis shows how in this postmodern story, the moral concept of evil does not entirely surrender to historical and rhetorical critique. Rather, evil retains its currency - even as the notion of ethics is necessarily redefined.

Next, Agnes Curry argues that the modern notion of subjectivity is inextricably interwoven with the rise of terrorism. The linkage of terror with virtue and equality first noted by Robespierre during the French Revolution remains intriguing, she contends, for it suggests that modern terrorism and the rise of the modern, individual democratic subject are chiasmatic phenomena. She suggests that the historicity of terrorism is inseparable from the rise of modern subjectivity and its now globalizing regimes. In this light, the chapter considers implications of the attack now mythologized as '9/11' for understanding both the nature of evil and new possibilities for subjectivity. Did this event really mark a radical turn in history? Was it, as Alain Badiou has argued, a strike at otherness, an attempt to erase distinctions between innocence and guilt, civilian and combatant?

Continuing with the thought of Badiou, Nancy Billias attempts to frame a possible response to moving beyond the evils that may be inherent in the modern notion of the subject. Reflecting on the potential of each person to perform acts of evil, even terrorism, given the right set of issues and variables, she asks us to consider (with Badiou and Baudrillard) that terrorism is an auto-immune disease, a reaction against the depersonalizing effects of globalization, totalitarianism, and nihilism. The chapter concludes, perhaps paradoxically, with a call to a radical form of hope, proposing a new model for understanding subjectivity which contains elements of the philosophies of Badiou and Levinas.

In the final chapter, Shlomit Harrosh extends the thoughts of both Curry and Billias with an analysis of two opposing outlooks dominating current debates on national security. Is national security a matter of protecting the lives of a nation's citizens, as the pragmatic view would have it, or a matter of preserving the moral and political values of a nation-state, as idealists might argue? Harrosh proposes an alternating two-tiered approach to the question of balancing human rights with personal and national security. She outlines the historical and conceptual links between terrorism and human rights, and uses her model to examine specific counter-terrorist proposals involving human rights violation. Though respect for human rights can cost lives, this risk must be taken if an open and democratic society is to maintain its moral integrity.

With her cogent and provocative proposal, Harrosh brings this series of reflections on evil to an open-ended close. Is there hope for humanity, given human wickedness? A more vital question is hard to imagine. The editors urge you, the reader, to explore it through the essays presented here.

Part 1

Investigations of the Nature of Evil in 'Imaginary' Contexts

Aesthetics of Evil: Adorno vs. the Ethical Turn

Anders Johansson

Abstract

The outset for the paper is the widespread notion that literature is better suited than philosophy for understanding and relating experiences of evil. A problem with this supposedly post-metaphysical notion, exemplified by an essay written by María Pía Lara, is that it implies a metaphysical conception of an inherent goodness in literature. To find a more critical approach, the paper turns to Theodor W. Adorno and his comments on poetry after Auschwitz. From his perspective evil is just as present in the interior of every artwork, as in society in general - literature is no less evil than anything else. Due to its material character, however, every artwork does harbour a possibility of understanding and reconciliation that philosophical thinking lacks. Finally, two examples are used to illustrate Adorno's points: Michael Haneke's film *Funny Games*, and the Swedish novel *Äldreomsorgen i övre Kågedalen* by Nikanor Teratologen. Both could be seen as two extremely cruel narrations of evil, totally lacking all reconciliation. The point is that a reconciliation can be found in the interior of the works, however. In that way, the two works demonstrate a sensibility of the immanent violence of their own form.

Key Words: Adorno, Aesthetics, Auschwitz, Ethical Turn, evil, Lara, non-identity, postmetaphysical, reconciliation, violence

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Introduction

When philosophers discuss evil they often turn to literature. Without doubt this tendency has become more evident after the so called fall of the Grand Narratives. In that view the philosophical interest in literature seems in part to be an expression of certain post-modern humbleness: one turns to literature since it is considered to contain a form of knowledge that analytical philosophical thinking cannot reach.[1] More specifically, it is often said that literature in general - and storytelling in particular - is more suited than both philosophy and theology for doing justice to the singularity of the personal experience, the experience of the concentration camps of World War Two for example, since it can approach evil "without metaphysical banisters," to borrow a phrase from María-Pía Lara.[2]

Obviously there is something very true in this, but there are also, I believe, reasons for a certain scepticism. Firstly it is often disregarded that

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every narrative also contains generalizing traits: all narrating forces the singular narrated fate into a language, a literary tradition and a genre, all consisting of very tangible limitations and demands. The singular is thus necessarily subordinated to the general, even in the most innocent or original of literary narratives. Secondly, the question is whether a narrative free from metaphysical banisters might not serve evil as well as good. What would prevent the Nazi executioners to turn narratives to *their* advantage against their victims? The point is that our estimation of literature still implies a silent presupposition that literary narratives in the end always serve *good*. This is probably one of the most fundamental assumptions of the entire literary institution: that what is worthy of *aesthetical* acclaim is by necessity *ethically* praiseworthy as well. The problem here isn't this valuation as such, but the fact that it is almost always silently taken for granted. In that way the attempts to treat evil in a "post-metaphysical" manner, generally imply another, more persistent metaphysics.[3]

Returning to Lara, I still believe she is right when she says, referring to Walter Benjamin, that storytelling (often) has the power to create a moral (and, one could add, political) space, which is crucial when it comes to remembering and understanding for example the Holocaust.[4] I also agree with her that literary narratives - or rather art in general - often seem to be better equipped than philosophical theories to do justice to the singular experience. The point is, however, that we have to be able to answer why and how that can be, *in every particular case*, if we want to avoid leaning on prefabricated, general conceptions like "the power of storytelling," the power of art, the power of literature etc.[5] If we skip this "how", we will inevitably fall back onto the same old idealist notions of literature as automatically more truthful and moral than journalism, philosophy, science, etc. However post-metaphysical our ambitions, our way of thinking will still rest on a metaphysical foundation,[6] which, ironically, will impede us from approaching the evil circumstances we set out to understand.

On this point I think it might be fruitful to turn to Theodor W. Adorno, and his infamous remarks on the barbarity of writing poetry after Auschwitz. Adorno's point, made in an essay from 1955, is that society has become so totalized or reified that it has become virtually impossible for "the mind" (*Geist*) - including both poetry, and, importantly, Adorno's own critique - to emancipate itself from reification.[7] There is no position outside of reification - no safety zone, no innocence, immunity or radicalism. Evilness thus comprises also the philosophical and literary efforts, which all too often take their distance from evil for granted.

Seven years later, in the essay "Commitment," he defends his - by now heavily criticized - statement, and goes on to raise the question whether art, given the recent regression of society, may exist at all anymore. But he

also adds that the paradoxical task of contemporary art is to refuse to give in to this situation. For although art has lost its right to exist, there still is a great *need* of art. On the one hand the excessive factual suffering around us (concentrated in the name "Auschwitz") makes all art appear as either cynical or naive; on the other hand the same suffering "demands the continued existence of the very art it forbids; hardly anywhere else does suffering still find its own voice, a consolation that does not immediately betray it."[8]

Another four years later, towards the end of *Negative Dialectics* (1966), he underlines this aspect and admits, incidentally, that his earlier statements on poetry after Auschwitz might have been false, since "Perennial suffering has as much right to expression as a tortured has to scream."[9] He immediately adds, however, that one rightly might ask whether it is at all possible to *live* after Auschwitz.[10] The earlier exaggeration is withdrawn - only to be replaced with a new, yet stronger hyperbole. What looked like an aesthetic problem is made into an existential one.

To a certain point Adorno's view obviously coincides with the recent efforts, for example by Lara, to ascribe a unique possibility to understand evil to literature.[11] But while Lara treats narrations as a kind of historically indifferent, ready-made solution - the form (narration) is silently presupposed to exist as an ever-present possibility before and independently of the formed (the experience of evil) - Adorno both affirms and denies this possibility. For him, the fundamental problem is that every single story, however innocent its purposes, reproduces the evil it is supposed to mediate.[12] Already through its forming of a material, every work of art takes part in the purposive violence that characterizes modernity, a violence which the artwork, as an autonomous formation, at the same time distances itself from.[13] The crux is thus not so much, or not only, the moral content of the experience recounted, but the very *singularity* of the experience. The crucial question is how to avoid subordinating the particularity of the singular experience to a general form, how to create a form that is tolerant towards its amorphous counterpart. Or, with Adorno's Hegelian terminology, how to create an identity between *identity and non-identity*.[14]

This is roughly the problem that Lara points out in the beginning of her essay, and it is also the fundamental reason for Adorno's interest in art. For the point is that the kind of thinking every artwork constitutes or contains a possibility to establish an identity that can harbour the non-identical in its non-identity. In other words, Adorno would agree with Lara that the artwork *can* do justice to the singular experience (of evil, for example) in a way that conceptual thinking cannot. The reason for this, however, is not that artworks are less rational or general than philosophy, or that they are less evil, guilty or reified than anything else in this world, but that the material and mimetic rationality of the artwork is more adaptable, more vulnerable, and thus in a

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way less violent than the rationality of conceptual thinking, whose identity is always established by force.[15]

But although art can be seen as a more tolerant discourse than philosophy, it cannot but fail in its efforts. Every artwork stretches against a *true identity*, a reconciliation which isn't a deceit, but due to the inevitable heteronomy of the work of art, this identity is never really reached. In this failure to reconcile the identical with the non-identical, we can, however, experience the *possibility* of a true reconciliation, a consolation that isn't a betrayal, a utopian possibility which reality under the present conditions denies.[16]

So far it might look as though Adorno, in a traditionally idealist manner, sees an opportunity in the artwork to rise *above* evil, to present a possible reconciliation *beyond* the limitations and discriminations of modern society. There is however another possibility for understanding his idea of an aesthetic reconciliation. As indicated above, that possibility is connected to the materiality of the artwork. The point is that the artwork, in contrast to conceptual thinking, *needs* the material, the approximate, particular, amorphous which at the same time nonetheless is an obstacle to its necessary unity.[17] Accordingly, the unity of the artwork is nothing but the immanent tension between identity and non-identity. But what is more important is that this unavoidable tension or dialectic also has to be understood as a moment of micrological reconciliation, an image of a truth free from violence.[18]

Perhaps all these abstract thoughts could be visualized finally through two examples. The Austrian director Michael Haneke's film *Funny Games* is an extremely cold narration about sadistic violence, a naked study in extreme evil, reminiscent of Stanley Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange*. It tells the frightening story of how two young intruders, seemingly just for the fun of it, terrorize and finally kill a family, locked up in their stylish weekend cottage. In its total lack of all compassion and reconciliation it is quite a scary movie. It is hard to mention another film where a happy ending is so distant. Seen in this way, *Funny Games* could perhaps illustrate Lara's points about "the power of storytelling" and the experience of evil. The problem is that there still is something routinely comforting (Adorno would call it a *false* reconciliation) in the storytelling itself: whatever the intention, the evilness is made well-known, handy and almost enjoyable, by being forced into the regular film format. Haven't we, after all, seen it all before? And isn't that recognition a condition for our appreciation of every story?

But there is yet another aspect of Haneke's film, an aspect that isn't really found in the story told, but rather in the breakdown of the narration. On one occasion in the movie, one of the tormented victims manages to overpower and kill one of the two tormentors. The other tormentor immediately turns furious (so far in the film, he has only showed a creepy

combination of extreme politeness and relentless evilness), grasps a remote control, turns it toward the viewer, and literally *rewinds the film* - the film in which he himself is a character, the film I am discussing here - a few seconds, whereupon everything continues as before, but this time the overpowering fails, and the victims are by and by killed in a slow sadistic play - a funny game.

In this erasing of the attempted overpowering something important happens: the winding back of the film visualizes the immanent violence of the form itself. Suddenly we are made aware of the constraints the narration of every movie implies: that everything in principle is decided from the outset; that every redundant little detail which could possibly break the necessary unity of the story has to be cut off; that everything non-identical has to be sacrificed on the altar of identity. Paradoxically, the film thus presents - negatively - a kind of image of the multiplicity of immanent non-realized possibilities, non-identical protuberances, anomalies and deviations which the unity of the work could not harbour. The point is that they nevertheless become visible, indirectly, in this rupture. This *second image* - as we could call it - which emerges exactly in the breakdown of the *first image* (the story), is what Adorno calls the *Erscheinung* (appearance, semblance) of the artwork.[19] This is the emphatic moment of the film, its simultaneous destruction and realization: the film virtually explodes, everything stops, the process becomes image, and we experience a reconciled identity between the finished identity and all the non-identical aspects of the work. There is nothing transcendent in this *Erscheinung*, nothing metaphysical in a traditional sense, only a sudden and immanent reconciliation between the necessity for the movie to hold together as a unity, and the need to do justice to the particular in its particularity. For a vanishing moment there is a truly non-violent identity.

Another interesting case is the scandalous Swedish novel *Äldreomsorgen i övre Kågedalen* (*The Old-age Care in the Upper Valley of Kåge*) by Nikanor Teratologen.[20] This first novel, heaving with misogynist violence, sadism, paedophilia, Nazism, torture, cannibalism and contempt for weakness certainly is an attempt of "narrating evil." If that means that it can help us "weaving a moral understanding of the past," as Lara puts it, is hard to see however. If it can, it is hardly the moral understanding most of us would *want* anyway: what's characteristic about Teratologen's novel is the lack of any attitude against evil on the level of narrating, or, using another concept, in the implied author of the book. Or even worse: however odd it may sound, this is a hilarious novel; it presents an unsettling mix of atrocities and laughs, without any intention of keeping those sides separate. All in all, the novel can be seen as an attempt to leave the established notion of good literature as by definition *ethically good* behind, a decided attempt to write *evil literature*.

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But why bother? Even if it really *is* possible to write a piece of evil literature, is it necessarily worthy of our attention? Isn't all criticism with any decency and justification - not only the ethical criticism proposed by Nussbaum - obliged to condemn this kind of racism, sexism and sadism?[21] Isn't Lara right in presupposing that much goodness? A short fragment in Adorno's *Minima Moralia* might point to another answer: "The comfort that flows from great works of art lies less in what they express than in the fact that they have managed to struggle out of existence. *Hope is soonest found among the comfortless*."[22] While Lara implicitly urges literature to take a stand against evil, Adorno questions the very possibility of literature to choose its own ethical content. If there is such a moral stand, it is to be found in the hopeless cases rather than in the hopeful ones.

Äldreomsorgen i övre Kågedalen certainly is a work without hope: there is nothing but meanness, selfishness and sadism in the upper valley of Kåge (which really exists), and nothing really gets better during the novel. To live is to suffer, in particular for the weaker of the two protagonists, the young boy "pyret" ("mite"), who is continuously reminded of his awkward worthlessness, when he is not violated or tortured by "morfar" ("grandpa") and his odd fellows. But exactly *here*, in the most miserable of all the characters, there persists something else. With pyret's own, badly formulated words:

> ja streta… spjärna… dom va int beredda på motstånd…
> dom hårdna… ja skydda de man aldri få ge upp… hur
> förnedrad man än ä… de där som fanns före allt börja…
> den du va innan dom börja förgå sä… själva pyrigheten…
> de där man kapsla in… de där som gör att man måst härdas
> å bli morfar… De ä nåt litet å varmt… men när de gäll ä de
> de starkaste som finns.[23]

> (I struggled… resisted… they wasn't prepared for that…
> they hardened… I protected that which you never should
> give up… however humiliated you are… that which was
> there before it all began… the one you was before they
> started to abuse… the tinyness itself… that thing you
> enclose… that which forces you to harden and become
> grandpa… It's something small and warm… but when it
> really comes to the point it's the strongest there is).[24]

What's noteworthy in this passage is how the power relation is changed. In his very weakness pyret maintains something that - if he is right - in the end is stronger than the humiliating, hardened powers around him. This strength

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resides, in short, in the possibility not to harden but to change, to become something else than you're supposed to become, a possibility that has disappeared in the evilness of grandpa.

But the point is that pyret's words can be read as a meta-poetical statement about the strength of the non-identities of the novel as well, of the tiny intensities which is forced into the hardened form of the narration - "that which was there before it all began…" Enclosed deep inside the conventions of good literature there remains something else, something which will always remain stronger than every ethical demand. If there ever was a goodness of literature, it is in this moment one should look for it, rather than in the presupposed goodness of the narrative form.

Notes

[1] The most influential example of this approach is probably M Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge*, Oxford University Press, New York & Oxford, 1990. Two other illustrative examples are: C McGinn, *Ethics, Evil, and Fiction*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1997; P Levine, *Living without Philosophy*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1998.

[2] M P Lara, 'Narrating Evil: A Postmetaphysical Theory of Reflective Judgment,' in *Rethinking Evil: Contemporary Perspectives*, M P Lara (ed), University of California Press, Berkeley, 2001, p. 240.

[3] This is indeed a point that could be made against the ethical turn in its entirety: it presupposes the same preconceived image of a certain goodness of literature, an image that is very seldom acknowledged. When Martha Nussbaum pretends to leave all ideological axioms behind, except for the Aristotelian question "How should one live?", she forgets that her view of literature and reading (her way of talking of literature in terms of friendship and love for example) isn't natural, but part of an idealist tradition whose aesthetical and ethical values she will thus unknowingly reproduce. (Nussbaum, pp. 23-25, 29, 48, 173)

[4] Lara, op. cit., p. 244.

[5] Or in Lara's own words: "it is important to think more precisely about exactly what makes them [literary narratives] significant in conceptualizing and understanding evil." (Ibid., p. 242)

[6] With "metaphysical" I aim at something *unconditioned*; that which - explicitly or implicitly - is supposed to have no premises outside itself.

[7] T W Adorno, *Prisms*, trans. S & S Weber, Neville Spearman, London, 1967, p. 34.

[8] T W Adorno, "Commitment," *Notes to Literature* vol. II, trans. S Weber Nicholsen Columbia University Press, New York, 1992, p. 88.

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[9] T W Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E B Ashton, Continuum, New York, 1994, p. 362.

[10] There are indeed unexpected but important similarities between Adorno and Nussbaum - in ascribing to art a truth content, in the resistance to relativism as well as positivism, in the idea of a relatedness between philosophy and literature - but right here the profound difference between them appears in concentrated form: while Nussbaum approaches literature with the question, "How should one live?" (Nussbaum, op. cit., p. 289), Adorno's question would rather be, "Is there still life?"

[11] One might object that Lara talks about *narratives*, not poetry. Since Adorno's statement is valid for art in general, not only poetry, that objection isn't that important in this context however.

[12] See T W Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, trans. R Hullot-Kentor, Athlone Press, London, 1997, p. 139. (Translation modified.)

[13] See ibid., p. 50.

[14] In the Preface to his *Logic*, Hegel stipulates "the identity between identity and non-identity" as the basis for all thought. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik. Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 11, eds. Friedrich Hogemann & Walter Jaeschke, Felix Meiner Verlag, Hamburg, 1978, p. 37. Adorno is both highly influenced by, and critical of Hegel's assumption. See Adorno 1994, pp. 6-15.

[15] Behind this view one might sense the Kantian vision of the aesthetic experience as an autonomous judgment. Even though Adorno, in some regards, is highly critical towards Kant (mainly to his idealist disregard of the object), he could be said to defend this notion and the unique possibilities of the aesthetic experience. For Adorno the aesthetic experience is the only place - or rather, the only *moment* - in the totally reified society where the ethical (and political) space Lara points to subsists. (Cf. Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft. Gesammelte Werke* vol. 5, eds. Der preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Georg Riemer Verlag, Berlin, 1908, chapter III, IV.)

[16] Adorno 1997, p. 132.

[17] See ibid., p. 176.

[18] For an exhaustive interpretation of Adorno's aesthetic theory along these lines, see: C Menke-Eggers, *Die Souveränität der Kunst: Ästhetische Erfahrung nach Adorno und Derrida*, Athenäum, Frankfurt am Main, 1988, pp. 156-169.

[19] Adorno 1997, pp. 84-85, 175-178.

[20] The novel aroused mixed emotions among the critics, but what was more remarkable was the refusal of the renowned editorial Norstedts to publish the

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sequel, notwithstanding the commercial success and critical acclaims of the first part.

[21] Nussbaum, op. cit., p. 233.

[22] T W Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life* trans. E F N Jephcott, Verso, London & New York, 1997, p. 223. (My emphasis, translation modified.)

[23] N Teratologen, *Äldreomsorgen i övre Kågedalen*, Vertigo, Stockholm & Malmö, 1998), p. 92.

[24] It should be noted that is very hard to translate *Äldreomsorgen i övre Kågedalen* since it is written in a very specific, almost lost dialect. A lot of connotations get lost in translation. On the other hand many passages are difficult to understand for Swedes in general as well. In addition to this, the language is often consciously bad.

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Allegories of Evil:
Kafka's *The Castle* and Auster's
The Music of Chance

Ilana Shiloh

Abstract

Evil has traditionally been portrayed in terms of the extraordinary. In religion, myth or folklore, symbolic embodiments of evil are situated outside the realm of the mundane, exercising their powers above or below the fictional topography - Satan overreaching to heaven, Hades ruling the underworld and goblins residing in grottos and mines. Kafka was perhaps the first writer to imaginatively anchor evil in the sphere of the perfectly ordinary. In *The Castle* (1926), the physical edifice, as well as its rulers, epitomise an unsettling combination of omnipotence and banality, projecting a world in which, to quote C.S. Lewis, "the greatest evil is done…by quiet men with white collars and cut fingernails and smooth-shaven cheeks who do not need to raise their voice."[1]

This vision of the "banality of evil," to borrow Hanna Arendt's memorable phrase, equally underpins Paul Auster's *The Music of Chance* (1990). In spite of the difference in the narrative line - K., Kafka's main character, is excluded from the object of his desire, whereas Nashe and Pozzi, Auster's protagonists, are imprisoned in the mansion of the two ruthless millionaires - both Kafka and Auster allegorise evil through the trope of the Castle. The implications of this trope, as well as the sociological and metaphysical scope of their imaginative exploration of evil are the subject matter of the present paper.

Key words: Symbolic representation, banality, dehumanisation, order and disorder.

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Evil has traditionally been portrayed in terms of the extraordinary, and associated with radical otherness, grandeur and the malicious disruption of order. First and foremost, evil is traditionally attributed to the other. The ultimate other is one who does not even share our human nature, who lives in the realm of the supernatural. Supernatural forces can be embodied in characters radically different from human beings, such as demons or aliens, in creatures inhabiting the twilight zone between life and death, such as zombies, or in figures bridging the gap between the human and the non-human, such as vampires and androids. These are indeed the representatives

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of evil in horror movies or in science fiction films. Evil thus always entails dehumanisation. This process is reciprocal: the evildoer regards his target as less than human, which allows him to inflict harm without pangs of conscience, while the victim sees the one who has harmed him as monstrous, unworthy of belonging to the human race.

Second, evil is associated with grandeur. Evil characters are traditionally depicted as larger than life; they are endowed with an extraordinary power to harm and destroy. The aggrandisement of evil is common to popular culture, folklore, and to most Western religions and mythologies. The archetype of this mode of representation is the figure of Satan, who rebelled against God in an effort to usurp His power, and whose cardinal sin is the sin of pride, the aspiration to be a law unto himself.

Third, evil is traditionally linked with chaos. Activities or events interpreted as manifestations of evil have usually been regarded as eruptions of disorder and havoc in the peaceful routine of normal life. Thus natural disasters, such as earthquakes, were seen in the past as the doings of malevolent spirits, because they coincided with the customary perception of evil as a tremendous force, destroying the harmony of nature and inflicting indescribable harm. From a different perspective, in classical detective fiction the criminal is depicted as the symbolic representative of violence and disorder, aiming to unravel the fabric of society; the detective is the figure who quells the eruption of violence and brings about the restoration of order.

Like all representation, the representation of evil in art both reflects and creates perception. This perception does not necessarily conform to reality. The anchoring of evil in the realm of the extraordinary may be accounted for by our need to cast it in opposition to ourselves. If evil is inherently different from the normal, it is inherently different from me, and this assumption precludes the possibility of understanding, identification or potential affinity. Yet, as Hannah Arendt argues in her report on one of the greatest criminals of the 20th century, "the trouble with Eichmann was precisely that so many were like him, and that the many were neither perverted nor sadistic, that they were, and still are, terribly and terrifyingly normal."[2]

Kafka was perhaps the first to etch evil in our consciousness as terrifyingly normal. His last novel, *The Castle* (1926) tells the story of K., who arrives at a small village following his appointment there as a land surveyor, and who attempts, in vain, to elicit from the lords of the castle a recognition of his status. Like all of Kafka's oeuvre, *The Castle* has an allegorical dimension that has acquired multiple critical interpretations. One of the most widely accepted readings, cited on the cover of the novel's English edition, was eloquently formulated by Bertold Brecht. Brecht sees *The Castle* as a nightmarish vision of "the future concentration camps, the

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future instability of the law [and] the future absolutism of the state *Apparat*."
As Kafka's life and writing pre-dated the atrocities of Nazi Germany and the
bloody persecutions in communist U.S.S.R., Brecht interprets Kafka's novel
as an accurate and terrifying prophesy of the evil inherent in a totalitarian
state.

I would like to suggest that the evil metaphorically conveyed in *The
Castle* is more pervasive. It is a form of evil ontologically inherent in the
human condition, and manifested in a dull and endless thwarting of human
desire. The narrativization of this desire is K.'s journey to the Castle. The
novel's narrative consists of K.'s incessant attempts to reach the Castle or to
meet its deputy, Klamm, to obtain his authorisation for acting in the village
as a land surveyor. But K. never reaches his destination, nor is he granted the
appointment he craves. All he manages to accomplish is a peephole view of
dozing Klamm, clumsy beginnings of an affair with Klamm's ex-lover,
Frieda, and interviews with the deputies of Klamm's deputies. If the novel's
narrative paradigm is that of a journey, it is a journey doomed to failure,
because each forward step is countered by a step back, and the action line
unfolds in a circular, rather than linear, manner.

The obstacle to K.'s progress is apparently the Castle. The image of
the castle obviously draws on the physical topography of Prague, Kafka's
hometown. A castle is also a set element of fairy tale and folklore: it conveys
power, inaccessibility, and exclusion. Exclusion and inaccessibility are
indeed the key motifs of Kafka's novel. Yet the castle's chief symbolic
attribute - power - is diluted by other, more subversive characteristics -
shabbiness, infantilism and madness. When K. spots the castle from a
distance he is initially impressed, but a closer look proves deeply
disappointing: "it was after all only a wretched-looking town, a huddle of
village houses, whose … plaster had long since flaked off and the stone
seemed to be crumbling away." The windows of the church tower glitter in
the sun, but theirs is a "somewhat maniacal glitter," and the outline of the
attic looks "irregular, broken, fumbling, as if designed by the trembling or
careless hands of a child." On the whole "it was as if a melancholy-mad
tenant who ought to have been locked in the topmost chamber of his house
had burst through the roof and lifted himself up to the gaze of the world."[3]

The combination of mastery, insanity and shabbiness characterises
not only the edifice but also its inhabitants. The castle's invisible tenants
exercise absolute power over the villagers, who attempt to obey their
masters' implicit demands. Like believers striving to fathom and follow
God's commands (the novel was indeed presented by Max Brod as a parable
of divine grace), the village dwellers conduct their lives according to what
they see as the implicit wishes of the lords of the Castle. And who are these
lords? Their deputy, Klamm, was once compared to an eagle; and when K.
considers Klamm's "remoteness," his "wheelings which could never be

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disturbed by anything that K. did down below," and which Klamm "followed at the behest of incomprehensible laws," he concludes that "all these things Klamm and the eagle had in common."[4] But this sublime vision plummets when K. notices the shabby outfit and the beer-stained protocol of Klamm's deputy, Momus, and the protagonist cannot reconcile Klamm's exalted position with his clerk's pitiful state.

Yet the starkest contrast to the presumed magnificence of the castle is posited by the activities of its inhabitants, which are characterised by dehumanisation, arbitrariness and pointless circularity. When the upset K. tells Momus "you only think of yourselves," the clerk replies indifferently: "of whom, then, should we think? Who else is there here?"[5] The self-enclosed and self-serving apparatus of the castle furiously labours at doing nothing. The clerks, barricaded behind closed doors, incessantly push away files containing the villagers' petitions. When one makes a call from the village to the castle, all its telephones start ringing, or they would have done so if they hadn't been disconnected. And when a mistake occurs - and K. would find out that his appointment for Land Surveyor was such a mistake - the authority in charge of rectifying errors does not admit the possibility of an error.

Where does evil reside here? First and foremost, in the Castle's administrative apparatus, which subverts the hierarchy of the human and the non-human. When the Superintendent explains to K. the particulars of the Castle's system, he boasts that the system has liberated itself from the need of human intervention. It has become autonomous and self-sufficient. And he elaborates:

> When an affair has been weighed for a very long time … it
> may happen … that suddenly in a flash the decision comes in
> some unforeseen place … It's as if the administrative
> apparatus were unable to bear the tension … and had hit upon
> the decision by itself, without the assistance of the officials.[6]

The image conveys the quintessence of bureaucracy, a double take consisting of the personification of a set of rules and regulations and a simultaneous de-humanisation of the people for whom they were created.

This dehumanisation overflows from the world of the Castle to all the realms of the fictional universe. One of its manifestations is the inversion of the hierarchy between the human and the non-human; a related aspect is the systematic frustration of that which makes us uniquely human. And what makes us uniquely human is the desire to belong, the craving for inclusion. Whereas the centrality of desire is suggested by the novel's narrative line, the object of desire is implied by K.'s chosen profession. K. requests recognition as a Land Surveyor, and a Land Surveyor is a person who traces

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boundaries. Boundaries determine inclusion and exclusion, and while craving the first, all K. gets is the latter, as he is rejected, time and again, by the villagers and the castle officials.

K.'s vocation points to the novel's theme in still another way. A Land Surveyor's work consists of measuring the land, and the act of measuring pre-supposes the existence of stable, objective and absolute units. But in the novel's fictional world nothing is stable, objective or absolute. The administrative apparatus is capricious and arbitrary; the characters interpret and re-interpret each event in endless and contradictory ways. Identity itself becomes fluid: K. does not recognise his assistants from one meeting to the next, and the Castle's deputies also look different in every encounter. This indeterminacy extends to the most fundamental dimensions of the fictional world, and K. loses the senses of place and time. The blurring of boundaries and values is refracted from the fictional to the textual level, and sentences are often constructed in oppositional pairs, so that a sentence often makes two contradictory claims.

The fluidity of the fictional world is also manifest in the blurring of distinctions between good and evil. The lords of the Castle are brutal, obtuse and inhuman; but K. is not better. He simply lacks their power. It is not accidental that the protagonist of *The Castle* is designated by the same letter as the antagonist. Like the detective and the criminal, Dupin and Minister D., in Poe's "The Purloined Letter," so do K. and Klamm reflect each other; they are mirror images. Thus all human contacts that K. initiates are instrumental, and he starts a relationship with Frieda only because he sees her as a means of approaching Klamm.

The concept of evil implicitly conveyed in *The Castle* can be clarified through a comparison with a work that Kafka's novel apparently adumbrates, Camus's *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1942). In his philosophical essay Camus suggests that the fundamental property of the human mind is the quest for meaning. This quest is thwarted by external reality, and the gap between the human desire for meaning and the world's meaninglessness is the absurd. Camus describes the human condition in terms of thwarted desire. This view equally underpins the fictional world of Kafka, but here the object of desire is slightly different. K. does not strive to understand; he craves to belong. His quest is emotional rather than intellectual, and it can never be fulfilled. The basic evil is thus metaphysical and is refracted on all levels of human existence. It does not derive from intentionality or malice, just from indifference.

Paul Auster's *The Music of Chance* (1990) conspicuously corresponds with Kafka's *The Castle*. Its protagonist, Nashe, a fire fighter from Boston, leaves his home upon receiving a mind-blowing inheritance, buys a red Saab and takes to the road, where he wastes most of his money. One day he picks up Pozzi, a young and badly wounded hitchhiker. Pozzi is

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a professional poker player and he promises to make money for Nashe in a game against a pair of inane millionaires, Flower and Stone. The two arrive at the millionaires' mansion and the anticipated poker game takes place, but things do not go according to plan; Pozzi loses everything. Stone then suggests that Pozzi and Nashe pay their gambling losses by erecting a wall on the millionaires' premises. Nashe accepts the offer. The form of payment exacted by the millionaires turns into brutal and inhuman labour, at the end of which Pozzi is killed and Nashe apparently commits suicide.

The mansion and its tenants are depicted in a manner that echoes the description of the Castle and conveys the same combination of power, banality and evil. The premonition of evil is already suggested at the entry to the millionaires' abode, where an assemblage of broken statues exhibit a mounting succession of senseless cruelty: "a naked wood nymph missing her right arm, a headless hunter, a horse with no legs that floated above a stone plinth with an iron shaft connected to its belly"[7] The brutality foreshadowed in this gallery of mutilation materialises in the millionaires' treatment of their two captives, whom they senselessly overwork to death.

In Kafka's novel evil is diffuse and hard to circumscribe, but in Auster's work the source of evil is unequivocal. The source of the evil portrayed in *The Music of Chance* is money. Money is the engine of corruptive power, the primal cause of dehumanisation, brutality and abject servitude. Nashe's tragic error resides in his tacit acceptance of the capitalist ethos, in his belief that his punishment is ultimately justified. For Nashe, money means freedom; by the same logic, lack of money entails servitude. If K., Kafka's protagonist, reflects the antagonist Klamm, Nashe's set of values mirrors his tormentors' beliefs.

Although Kafka and Auster differ in their concept of evil, they both anchor evil in the realm of the mundane. Flower and Stone are neither grand nor heroic; they are terrifyingly normal. In the past, they used to be "real ordinary middle-class guys"[8]: Stone worked as an optometrist and Flower as an accountant. But since winning twenty million dollars, they have continued making money, and it is money that has given them the unbounded power of gods. "No matter what we do," boasts Flower, "everything seems to turn out right … at times I feel that we've become immortal."[9] This association with divinity is substantiated by Stone's hobby – a miniature model city which he has labelled "The City of the World," as befits a man who deems himself the Creator of Worlds. Flower's hobby, on the other hand, is the collection of historical memorabilia. His vast and depressing accumulation of trivia symbolically suggests the millionaires' obsession with the world of objects, their reduction of all reality to a world of objects.

Like the lords of the Castle, so do Flower and Stone invert the hierarchy between the human and the non-human. As an accountant, Flower

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has dealt with numbers all his life and he nurtures warm feelings towards them. "Numbers have souls," he expounds solemnly, "and you can't help but get involved with them in a personal way."[10] Ironically, once Pozzi and Nash become his debtors, he cannot help but get involved with them in an impersonal way.

The inversion of ethically laden terms, such as the human and the non-human, is accompanied by the millionaires' subversion of the hierarchy of signification. In semiotic terms, money is a signifier rather than a signified. It has no intrinsic value, acquiring its worth from the labour, services or commodities that it represents. But for Flower and Stone money becomes a signified, the thing itself. It is not a means but the end, and Pozzi and Nashe become instrumental in achieving that end.

The Castle and *The Music of Chance* present complex and unsettling allegories of evil. Evil has traditionally been attributed to the other and symbolically depicted as the invasion of chaos into the orderly routine of everyday life. Kafka and Auster have a different insight, and their vision is more accurate and terrifying. For history has taught us that evil originates amidst the most banal normalcy and thrives upon organisation and order.

Notes

[1] C S Lewis, Preface to *The Screwtape Letters* (1961), quoted in A Morton, *On* Evil, Routledge, New York, 2004, epigraph.

[2] H Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, Faber and Faber, London, 1963, p. 253.

[3] F Kafka, *The Castle*, Vintage, London, 1999, p. 281.

[4] Ibid., p. 341.

[5] Ibid., p. 411.

[6] Ibid., p. 314.

[7] PAuster, *The Music of Chance*, Penguin, New York, 1991, p. 68.

[8] Ibid., p. 32.

[9] Ibid., p. 75.

[10] Ibid., p. 73.

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The Face of Evil:
Dr. Emmenberger in Friedrich Dürrenmatt's *Der Verdacht*

Vera B. Profit

Abstract
     Prior to the 1983 publication of M. Scott Peck's *People of the Lie*, the diagnosis of human evil had never entered the psychiatric lexicon. In order to allow for this designation within the medical sphere and consequently begin the healing process of those afflicted, Dr. Peck's landmark treatise elucidates the characteristics of both individual and group evil.

     However in this inquiry, I would like to focus exclusively upon the phenomenon of individual evil and eight of its major facets. As a mass murderer, Dr. Fritz Emmenberger, one of the protagonists in Friedrich Dürrenmatt's post war novel, *Der Verdacht*, exhibits all eight characteristics. They are: victimization of body and/or spirit, failure to recognize others as autonomous, depersonalization of others, unmitigated narcissism, the unsubordinated use of power, scapegoating, lying and the total inability to handle legitimate criticism.

Key Words: Victimization, narcissism, depersonalization, unsubordinated use of power, lying, scapegoating[1]

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> Angels boring? Yes - until they fall! Then the angel takes on fascination [. . .]. When an angel assumes independent self-assertion - call it pride or refusal to knuckle under or what not - he then takes on power and the capacity to grasp our attention and even admiration.[2]

     Those are the clinical reflections of Rollo May in his *Love and Will*. More than half a century earlier, as if he also had been trained as a psychiatrist, Oscar Wilde phrased the observation similarly. He described Dorian Gray contemplating his own by then seriously flawed portrait suffused "with that pride of individualism that is half the fascination of sin."[3]

     In his seminal study *People of the Lie: The Hope for Healing Human Evil*, M. Scott Peck alludes to this identical phenomenon of equating seeming self-articulation and the attractions of sin: "I have seen cases in

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which an individual made an evil choice for no apparent reason other than the pure desire to exercise the freedom of his or her will."[4]

Self-assertion, individualism and freedom of choice are unquestionably laudable in and of themselves, but at what point do these strivings no longer further integrated self-actualization? At what juncture does appropriate self-interest develop into narcissism, become sinful, become evil and thus lead not to the fulfilment of the human person as was intended, but, if left unchecked, unerringly to the diametric opposite: his or her destruction?

Where can examples be found of those who misread the early and, therefore, still reversible signs of narcissistic behaviour, those who did not make the requisite course correction and subsequently annihilated not only themselves but their all too numerous victims as well? If we study these individuals, might we not learn from them and possibly avoid making their mistakes?

According to Alexander Solzhenitsyn, we needn't look very far:

A work of art contains its verification in itself: artificial, strained concepts do not withstand the test of being turned into images [. . .]. Works which draw on truth [. . .] compellingly involve us, and no one ever [. . .] will come forth to refute them.[5]

Let us, therefore, look to art, look to literature. This paper will concentrate upon a multi-faceted detective novel published in Switzerland; the year was 1951. Thus it was conceived both geographically and chronologically in closest proximity to the Holocaust, the quintessence of evil. I am referring to Friedrich Dürrenmatt's *Der Verdacht*.[6]

In his chapter entitled "Toward a Psychology of Evil," Scott Peck offers a working definition: "Evil [. . .] is that force, residing either inside or outside of human beings, that seeks to kill life or liveliness."[7]

Contrary to every value a physician ought to espouse, contrary to the principles of the Hippocratic Oath,[8] Dr. Fritz Emmenberger kills not once, but many times. He murders repeatedly in the concentration camp at Stutthof near Danzig. At the war's conclusion, Emmenberger kills Nehle, the Berliner, who had assumed the Swiss doctor's identity in Chile during the war years and had thus served his purpose. Until 1948 the physician likewise continues to murder his patients in his sanatorium—named Sonnenstein[9]—in the heart of Zurich.

These are facts, not rumour. Gulliver, one of Emmenberger's victims and a Jewish friend of Bärlach, the police inspector on the case, confirms the first series of killings.[10] Emmenberger himself refers to the inaccuracy of the police reports concerning Nehle.[11] Perpetrated in

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Switzerland at the time the novel takes place, the second set of murders is brutally acknowledged by an accomplice, yet another physician, Dr. Edith Marlok.[12]

But let us not neglect the second half of Peck's definition; he also mentions the destruction of liveliness and thus does not restrict himself to the annihilation of the corporeal. Any attempts to diminish the capacities for knowing, for feeling, for all that contributes to the fullness of legitimate self-expression are just as detrimental. These measures create victims just as readily. And to paraphrase Scott Peck, it is by their victims that you shall know the evil.[13]

Even by this latter half of Peck's thesis, Dr. Emmenberger's list is long indeed. In Gulliver's assessment, what distinguishes this physician from the other Nazi doctors is not primarily the atrocity of the experiments he conducts, but that he performs them only on those Jews who, having witnessed their fellow prisoners succumb to the tortures, consent to the same treatment. Should they survive (only Gulliver manages to do so), they will be transported from an extermination to a concentration camp.[14] Watching the horror, consenting to the horror, and the bastardization of hope constitute at minimum a triple perversion. Thrice a victim. But there are others. As, for example, Dr. Marlok. At Stutthof, she becomes Emmenberger's lover in order to save her life; doubtlessly she loses her person.[15] Or consider the dwarf. Though Emmenberger spares his life as well (according to Heinrich Himmler's directives, he would have been executed),[16] the doctor trains him to kill.

While Emmenberger initiates his dehumanization of these last two in the camp, he perpetuates their victimization during the post-war years in Switzerland. Marlok continues as lover and also becomes an accomplice; she needs ever greater amounts of morphine to suppress her assaulted conscience.[17] The dwarf suffers similarly, as he is literally transformed into Emmenberger's tool. For it is the dwarf whom the physician instructs to murder Fortschig, the hapless pamphleteer.[18] In addition to the many nameless patients Emmenberger terrorizes,[19] there is one more major victim to be named: the aforementioned Hans Bärlach. The doctor's draconian tactics severely test his humanity.[20]

The killing or serious compromising of body and/or spirit constitutes the *first* sign of those who are evil. This element leads naturally to a *second*: the evil fail to recognize others as others, as separate configurations with their own destinies. While mistreating the victims already listed, unnamed or named, Emmenberger never once asks what each of them needs in order to live humanely; this attitude would eventually lead to the utter depersonalization of the other. This depersonalization comprises the *third* characteristic of those designated evil. Marlok summarizes it clearly: "'[. . .] I [. . .] am, neither female nor male, only flesh [. . .].'"[21] But there are other

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examples. Emmenberger refers to the dwarf, mentioned earlier, as "'a useful tool,'" "'this ludicrous thing'" and in his final damning summation: "'[. . .] a desecrated human being still proves to be the most reliable of instruments.'"[22]

Given the facts, it is an understatement to assert that Emmenberger cares only about his own wishes. This extreme form of self-centeredness with its absolute lawlessness constitutes the *fourth* element of the evil. The academically brilliant *Höllenfürst* phrases it unequivocally in describing his sadistic operations: "'*my* triumph and *my* freedom and nothing but these are reflected in the quivering, unconscious, white flesh beneath my scalpel.'"[23]

Once he obtains ultimate power over another, what does Dr. Emmenberger do? He does nothing which furthers the other's (or for that matter his own) legitimate self-actualization. This behaviour exemplifies an acquisition and exercise of power for its own sake and is the *fifth* characteristic of the evil. This use of power is unsubordinated to anything other than itself. Yet Peck asserts: "Mental health requires that the human will submit itself to something higher than itself."[24] Depending on their orientation, some define that governing principle as common sense or the needs of others; the religiously inclined would define it as God. Consequently, the evil are characterized by an unsubmitted will. Such unbridled wilfulness does not seek to enrich, but, as Emmenberger illustrates, seeks only to destroy.

If confronted by contrary evidence - as inevitably happens - that the achieved is undesirable, how does Emmenberger, how do those who are evil react? In two omnipresent, thoroughly predictable ways. They blame everyone and everything but themselves for their failures. As these diversionary tactics do not coincide with the facts, they must lie - to themselves as well as to others. Scapegoating and lying are, therefore, the *sixth* and *seventh* characteristics of the evil.

As the Swiss physician has never been able to find any transcendent values, he blames his debilitating nihilism on life's inherent injustice, its inherent senselessness, as he perceives it. He believes chance alone determines the very few winners and the majority of losers and thus draws the conclusion that freedom itself is an illusion. "Freedom is the courage to commit crimes, for it itself is a crime."[25]

In this succinct summation at least two lies become apparent. Even when viewing life from a secular perspective, Emmenberger's diatribe denies the primacy of each human life. But the statement contains yet another lie which is far more subtle. He claims the right to torture and kill others, because freedom itself is torturous. Erich Fromm in his *Escape from Freedom* asserts that those who sadistically assume power over others do so, not to actualize their stated motivations, but those left unstated. Think or say as they might, it is their acute sense of isolation and inadequacy that the evil cannot bear. Those in effect are the reasons they act as they do.[26]

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But these two are far from the only lies in Fritz Emmenberger's chronology. They are legion. Evil and consistent lying are inextricably intertwined. One *never* exists without the other.

Emmenberger always loved torture, even in his youth. But during medical school only two fellow students - the Lucerner, whose life he, paradoxically enough, saves and Dr. Hungertobel, a long-time friend of Bärlach's - recognize the physician in training for what he is: not an individual learning to heal, but rather someone deriving pleasure from the infliction of pain.[27] Later in the death camps, no one recognizes Emmenberger, for he assumes an elaborately constructed false identity. Even the astute Gulliver knows him only as Dr. Nehle.[28] Actually the concentration camps themselves, whose cause Emmenberger/Nehle serves, are predicated on a lie: certain individuals do not deserve to live. After the cessation of hostilities, though resuming his legal name, Emmenberger does not dispense with subterfuge. For who would suspect a sadist in the articulate, fastidiously dressed physician, the director of a Swiss sanatorium?[29] Peck diagnoses the problem correctly: "Utterly dedicated to preserving their self-image of perfection, they are unceasingly engaged in an effort to maintain the appearance of moral purity [. . .]. Their 'goodness' is [. . .] pretense. It is [. . .] a lie."[30]

But why do they need a disguise, need to lie? Even if only on a most elementary level, these individuals sense the discrepancy between what they are and what they ought to be. Contrary to what some might suggest, the conscience of those who are evil does make itself felt. They fear discovery of the discrepancy and thus fabricate the lie in order to hide the truth. This knowledge of their imperfection, the resultant pain (any assault on the ego seems hurtful) and the relentless effort to escape from this legitimate discomfort by means of lies are typical features of the *eighth* characteristic of evil. What they cannot abide is the sense of seeming imperfect to themselves, or to others. Peck maintains that to these individuals, any self- or other-admonition, which could be a helpful catalyst for healing, seems suicidal.[31]

Victimization of body and/or spirit, failure to recognize others as autonomous, depersonalization of others, unmitigated narcissism, the unsubordinated use of power, scapegoating and lying, the total inability to handle criticism: these are some of the characteristics of an evil individual and Dr. Emmenberger undeniably exhibits eight of them.

At the outset of this paper, I suggested that through close examination of evil individuals, we could apprehend more clearly where they went awry and thus avoid taking the identical false turns. There are other reasons for such study. By steadfastly looking at evil, we would finally learn that to evaluate the actions of others or ourselves and, if necessary, declare them evil is not itself an evil. Cognizant of history's blatant failures, we cannot afford to look away. For if we recognized the evil sooner rather than

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later, could not the damage to themselves as well as others, at least be minimized, if not totally eliminated? A malady cannot begin to be treated until it is named.

Notes

[1]The University of Notre Dame's Institute for Scholarship in the Liberal Arts as well as the Department of German and Russian defrayed the expenses incurred as a result of my participation in the 7th Global Conference: Perspectives on Evil and Human Wickedness held in Salzburg, Austria, March 2006.

[2]R May, *Love and Will*, Delta, New York, 1989, p. 140.

[3]O Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, ed. D L Lawler, Norton, New York, 1988, p. 109.

[4]M S Peck, *People of the Lie: The Hope for Healing Human Evil*, Simon, New York, 1983, p. 82.

[5]A Solzhenitsyn, *Nobel Lecture,* trans. F D Reeve, Farrar, New York, 1973, p. 7.

[6]F Dürrenmatt, '*Der Verdacht: Ein Kriminalroman*, 1951' *Gesammelte Werke*: *Romane*, *Diogenes*, vol. 4, Zürich, 1991, pp. 119 - 265.

[7] Peck, op. cit., p. 43.

[8]C Lichtenthaeler, *Der Eid des Hippokrates*: *Ursprung und Bedeutung*, Deutscher Ärzte-Verlag, Köln, 1984.

[9]T Schilter, *Unmenschliches Ermessen: Die national-sozialistische "Euthanasie"—Tötungsanstalt Pirna-Sonnenstein 1940/41*, Stiftung Sächsische Gedenkstätten und G. Kiepenheuer, Leipzig, 1998, 1st ed. 1999.

[10]Dürrenmatt, op. cit., p. 153.

[11]Ibid., pp. 243-244.

[12]Ibid., p. 224.

[13]Peck, p. 107.

[14]Dürrenmatt, pp. 159-162.

[15]Ibid., p. 217.

[16]Ernst Klee, *'Euthanasie" im NS Staat: Die "Vernichtung lebensunwerten Lebens,'* Fischer, Frankfurt, 1983.

[17]Dürrenmatt, p. 226.

[18]Ibid., pp. 236, 239.

[19]Ibid., p. 224.

[20]Ibid., pp. 236-259.

[21]Ibid., p. 223. All translations from this text mentioned within the essay are my own.

[22]Ibid., p. 247.

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[23]Ibid., p. 252.
[24]Peck, op. cit., p. 162.
[25]Dürrenmatt, op. cit., pp. 251-252.
[26]E Fromm, *Escape from Freedom*, Rinehart, New York, 1941, p. 158.
[27]Dürrenmatt, op. cit., pp. 144-145.
[28]Ibid., pp. 158-159.
[29]Ibid., p. 236.
[30]Peck, op. cit., p. 75.
[31]Ibid., pp. 71-77.

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Contesting Claggart:
Evil in Herman Melville's *Billy Budd, Sailor*

Luc Small

Abstract

In this paper I explore how Herman Melville's *Billy Budd, Sailor* has been used to defend various philosophical positions on moral evil. While my discussion focuses on the substantive views of Peter Kivy, Colin McGinn and Daniel Haybron, I also consider some wider issues about the use of literary material by philosophers.

In Melville's classic, the depraved John Claggart destroys the virtuous Billy Budd for no clear (instrumental) motive. Claggart's perplexing psychology has engaged many philosophers concerned with moral evil. I have elected to survey three representative and contrasting philosophical works, namely: Kivy's *Melville's Billy and the Secular Problem of Evil*; McGinn's *Ethics, Evil and Fiction*; and Haybron's *Evil Characters*. Whilst in his paper Kivy expresses strong reservations about the possibility of explaining unmotivated malice, both McGinn and Haybron aim to demonstrate that this can be done. Intriguingly, all three commentators, despite their markedly differing conclusions, find support for their respective positions in Melville's text.

I discuss which philosopher presents the most tenable stance on human evil and consider which philosopher supplies the best reading of Claggart's psychology. Interestingly, in each case, the philosopher is different. Finally, I draw a number of conclusions about the general practice of using fiction to inform philosophy. On the strength of the evidence presented (in which three philosophers find support for widely differing positions on human evil in the same text), it might seem that the practice should be avoided. I argue, however, that a common emphasis on a work of fiction enables efficient comparative analysis between competing philosophical positions. That interpretations of Melville's Claggart vary significantly demonstrates that literature can expose the true complexity of a philosophical problem. The interplay between a literary text and a philosopher's interpretation, I conclude, can inspire new philosophical positions and expose them to debate within a common context.

Keywords: Evil, Billy Budd, Melville, Haybron, McGinn, Kivy, moral philosophy, fiction

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I'd like to begin by thanking the Evil 7 organisers for giving me the opportunity to present this paper. I'd also like to thank all of you in attendance today.

Today's paper centres on literature and evil. More specifically, I will be discussing Herman Melville's *The Story of Billy Budd, Sailor*. I do not aim to present an incisive literary criticism of Melville's classic. Rather I wish to convey how philosophers have made use of *The Story of Billy Budd, Sailor* to inform and defend their philosophical positions on the evil character.

Without further delay, I will begin with a short summary of Melville's narrative.

1   The Story

Herman Melville's classic *Billy Budd, Sailor*,[1] set aboard the warship *Bellipotent*, centres on three characters: the virtuous foretopman Billy Budd, the villainous John Claggart, and captain Vere. The narrator, himself a central character, aims to clear Budd's name, which had been tarnished by the inaccurate reports in the *News of the Mediterranean*. According to the latter, Budd murdered the "respectable and discreet" Claggart, after Claggart threatened to expose Budd's mutinous plans.[2] In marked contrast, the narrator maintains that the thuggish Claggart was simply "down on" Budd and acted so as to compromise Budd's reputation. Whilst amicable in their encounters, Claggart, via his accomplices, attempts to implicate Budd in mutinous affairs. Shortly thereafter, Claggart reports to the captain, convincing the initially hesitant Vere to summons Budd for questioning. With all three assembled in Vere's quarters, Claggart accuses Budd of mutiny, and Budd, angered and pugnacious, retaliates with a fatal blow. Having killed Claggart, Budd is incarcerated and a trial is called. Vere, torn between Budd's indubitable virtue and the gravity of his crime, concludes that justice must be done - the death of Claggart paid for in kind. Tragically, Budd is hung in the early dawn.

Melville's story has proved captivating for moral philosophers, who have explored Claggart's dark psychology in the interests of comprehending the evil character. Here I reflect on this practice and assess whether substantive philosophical conclusions can be drawn, or at least defended, on the basis of Claggart, a fictional character. Does it make sense to appeal to fiction in attempting to grasp the evil character? And what is to be done when the same character, Claggart, is invoked to defend several divergent readings of evil?

2   Kivy

In *Melville's Billy and the Secular Problem of Evil*, Peter Kivy argues that a key theme in Melville's story is that of explaining "why we knowingly cause pain and suffering to one another."[3] He claims that neither

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of the two "familiar accounts" of human motivation - psychological egoism and pluralism - can explain "man's inhumanity to man."[4] As Kivy notes:

> The egoist recognizes, above all others, that men can be ruthless in pursuit of their interests: what he cannot recognize is that men can be ruthless for the sake of ruthlessness alone; for that would mean that egoism is false - that self-interest is not the only human motive.[5]

Similarly, he notes that under the pluralist understanding:

> We may destroy others for the sake of our own interest, or the interest of some third person, or to satisfy our particular passions and affections. What we cannot do is destroy or harm others *without* one of these motives. There is no motive … of pure destructiveness…[6]

The key point here is that, for Kivy, the evil person is "ruthless for the sake of ruthlessness alone." The evil person executes an act of "pure destructiveness" simply because it is a ruthless, destructive, pitiless, merciless, unsparing, bad - and ultimately evil thing to do. I take this as tantamount to saying that the evil person is one who pursues evil for evil's sake. For convenience, I will term this the *satanic* conception of the evil character. I choose the term satanic merely as shorthand and fully acknowledge that this may not accord with everyone's picture of Satan.

Kivy takes it as given that cases can and do arise in which one agent harms another with only ruthlessness as his motive - Claggart being one such example.[7] Careful to acknowledge the dangers of using fiction to derive conclusions about the actual world, Kivy notes that Melville intended the world of the text to resemble the actual world.[8] Budd's world is, he claims, "permeated with factual elements of our own,"[9] replete with references to Voltaire and Diderot, and great naval battles. Thus Kivy concludes that Melville has "invited us to read it as a world in which physical objects and human beings behave in accordance with the physical and psychological laws of our own."[10] And as such, Kivy concludes, Melville intended to and did present in Claggart a psychology that could be instantiated in the actual world. The very possible existence of Claggarts, for Kivy, makes what he calls the secular problem of evil pressing.

Kivy begins his analysis of Melville's tale by noting the bafflement the reader has at the lack of "adequate motivational cues" for grounding Claggart's desire to destroy Budd.[11] Claggart, Kivy argues, is completely unmotivated. The narrator, in trying to understand Claggart's desire to destroy Budd, fumbles for explanations that will render Claggart's behaviour

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rational in naturalistic terms.[12] The narrator hunts unsuccessfully for a past encounter when Budd may have *crossed* Claggart. Without this kind of motive, Kivy surmises that standard models of human motivation cannot explain Claggart's behaviour. Claggart was neither acting selfishly, nor altruistically, nor was his mind directed to a goal, or by passion.

Once the search for motives is given up, Kivy suggests, one is forced to hypothesise "spontaneous antipathy" - in the words of the narrator "a depravity according to nature"[13] - an "explanation" which does little more than restate the problem.[14]

Thus Claggart remains a mystery, and the narrator defaults to a non-natural explanation by concluding that a "divine purpose shapes" Claggart's "seemingly purposeless and unintelligible ends."[15] Exhausted, the narrator retires unsatisfied with his last-ditch theological resolution.

In sum, Kivy argues that one of the themes of *Billy Budd, Sailor* is unmotivated malice.[16] The possible existence of such characters as Claggart in our world, Kivy surmises, leads to what he calls the secular problem of evil. This problem entails explaining unmotivated malice - something that, for Kivy, cannot be done.

3   McGinn

Colin McGinn, in his *Ethics, Evil and Fiction*, presents a contrasting treatment of evil. McGinn's goal is to develop a *theory* of the evil person, an aim that puts him at odds with Kivy. For Kivy, human evil is a problem that defies explanation and Claggart serves to confirm this. But McGinn presents a theory professing to explain human evil, thereby eschewing Kivy's scepticism that this is possible. Furthermore, he maintains that his theory can comprehend and explain Claggart.

The evil person, McGinn theorises, acts so as to derive "pleasure from pain and pain from pleasure,"[17] non-instrumentally.[18] Thus when the evil person acts to harm another person, "the other's pain is prized for its own sake … the motive is precisely to cause suffering."[19] The evil person is therefore taken to be equivalent to the sadist - sadist here being used in the broadest sense, not limited in application, as it usually is, to the sexual sadist.

There is a subtle but important distinction between McGinn's understanding of human evil and Kivy's. Kivy, to reiterate, concludes that the evil person - and thus Claggart - is "ruthless for the sake of ruthlessness alone." McGinn, meanwhile, argues that the evil person prizes pain in others for its own sake. I have (earlier) termed Kivy's the satanic conception of evil; McGinn's, by contrast, is perhaps best labelled the sadistic conception of human evil.

That Claggart sadistically takes pleasure in the pain of Budd is evidenced throughout the story, McGinn maintains. Claggart's temperament, for instance, is described as the "direct reverse of a saint," suggesting to

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McGinn "an inversion of the usual laws of interpersonal feeling."[20] Encouraged by Melville's comment that Claggart is "capable of apprehending the good, but powerless to be it,"[21] McGinn observes that

> [Claggart's] character is so constituted that, despite his moral awareness, he cannot help but seek out the destruction of the Handsome Sailor. He is formed in such a way as to hate virtue and to hate the pleasures of the virtuous.[22]

In this manner, McGinn adopts the same text as Kivy, but finds in it support for a very different conception of the evil character. The only point on which McGinn and Kivy are substantively allied is that Claggart's character does not fit the two standard models of motivation. Indeed McGinn notes that under his theory, the evil character "is not egoistic in the traditional sense, since no benefit to the agent accrues from the other's pain, aside from the pleasure afforded by it."[23] But whilst for Kivy this inability to square the evil person with standard accounts of motivation leads to the secular problem of evil, for McGinn it poses no such problem. Indeed Melville's conclusion that Claggart possesses a "depravity according to nature"[24] points the way, for McGinn, not to the secular problem of evil but to a tenable explanation of evil.

The key factor that allows McGinn to escape Kivy's secular problem of evil, I contend, is that he doesn't view the evil person as motivated to pursue evil for evil's sake. It would indeed be difficult to fathom how a person could be motivated to somewhat dispassionately pursue evil ends. It is somewhat less difficult to contemplate a person motivated by pleasure, even if that pleasure stems from a dark place. To this end, McGinn defends the idea that it may be a simple fact that some people are hard-wired to be sadists. I will sidestep the intricacies of McGinn's argument in the interests of brevity.

To recapitulate: McGinn finds in Claggart a fitting example of the kind of character he considers evil, a character possessing sadistic, rather than satanic qualities.

4   Haybron

In *Evil Characters*, Daniel Haybron extends McGinn's theory of the evil person. He, too, supplies an interpretation of *Billy Budd, Sailor* - one closer to Kivy's than McGinn's. Thus he straddles a middle ground, agreeing with McGinn that evil need not be unfathomable, and yet agreeing with Kivy that Claggart was satanic in his wickedness.

Haybron's primary contention is that McGinn's postulated sadistic disposition is neither necessary nor sufficient for delimiting the evil

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character.[25] He comes to this conclusion by defining the evil character as "morally a person of the worst sort."[26] Challenging the sufficiency of McGinn's criterion, Haybron considers the possibility of a character who, whilst sadistic, possesses "normal moral convictions."[27] Such a person - if such a psychology is plausible[28] - would not be a person of the worst sort, and thus not properly understood as evil.

On the question of necessity, Haybron suggests that a person could qualify as evil without being sadistic, provided that she is either malicious or malevolent. In the interests of brevity I shall sidestep the former and concentrate on the latter.

Malevolence captures the kind of behaviour that seeks evil ends quite generally - very much along the lines of the satanic conception of the evil character. Haybron writes:

> There is at least one further way for one's character to be evil. For why need it be merely the pain or misfortune of others that the evil person seeks? Perhaps he has a broader disposition to seek *badness*, destruction … evil.[29]

It is this kind of disposition that Claggart, for Haybron, exhibits. Perceptive on this point, Haybron is worth quoting at length:

> Claggart's vile disposition, for instance, is probably best described as malevolent, and not merely antisympathetic. After all, it is no coincidence that he chooses Budd - the ship's most innocent and virtuous inhabitant - to persecute. It looks precisely to be Budd's goodness that so arouses Claggart's enmity. If he only sought to realize another's misery, why choose Budd - especially given Budd's popularity, which only made his job more difficult? He seems not only to enjoy the suffering of others but to despise whatever goodness he encounters in them.[30]

Haybron thus interprets Claggart's character in terms very similar to Kivy. Claggart is motivated to pursue evil ends by their own lights - preying on Budd because he is a towering exemplar of the good. He is not sadistic, as McGinn would have it, but rather seeks to maximise evil and throttle the good on every occasion.

Importantly, however, Haybron has his doubts about whether the malevolent, and thus Claggart's, psychology is plausible. He notes that representative "examples of such extreme individuals are not readily encountered" and that, perhaps, "it is simply too difficult for a normal person to fully comprehend the malevolent soul."[31] Hence whilst in agreement with

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Kivy about Claggart's malevolent nature, Haybron is sceptical about the existence of real-world persons who are "ruthless for the sake of ruthlessness alone," a fact that Kivy takes as a given. In Haybron's opinion, Claggart and his vile character are thankfully constrained by merely fictional existence.

Very briefly, Haybron introduces one more constraint to his theory, namely that the truly evil character must be responsible or culpable for her having evil dispositions.[32]

Thus, according to Haybron, the worst kind of person morally - the evil person - is sadistic, malicious and/or malevolent, lacks normal moral convictions, and is solely responsible for the possession of these lamentable dispositions.

As a consequence of Haybron's theory, Claggart does not qualify as a truly evil person. Claggart's "wickedness," Haybron notes, "is basic and beyond his 'power to annul.'" And for this reason Claggart is "cut off from one sort of moral extreme: *culpable* wickedness of character."[33] At base, Claggart is malevolent, but not by choice. Hence he is not evil.

5   Kivy, McGinn and Haybron Compared

What then do we conclude from all of this? Well, I would hazard, Kivy, McGinn and Haybron are all correct on at least one substantive point. Furthermore, uncanny allegiances arise on different matters.

All the commentators detect Claggart's lack of instrumental motive, causing each to ask: What moved Claggart to destroy Budd? For Kivy and Haybron the answer they arrive at - the answer they find in the text - is the same: Claggart is motivated by sheer satanic malevolence. Claggart is constructed to pursue evil for evil's sake. McGinn meanwhile suggests a different answer (and similarly finds support for it in the text), namely that Claggart is sadistic. Ultimately, I think that Kivy and Haybron provide an interpretation that is truer to the text than McGinn. Indeed, the very descriptions of Claggart that McGinn invokes to support his conclusions about Claggart - a temperament "the direct reverse of a saint," "apprehending the good, but powerless to be it"[34] - point more to malevolence than to sadism.

Despite their compatible readings of Claggart, Kivy and Haybron quickly reach disagreement on his psychological plausibility. For Haybron, Claggart's kind is restricted to fictional worlds. Whilst characters that pursue evil for evil's sake are commonplace in works of literature - consider, in addition to Claggart, Milton's *Satan* and Shakespeare's *Iago* (perhaps) - it is much harder to point to a real-world instance of such a person. In opposition to Haybron, however, Kivy takes it as given that a character such as Claggart could exist in our world. It is my contention that Haybron's is the more plausible stance.

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The real-world psychological plausibility of Claggart's character, about which Kivy and Haybron are at odds, briefly unites Kivy and McGinn. McGinn, after all, attests to Claggart's psychological plausibility. His interpretation of Claggart's psychology is much removed from Kivy's, however. It is McGinn's sadistic rather than satanic take on the evil character that allows him to avoid Kivy's secular problem of evil. McGinn avoids having to explain the motivation to do evil for evil's sake by construing the evil person - and thus Claggart - as sadistic. Because McGinn replaces evil with pleasure as the evil person's end goal, he renders the evil person's desires as explicable as those of any other being moved by pleasure. Thus in McGinn's estimation, Claggart's purportedly inexplicable "natural depravity," which for Kivy suggests the secular problem of evil, leads directly to an explanation. On this point I side with McGinn in concluding that human evil does have an explanation.

Finally Kivy and McGinn find one more unholy alliance: they both conclude that Claggart is evil. Haybron, on the other hand, suggests that Claggart might not be the best literary subject of study for evil, because he is not in any sense to be deemed culpable for possessing his evil tendencies.

6   Fiction informing Philosophy

What does the foregoing analysis tell us about the practice of using fiction to inform philosophy? At first gloss it seems to suggest that the practice is fatally flawed. Kivy, McGinn and Haybron all purport to find important insights into evil within the same text. The problem is that each philosopher has a very different opinion about evil. Those inclined to scepticism might therefore conclude that a philosopher will interpret a fictional work in a fashion that suits her purposes, and that for this reason the practice of introducing fiction into philosophical discourse is to be resisted.

Importantly, however, none of the positions on evil advanced here depend on the truth of their respective interpretation of Claggart's character. Kivy can advance his satanic conception of the evil person and conclude that it creates a problem for standard accounts of motivation. McGinn can posit his sadistic disposition. And Haybron can introduce characteristics of malevolence, malice and culpability as he wishes. Appeal to Claggart's character is never employed by these philosophers to ground a claim about evil; it is only ever engaged to render plausible such a claim. Viewed from this perspective it is hard to fault the usage of literary examples in philosophy, even if interpretations differ.

Indeed, literary examples may provide a valuable standard by which to develop competing philosophical notions. Claggart supplies a common resource that moral philosophers can exploit as they wish. In the process a multiplicity of Claggarts may emerge, each constituted of those salient elements of (his) character that most captivate the philosopher. Each Claggart

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thus lends inspiration to a new understanding of evil. Not all understandings, to be sure, are created equal - some will wither as surely as some will flourish. What is important is that they are brought to bear, contested, accepted or rejected. Appeal to fiction can help in this process. For this reason it does not count against the use of fiction in philosophy that in the works of Kivy, McGinn and Haybron three different Claggarts emerge. It is in this process of contesting Claggart that valuable insights into evil are revealed.

Notes

[1] H Melville, *Billy Budd, Sailor and Other Stories*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1985.

[2] Ibid., p. 407.

[3] P Kivy, 'Melville's Billy and the Secular Problem of Evil: The Worm in the Bud,' *Monist,* vol. 63, 1980, p. 481.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid., p. 484.

[7] Ibid., p. 485.

[8] Ibid., pp. 486-87.

[9] Ibid., p. 487.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid., p. 486

[12] Ibid., p. 489.

[13] Ibid., p. 491.

[14] Ibid., p. 490.

[15] Ibid., p. 492.

[16] Ibid.

[17] C McGinn, *Ethics, Evil, and Fiction*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1997, p. 62.

[18] By 'non-instrumentally', McGinn means that the evil person inflicts pain on others for its own sake. Thus a person who perpetrates a violent theft (in which the victim is badly injured) and derives pleasure from the money stolen would not qualify as evil. Although the victim suffers great pain, the perpetrator's pleasure is derived from the money stolen and not the pain itself.

[19] McGinn, op.cit., p. 63.

[20] Ibid., p. 64.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid., p. 63.

[24] Ibid, p. 63.

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[25] D M Haybron, 'Evil Characters,' *American Philosophical Quarterly,* vol. 36, 1999, p.134.
[26] Ibid., p. 131.
[27] Ibid., p. 134.
[28] Haybron himself has his reservations on this point, although he cites Jeffrey Dahmer as a possible example.
[29] Haybron, op. cit., p. 136.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid., pp. 136-37.
[32] Ibid., p. 141.
[33] Ibid.
[34] McGinn, op. cit., p. 64.

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"Unrepenting Sorrow and Deliberate Sin": Milton and Hawthorne's Understanding of Evil

Gregory A. Wilson

Abstract

Despite the considerable influence John Milton's work has had upon a host of writers, one author stands out as particularly indebted to his vision: Nathaniel Hawthorne, documenter of America's early moral development in *The Scarlet Letter*, *The House Of The Seven Gables*, and short stories of good and evil. Though Hawthorne managed to carve himself a niche in literary history away from the shadow of Milton in his prose, he draws heavily on Milton's ideas in his writing, particularly concerning the choice of good and evil. This article explores the extent to which Hawthorne follows Milton while simultaneously attempting to break from his influence. First, I examine Milton's conception of the psychology of good, evil, and moral choice between extremes. Second, I turn to the works of Hawthorne and determine both his view of this same moral choice, and to what extent he aligns himself in this view with Milton's concepts. I conclude by pointing out that while Hawthorne is indebted to Milton's views of evil and the parameters which the latter author establishes, he establishes his own authoritative voice in the field of literature in part because of the ways in which he parts philosophical and aesthetic company with his predecessor.

In the beginning of his book *Milton in Early America*, George F. Sensabaugh suggests that John Milton was so hugely influential on American literature of the time because "[h]is vast imagery, particularly as seen in *Paradise Lost*, opened vistas not so much on actual and mutable nature as on transcendent and unchanging reality. His voice - commanding and vibrant - not only guided the course of early serious verse but also informed the moral, spiritual, and intellectual life of the nation."[1] Though Sensabaugh later suggests that this influence faded after 1815 or so, in fact Milton's presence was still significantly felt by later inheritors of the legacy of early American literature. Emerson, Thoreau, and later Whitman all confessed themselves indebted to his suggestions, particularly his conception of the art as flowing from the artist's character and his belief "that the heroic poem could only be written by the man who had lived a heroic life."[2]

But as much as Milton was praised for his strength, breadth, and clarity of vision, he was also recognized as a tragedian of the first order. And

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despite the considerable influence his work had upon the writers previously mentioned, another author stands out as being most indebted to Milton's tragic vision: Nathaniel Hawthorne, documenter and historian of America's early moral development in his seminal works *The Scarlet Letter*, *The House Of The Seven Gables*, and numerous short stories of good and evil. Though Hawthorne managed to carve himself a niche in literary history away from the shadow of Milton in his prose (a task which by their own admission Wordsworth and Keats were never able to accomplish in their poetry), he draws heavily on Milton's ideas and techniques of tragic form in his writing, particularly those works concerning the choice of good and evil. This article explores the extent to which Hawthorne follows Milton's tenets while simultaneously attempting to break from his influence. First, I examine and outline Milton's conception of the psychology of good and evil and the extent to which we are able to choose between the two moral extremes. Second, I turn to the works of Hawthorne, particularly *The Scarlet Letter*, and determine both Hawthorne's view of this same moral decision and to what extent he aligns himself in this view with Milton's concepts.   Throughout the scope of my analysis, I attempt to demonstrate that while Hawthorne is heavily indebted to Milton's views of tragedy and the parameters which the latter author establishes, he is able to establish his own authoritative literary voice regarding both subject matter and degree largely because of the ways in which he parts philosophical and aesthetic company with his predecessor.

Milton did not write in a psychological age, and indeed many critics have argued that his apparent semi-admiration for the heroism of Satan is little more than sophisticated preparation for his later condemnation of the fallen archangel's evil. Douglas Bush argues that *Paradise Lost* is not in the main a poem about good and evil in and of themselves, a philosophical discussion about what defines each moral pole, but rather what the battle between those two poles entails:

> *Paradise Lost* is neither a fundamentalist tract for Sunday reading nor a metaphysical inquiry into the origin and nature of evil but a 'myth' about the actual and perpetual war between good and evil in the world and in the soul of man.[3]

Milton leaves, then, the question of what good and evil are to the later metaphysical philosophers. But as Bush suggests in this excerpt, the poem does consider as one of its fundamental questions how and on what grounds the decision of good and evil is made. Satan's attack on the supremacy of God both in heaven and hell, Eve's decision to eat from the forbidden Tree and Adam's quick acceptance of (then complicity in) her sin all preoccupy Milton's attention to much too great an extent to pass it off as a "setup" for

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Milton's later condemnations. It is true that Milton makes continuing reference to the "false presumptuous hope" and unforgivable deeds of those who have chosen the evil path.[4] But while Milton is writing in a pre-psychological age, his work does concern itself not simply with moral opposites but with humanity's perception of the two, and in so doing, it foreshadows later psychological exploration of morality as a whole. For the purposes of this article, therefore, I will be using the term psychology in its broadest sense to refer to Milton's treatment of morality and why individuals either accept or reject its dictates.

Milton's conception of the psychology of good and evil works on essentially two levels. First, it represents a choice as free, dictated neither by fate nor divine control but rather by the actions of the will, conscience, and intellect. As I will suggest in a moment, this free choice applies equally to mortal and immortal individuals, contrary to what some critics have previously argued. And, although severe punishments may be meted out from the supreme authority of God, they must come after the decision has been freely made so as to make the decision, right or wrong, more meaningful. (In this component, Milton develops his argument for post-action consequences over pre-action censure, first outlined in *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* and substantially expanded upon in his anti-censorship tract *Aeropagitica*.) Second, in Milton's view an individual's choice of evil is not a decision of positive action, selecting the evil path, but rather one of negation, choosing *not* to select the path of good. In this sense it represents a certain defect of character, either a lack of understanding of oneself and one's position in the rest of the universe resulting in a failure of the intellect to steer a course between temptation and despair over morality's strict dictates, or a failure of the will to stand firm in the face of what seems to be an inevitable moral collapse - a sort of self-fulfilling prophecy of corruption. True, Eve picks and eats the apple herself, and Adam chooses to imitate her sin and fall with her rather than spend an eternity of good without her; but Eve is tempted to eat the forbidden fruit precisely because she does not understand either the full import of her actions or the position of the serpent as both the disguised representation of Satan's corrupting influence and physically a member of the animal kingdom over whom Adam and Eve have been given dominion. Adam falls with her almost immediately because of his hasty and unreasonable assumption that there is no way to save her, choosing to cave in to what he wrongly assumes to be inevitable and thereby to doom himself rather than stand firm and appeal for salvation. But before we can examine to what degree Hawthorne follows through on these ideas, some further explanation of each component is in order.

The emphasis on free choice in the decision of good and evil is not a new one for Milton. As I have already suggested, as early as 1643 he was beginning to lay out his argument for the free pursuit of truth and the

importance of responding to actions after the fact rather than attempting to suppress potentially dangerous ones before they could be shown to be harmful or not. In Milton's conception, free choice is not essential because it is the major check to tyranny, or a method to elevate humanity, though these may have been among the ideas he had when he began work in this area; it is essential because it is the only thing that makes acts of charity, virtue, and good *meaningful* acts. In a sense, Milton argues that good and evil are themselves meaningless if they cannot be chosen; one who would *by nature or compulsion* choose the good would have stripped the concept of relevancy.

Within the text of *Paradise Lost*, Milton emphasizes the notion of freely chosen good and evil even more strongly by making it one of God's essential edicts, as this passage from God's first speech in Book III demonstrates:

> . . . man will hearken to his [Satan's] glozing lies,
> . . . and . . . so will fall,
> He and his faithless progeny: whose fault?
> Whose but his own? ingrate, he had of me
> All he could have; I made him just and right,
> Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall.
> Such I created all the ethereal powers
> And spirits, both them who stood and them who failed;
> Freely they stood who stood, and fell who fell.
> Not free, what proof could they have given sincere
> Of true allegiance, constant faith or love,
> Where only what *they needs must do* [my emphasis], appeared,
> Not what they would? what praise could they receive?
> . . . The first sort by their own suggestion fell,
> Self-tempted, self-depraved: man falls deceived
> By the other first: man therefore shall find grace,
> The other none . . .[5]

As God makes clear, Satan and the other fallen angels were made capable of good actions, "sufficient to have stood, though free to fall." So their choice to reject good reflects no evil or defect in God or in the process of creation, but rather a failure to choose properly. God also suggests that it is impossible to change this course; as an irrevocable fact, humans and spirits alike have the freedom to decide on good or evil. In a crucial distinction, however, God also indicates that man will be capable of redemption, as he was tempted into his evil action by another agent. This may indicate one of several subtle differences between the essence of spirits and mortal beings - first, a choice is only fully subject to consequences if it is self-generated and conceived, and unlike the mortal Eve and Adam, the "self-tempted, self-depraved" fallen

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angels fall entirely as a function of their own self-generated temptations. Thus Adam, twice removed from the original temptation, is punished by being given the sentence of mortality and the edict that he must work for sustenance and survival, but his dominion over Eve and the rest of the world is still intact; Eve, who committed the act but was tempted by another is made even more subservient to Adam and is given the additional hardship of childbirth, but is still superior to the other animals, particularly the serpent; and Satan himself is punished with even further damnation and the knowledge that nothing will save him from that damnation. His is the original, self-generated evil, his the most uninfluenced choice, and therefore his is the greatest punishment.

The second distinction between the evil choices of humans and spirits is that while Adam and Eve each believes him/herself to be choosing an objective good in eating of the apple - while, admittedly, doing so in the understanding that they are violating another supposedly "good" restriction. Eve believes she will gain greater knowledge, Adam believes he will keep Eve. But the fallen angels have chosen and continue to choose their sins with full understanding that they do not represent actions of good. Naturally, each sinning spirit believes the action he is taking to be justified, but none try to rationalize their decision as a moral, virtuous act. But even with the difference in consequences between the two groups, spirits and mortals are both ultimately subject to the dictates of their own wills - though whether the choices they make from such dictates are proper or not will naturally be a decision made only by God.

The second component of Milton's conception of evil - that the choice of evil is not a positive selection of evil but rather a negation or non-selection of good, and that such a choice inevitably flows from a defect of character manifested in a lack of understanding of oneself and one's position in the universe (a failure of reason or the logical intellect, or a failure of the will to stand against what it perceives as inevitable moral collapse) - is, like the first component, found in Milton's earlier writing, both prose and poetry. As Rex Warner points out, Milton's natural affinity to positive action and to the importance of actively pursuing the good was exhibited as early as 1654, in his *Second Defence of the English People*, where "in the last sentences he plainly warns the English people of the judgement of posterity, if they fail to live up to the height and dignity of their opportunities."[6] Those who sit idly by and do nothing would by implication be committing evil, unwilling to build on solid "foundations" of morality and "complete the structure." So did those who were uncommitted sit by, as Milton saw it, and watched the restoration of the monarchy without comment; so would Satan later be willing, in *Paradise Regained*, to watch Jesus voluntarily fall from the cliff and be saved or killed, a test which Jesus positively rejects in favor of the good; and so does each proponent of evil in *Paradise Lost* operate, at one

point or another, in their committing of evil acts. Satan commits the first definitive act of evil, defiance of the will of God, out of excessive pride and ambition; but at a deeper level, he does so from a lack of understanding of his own relationship to God and the rest of the universe. Thus he scornfully responds to Abdiel's demand that he rethink his evil plan and seek pardon from God ". . . who made / Thee what thou art, and formed the powers of heaven / Such as he pleased, and circumscribed their being …"[7] with two extraordinary statements about his own character. First, Satan baldly suggests that neither he nor the other rebellious angels could have been created by an external force, as he "[k]now[s] none before [the rebellious angels], self-begot, self-raised / By our own quickening power."[8] But this claim is self-evidently absurd: Satan's argument is based on the premise that no one existed before him and his cohorts, yet by definition all of heaven and its "ethereal sons" must have been created by something existing prior to them, unless we are to believe that all of the heavenly hierarchy, God included, simply sprung into being on a whim of fate - a difficult leap of logic to swallow by any standard. But Satan's underlying implication is even more disturbing, for at base what he suggests is that he is at an "equal" level with all others, even God, and that he can defeat them by his self-generated might. Such a statement betrays a significant lack of understanding, not simply of his own nature as a created and subservient being, but more importantly of the nature of God, who in a sense encompasses and is Himself a part of all things. Only Abdiel understands this paradigm and abandons the faction of rebellious angels doomed to expulsion from the sphere of Heaven. Satan, through a failure of self- and other-understanding, avoids the good of remaining obedient to God's will and divine hierarchy.

As I have already outlined, the other two major executors of evil in *Paradise Lost*, Adam and Eve, suffer from different defects of character than those of Satan; but they lead to a similar negation of the good and a choice, arising from either a failure of intellect or will, to allow evil to be committed. In Eve's case, Satan is able to tempt her because she does not really understand either God or the ramifications of good and evil; yet Adam falls too, not from a failure of intellect or understanding but rather a failure of the will, an inability to stand firm against what he hastily and wrongly assumes to be an inevitable outcome of Eve's sin, his separation from and loss of her. Adam intellectually knows he will be doomed along with his wife by eating the apple, but like his wife, he chooses not to stand and positively strive for the good of God's plan; indeed, he does not even consider the possibility of appealing to God for His advice and help. His will fails him, and again, he "allows" himself to commit evil. All three figures thus illustrate both components of evil as Milton envisions it, both in their freely choosing actions that will lead to evil and in their making choices that are evil to the extent they avoid the good.

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Having established Milton's conception of evil, we must now turn to the works of Hawthorne to determine the extent to which Hawthorne drew on these ideas in his own writing. To begin with, Hawthorne is unquestionably a writer of morality and the struggle between good and evil. But what distinguishes his treatment of this common subject is his exploration, similar to Milton's, of why we choose the paths we do: what makes a "good" character, with a certain background, parentage, and set of moral values, decide on the virtuous path while a "bad" character of near identical initial circumstances decides on the path of vice? As with Milton, it may be stretching the bounds of history too much to expect Hawthorne to have been looking ahead to a time of greater psychological awareness and concern, but it is undoubtedly true that he acted as a sort of barometer for the darkness of men's souls in that time, a moral opposite to the more optimistic outcomes of the metaphysical quests of Emerson and Thoreau. Henry F. Pommer comments that "*Paradise Lost* and other of Milton's works very likely attracted [Hawthorne and Herman Melville] . . . because of the large concern of all three authors with the origins, workings, and powers of evil."[9] More specifically, Hawthorne was principally concerned not simply with individual choices of good or evil, but also with exploring the interior struggles resulting from such decisions; and in so doing, he drew heavily on Milton's two components of evil.

Perhaps the clearest example of Hawthorne's concern is his most famous work on secret sin, evil, and the quest for redemption, *The Scarlet Letter*. Evidence from the time suggests that more than one critic was disturbed by the unflinching look it cast upon sin and hidden evil. Arthur Cleveland Coxe flatly rejected Hawthorne's work as unnecessary and "nauseous," saying in his review:

> Why has our author selected such a theme? . . . Is it . . .
> because a[n] . . . underside of filth has become as requisite
> to a romance, as death in the fifth act to a tragedy? . . . fie,
> Mr. Hawthorne! . . . The poor bemired hero and heroine of
> the story should not have been seen wallowing in their filth,
> at such a rate as this.[10]

Evidently Hawthorne's "appalling" and unflinching examination of sin and evil was of profound psychological concern to readers of the day, perhaps because many of them felt their own individual circumstances to have uncomfortable similarities to those outlined in *The Scarlet Letter*. Yet this was hardly the first book to discuss the question of evil and sin, and as even Coxe is forced to point out, Hawthorne's treatment is not on the surface objectionable - it is the *implications* of what he presents that are so odious and "delicately immoral." And when we examine closely what those

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implications are, we see striking parallels to Milton's two conceptions of evil woven throughout the narrative. First, Hester's sin is unquestionably one of her own choosing, as is Dimmesdale's. She believes her husband to be dead, but it is important to understand that in the Puritan conception this belief does not free her from her formal marital obligations - most importantly, faithfulness to her spouse - and consequently, she must maintain her moral status by remaining celibate until either the return of her husband or verifiable news of his death. As I will discuss in a moment, she is strongly influenced by Dimmesdale's desire; but this does not invalidate the status of her choice as a free one. Like Brown, she allows herself to be brought into sin; and like Brown, she must be punished for doing so. Fate plays a part in bringing about the circumstances that would lead to her, and particularly Dimmesdale's, further punishment at the hands of her former husband Roger Chillingworth, but the decisions she makes to lead her to that punishment are her own. Dimmesdale, too, allows himself to be swayed by his own previously repressed desires, and then compounds the sin by being unable to reveal his complicity until the very end. In this way, both sinful characters, to a greater or lesser degree, choose their evil paths.

And what can be said of Chillingworth, the evil doctor who exacts his revenge on Hester for her betrayal and on Dimmesdale for his collusion with her sin? First, is he evil at all? There is no direct evidence that he is physically poisoning Dimmesdale, though certainly he is unmerciful in his insinuations of guilt and his psychological torture of the sickly minister. Yet even this lack of mercy may be simply an example of carrying out a form of justice, particularly in Puritan theology; and at the least, his is simply a sin of response to the sin already committed. As he says to Hester:

> It is not granted me to pardon. I have no such power as thou tellest me of. . . . By thy first step awry, thou didst plant the germ of evil; but since that moment, it has all been a dark necessity. Ye that wronged me are not sinful, save in a kind of typical illusion; neither am I fiend-like, who have snatched a fiend's office from his hands. It is our fate. Let the black flower blossom as it may![11]

But when closely examined, neither of these last two arguments in any way absolves Chillingworth of his evil actions. To begin with, evil actions carried out in the name of justice do not become less evil with the label; we might have at least expected a character with a higher moral standard than those he condemns to turn the other cheek and forgive the "repentant sinners." Not only does Chillingworth choose not to do this, he operates in such a fashion as to bring both to their early destruction - even if he is not poisoning Dimmesdale directly, he is unquestionably contributing to the minister's

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declining emotional health - and in so doing, proves his words of self-absolution to be hollow. He claims to be not "fiend-like," yet he admits to having "snatched a fiend's office from his hands"; he says that Hester is "not sinful," yet will be punished for the "illusion" of such. And to argue that he is simply responding to an earlier sin, that his behavior has "all been a dark necessity," and as such is not really representative of evil action, is patently absurd from any logical standard. By his own admission, he has "snatched a fiend's office from his hands"; and in so *choosing* to avoid the good path before him (an issue I will consider later in this section), he has become as sinful as those he is revenging himself on. But he is worthy of even greater censure than the other two, for while both suffer for their actions - Hester outwardly, Dimmesdale internally - they do so for one mistake made. Chillingworth continues his vengeance long after the time when he could have been excused for an angry, even violent reaction against his betrayers. Even if it is a sin of response, Chillingworth becomes defined by his sin, rather than defined by the avoidance of it as are Hester and Dimmesdale. Hence the death of his patient hastens his own doom as well, as the focus of his evil has been removed. The narrator comments on this phenomenon in the novel's conclusion:

> This unhappy man had made the very principle of his life to consist in the pursuit and systematic exercise of revenge; and when, by its completest triumph and consummation, that evil principle was left with no further material to support it,--when, in short, there was no more devil's work on earth for him to do, it only remained for the unhumanized mortal to betake himself whither his Master would find him tasks enough, and pay him his wages duly.[12]

In the end, then, Chillingworth is worthy of even greater condemnation than those who had committed the original sin. In Hawthorne's conception, he is clearly an evil character, not controlled by fate but master of his own vengeful, wholly destructive policy towards the outside world, and as such is completely in line with Milton's view of a freely chosen path of evil.

The second set of questions concerning Chillingworth, however, connects with the second of Milton's theories of evil: why does he, or Hester and Dimmesdale, choose to commit evil actions? And is the degree of each character's sin different? The answer to both questions, I think, can be combined in a brief analysis of the nature of each character's transgression.

Hester's sin, as Frederic I. Carpenter comments, is one of passion.[13] Moreover, she is aided and abetted in her action by the man who had the ultimate responsibility to prevent his parishioners from committing such sins.

Hester does choose to give into her desires, but they are desires influenced by Dimmesdale, and as such put her at the lightest level of violation. Again, her choice of sin is a decision not to choose the virtuous path, but to give in to her desires, clearly due to a failure of the will; she is unwilling to take the moral path and wait for positive news of her husband's survival or death. Because of this failure of character, she refuses to positively select the moral decision and avoid Dimmesdale's temptation. Though harsh by modern standards, the judgment that she has failed is of course perfectly logical in the Puritan era and even the mid-1800s. Yet even taking into account this flaw in Hester's character, Dimmesdale's sin is unquestionably greater, as it is twofold, one of passion and one of the hypocrisy incumbent on concealing his first transgression, particularly in light of his specific position in the community. Like Adam's, his failure is one of will and more importantly intellect. First, he allows himself to be seduced by Hester's beauty, and second, he fails adequately to consider his responsibility to those others in his flock (Hester included); and as such, and because his sin has far greater long-term impact than that of Hester's, he must bear a significantly greater share of blame. And finally, Chillingworth falls short of any moral standard in his actions, for he has the lessons of the other sinners to learn from, and yet refuses to do so. His is a continual, unending sin from beginning to end; and as Dimmesdale's physical stature grows weaker from his care, so must the doctor's character be said to be slowly degrading with it. Like Satan, Chillingworth does not understand his position, though his sphere is the limited moral and social one of the village, while Satan must place himself in relation to all of the universe and existence as a whole; in each character's case, however, the actor falsely ascribes the final moral decisions to himself when such choices properly reside in the hands of God. Thus Satan decides on what is just based on his standards, and thus Chillingworth "snatches a fiend's office from his hands," though he might have more properly termed it the hands of God, who should and will eventually decide what the three sinners' punishments should be. Both demonstrate a major character flaw in their failure of understanding, and as this flaw leads to both characters' evil behavior, it is clear that here, too, Milton's influence is strongly felt.

Before concluding, however, I wish to briefly consider some of the distinctions with regard to the question of evil between the two authors I have been discussing. It has been fashionable in some critical circles to overstate the similarities between Milton's and Hawthorne's treatment of the subject of evil. This is a dangerous trap to fall into, since overextending the comparison between the two authors without understanding their differences runs the risk of invalidating those areas where influence *can* be demonstrated. First, while both were concerned with the question of why humans were so prone to choose sin over virtue, and they came up with similar conclusions, their significantly different religious and political backgrounds substantially

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altered the direction from which each considered the subject. Milton believed fervently in the importance of free choice, even when that choice involved a decision to sin; but he did so as the leading defender first of regicide, then of republican government in England in the mid to late 1600s. As he saw it, a free choice of government, and resistance to any absolute authority which maintained its power simply by asserting its authority was essential to a freer England. His only exception to this rule was concerning the will of God, and even in this case, his portrayal of Satan as a "heroic" figure suggests he had some difficulty in reconciling the two positions of absolute free will and absolute submission to the will of God. So, too, would Milton's peculiar brand of Protestant theology dictate the importance of not ascribing to an outside religious authority or accepting extreme restrictions on behavior. In contrast, political concerns had very little to do with Hawthorne's concept of free moral choice; in his case, such an idea was less a prescription for behavior than it was an observation of how individuals usually functioned within a repressive Puritan society. Hawthorne had little interest in political issues, his highest post having been Surveyor of the Salem Customhouse in 1846, and in general, very little of Hawthorne's life was historically noteworthy. Moreover, Hawthorne was not really a "contemporary" author in any case; obsessed with the past, haunted by the repressive attitudes of his ancestors, particularly his father and grandfather, much of his work was concerned with characters in past history, not political prescriptions for the present day. He was of course profoundly interested in morality and the psychology of good and evil, but this had less to do with religious concerns than with his dissatisfaction with the extreme optimism of the Transcendental view, which in many ways he found misguided and incomplete. In general, Milton was driven to write from his personal experience, his political agenda, and his religious background; Hawthorne wrote from a wish to understand history, to synthesize his philosophical stance, and perhaps even to establish a cultural and literary history for succeeding generations. Nevertheless, both are fascinated with the process of choosing between good and evil, and as Pommer notes: "Hawthorne had studied Milton in his youth, and an understanding of *Paradise Lost* was subsequently of great importance in his developing a profound knowledge of the operation of evil in human nature."[14] The lines of influence are clear.

John Milton had an unquestionable and incalculable influence on the writers who followed him; but for Nathaniel Hawthorne he held a particularly unique place in the literary field. For authors such as Melville, Milton was a spirit as deeply involved in and committed to his characters as an American writer could have hoped for; and in Melville's adoption and perfection of the Miltonic epic-heroic ideal, he pulled more power and relevance out of his work than he could have done without his famous predecessor. For Hawthorne, Milton stood as a figure interested in the same profound concerns

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of good and evil, and humanity's choices of either, as himself; and as such, an understanding of Milton's methods concerning the question were of great help in preparing Hawthorne for his own exploration of the moral psychology of a nation. To this author, Milton stood as both a guide and challenger against which he would test his new conception of psychological and quasi-religious tragedy - and the former writer's success was in part determined by the extent to which he was capable of following the latter's tenets while simultaneously breaking free from his towering influence. Hawthorne's ability to do so is a mark of his greatness as a writer and observer of human nature; but in the end he owes a considerable debt to his intellectual, spiritual, and poetic mentor.

Notes

[1]G F Sensabaugh, *Milton in Early America*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 1964, p. 6.

[2]F O Mathiessen, *American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1941, pp. 21, 154.

[3]D Bush, *John Milton: A Sketch of His Life and Writings*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1964, p. 146.

[4]J Milton, *Paradise Lost*, in *A Critical Edition of the Major Works*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1991, II. 520.

[5]Ibid., III. pp. 93-132.

[6]R Warner, *John Milton*. Max Parrish & Co., Ltd., London, 1949, p. 41.

[7]Milton, op. cit., V. pp. 824-825.

[8]Ibid., V. 860-861.

[9]H F Pommer, *Milton and Melville*, University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, PA, 1950, p. 15.

[10]A C Coxe, 'The Nauseous Amour of a Puritan Pastor,' in *The Scarlet Letter - A Norton Critical Edition*, S Gross et. al. (ed.), Norton, New York, 1988, p. 190.

[11]N Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*, in Gross et al., op. cit., p. 119.

[12]Ibid., p. 175.

[13] F Carpenter, 'Scarlet A Minus,' in Gross et al., p. 293.

[14]Pommer, op. cit., p. 10.

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Ecoterrorism, Climate Change and the Politicisation of Science in Michael Crichton's *State of Fear*.

Margarita Carretero-González

Abstract

   The *Da Vinci Code*'s success in warming up debates concerning the Catholic Church and Opus Dei, or the surprised tourists in Paris complaining of wrong information given in the book about some of the locations where the action unfolds bear witness to the power of best-sellers as opinion formers. The fact that the author, Dan Brown, decided to mix fictionalised events with real ones, and even with controversial but plausible theories regarding the relationship between Mary Magdalene and Jesus, may explain why many readers have taken the book as much more than fiction. A similar technique has been used by Michael Crichton in his latest thriller, *State of Fear* (2004), in which he questions the validity of the theories predicting climatic change by structuring the plot around a series of acts of ecoterrorism causing natural disasters which imitate the effects of global warming, leaving scientists at the mercy of environmental pressure groups. In contrast to Brown, however, Michael Crichton actually appears to be serving a political agenda. *State of Fear* includes an "author's message," two appendices and a bibliography with almost 200 references, which Crichton uses to justify his reasons for supporting the contention developed in the book, a thesis that he has also defended in public conferences. It is safe to say that *State of Fear* has become more than a fictional work; it has been transformed into a powerful instrument of science politicisation, precisely a danger the best-selling author warns the reader about in one of the appendices. This paper explores the way Michael Crichton makes use of the ecothriller genre to support a political agenda enthusiastically applauded by the Bush administration.

Key Words: Ecoterrorism, climate change, Michael Crichton, *State of Fear*, politicized science

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   Before I start to develop the ideas that make up the content of these pages, I believe it is only fair to acquaint the reader with the circumstances which led me to write an essay about an author whom I don't like and a book which I didn't particularly enjoy. Watching *Jurassic Park* was the closest acquaintance I'd ever had with Michael Crichton; for some reason, I have

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never been attracted to his books and I must safely affirm that, after reading *State of Fear*, I don't think I will ever read him again, simply because, independently of what I will be discussing in the pages that follow, I fail to get any aesthetic pleasure from the way he writes.

So why did I decide to pick up *State of Fear* and then write this paper? I admit I simply took the bait and joined the controversy around the thesis the book sustains: that global warming, far from being a threat to the planet, is a magnified theory supported by environmental pressure groups in order to make money. I learnt of the existence of the book through an editorial in the Spanish magazine *Integral*, which announced the imminent appearance of the Spanish translation and dwelled on the controversy the book had originated in the States.[1] The editor, quoting from an article that appeared in *New Scientist*, warned about the many powers and interests at stake in the debate around climate change, "perhaps the most crucial scientific question of the 21st century,"[2] and the need for the right side to win, while wondering which side was right. As a citizen concerned about the environment, I was intrigued by what the book had to say regarding global warming. Convinced that the best-selling author was paying lip-service to the powers that be, I went to the Amazon website and bought the book, making sure that I got it second-hand so that at least none of my money contributed to his already big fortune. From this lengthy explanation, it is easy to deduce that I approached the reading of Crichton's book with a fair amount of prejudice.

State of Fear is both a techno-thriller and a political pamphlet, full of action and action heroes, sexy girls, clichés and scientific jargon, but also full of graphs, footnotes and lots of bibliographical references. The plot revolves around a litigation suit the island of Vanutu intends to file against the United States, the largest economy in the world and the biggest emitter of carbon dioxide. The inhabitants of Vanutu run the risk of having to evacuate the island because of rising sea levels caused by global warming. The novel defends the thesis that, if a lawsuit like that were ever filed, it could not prosper because there is not enough scientific evidence to prove that global warming is actually happening in the way eco-alarmists suggest, or even that humans have much to do with it.[3] An environmental organisation, the National Environment Resource Fund (NERF) becomes aware of this and, wanting to win the lawsuit and create publicity, allies with an ecoterrorist group, the Earth Liberation Front (ELF) - a well-known and real ecoterrorist organisation. Their intention is to commit a series of acts of ecoterrorism which mimic the effects caused by global warming, in a campaign perfectly orchestrated to coincide with NERF'S annual conference, that year hosted under the slogan: "ABRUPT CLIMATE CHANGE: THE CATASTROPHE AHEAD." In their first assault, the ecoterrorists intend to break off an enormous iceberg in Antarctica; next, they move to America in order to

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provoke a storm that would flood a camping area killing lots of schoolchildren and, finally, they cause an earthquake in the bottom of the South Pacific with the intention of originating a tsunami strong enough to reach California just in time to hit the news as the conference on Abrupt Climate Change develops. Needless to say, the good guys thwart the purposes of the ecoterrorists and, realising that all NGOs are part of the establishment, they decide to found a truly independent organisation. As if the message had not been clearly stated enough, Crichton adds an "Author's message," two appendices, one on "Why Politicized Science is Dangerous" and another on sources of data for graphs, together with a list of more than two hundred bibliographical references, some of them annotated.

It would be too simplistic to say that the book divides the characters between good and bad people. I have devised a more satisfactory classification, forming the following groups: a) the good-and-well-informed characters; b) the good-but-badly-informed characters; c) the arrogant-and-badly-informed characters; and, finally, d) the just plain evil characters. Crichton's intended reader is perceived as belonging to the second group, and his/her position is taken in the book by 28-year-old attorney Peter Evans who will acquire the correct information as the narrative evolves. Evans is a very concerned about the environment citizen, happy to drive a hybrid and even happier to see how many of them are progressively appearing in Los Angeles. From the beginning he is openly sceptical of all the anti-environmental information he receives from action hero John Kenner (a federal agent / MIT scientist) who clearly becomes Crichton's mouthpiece (a member of the good-and-well-informed characters). Evans expresses the readers' surprise when he learns that the Vanutu case is not an easy one to win: "What do you mean?" Evans says, "This is global warming. Everybody knows that global warming is –", but he is not allowed to finish the sentence and, when forced to give a definition: "Global warming is the heating up of the earth from burning fossil fuels," he is corrected.[4] Actually, he is told, "global warming is the *theory* that increased levels of carbon dioxide and certain other gasses *are causing* an increase in the *average temperature* of the earth's *atmosphere* because of the so-called 'greenhouse effect.'"[5] Accused of not being able to express accurately a strong-held belief, Evans is continuously ridiculed. His constant argumentation against the data he is given to refute his belief earns him a somewhat patronising comment from Kenner: "Your heart may be in the right place ... but you simply don't know what you're talking about."[6] It is up to Kenner / Crichton to instruct Evans / the reader.

Like Evans, the reader questions the information the book offers and tends to understand and justify the excessively dramatic language used by environmentalist Nick Drake, of NERF (belonging to the group of the just plain evil characters). After all, Evans sympathetically thinks,

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the frustration he [Nick Drake] expressed was perfectly understandable. From the beginning, the movement had had to fight apathy in the broader society. Human beings didn't think in the long term. They didn't see the slow degradation of the environment. It had always been an uphill battle to rouse the public to do what was really in its own best interest.[7]

It is only after he almost dies - for the first of many times - prey to one of these terrorist attacks, that Evans sees the light. The moment of revelation follows a literal descent into the underground when he falls into a crevasse. The lengthy quotation that follows serves to illustrate why it is difficult to enjoy Crichton's style:

He realized then that his experience in the crevasse had changed him permanently. Someone had tried to kill him. He could never have imagined such a thing living in suburban Cleveland, or in college, or law school. He could never have imagined such a thing while living his daily life, going to work at his firm in Los Angeles.

And so he could not have predicted the way that he felt changed by it now. He felt as if he had been physically moved - as if someone had picked him up and shifted him ten feet to one side. He was no longer standing in the same place. But he had also been changed internally. He felt a kind of solid impassivity he had not known before. There were unpleasant realities in the world, and previously he had averted his eyes from them, or changed the subject, or made excuses for what had occurred. He had imagined that this was an acceptable strategy in life - in fact, that it was a more humane strategy. He no longer believed that.

If someone tried to kill you, you did not have the option of averting your eyes or changing the subject. You were forced to deal with that person's behaviour. The experience was, in the end, a loss of certain illusions.

The world was not how you wanted it to be.

The world was how it was.

There were bad people in the world. They had to be stopped.[8]

This new Evans, after learning that three ecoterrorists have been killed, is capable of uttering a poetical "Screw'em."[9]

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The romantic touch of the plot demands as well that the change should be noticed by a beautiful-beyond-perfection female character, Sarah Jones, described when she first appears as "an extremely beautiful woman. ... tall, with a honey-colored tan, shoulder-length blond hair, blue eyes, perfect features, very white teeth [and] athletic in the casual way that California people were athletic."[10] As Sarah overhears Evans speaking to Kenner, his internal change becomes also evident to her: "Evans's voice had lost its boyish hesitancy. He was no longer protesting everything Kenner said. He sounded older somehow, more mature, more solid. [...] It was odd, she thought. There was something about him. Some surprising quality she hadn't noticed before."[11] Evans now belongs to the group of the good-and-well-informed characters, he is ready to be an active member of the team that fights against the ecoterrorists, and the reader - hopefully for the author - should have identified with his position at this stage.

The environmentalists are also relegated to the most pathetic group of characters in the book, that of the arrogant-and-badly-informed characters, referred to in the novel as "Gulfstream environmentalist[s]."[12] These are celebrities who seem to have embraced the cause just because it is fashionable. They repeat received wisdom without any critical judgement, adopt politically correct towards the environment attitudes and, when running out of arguments to counteract the data offered by Kenner, they just express an unwillingness to believe him. One of these celebrities is Ted Bradley, a famous comedian who ends up being eaten alive by the inhabitants of the island whose lives he had previously romanticised. Before being taken away to what will be his sacrifice, Kenner doesn't lose an opportunity to lecture him:

> You think civilization is some horrible, polluting human invention that separates us from the state of nature. But civilization doesn't separate us from nature, Ted. Civilization *protects* us from nature. Because what you see right now, all around you - this *is* nature.[13]

Keen on believing to the end that human beings are good, kind, cooperative, that there are genes for altruism and that all cruelty springs for weakness, Bradley is forced to silence by a cruel death. A warning for the romantics.

If *State of Fear* were just a simple work of fiction, I wouldn't have bothered to enter the controversy. After all, fiction is fiction and poetic licence exists for some reason. If Dan Brown could place Mary Magdalene's tomb under the Pyramid in the Louvre, then Crichton is free to make up his own stories as he pleases. But he plays a very clever game in disguising a pamphlet as a best-selling novel, interspersed by a series of lectures on the history of the Earth and the constant state of change in the weather given by

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some characters in the novel in order to persuade the others - and the reader - that global warming is just a consequence of a natural geological era, that it is not a threat to the environment and, most importantly, that humans have nothing to do with it, a thesis Crichton has also defended in public lectures. However, when accused of having manipulated some data offered to him by scientists or of using weak arguments to support his thesis, Crichton then excuses himself by arguing that, after all, he's just a novelist.[14] A novelist, however, who is now taken as an expert on climate change.

Personally speaking, what really triggered me to enter the controversy was the last statement in his "Author's message": "Everybody has an agenda. Except me."[15] Such an act of arrogance should not go unanswered. Crichton offers his list of references "to assist those readers who would like to review my thinking and arrive at their own conclusions"[16] and I decided to accept his invitation. It was not at all difficult to discover his agenda. *State of Fear* was curiously published on December 2004, two months before the Kyoto Protocol enforcement (a protocol that, the book supports, the United States is right in not signing) and also at a time when the Bush administration was "blowing off the Arctic meltdown concerns raised in the Arctic Climate Change Assessment initiated by regional Arctic nations and native tribal peoples."[17] I learnt that the American Enterprise Institute, proud of having about 20 ex-students inside the Bush administration, among them Dick Cheney, offered Crichton the main idea for the plot[18] and that when Crichton was invited to give a talk on "Science Policy in the 21st Century" in their Wohlstetter Conference Center, "AEI president and former Reagan budget official Christopher DeMuth praised the author for conveying 'serious science with a sense of drama to a popular audience.'"[19] Literally, what Crichton and his book are saying is being taken more seriously than the work of scientists. A look at some of the comments posted by readers in the Amazon.co.uk or Amazon.com websites illustrates the power of a best-seller such as *State of Fear* as an opinion former.

For the sake of space, I will not be dwelling on the many theories that have been disproved since the book's publication or the ones that lack foundation. It is true that some issues are heavily controversial and that environmental organisations sometimes use a language that causes more fear than inspiration.[20] Perhaps I belong to the group of the naive people getting the wrong information, but the fact that eleven national science academies put together the joint statement "Global Response to Climate Change," asking politicians at the G8 summit in Gleneagles to acknowledge the problem and find a solution before it is too late for some countries, is enough to convince me that the subject is more worrisome than some powers defend. Moreover, knowing that forty public policy groups that seek to undermine the theory supporting the anthropogenic factor in global warming (among them the American Enterprise Institute, the Center for the Study of CO2 and

Global Change or the Institute for Energy Research), all receive money from ExxonMobil sends a chill down my spine.[21]

It is obvious that Michael Crichton is just the most recent, popular and successful addition to the Green Backlash, part of a greater right-wing backlash which, according to Andrew Rovell, is gripping America with such strength "the very future of the environmental movement itself is threatened."[22] Rovell, writing in 1996, argued that, after the disappearance of communism, the Right needed a new scapegoat, and any sort of movement that opposed a threat to the *status quo* was eligible. The stronger the popularity of the movement, the stronger the backlash. In this context, the environmental movement became the perfect target, since it questioned

> the very relationship human society had with the planet, and asked people to re-evaluate the impact many everyday processes were having on the natural world [advocating] a change in attitudes, a change in industry, a change in government, a change in society itself.[23]

Environmentalists, Rovell continues, like the "civil rights movement, the anti-war movement, the Indian Rights movement, the women's movement or the gay rights movement" became the new enemies of the political Right.[24] Like Michael Crichton or his mouthpiece in *State of Fear*, John Kenner, "many of the Right consider themselves the 'true environmentalists'" and, at the same time, see themselves as "pro-family and pro-morality, whereas environmentalists are portrayed as evil, totalitarians, socialists, communists, against liberty and freedom of the average individual."[25]

After 9/11, the enemy has a new face, the face of Islamic fundamentalism. Anti-environmentalists have even gone as far as to accuse environmentalism of being "a new religion, which was anti-humanity, anti-civilisation, anti-technology as well as pro-alarmism and terrorism."[26] According to Wayne Madsen, some "ludicrous right-wingers have even suggested that eminent global warming experts like Rajendra K. Pachauri are somehow irresponsibly focusing the world's attention away from the war on Islamic terrorism."[27] Interestingly enough, a very similar opinion is expressed by a secondary character in Crichton's novel, referring to the state of fear unnecessarily caused by environmental organisations: "now we have radical fundamentalism and post 9/11 terrorism to make us afraid, and these are certainly real reasons for fear."[28]

Michael Crichton tries to convince the reader that he is the only one without an agenda, that he is just a novelist. However, as I hope I have shown, it is safe to affirm that *State of Fear* is much more than just a fictional work; it has become a powerful instrument of science politicisation, precisely

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the danger the best-selling author most enthusiastically warns the reader about.

Notes

[1] P Valero, 'El clima de Crichton,' *Integral*, vol. 309, September 2005, p. 3; D Glick, "Cambio climático: ¿mito o realidad?" *Integral* vol. 309, September 2005, pp. 38-43.

[2] F Pearce, 'Climate Change: Menace or Myth?' *New Scientist,* vol.12, February 2005, viewed on 20 February 2006, <http://www.newscientist.com/channel/earth/mg18524861.400.html>.

[3] However, "CIEL [The Center for International Environmental Law] and Earth Justice (EJ) are petitioning the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights on behalf of the Inuits. The Commission has in the past recognized the relationship between human rights and the environmental effects of development activities, and its interpretation of this relationship suggests that it would recognize the human rights implications of the effects of global warming. The United States has not ratified the Convention and as such is not subject to the jurisdiction of the court. However, a report by the Commission examining the connection between global warming and human rights could have a powerful impact on worldwide efforts to address global warming. It would demonstrate that the issue is not merely an abstract problem for the future, but is instead a problem of immediate concern to all people everywhere. Recognition by the Commission of a link between global warming and human rights may establish a legal basis for holding responsible countries that have profited from inadequate greenhouse gas regulation and could provide a strong incentive to all countries to participate in effective international response efforts." Donald Goldberg, 'Inuit Case,' *CIEL. The Center for International Environmental Law*, 25 February 2005, viewed on 25 November 2005, <http://www.ciel.org/Climate/Climate_Inuit.htm>.

[4] M Crichton, *State of Fear*, HarperCollins, London, 2005, p. 95.

[5] Ibid., p. 96.

[6] Ibid., p. 228.

[7] Ibid., p. 352.

[8] Ibid., p. 424.

[9] Ibid., p. 425.

[10] Ibid., p. 72.

[11] Ibid., pp. 426-7.

[12] Ibid., p. 147.

[13] Ibid., p. 627.

[14] Glick, p. 42.

[15] Crichton, p. 680.

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[16] Ibid., p. 691.

[17] W Madsen, 'State of Fear - or Smear?' *National Center for Policy Analysis*, 9 January 2005, viewed on 10 November 2005,
<http://www.ncpa.org/sid/2005/20050109.htm>.

[18] Glick, p. 42.

[19] C Mooney, 'Some Like It Hot,' *Mother Jones Magazine*, May/June 2005, viewed on 8 December 2005,
<http://www.motherjones.com/news/feature/2005/05/some_like_it_hot.html>

[20] See Michael Shellenberger and Ted Nordhaus, 'The Death of Environmentalism. Global Warming Politics in a Post-environmental World', *Grist Magazine*, 13 January 2005, viewed on 6 December 2005,
<http://www.grist.org/news/maindish/2005/01/13/doe-reprint/>.

[21] 'Put a Tiger in your Think Tank', *Mother Jones Magazine*, May/June 2005, viewed on 8 December 2005,
<http://www.motherjones.com/news/featurex/2005/05/exxon_chart.html>.

[22] A Rowell, *Green Backlash. Global Subversion of the Environment Movement*, Routledge, London & New York, 1996, p. 5.

[23] Ibid., p. 44.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid, p. 10.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Madsen.

[28] Crichton, p. 541.

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The Language of Evil:
Popular Versus 'Higher' Culture

Neil Forsyth

Abstract

Professional actors who play 'evil' roles have often thought deeply about their task. But they speak quite differently about the experience depending on whether they are acting in works of popular fantasy like Peake's *Gormenghast* or a work of high culture like Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. The key difference may be whether the work contains its own reflection on the nature of evil, and I propose that this gives us a way to distinguish between popular uses of the word and 'higher' literary contexts in which the villain knowingly confronts his own nature.

Key Words: Actor, evil, popular, high culture, Sher.

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I first want to thank the organizers for giving me this privileged position on the conference programme, on the last day right after lunch. This sets me the extra challenge of trying to keep you all awake for the next few minutes. The way I propose to do so is to explore what actors say about playing 'evil' characters, and then, just as you are about to drop off, to show you part of a video interview. The choice of actors and characters is designed to present a simple hypothesis about how to distinguish between popular and higher culture. That distinction may still seem invidious to many of you, but I want to assume that postmodernism has now done its work of abolishing a rigid canon of literary works and flattening the terrain of cultural productions. It is now time to see whether it is worth salvaging anything of what earlier generations thought of as automatic distinctions between 'higher' and 'popular'. My particular examples will be from a production of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and the BBC TV version of Mervyn Peake's *Gormenghast*.

First though, what about the ways in which we use the word 'evil'? It is common enough in low-level journalism, the world in which murder is perpetrated by 'fiends' and most criminals worth writing about, whether convicted or not, are 'evil'. The word is often splashed in capitals across the front page. It has also become common in the kind of political discourse to which we have been reduced as a result of the Bush-Blair 'War on Terror'. Its most famous instance is probably in the phrase coined by the White House

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speech-writer Michael Gerson for the 2002 State of the Union Address, 'the axis of evil', referring to that well-known and close-knit team of co-conspirators Iraq, Iran and North Korea. Another speechwriter had originally put 'axis of hatred', but Gerson changed it to 'evil' for its more theological resonance. "Evil exists, and it has to be confronted," Gerson told Jeffrey Goldberg in a recent *New Yorker* interview.[1] (One may wonder why it needs to be confronted so differently in Iraq and North Korea, unless perhaps the possession of oil-wealth has something to do with it.) In the dry run for the current conflict, Ronald Reagan had also famously referred to the Soviet Union, shortly before its implosion, as 'the evil empire'.[2]

In a more interesting way, the word 'evil' is often used with restraint in popular detective fiction, including television drama, a world which attracts many of the best writers of our time, and some of the biggest budgets. But in otherwise parallel literary discussions the sense of the word soon evaporates when more rigorous critical tools are applied to it. First-time readers of that Gothic ghost-story, Henry James's 'The Turn of the Screw', for example, usually wonder about the location of 'evil': is it in the boy Miles or the mind of the governess? But these questions ricochet endlessly back and forth between conflicting interpretations, and opinions about what is 'evil' soon come to seem beside the point: the tale itself is out of range for such a vocabulary. This critical gap between popular journalism and higher literary contexts, this division within our culture, is what I would like to explore.

There are important exceptions - literary contexts in which the language of evil is common enough. The literature of fantasy, as it has come to be known (Tolkien, Lewis, Peake), is the most obvious site in which a struggle of good and evil is seen to be taking place. Indeed that struggle is the basic assumption upon which the action proceeds. Yet even here there are some surprises. Fiona Shaw, in commenting on the BBC version of Peake's *Gormenghast* in which she acted, says that "there is a lot of talk of Steerpike as a sort of journey of evil, but that doesn't interest me at all about Steerpike. I think it is in a way the incredibly fluctuating class system of the past 200 years that is being very honestly described by Mervyn Peake."[3] The critical move Shaw makes here, good leftist as she is, is typical of those who see all talk of good and evil as a way to avoid the politics and history of genuine conflict. The language of 'the evil empire' or the 'axis of evil' deflects attention from the faults of American foreign policy. For Shaw, any talk of the work she was performing in as 'evil' was merely a distraction.

The actor (Jonathan Rhys Meyers) who actually plays Steerpike, however, differs. He has obviously had to reflect on the issue a lot. With no theatrical training, apparently, Meyers prepared for the role, curiously enough, by reading Samuel Beckett. He thinks of his character as lonely and sexually frustrated, and at one point explains his behaviour as the result of child abuse. Meyers strongly identifies with the character's restless ambition.

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Yet he also makes another move that is common in discussion of 'evil': evil people do not think of themselves as evil, he claims. Hitler "laughed and he smiled and he loved his relations. He loved dogs and played with children, and thought he was a great, great man…you do." Now this move or something like it is almost a necessary step if the actor wants to avoid becoming simply a melodramatic villain. But notice that he is shifting the ground from the literature of fantasy to real history. This is also a common move. Hitler as a personality, Nazism as a political phenomenon, are almost unavoidable in such discussions. Indeed, as Stephen Fry points out in the same context, "Mervyn Peake was an official war artist … and was one of the first people to see Belsen, in other words, was one of the first people to see a new kind of evil that mankind had not yet realized it was capable of." One sees what he means here, and one sympathizes. Such language is very common in speaking of the Holocaust, especially the shift to using 'evil' as a noun. And yet Peake was obviously not one of the first *people* to see Belsen. He was just one of the first *outsiders*. And Fry's statement begs the question of how 'new' was the Holocaust. Potential confusions of this kind arise wherever the language of 'evil', or the Holocaust itself, enter critical discourse. Indeed some historians have argued that making the Holocaust such a special evil removes it from the possibility of explanation (see for example, Mike Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts*).

But what interests me in this particular case is that the actors, and indeed many people who discuss *Gormenghast* and the like, cannot find the material for their reflection about 'evil' within the work itself, and soon shift, either to works of 'high' culture like Beckett's, or to history to find ways to talk about it. Fiona Shaw moves to history to resist talk of evil altogether, while the Steerpike actor imagines himself into the role via Hitler. Of course Tolkien, Lewis and Peake were all three reacting to the events of the Second World War, and one might say that they were in some sense accounting for what happened even without referring to it. They were not writing allegory - they were very firm about that - and they were obviously not writing history, but they were nonetheless constructing literary forms that could, they seem to have felt, enable understanding of that conflict. As for many of the participants, the war against Hitler seemed to reproduce some archetypal conflict. It is not merely a joke when Peake's Steerpike calls the pet monkey 'Satan.' And yet once we move to the vocabulary of a war between good and evil, the temptation is to assume that explanation is no longer called for. We can get on with the story.

In this respect the popular literature of fantasy can be aligned with what I said before about popular journalism, and differs markedly from what Milton did with the war of good and evil in *Paradise Lost*.[4] But here my examples of higher culture must be restricted to theatrical productions and what the actors themselves say. Though there have been two recent

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adaptations of Milton's poem to the theatre, neither was successful,[5] and neither provoked any interesting reflection on the part of the actors. But the case is very different with Shakespeare.

In preparing to play *Macbeth* for the Royal Shakespeare Company in 1999, for example, Anthony Sher went to interview two murderers. He explains at fascinating length for the DVD of the Channel Four adaptation in 2004, that while one of the criminals deliberately avoided confronting what he had done, the other had thought deeply about his crime, was haunted by it, and enabled Sher to develop his own extremely powerful reading of the part. He thus managed to make a direct connection between the lowest level of popular culture and the very highest. But he also explains that what made him do this was not simply the plan of research that a fine professional actor always undertakes, but rather something about Shakespeare's text itself. As I argued in my earlier talk on *Macbeth*[6], what Shakespeare does is to invite us inside his villain, and so compels an intelligent actor like Sher to try to follow. He points out how much thinking Macbeth does, how powerful is his imagination, how contradictory is his behaviour, and how difficult that was to understand. In the end it is precisely the contradiction which makes Sher talk of 'fantastic writing'. Above all he shows how the reflection about the crime contained explicitly within Shakespeare's text made him explore the whole question further for himself and led him to the confrontation with those two contemporary villains. The literature of high culture, in this case at least, contains its own reflection on the nature of evil. That conscious reflection, particularly Macbeth's extraordinary speeches, may also provide a measure of the difference between the knowing confrontation with one's own evil that we meet in a great writer, and the world of fantasy literature, where the villain does not know his own depth. Lady Macbeth is perhaps more like the first of the murderers Sher talked to, in that she does not imagine the consequences. Indeed the sleepwalking scene shows her driven by *unconscious* guilt. Macbeth himself, however, is 'extremely sensitive', haunted by his conscience, and comes eventually to a 'sort of existential despair'. This example, together with the remarks quoted above about the BBC *Gormenghast*, may well show that some of the most intelligent recent discussion of evil has come not from philosophers but from actors. But it also shows how different what actors say will be when they are performing popular fantasy and Shakespeare.

Notes

[1] J Goldberg, 'The Believer', *The New Yorker,* Feb 13 and 20, 2006, p. 60.

[2] Speaking to the National Association of Evangelicals' annual convention in Orlando, Florida on March 8, 1983, President Reagan told them, referring to

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C.S. Lewis's famous letters from a senior to a junior devil about how best to tempt humankind, "I've always believed that old Screwtape reserved his best efforts for those of you in the church. So, in your discussions of the nuclear freeze proposals, I urge you to beware the temptation of pride - the temptation of blithely declaring yourselves above it all and label both sides equally at fault, to ignore the facts of history and the aggressive impulses of an evil empire, to simply call the arms race a giant misunderstanding and thereby remove yourself from the struggle between right and wrong and good and evil". See http://www.presidentreagan.info/speeches/empire.cfm

[3] This and the other comments are quoted from the DVD version of the BBC TV 2000 version of Mervyn Peake's *Gormenghast* trilogy. Of the novels, *Titus Groan* was published in 1946, followed by *Gormenghast* in 1950 and *Titus Alone* in 1959. The TV programmes were based on the first two books.

[4] See N Forsyth, '*Paradise Lost* and the Origin of Evil', *International Journal for the Classical Tradition,* vol. 6, no. 4, Spring 2000, pp. 516-548, and *The Satanic Epic*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2003), pp. 188-216.

[5] See my review of *Paradise Lost,* performed at the Bristol Old Vic. *Early Modern Literary Studies* 10.1, May, 2004, 16.1-11 <http://purl.oclc.org/emls/10-1/revforsy.html>.

[6] 'Evil and Literature: Grandeur and Nothingness', in *Understanding Evil: An Interdisciplinary Approach*, M S Breen (ed.), Rodopi, Amsterdam/New York, 2003, pp. 1-17.

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Sex, Sin and Redemption: The Critique of Christian Rhetoric in Rolf de Heer's *Bad Boy Bubby*

Ann-Marie Cook

Abstract

  The graphic depiction of incest, murder, anal rape, and other forms of violence has led Rolf de Heer's *Bad Boy Bubby* (1993) to be condemned as the most vulgar and offensive film in contemporary Australian cinema. However, in this paper, I locate the depiction of these taboos as part of a sophisticated critique of the pro-family, pro-religion rhetoric being promulgated by Focus on the Family Australia, a Christian organization whose formation in 1993 signified the further entrenchment of Australia's "religious right." De Heer chronicles the misadventures of Bubby, a thirty-five-year-old man whose life has been spent living in a locked basement with his mother, a sadistic religious fanatic who treats him as a sex toy and uses other forms of physical and mental cruelty to maintain her control over him. I argue that the film positions Bubby as a "noble savage" who innocently mimics the violence and sexual behaviour he witnesses without comprehending the suffering that results. De Heer uses the structure of the picaresque to follow Bubby's progress as he escapes the toxic influence of his family and interacts with characters in the real world who "re-program" him to perceive suffering, compassion, and love. Thus, the real subversiveness of the film lies in its inversion of conventional moral perceptions. Indeed, it frames morally transgressive characters as the source of Bubby's redemption. Meanwhile, characters that openly espouse Christian rhetoric are depicted as the true sources of evil because their actions injure, exploit, and marginalize those most in need of compassion. Therefore, Bubby is neither bad, nor mad, but simply a victim of those institutions that are championed by social conservatives as the core values of Australian society: the family and religion.

Key Words: Bad Boy Bubby, Rolf de Heer, John Howard, Australian Religious Right, Contemporary Australian Cinema, family values, Lyons Forum, Christian Fundamentalism

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This paper represents the beginning of a larger project aimed at making sense of the way Australian filmmakers have engaged critically with the socially conservative policies championed by John Howard and his supporters within the Liberal-National Coalition. The 1990s are a particularly important period for this study because they mark the resurgence of Howard's political career as he rapidly ascended to the roles of Liberal Party Leader and Opposition Leader in 1995 and Prime Minister in 1996. This was also the decade that saw the emergence of a new brand of politically-connected Christian fundamentalists who succeeded in destabilizing the historically secular terrain of Australian politics by shrewdly deploying the particular rhetorical token of "family values." A product of this cultural moment, Rolf de Heer's 1993 film *Bad Boy Bubby*[1] offers an intellectually challenging critical engagement with the institutions that fundamentalist Christians championed as the bedrock of Australian society: the two-parent, heterosexual family and the Judeo-Christian tradition. I want to examine how the film's critique can be seen to operate along two main lines: through the subversion of the institutions embraced by "family values" and through the active valorisation of characters whose morally questionable lifestyles and promotion of non-judgmental love place them at odds with the rhetoric of "family values."

1.   New Spheres of Influence: Australia's Religious Right and the Rhetoric of "Family Values"

During the 1990s, the historically secular terrain of Australian politics was transformed by the ascendancy of organizations and politicians who were intent on crafting a new cultural landscape in accordance with a right wing, Christian fundamentalist agenda. This represented an unprecedented development in a nation where scepticism about religious pronouncements on morality and "suspicion of priests and other members of the clergy" defined a dominant strand of post-Federation Australian identity.[2] Even the formation of organizations such as the Australian Family Association, Australian Federation for the Family, and National Alliance of Christian Leaders throughout the 1980s did not substantially interfere with what Lev Lafayette describes as a "bi-partisan wave of secular rationality on moral issues" wherein "progressive and secular leadership [came] from religious leaders themselves."[3]   While on the fringe of political culture, fundamentalist groups in Australia took cues from their American counterparts and cultivated the rhetoric of "family values" in order to promote Christian values and right wing conservative policies on social issues in terms that were designed to have a wide secular appeal.

The formation of the Lyons Forum in 1992 played a crucial role in bolstering the political currency of "family values" rhetoric by translating it

into specific policies that could be implemented through mainstream state and federal institutions. Comprised of disaffected social conservatives within the Liberal-National Coalition, the Lyons Forum was founded on the principle that the family was "essential to the stability, morale, security and prosperity of the Australian nation, and should be seen as the fundamental unit of society."[4] According to its manifesto, the organization's primary goals were to "initiate and monitor legislation with respect to its influence and effect on the family unit."[5] Rallying around former Liberal leader John Howard, the Forum "successfully changed the climate of public debate and harnessed the image of the 'mainstream'."[6] This was a match made in heaven, so to speak, because Howard and the Forum shared the same social values, spoke the same language and enjoyed a mutually beneficial relationship. The organization's support was instrumental in helping him regain the party leadership in 1995, and he reciprocated by making sure that policy objectives where shaped, not by social liberals who had previously held sway in the Coalition, but by 'family values' conservatives - many of whom were members of the Forum.[7] With the emergence of powerful organizations like Focus on the Family Australia in 1993 and the Australian Christian Coalition in 1995, along with Liberal-National Coalition's victory in the 1996 election, it became clear that the Religious Right had consolidated its power and succeeded in cementing the rhetoric of "family values" into the language of policymaking.

Adroit deployment of the rhetoric of "family values" appears to have played a key role in the political ascendancy of John Howard, the Lyons Forum, and right-wing Christian organizations more generally. According to Marion Maddox, this language was encoded as a double signifier that could "appeal to the minority of conservative Christian voters, who recognise the language of 'family' and correctly decode the associated policy agenda" while avoiding the "explicitly religious language" that would alienate the broader and resolutely secular electorate.[8] While it may have sounded innocuous enough - who, after all, could quarrel with the notion that families are an important social unit? - the primary issue of contention for the rhetoric of "family values" is that proponents had very rigid views about what constituted a family. As Maddox explains, "family values" served as watchword for a "specific constellation of policy prescriptions, all directed at entrenching a model of two-heterosexual-parents nuclear family at the expense of other family models."[9] In the name of defending the idealized heterosexual two-parent family, Howard, the Lyons Forum, and conservative Christian organizations promoted a matrix of policies aimed at limiting abortion rights, censoring the media, blocking the legal recognition of same sex couples, preventing single women and lesbians from having access to

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IVF treatment, while championing the value of keeping mothers at home.[10]
Thus, the deeply divisive rhetoric of "family values" effectively enshrined
into policymaking discourses an extremely problematic assumption about the
inherent moral supremacy of traditional, two-parent, heterosexual families
and conservative interpretations of the Judeo-Christian tradition. I now want
to examine how these two assumptions are referenced and ultimately
critiqued in de Heer's film.

2.   Subverting "Family Values"

Produced and released a year after the creation of the Lyons Forum,
and in the same year as the founding of Focus on the Family Australia, *Bad
Boy Bubby* has been both ridiculed as the most vulgar and offensive film to
come out of Down Under and hailed as a ground breaking contribution to
Australian national cinema. Because this is a somewhat obscure film that
many of you may not be familiar with, I want to briefly summarize its plot.
Bubby is an emotionally and intellectually stunted man-child who has been
kept locked in a basement flat with his mother, Flo, for thirty-seven years.
Flo is a sadistic religious fanatic who convinces Bubby that he will suffocate
in the air outside the flat, regularly beats him, and in a shocking twist, carries
on an incestuous relationship with him. Because Bubby has never known an
alternative to this way of life or encountered any cultural influences aside
from his mother's toxic control of him, he accepts his way of life as normal.
Bubby is literally a blank slate who lacks any preconceived basis for
evaluating the right and wrong of actions and instead simply absorbs and
mimics the words and mannerisms he observes. When his father, Pop, returns
home for the first time since Bubby was born, the dynamics of the family
romance are destabilized and Bubby reacts by suffocating his parents with
clingfilm, not to kill them (because he has no concept of death), but simply to
make them, as he puts it "be still." Bubby then sets off on an adventure
through suburban Adelaide in which he encounters people from a variety of
walks of life including Salvation Army choristers, a foul-mouthed rock band,
an atheist who plays a church organ, various people (including a police
officer and the members of a women's group) who beat him up, a rich
woman who buys him food, a prison inmate who rapes him, and a group of
severely disabled men and women whose communication is intelligible only
to Bubby. Bubby falls in love with a Rubenesque nurse appropriately named
Angel and manages, through her influence, to start a new family and thereby
break the cycle of violence that has dominated his life.

De Heer pushes the aesthetic and moral boundaries that supervise
narrative cinema by offering audiences disturbingly graphic depictions of
incest, murder, anal rape, and other forms of violence. But rather than react
with disgust at such revolting acts, I propose that we read them as part of the

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director's critique of the brutality that is perpetuated throughout society at large, within the family unit, and through the façade of religious piety. In an age where spectators have become so accustomed to violent imagery, de Heer renders violence as something so extreme and intense that it cannot be lost on even the most de-sensitized viewer. For at the same time that de Heer confronts us with startling images of dehumanization, he also locates them within a picaresque that extends the possibility of achieving redemption. The picaresque narrative, according to Gerhart Hoffmeister, "has become an accepted genre for representation and commentary on the ills of society,"[11] and de Heer's "Director's Statement" for the London Film Festival reveals that he wanted the film to raise questions about some of the basic that inform social norms pertaining to aesthetics, religion, and morality:

> Using Bubby's non-judgemental view of the world I was then able to begin to explore parts of it. … It became a film about appearances, … It also became a film about belief systems...spiritual, religious, scientific, interpersonal...and how by clinging to them in order to try to make sense of the world, we are actually prevented from making sense of it.[12]

I would argue that the physical journey and educational encounters supported within the picaresque structure provide de Heer with the ideal vehicles for exposing the hypocrisy of "family values" by laying bare the harmful influences that family and religion exert on Bubby and Angel.

The sequences that offer glimpses into Bubby's and Angel's respective home lives can be seen to critique "family values" by inverting the logic of the home, the bonds of family love, and the enriching value of religion. Both "homes" are situated in an industrial landscape that is literally on the fringes of the community and associated with junk space. The interior squalor of Bubby's prison-like basement flat (Figure 1) is echoed by the salvage yard that surrounds Angel's family home (Figure 2). Although interior shots of her home portray it as the typical middle class residence, we soon learn that this is simply a façade of gentility and that her parents are every bit as cruel and hypocritical as Flo.

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Figure 1 (Photo courtesy of Simon Cardwell)

Figure 2 (Photo courtesy of Simon Cardwell)

By exposing the brutality that takes place within the two families, the film undermines the Religious Right's claim that "family values" are the panacea for violence and other social ills. In Bubby's case, motherly love is rendered in the perverse terms of incest and abuse, putting a whole new spin on motherly love. When Flo leaves the flat, she instructs Bubby that if he moves from the spot he's been instructed to occupy, God will tell her and she'll beat him brainless (Figure 3). Even when he is no longer imprisoned under the watchful eyes of his mother and the crudely fashioned crucifix on

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the wall, Bubby repeats, like a perverse catechism, her admonition: "God is watching and he'll beat your brains out." De Heer thus positions Bubby as a tabula rasa figure that absorbs all of the violence dished out by his mother because he knows no alternative. The director observes that "Bubby has only met one other person in his life, on whom he is completely dependent. … He has no real basis for comparison, therefore no real basis for making judgments about people. In that sense he is a complete innocent."[13] Although Bubby does cause suffering, his behavior stems from a lack of awareness about the consequences of his actions rather than any sort of maliciousness. Indeed, when he tortures a feral cat by wrapping it in clingfilm and subjecting it to the same verbal abuse received from his mother, he is simply mimicking what he assumes to be acceptable behavior (Figure 4). He lacks comprehension of suffering and death because nurturing and compassion simply don't exist in the world his mother has created for him. He is neither bad, nor mad, but simply a victim of a toxic home and family life.

Figure 3   (Photo courtesy of Simon Cardwell)

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Figure 4   (Photo courtesy of Simon Cardwell)

Angel's family members also use religion as a discourse of discipline and punishment and use the threat of divine punishment to elicit obedience from their wayward children. The "holier than thou" rhetoric of Angel's mum appeals to religion as a justification for body fascism in a situation which evokes the ways in which scriptures can be interpreted to support or defend the arbitrary preferences of a particular group. When her father accuses her of being a "fat slut" her mother responds, "Fat people are so gross. God hates fat people." But by filling Angel's parents' dining room décor with religious iconography, de Heer ironically highlights the disparity between the message of love and forgiveness evoked by the crucifixion, the pieta, the Sacred Heart, the gospel accounts of the life of Christ and the religious platitudes used to justify judgmental, mean-spirited actions by a supposedly Christian family (Figure 5). Just as he did with his own mum and Pop, Bubby uses clingfilm to suffocate Angel's parents in a gesture that symbolically silences the discourses that use religion as a convenient excuse to promote hateful, discriminatory treatment of other people. Moreover, since the only instance in which family portraits on the wall in the background of the scene are visible coincides with Angel's mother's abrupt outburst of physical violence, the film eloquently implies that those who trumpet Christian rhetoric the loudest are sometimes the most un-Christian like in their behaviour (Figure 6).

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Figure 5   (Photo courtesy of Simon Cardwell)

Figure 6   (Photo courtesy of Simon Cardwell)

According to the rhetoric of the Religious Right, a poor, single-parent family like Bubby's is precisely where one would expect to see violence and neglect - hence their advocacy for the traditional two-parent family. But in a brilliant and daring move, de Heer establishes a visual and thematic correlation between Bubby's family and the ideal two-parent model symbolized by Angel's parents in order condemn the cruelty perpetuated through *both* units. Through the subversion of home, family, and religion, the

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film subversively demonstrates that religion doesn't always have an
enriching influence on individuals' lives and that traditional two-parent
models are by no means inherently morally superior to other family units.
Bubby's mother and Angel's parents embody what critics saw as the vices of
Australia's Religious Right. Like the parents, the Religious Right promoted
judgment, condemnation, and punishment rather than love and forgiveness.
Like the parents, the Religious Right claimed a monopoly on knowing God's
will and used it as a basis for eliminating practices and lifestyles they don't
like. Thus, by exposing the disingenuousness and hypocrisy of the parental
figures who purport to know God's will, the film implicitly conveys a
critique of "family values".

3.   Sex, Sin and Redemption in the Bosom of Love
         Whilst decrying the toxic effects of institutions embraced by "family
values," de Heer exploits the possibilities of the picaresque in order to show
how Bubby's redemption lies in the hands of characters whose lifestyles
would attract the condemnation of the Religious Right: a foul-mouthed band
of rockers who drink and carouse but ultimately show Bubby the first
genuine compassion and kindness he has ever seen, and Angel, the sexually
enlightened nurse who becomes the good mother-lover Bubby never had. By
modelling compassion and kindness for Bubby to absorb and mimic, Angel
and the Band come to form a new and more desirable family than Bubby's
blood relations. As Tom O'Regan points out, "Bubby's…notions of the
sexually attractive body are unconventional: the threatening cornucopia of
flesh of his aging mum…enables his positive desire for the younger but
equally well-endowed … Angel.[14] While her resemblance to Flo, the original
object of Bubby's desire, forms the basis for his initial attraction to Angel,
she functions as a good mother whose sensuality, compassion, kindness, and
nurturing spirit redeem him from the destructiveness of his relationship with
his mother. It is through his interaction with Angel and her ward of disabled
patients that Bubby comes to understand the meaning of suffering. But it is
also through the family they create together that Bubby gains the opportunity
to experience true joy and find comfort in a stable home life that ends once
and for all the cycle of violence.
         Admittedly, some viewers might perceive the film's positioning of
the family as Bubby's saving grace as proof that proponents of "family
values" had gotten it right. But there is an important difference between
acknowledging the value of the family and embracing "family values"
because the latter term defines a family only in terms of a married
heterosexual couple. And it seems to me that Bubby and Angel's union
doesn't quite fit that model. First and foremost, the couple give every
indication of *rejecting* religion because they associate it with the abuse meted

out within their own families. In addition, Bubby and Angel enjoy a liberated sexuality and their marital status is never actually clarified, which means that they could well be "sinfully cohabitating." Thirdly, Angel is clearly positioned as the more dominant partner, so their relationship runs afoul of patriarchal model promoted in many fundamentalist discourses. Finally, the film gestures toward a more inclusive definition of family that extends beyond Bubby and Angel to include the band members who treated him like family more than Flo and Pop ever did. The penultimate scene of the film eloquently articulates the value of the non-traditional family by showing Angel giving birth naked in a hospital room, surrounded by windows that allow the band to be present with Bubby and Angel for birth of the newest addition to their family. By showing that a supposedly "unconventional," immoral, or impure version of the family enriches Bubby and Angel's lives far more than their own biological families did, the film exposes the fallacious logic behind Religious Right's efforts to use the rhetoric of "family values" to promote traditional marriage and family at the expense of other viable models.

4.   Conclusion

By exploring the ways in which *Bad Boy Bubby* engages with the primacy of the traditional family and condemns hypocrisy of judging others who happen to be different, this paper has situated the film as a critique of the rhetoric of "family values." The film can also be seen to register a more profound and radical critique of Christian rhetoric by simply laying bare the extent to which religion can be co-opted by those who use it to validate their own arbitrary moral preferences. By articulating a message about the redemptive power of *any* genuine, loving relationship, the film embraces a set of inclusive values that magnify the hypocrisy and mean-spiritedness that informed both the rhetoric of "family values" and the fundamentalist political agenda that ultimately elevated John Howard's Liberal-National Coalition to the government benches they continue to occupy to this day.

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Notes

I would like to acknowledge and thank Mr. Rolf de Heer for graciously granting permission to use still images from the film in this essay.

[1] R De Heer, *Bad Boy Bubby*, Vertigo Productions, Adelaide, South Australia 1993, DVD.

[2] L Lafayette, 'The Rise of Reactionary Religious Politics in Australia,' *Bad Subjects*, Issue 72, February 2005, viewed on 6 January 2006, <http://bad.eserver.org/issues/2005/72/lafayette.html>.

[3] Ibid.

[4] B Pike, 'The Lyons Share of Power: The Influence of the Religious Right in Contemporary Australian Politics,' viewed on 8 January 2006, <http://members.optusnet.com.au/~pk1956/censorship/lyon1.htm>.

[5] Ibid.

[6] M Maddox, *God Under Howard: The Rise of the Religious Right in Australian Politics*, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, NSW, 2005, p. 94.

[7] Ibid., p. 30.

[8] Ibid., p. 39.

[9] Ibid., p. 38.

[10] Ibid., p. 221.

[11] G Hoffmeister, 'Picaresque Novel,' *The Literary Encyclopedia*, 2 February 2004, The Literary Dictionary Company, viewed on 14 February 2006, <http://www.litencyc.com/php/stopics.php?rec=true&UID=862.>

[12] R De Heer, in Martin McCaffrey, 'Director's Statement - London Film Festival 1993,' *Interviews: Rolf de Heer and Nicholas Hope*, October 2001, viewed on 6 January 2006, <http://www.angelfire.com/movies/badboybubby/interview.htm>

[13] Ibid.

[14] T O'Regan, *Australian National Cinema*, Routledge, London, 1993, pp. 246-247.

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Villainy, Disability, and the Moving Image:
A Psychoanalytic Perspective

Martin F. Norden

Abstract

Taking their cue from such literary texts as the Bible, Shakespeare's *Richard III,* Melville's *Moby-Dick,* and Barrie's *Peter Pan,* filmmakers and TV producers have often associated disability with evil in their works. This conflation has led to a particularly odious stereotype: the "Obsessive Avenger," a character (almost always an adult male) who in the name of revenge relentlessly pursues those he holds responsible for his disablement, some other moral-code violation, or both. Appearing in numerous productions throughout the history of moving-image media, this monomaniacal figure reinforces mainstream society's most deeply entrenched negative beliefs about disabled people. In the hope of exposing the forces behind this most insidious of disability-related stereotypes and the ways it has been received, this essay examines the film/TV linkage of disability and evil through the lens of Freud's "The Uncanny" and related works.

Key Words: Cinema, disability, film, Freud, psychoanalysis, stereotypes, television

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A wheelchair-using man known as "Dead Legs" spends eighteen years on a bizarre revenge scheme to do in the man who had pushed him off a balcony and run off with his wife. A disfigured shepherd recruits the Frankenstein monster to help him murder the jurors who had sentenced him to the gallows. A cartoon pirate plots against the sprite who cut off his hand and fed it to a crocodile. A handless scientist seeks revenge on the U.S. government by using nuclear energy to topple its space programme. A disabled Vietnam veteran plays a deadly game of cat-and-mouse with two young people staying on his rental property. A sniper hunts down the policemen he holds responsible for the loss of his hands during a bungled bank robbery. A disabled ex-cop plants a bomb that will detonate if the bus to which it is attached falls below a speed of fifty miles per hour. A man paralysed from the neck down quietly takes revenge on his cheating wife and brother whilst bamboozling the courts.

The films and television shows suggested in the above collage of word-images reflect one of the more despicable tendencies found in mainstream moving-image media: the demonisation of people with disabilities. Moreover, these particular productions - in order, *West of Zanzibar* (1928), *Son of Frankenstein* (1939), *Peter Pan* (1953), *Dr. No* (1962), *To Kill a Clown* (1972), *Hawaii Five-O*'s "Hookman" episode (1973), *Speed* (1994), and *The Practice*'s "Burnout" episode (2003) - constitute just a small sam-

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pling of this trend. Indeed, the conflation of evil and disability stretches from the earliest years of moving-image media to the present.

The reasons for perpetuating this tendency cannot help but be highly problematic, particularly when we consider the impact of the resulting productions. Stephen Dwoskin, whose 1992 documentary film *Face of Our Fear* traced the evolution of disability imagery in western culture, has argued that such films and programmes cannot help but reinforce mainstream society's prevailing negative views of disabled people. "The disabled images become a dramatic shorthand and are readily accepted as that," he wrote, adding that the symbolic or metaphoric use of disability imagery "is far more dangerous and maintains the stigma more subversively" than productions such as *Johnny Got His Gun* (1971) and *Coming Home* (1978) that use disability as a central theme. The far-reaching consequences of these stereotyped images, according to Dwoskin, can also include a denial of selfhood among disabled people themselves.[1]

The desire to use physical difference in such ways is motivated to a large extent by a complex set of deep-seated and often unarticulated fears. This complex of fears reaches its zenith in the form of a figure that I call the "Obsessive Avenger," exemplified by the characters described at the beginning of this paper. As a means of better understanding this seemingly deathless image and its ramifications, I propose to interpret them in light of psychoanalytic theory, principally Sigmund Freud's landmark 1919 essay, "The Uncanny." Originally published at a time when the world was pondering the disabling consequences of war on countless soldiers, sailors, and civilians, "The Uncanny" is rife with references to disability that have direct bearing on this movie image. An examination of Freud's concepts as developed in this essay and other works may help expose the forces that have shaped this variant of disability imagery and the ways it has been received.

Freud, who began writing about disability issues at least as early as 1893 and began articulating the concept of a castration complex shortly thereafter,[2] ascribed a symbolic dimension to disability in "The Uncanny." Drawing heavily on E. T. A. Hoffmann's "The Sand-Man," an 1814 story about a young man who fears the title character's reputation for tearing out children's eyes and feeding them to his bird-like offspring, Freud specifically equated the fear of becoming blind with a repressed boyhood dread: castration anxiety. "The study of dreams, fantasies, and myths has taught us . . . that anxiety about one's eyes, the fear of going blind, is quite often a substitute for the fear of castration," he wrote, further observing a "substitutive relation between the eye and the male member."[3]

Several commentators have criticised Freud's eye-penis *ersatz-beziehung* as problematic and overly simplistic,[4] but an alternative reading that allows for a broader perspective may lead us to a very different conclusion. Freud emphasised blindness over other disabling circumstances in "The Uncanny" (many adults "fear no physical injury so much as one to the eye," he categorically stated), but a closer reading of the essay suggests a pan-disability perspective. Freud noted, for instance, that "a particularly strong and obscure emotion is aroused by the threat of losing the sexual organ, and that it is this emotion that first gives such resonance to the idea of losing other organs." In addition, he suggested that such phenomena as "sev-

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ered limbs" and "a hand detached from the arm . . . have something highly
uncanny about them" and concluded this latter observation by stating that
"this species of the uncanny stems from its proximity to the castration com-
plex."[5] If we take a cross-disability psychoanalytic perspective, it suffices to
say that, generally speaking, any major violation of typical bodily integrity,
whether genetic or acquired, is tantamount to symbolic disempowerment and
stirs the deepest dread.

What relationship can be drawn between this Freudian reading of
disability and the movie/TV world's deep-seated interest in disabled charac-
ters such as the Obsessive Avenger? Why do filmmakers and TV producers
continue to breathe life into such a hateful stereotype? Are they consciously
trying to arouse repressed feelings in audience members? Or do they merely
subscribe to the view that this image has "worked" in previous cultural ex-
pressions, and that its potency is due mainly to its sheer repetition?

As a start toward answering these questions, I suggest we take a
closer look at "The Uncanny" and Freud's primary concern expressed in it:
"the quality of the *fear* that is elicited," in the words of French feminist theo-
rist Hélène Cixous.[6] It seems obvious to state that filmmakers trafficking in
Obsessive-Avenger imagery are attempting to generate two dimensions or
types of fear: the fear of becoming disabled, and the fear of disabled "Oth-
ers." In a sense, the former is a pre-disablement concern and the latter a
post-disablement one. Put another way, the first is an imaginary fear based on
the *possibility* of disablement, whilst the second arises as a result of actually
seeing (as opposed to imagining) the appearance and actions of a person al-
ready disabled.

The differences among and connections between these types of fear
become more apparent if we move from Freud's first "ingredient" for an un-
canny experience - the arousal of the repressed boyhood fear of castration - to
the second: the *repetition-compulsion*, or powerful drive to repeat unpleasant,
even painful, experiences. Freud developed the idea of repetition-compulsion
after working with people traumatised by events of World War I; he discov-
ered that his patients often returned in their dreams to these highly distressing
events. These revisitations, he learned, afforded the patients no enjoyment
and therefore went beyond his celebrated "pleasure principle."

Another point that Freud discovered about the repetition-compulsion
phenomenon is that people seem to take pleasure in others' traumatic epi-
sodes. "The artistic play and artistic imitation carried out by adults, which,
unlike children's, are aimed at an audience, do not spare the spectators (for
instance, in tragedy) the most painful experiences and can yet be felt by them
as highly enjoyable,"[7] he wrote. It is a point intuitively, and thoroughly, un-
derstood by moving-image makers.

Since the replay of "painful experiences" is very much at the heart of
the typical Obsessive-Avenger tale, a consideration of the way that tale un-
folds may prove helpful here. The story typically focuses on an adult male
who is disabled at the start of the film's narrative (either as the result of a ge-
netic disorder or an accident) or who becomes disabled shortly after the narra-
tive has commenced. This character, who from a Freudian perspective is thus
castrated, develops an irrational and overwhelming desire to repeat the ex-
perience. Instead of merely returning to the traumatic episode in his dreams,

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however, the character transforms this desire into vengeful action by seeking to disempower the figure(s) he holds responsible for this moral-code viola-tion, some other, or both. In other words, his sense of revenge is inextricably bound up with the desire to repeat. Audience members thus witness an exag-gerated playing-out of a character's repetition-compulsion, triggered by the memory of an earlier moral-code violation - usually, that character's disable-ment.

　　　　This "overwhelming compulsion" to repeat the experience by inflict-ing it on someone else accounts in large measure for the sense of uncanniness and fear generated by the Obsessive Avenger, in that it makes this disabled character appear to be possessed by evil, terrifying spirits. As Freud argued in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, a 1920 book he developed concurrently with "The Uncanny," the arousal of a repressed fear may unleash seemingly de-monic forces capable of possessing that person.[8]

　　　　Freud's 1915 essay "Some Character-Types Met with in Psycho-Analytic Work" sheds further light on this linkage of disability, villainy, and demonic possession. In this article, Freud discussed a class of neurotic pa-tients he called "the Exceptions": people who refuse to abandon detrimental behaviour because they believe they are special for having suffered enough already. To illustrate this "Character-Type," Freud drew on one of literature's earliest and most enduring of evil disabled characters: Richard III, Shake-speare's infamous "lump of foul deformity" who single-mindedly murders his way to the throne of England. Freud argued that Richard's claim to Excep-tional status "is closely bound up with and motivated by the circumstance of congenital injury" and even went as far as to speak for Richard in laying out the character's self-beliefs: "Nature has done me a grievous wrong in denying me that beauty of form which wins human love. Life owes me reparation for this, and I will see that I get it. I have a right to be an exception, to overstep those bounds by which others let themselves be circumscribed. I may do wrong myself, since wrong has been done to me." Though Freud did not ex-plicitly attribute diabolic possession to Richard in "Some Character-Types," we may infer as much given his commentary on evil, disability, and demonic forces in "The Uncanny."[9] And, lest we forget, Richard famously calls on diabolic forces to seal a relationship between his disabled status and his vil-lainous behaviour: "Then, since the heavens have shap'd my body so, let hell make crook'd my mind to answer it."

　　　　Filmmakers and TV producers have seldom resisted the idea of un-derscoring the uncanny behaviour of the Obsessive Avengers they have con-structed. John Huston, director and co-screenwriter of one of the most famous Obsessive-Avenger films of all time, *Moby Dick* (1956), serves well as a case in point; he quite consciously enhanced Ahab's uncanny sense beyond the level suggested in Melville's novel. As Huston explained, he believed the film needed a scene that showed the crew realising they were on a mission driven by diabolic forces:

> I finally perceived at least to my own satisfaction, what the
> point of the book was - a blasphemy - and there, by the
> way, was the most difficult problem in writing the screen-
> play: the realization on the part of the mate, the second

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> mate, and the crew of the *Pequod* that they were engaged in
> an unholy undertaking . . . When Starbuck realized that
> Ahab was out to kill a whale, this in itself didn't seem to
> have a particularly diabolic meaning or significance. What
> turned the trick was my realization one day - a ray of light
> hit me - that they were not doing what they were supposed
> to do: to furnish oil for the lamps of the world, light. In this
> they were committing, according to the Quaker mentality, a
> sin; and it was then the realization hit that they were en-
> gaged in something devilish . . . The scene was in Ahab's
> cabin when Starbuck confronts him. That was really the
> heart of the picture and not in *Moby-Dick*, not in the book. I
> think Melville would have approved.[10]

I find it worth noting that many movies and TV programmes featur-
ing Obsessive Avengers show the characters to be wrong-headed in their
quests. In other words, these figures have misidentified the source of their
moral-code violation or simply misunderstood the circumstances that led
them to engage in their monstrously "uncanny" behaviour. As a result, they
are often punished for their actions, usually by death.

Two intertwined observations on this point are in order. Firstly, I
would argue that the standard Obsessive Avenger scenario is driven to a large
extent by what Freud called the "death instinct" or, perhaps more commonly,
the death drive.[11] Freud developed this concept as a hypothesis to help ex-
plain repetition-compulsion, the phenomenon he had found so mystifying
whilst working with patients suffering from wartime trauma. In this regard,
we may view Obsessive Avengers as profoundly self-loathing beings whose
vengeful obsessions overwhelm any counterbalancing forces in their behav-
iour. Seeking to inflict pain on others, they care little if their actions put them
at risk of death. Importantly, the film/TV writers, producers, and directors
who have created such characters are all too happy to grant them their death
wishes.

The eagerness to create and then kill off such characters leads to the
second point: moving-image makers have exploited this disability-related
image in the name of maintaining patriarchal order. In other words, they have
developed cautionary tales in which symbolically castrated male figures who
seek revenge against patriarchal authorities are often punished further for
their Oedipal crimes. The warning posed in these tales is clear: males must
resolve the Oedipal crisis in the "usual" way by repressing their sexual inter-
est in the Mother under threat of castration from the Father and then identify-
ing with that authority figure - and thus do their part to maintain the patriar-
chal order on a micro level - or destruction inevitably follows.

By way of conclusion, I would argue that Freud's work is not enough
to fully explain the motives of either the Obsessive Avenger or the media
practitioners responsible for its continuation. In addition, we may never know
the extent to which audience members are stirred by the psychosexual forces
to which Freud alluded or have simply been conditioned to respond a certain
way as a result of frequent exposure to such potent images. As I hope this
essay has shown, however, psychoanalytic theory, which Freud himself con-

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sidered "an art of interpreting,"[12] can be used as a Rosetta stone for decrypting this moving-media construct. The more we understand this insidious stereotype and the forces that drive it, the better equipped we are to resist it.

Notes

[1] S Dwoskin, 'Missing Pieces,' *Disability Arts Magazine,* vol. 2, no. 1, Spring 1992, p. 4; Dwoskin, interview by author, Paris, France, 6 December 2003.

[2] See Freud's 1893 essay, "Some Points in a Comparative Study of Organic and Hysterical Paralysis," in *Collected Papers*, vol. 1, Basic Books, New York, 1959, pp. 42-58.

[3] S Freud, 'The Uncanny,' in *The Uncanny*, trans. D McLintock, Penguin Books, New York, 2003, pp. 139-40.

[4] See, for example, R Ginsburg, 'A Primal Scene of Reading: Freud and Hoffmann,' *Literature and Psychology*, vol. 38, no. 3, Fall 1992, p. 27; and E Wright, *Psychoanalytic Criticism: Theory in Practice*, Methuen, London, 1984, pp. 147-48.

[5] Freud, 'The Uncanny,' pp. 139, 140, 150.

[6] H Cixous. 'Fiction and Its Phantoms: A Reading of Freud's *Das Unheimliche* (The 'Uncanny'),' *New Literary History*, vol. 7, no. 3, 1976, p. 536.

[7] S Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, trans. and ed. J Strachey, Liveright, New York, 1961, p, 11.

[8] Ibid., pp. 29-30.

[9] S Freud, 'Some Character-Types Met with in Psycho-Analytic Work,' in *Collected Papers*, vol 4, Basic Books, New York, 1959, pp. 321-22; Freud, 'The Uncanny,' pp. 149-50.

[10] Huston cited in E Sherman, *Directing the Film: Film Directors on Their Art*, Acrobat Books, Los Angeles, 1976, pp. 34-35.

[11] As he famously put it, "The aim of all life is death." See Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle,* p. 32.

[12] Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, p. 12.

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Innocent or Guilty of Crimes Against Humanity? The Role of Film in the Holocaust 1939-45

Julia Victoria Doyle

Abstract

The devastating results of Hitler's campaign to produce a pure Germanic state are well documented. Less well documented, is his use, or abuse, of the media in obtaining this goal. As part of his vision he ordered *Gleichschaltung*, the "total assimilation within the state of all political, economic and cultural activities." This, he believed, could only be achieved through taking complete control of the media, for Hitler realised that film and other forms of media, were essential tools in propagating his ideologies to the German people and in particular the German youth. For as Manvell and Fränkel point out, "a regime as ruthless as the Nazis could not have existed without the constant application of propaganda in the minds of the people."

This paper will examine Hitler's use of propaganda in films as a means of influencing the minds of the German people in the period between 1933 and 1945. The paper will primarily focus on Hitler's theories on propaganda and how he implemented them into the everyday lives of the German people through film. By a close examination of several films produced during this period the paper will illustrate how Hitler and his National Socialist Party successfully used film to corrupt the minds of the German people to their way of thinking, thus allowing the party to implement its ideologies with devastating consequences.

Key words: Holocaust, the Eternal Jew, Hitler, film, propaganda, Hitler Youth, Joseph Goebbels, Nazis, National Socialism

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1.   Introduction

The devastating results of Hitler's campaign to produce a pure Germanic state are well documented. Less well documented is his use, or abuse, of the media in obtaining this goal. As part of his vision he ordered *Gleichschaltung*; the "total assimilation within the state of all political, economic and cultural activities."[i] This, he believed. could only be achieved through taking complete control of the media, for Hitler realised that film, and other forms of media, were essential tools in propagating his ideologies to the German people and in particular the German youth. For as Manvell and

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Fränkel point out, "a regime as ruthless as the Nazis could not have existed without the constant application of propaganda in the minds of the people."[ii]

This paper will examine Hitler's use of propaganda in films as a means of influencing the minds of the German people between the periods of 1933 to 1945. The paper will primarily focus on Hitler's theories on propaganda and how he implemented them into the everyday lives of the German people through film. By a close examination of films produced during this period, the paper will illustrate how Hitler and his National Socialist Party successfully used film to corrupt the minds of the German people to their way of thinking, thus allowing the party to implement their ideologies with devastating consequences.

2.   What is Propaganda?

Propaganda is defined in the Geddes and Grosset dictionary as "the organised spread of ideas, etc. to promote a cause."[iii] Such causes are usually of a political nature. Propaganda aims to subject individuals to intensive political doctrine and to break down a subject's resistance. It implies the connotations of mass manipulation, misinformation, or an attempt to mislead. Further, it can either be overt (openly done) or covert (concealed).

Propaganda is not new. In fact, the term 'propaganda' dates back to 1622, when the Vatican established the Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide (The Sacred Congregation for Propagating the Faith of the Roman Catholic Church). The aim of their propaganda was spreading "faith to the New World, as well as opposing Protestantism."[iv] It was also around this time that the term 'propaganda' lost its unbiased meaning, for the term propaganda originally stems from the Latin '*propagatio*,' meaning to "propagate and to spread."[v] However, in modern terms it evokes the image of something negative, or deceitful, or a method of mass manipulation. For as Sproule argues,

> Propaganda represents the work of large organisations or groups to win over the public for special interests through a massive orchestration of attractive conclusions packaged to conceal their… persuasive purpose.[vi]

It is this form of propaganda that Hitler would use with devastating effects.

3.   Hitler and Propaganda

When Hitler became Chancellor of Germany in 1933, he strove to use propaganda to influence the German public and create a totalitarian state. He believed that one of the key functions of propaganda was to reinforce his ideas to the masses. To Hitler, this meant that the people had to be orientated towards specific 'information,' their attention drawn to certain 'facts' (such

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as Anti-Semitism), and German traditions distorted to suit those of the Nazi Party.

Hitler believed that the masses were unintelligent and therefore the propaganda used had to be simple and straightforward in order to be understood by them. Thus, he believed that all information put across via propaganda had to be condensed into easily-learned slogans, and repeated many times in order to reinforce his message. As he claimed in *Mein Kampf*,

> The function of propaganda does not lie in the scientific training of the individual, but in calling the masses' attention to certain facts, processes, necessities, etc., whose significance is thus for the first time placed within their field of vision. The whole art consists in doing this so skilfully that everyone will be convinced that the fact is real, the process necessary, and the necessity correct.[vii]

Therefore, propaganda, particularly film propaganda, was used relentlessly to reinforce Nazi philosophies, and through this medium Hitler significantly influenced the way in which the German people thought and behaved.

4.   Hitler's Propaganda Machine

Propaganda, according to Hitler, is the attempt to confine men's minds to a single line of thought which leads them to take action in support of the propagandists. This excludes any form of rational argument, or any form of reasoning which might prejudice the propagandist's case. According to Welch, "if propaganda is to be totally effective, it can exist only in a mental vacuum within which every form of expression, political or religious, educational or artistic, is equally enclosed."[viii] In other words, non-conformists must disappear, while every other kind of expression must continue to function under a police state. Citizens must either adopt the ruling ideology or try to function in a way that is no threat to the ruling party.

In order to strengthen his power, Hitler restructured Germany's mass media machine by creating the *Reichsculturekammer* (Reich Culture Chamber). This was made up of seven chambers - film, radio, theatre, music, fine arts, literature and the press - all of which would be used to disseminate his political propaganda to the masses. To consolidate his power he banned all foreign films, radio broadcasts, and international press, and began his infamous book burnings, for he wanted the German people to be exposed *only* to National Socialist ideologies. Anything that contradicted his views was eliminated.

Such interventions and censorship were, according to Manvell and Fränkel,[ix] presented to the public in a positive light, for the Nazis claimed

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that through censorship and control of content a greater level of 'healthiness' in film and a higher cultural quality would be assured. In a speech delivered to the opening of the House of German Art in Munich in 1937, Hitler stated:

> During the long years in which I planned the formation of a new Reich I gave much thought to the tasks which would await us in the cultural cleansing of people's life; there was to be a cultural renaissance as well as a political and economic reform… As in politics, so in German art life; we are determined to make a clean sweep of phrases…[x]

The result was that film criticism, which was once of a very high quality in Germany, became a mere record of political appropriateness.

5.   Hitler's Vision for Germany

Hitler's 'cultural renaissance' was applied widely to the German film industry. His manipulation of German ideology began simply, for Hitler believed that the key to this renaissance was the re-emergence of traditional German ideals, such as *Völkesgemeinschaft* (national community) and *Blut und Boden* (Blood and Soil). Therefore, the Nazi Party produced films that portrayed country life and nature. Hake argued that nature in itself was a large part of German culture as nature represented "the idealisation of pre-industrial communities" based on "discourses of right wing nostalgia and negative utopianism."[xi] These films were popular with German audiences (particularly during the war), because they showed a world away from city life and acted as a form of escapism from unemployment, poverty, and the harsh realities of war. However, these films had a darker, more sinister agenda. They promoted the Nazi theory of *Weltanschauung*; the Nazi philosophy on the way German life *should* be. *Weltanschauung* was based on a variety of German traditions including the *Völk*, the notion that Germany was "a stable, racially pure, rural community, rooted in the soil of the homeland, entirely at one with its natural environment."[xii]

6.   Film and the Indoctrination of the Youth

One of the main aims of the Nazis was to indoctrinate the youth of Germany. Hitler firmly believed that the young were the easiest to manipulate. The Nazis realised the potential of cinema for exploiting children and adolescents susceptible to the fantasy and romanticism of the cinema. Film was particularly important to the Nazis as it was a modern visual medium popular with the majority of young people. As Welch points out, the Nazis "appreciated that the cinema was unexcelled in its ability to play upon emotions, and also because it was a perfect medium for combining both entertainment and propaganda."[xiii]

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Through propaganda films the youth were taught total devotion to Hitler and their need to make the ultimate sacrifice for him; death in battle. This is demonstrated in the film *Hitlerjunge Quex*, a film about a young Hitler Youth who sacrifices himself for the cause.[xiv] This film was also used to normalise and reinforce the idea that the young should be on the front line fighting for the Führer and Germany.

In order to achieve maximum impact from propaganda films, and in an attempt to influence all aspects of the German youths' lives, the National Socialist set up three main organisations; The Hitler Youth (*Hitler Jugend*), The Ministry for Education (*Erziehungsministerium*) and a section of the Reich Ministry (*Reich Ministerium für Völksaufklärung und Propaganda*, RMVP) dedicated to the 'education' of the young. These organisations worked together in order to create a new generation of people dedicated to Hitler and National Socialism.

Whilst the Youth movement aimed at ensuring the body of the young was fit, it was also concerned with the mind. Film was utilised here, as it was seen as the most important propaganda tool of the Government. Indeed, in 1941 Joseph Goebbels (The Minister for Enlightenment and Propaganda) announced to a Hitler Youth audience that:

> Our state has given film a very important assignment, and is therefore one of the most valuable far-reaching factors in the education of our nation… We do not want to ignore the fact that film must primarily entertain, but at the same time when the nation is so burdened, entertainment and politics cannot be divorced and certainly cannot be separated from the tasks of political leadership[xv]

In order to reinforce this, Hitler set up Film Hours (*Jugend filmstundelle*) to ensure that all children were subjected to these political films. Indeed, in 1936 time was allocated, usually on a Sunday, in order to watch a feature film. According to Hoffman[xvi] these were very popular with the young, particularly those living in rural areas where there were no cinemas. In 1942/43, 1500 mobile film units were set up that travelled around the country in order to "spread the Führer's word."[xvii] The films were introduced by Nazi officials who would indicate the relevant ideological points to be discussed after the movie to ensure that the children focused on the main principles and philosophies in the film. By 1936 it became *obligatory* for all children to attend these films. During the first year (1934), attendance was approximately 300,000 youths. By 1938 this had increased to over 2.5 million.[xviii]

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7.   Film and National Socialist Education

On 16 June 1934, the Reich Centre for Educational Films (*Reichstelle für Uniterrichtsfilm*) was founded. The main aim of this organisation was to oversee the production and distribution of 'educational' films for schools. Films shown were propaganda and cultural films with two main themes: a distorted picture of German history and the purity of the Aryan race. The films emphasised the supremacy of the German race and the inferiority of other cultures.

In 1940, the *Reichstelle* was changed to the Reich Institute for Film and Pictures in Science and Education (RWU). To exploit the opportunities that film propaganda could bring to educating children, the Nazis decided that the Ministry for Education and the RWU would work closely with the Propaganda Ministry. On 22 June 1934 the Minister for Education, Dr. Bernard Rust, ordered the showing of political propaganda in films in schools. He explained this new policy to an audience of specially invited teachers:

> The leadership of Germany increasingly believes that schools have to be open for the dissemination of our ideology. To carry out this task we know of no better means than the film. The film is particularly important for school children.[xix]

Propaganda films were screened in classes alongside a lecture from the teacher about the main points in the film. Children were often made to take exams after the screening in order to reinforce the main ideological themes of the film. The showing of these films was incorporated into school curricula alongside the teaching of the superiority of the Aryan race and anti-Semitic material.

The ultimate aim of the Hitler Youth, the Educational Authority, and the control of the Propaganda Ministry was to destroy, through propaganda films, individual thought in children, by infiltrating each stage of their development and their daily lives. They successfully subjected children to a planned course of indoctrination to produce a generation of people dedicated to Hitler and the Fatherland.

8.   Cultural Cleansing and Anti-Semitism

Hitler declared in *Mein Kampf* that "none but members of the nation may be citizens of the State. None but those of German blood may be members of a nation. No Jew, therefore, may be a member of the nation."[xx] Therefore, his 'cultural renaissance' focused on the dissemination of anti-Semitic propaganda.

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Hitler's hatred of the Jews was apparent from the beginning of his political career. In a speech he gave in Munich in 1922, he stated of the Jews that:

> His is no master people; he is an exploiter: the Jews are a people of robbers. He has never founded any civilisation, though he has destroyed civilisations by the hundred… everything he has stolen. Foreign people, foreign workmen build him his temples, it is foreigners who create and work for him, it is foreigners who shed their blood for him.[xxi]

He believed that the Jews were 'wandering and rootless' and were in opposition to traditional German values.[xxii] For, according to Reeves, Hitler believed that 'pure Aryan' Germans were "stable, and settled, spiritual, the epitome of healthy rural life", but that Jews were "materialistic, embodied the decadence and corruption of city life."[xxiii] However, it wasn't until he fully came to power that he used his position to launch his campaign of hatred against the Jews. Hitler believed firmly that "the genius of a great leader, consists of knowing how to concentrate the hate of his followers on one single enemy so that if need be even traditional opponents will unite against this enemy."[xxiv] This 'single enemy' became the Jewish people. Hitler's aim was to unite Germany against them. Hitler blamed the Jews for the social and economic problems that had befallen Germany. He accused the Jewish merchants of controlling Germany's capital and keeping the masses poor. The Jews, therefore, were made scapegoats towards which the German people could work off their resentment. Discrimination against the Jews was fuelled by a constant bombardment of anti-Semitic propaganda messages in the media, particularly in films. The result of this was that hatred of Jews by the German people increased dramatically as the number of anti-Semitic messages within the media, particularly in film, increased.

This increase in violence towards Jews was particularly evident among the younger German population. Hitler had seized the opportunity to use film to promulgate his ideologies knowing that the German people, especially the young, loved films. However, it is only through analysing films such as *The Eternal Jew* that the full horror of this manipulation can be appreciated.

8.   The Eternal Jew
The German film industry in 1940 saw the release of one of the most notorious anti-Semitic films of the Third Reich; Fritz Hippler's *Der ewige Jud* (The Eternal Jew). This film was made with the sole intention of inciting hatred against the Jewish race. It was made under the specific orders

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of Goebbels, and with Hitler's blessing. It is one of the most shocking anti-Semitic 'documentary' films made during that era.

The film portrays Jews living in squalid, insect infested ghettos, in which filthy men, women, and children, trade in any small pitiful goods they can acquire. Children are shown bartering for scraps of food. However, they are portrayed as willingly living in these conditions. The film suggests that in reality they are rich from the wealth that they have hoarded from the poor unsuspecting German citizen. The aim of this 'documentary' was to portray the Jews as the vilest of human parasites, fit only for segregation from the rest of mankind.[2] Indeed, the commentary by Eberhard Taubert, which gives the film its demagogic tone, begins by stating that,

> The civilised Jews we know in Germany only give us an incomplete picture of their racial character. This film shows genuine scenes of the Polish Ghettos. It shows us Jews as they really are before they conceal themselves behind the mask of civilised European people. [B]

In other words the audience is warned from the outset that the Jews they may know hide behind a mask of a civilised people.

The film claims to expose the Jews in their "natural state" in the ghettos of Poland; stating that "the war in Poland has given us the opportunity to get to know Jewry at its heart."[B]

The film overtly attacks the Jewish faith claiming that it *teaches* Jews to be deceitful and cunning. This is then contrasted to National Socialism, which it claims promotes honesty and integrity. The commentator emphasises the differences claiming that,

> For the Jews, business is a kind of holy transaction. For the non-Jews this is something completely incomprehensible. The Aryan attaches a conception of its value to every activity. He wants to create something, something worthwhile. Food or clothing, or homes, or machines, or works of art, or anything else that is of value to everyone. He is ruled by the feeling of being responsible for his work. [B]

To emphasise the point the film compares Jews to rats spreading disease across Europe and amongst German communities, infiltrating the German way of life, whilst pilfering honest money from *honest* German people.

The film concludes with an idealised sequence showing the "beauty" of the Aryan youth; soldiers marching in smart uniforms, the Hitler Youth playing in brass bands marching proudly wearing the Swastika and hailing

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their Führer. The commentator concludes, "Keep our race pure. Racial Purity forever." [8]

There is no other explanation for the contents of this film other than that it is an out-right attack on Jews. Furthermore, the film introduces the concept of annihilation of the Jews in Germany and other occupied countries. It provides an insight into what would become 'the final solution'. Undoubtedly, its overall aim was to persuade the German people, through its use of provocative imagery and language, that the total extermination of the Jewish race was necessary and *acceptable*. The film had an overwhelming effect on German adolescents. After the film was released, violence against Jews by German youths increased dramatically.

9.   Conclusion

Hitler used propaganda in films to achieve his personal objectives with horrific consequences. He accomplished this in several ways. In the first place he influenced the beliefs of the young by convincing them that as Aryan people they were superior to their Jewish (and foreign) neighbours. This was achieved by supplying the German people with continuous lies through film propaganda. He expanded his propaganda machine to encourage mass film production, and used films such as *The Eternal Jew* to reinforce his anti-Semitic message. Through total control of the film industry and complete censorship of all media output he was able to produce a complete totalitarian state, with Hitler's word as law.

Propaganda is a powerful weapon, a weapon that Hitler successfully used in order to influence the views of the German people, and in doing so was able to publicly commit mass genocide. As such film during Hitler's reign was guilty of aiding this process.

Notes

[1] D Welch, *Propaganda and the German Cinema 1933-1945*, Clarendon
            Press, Oxford, 1985, pp. 10, 23, 65, 24, 29, 69, 26.
[2] Fränkel, H and R Manvell, *The German Cinema*, J M Dent and Sons Ltd, London, 1971, pp. 65, 88.
[3] Geddes and Grosset, *English Dictionary*, Children's Leisure Products Ltd, New Lanark 2001, p. 805.
[4] G S Jowett and V O'Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion,* Sage Publications, London, 1989, pp. 2, 3.
[5] Collins*, Latin Dictionary*, Collins, London, 1990, p. 266.
[6] A Hitler, *Mein Kampf,* Hutchinson and Co, London, 1969, pp. 164, 44.
[7] D Welch, (ed.), *Nazi Propaganda,* Crook Helm, London, 1983, pp. 40, 66.
[8] S Hake, *German National Cinema*, Routledge, London, 2004, p. 42.

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[9] H Hoffman, *The Triumph of Propaganda: Film and National Socialism, 1933-1945*, Berghahn Books, Providence, 1996, pp. 83, 98, 103.

[10] R E Herzstein, *The War that Hitler Won: Nazi Propaganda,* Hamish Hamilton, London, 1979, p. 283.

[11] N Reeves, *The Power of Film Propaganda: Myth or Reality?* Cassell, London, 1999, p. 84.

[12] E Leiser, Erwin, *Nazi Cinema*, Secker and Warburg, London, 1968, p. 74. Welch, *Propaganda and the German Cinema 19901945*, 23.

[13] *Hitlerjunge Quex*, Director, Hans Steinhoff, Germany, 1933

[14] Welch, *Propaganda and the German Cinema 19901945*, 65.

[15] Hoffman, 98.

[16] Ibid., 103.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Welch, *Propaganda and the German Cinema 19901945*, 24.

[19] Hitler, 44.

[20] Herzstein, Robert. E., *The War that Hitler Won: Nazi Propaganda* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1979), 283.

[21] Reeves, Nicholas, *The Power of Film Propaganda: Myth or Reality?* (London: Cassell, 1999), 84.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Leiser, Erwin, *Nazi Cinema* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1968), 74.

Ur-Real Evil and Wickedness In A Virtual World

Marlin C. Bates, IV

Abstract

Massively multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPGs) are a relatively new phenomenon, but as they near their tenth birthday, some trends are starting to develop in the genre. Most importantly, there is the fact that in every game, whether it is science fiction or reality, fantasy or fact, there is always a division of forces based on the philosophical divide of good and evil. This poses an interesting question: what rhetorical purpose is served by creating and playing characters with an evil identity?

This study seeks to answer that question by examining the rhetorical construction of evil identity in the MMORPG Ultima Online (1998). In doing so, the study discovers that each player is allowed to pursue evil and wickedness for a multitude of reasons. Employing a grounded theory approach to implicit identity theory, the paper investigates how humans create both the product of identity and the process of an evil identity through rhetoric by examining how player-characters in Ultima Online follow an implicit schema of the "evil" character and, thus, identity development. The paper makes the argument that players use the site of Ultima Online in order to create identities in a manner that is implicitly recognized by all players. Those identities are then performed in web sites by the player-character.

Key Words: Identity, Rhetoric, MMORPG, Online, virtual, ur-Real, Ultima, grounded theory

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1. Introduction

Building upon prior research that discovered how player-characters in Ultima Online follow an implicit schema of character, and, thus, identity development, this paper will expand those conclusions by looking specifically at how this site is used to create and employ player-characters with an "evil" persona.[1] Players use the site of Ultima Online in order to create identities in a manner that is implicitly recognized by all players. Those identities are then promulgated and performed in web pages associated with the game. Thus, this paper will examine two aspects of the ur-Real world of Ultima Online: player profile scrolls and web site performances.

The creation of identity occurs as users choose who and what they wish to be in the game. The user can choose from a variety of professions and personalities. After the user determines what to become, the user follows a

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method of performance that is learned from other users within the game. The player profile scrolls represent the next step of the identity creation process in Ultima Online. It is with the profile scrolls that a player-character "joins the world of contending forces at play."[2] The contending forces in Ultima Online are the other player-characters and their own identities, each trying to adopt and adapt to the overarching schema present within the game itself. This paper presents a series of categories in which player-characters find themselves as they seek to understand the dramatic action taking place in front of them and enmesh themselves within it.

Before we can begin to discover the identities present within Ultima Online, we need to determine what "evil" is. With respect to Ultima Online and its players, that is a particularly difficult task. It has been argued by others that an immoral or evil act can only be attributed to someone if: a) that person is responsible for what he/she does; b) the action causes suffering in another person; and c) that suffering is undeserved.[3] With this definition, it would seem to be a rather straightforward process to separate the evil from the not-evil. However, making that determination in an ur-Real space is a subjective conclusion that depends upon a shared perception of the reality in which it occurs. I will argue that the identity performance in this game allows for player-characters to be "evil" in the sense that the player-characters uphold a sense of identity that they might not be able to perform in the "real" world. These players do this in order to re-tribalize in a post-modern sense. In an attempt to prove this thesis, we will look at the process of the identity creation and how it allows an "evil" product to be performed.

2.   Identity Creation

Although player-characters in the game can and do freely converse with each other, there is little objective proof by which to judge statements made by other player-characters. If a player-character were to run around the game declaring him- or herself a "demon-killer extraordinaire," most other player-characters would label such a character as either a "noob" or a fool.[4] As such, the player-characters need a way to identify themselves as truly living up to their alleged exploits. As Burke noted, we are "the only animal to [his] knowledge that seeks to define itself."[5] Therefore, player-characters must communicate who they are. Furthermore, any identity communicated is not determinate of the "real" or the "false." The identity presented and which the audience receives is one and the same. No matter how many differences may arise from the display of certain characteristics, it is real. Again, Burke reminds us that "in the mimesis of the practical the distinction between acting and play-acting, between real and make-believe becomes obliterated."[6] There can be no falsity, per se. Indeed, whatever actions are presented - *which are received by the audience* - become part of the player-character's identity. Therefore, questions of whether a representation is a "valid" one become

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moot. Furthermore, actions that are not received by an audience, no matter what the sense of reality, cannot be part of that identity. The player-characters may wish the actions to be part of their identity, but unless others receive the player-character's symbolic labour, identity cannot be expressed. If this labour is to be seen, there must be an outlet for it. That outlet is best seen as Ultima Online itself, along with associated web pages, because they allow a player-character a persistent method to fulfil his or her need to self-define as an "evil" or "not evil" persona.

For example, one short article, "Overconfident Fools," recounts how "our little terror party" went about combating others in a dungeon. Nowhere does the author distinguish between in-game or out-of-game realities. The reader is not given clues as to whether this is "real" or not.

> Well this fool, Allawishes, remained in the room while the rest of us entered. I assumed he must be powerful to not cower in fear or flee altogether. I always take advantage of the foolishness of others, though, and when I saw that he was wearing a full suit of plate and had just drawn his weapon without putting up another reflection shield, I turned him into a lightning rod. He went down. Glancing upon his body, I noticed he was over-equipped with mystical reagents, about 80 of each, so I lightened his load. I make a habit not to carry more than 20 of each at any given time, in the event that I am killed (which isn't very often, thankfully), but nobles are rarely as smart as I.[7]

The author describes the situation as if he were truly engaged in mortal combat. He does not use phrases such as "my character" or "his inventory." This is a story of performance, of how the rhetor-player crafts his identity for the reception of others. It is a tale of accomplishment told for the benefit of others to understand how a particular identity may be performed within the world. Just as the battlefield soldier tells stories to demonstrate a particular combat-related identity, the rhetor-player demonstrates a particular game-related identity. Additionally, however, it justifies what would normally be an immoral act - murder - in terms of objecting to the game's moralistic confines. Although the player-character wants to be an "evil" character, he must still answer to the mores of the community present within the game. In this case, he disagrees with the artificial "noble" players because he sees them as less capable, and, therefore, deserving of suffering. This is in direct disagreement with the game's official notoriety system, which seeks to elevate "good" and suppress "evil."

The player-created fiction web pages of the pseudo-official sites allow player-characters to do that in that they are able to fully explain, in

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game fictional terms, how and why they disagree. The "Darkside of UO" web site provides an even more explicitly "evil" example in which "Xavori" explains his dislike of the notoriety system.

> I was exploring the dungeon Covetous, looking for a good place to set up an ambush. Because I was unprepared, I had been ignoring the adventurers who were running back and forth past me. A few would pause, then shout out 'RUN!' when they saw I was marked as a Dread Lord. Apparently, the tyrant's false virtues were starting to sway the masses. Even though I probably deserve my title, after my testing of Sosaria's populace, I had my doubts that there were very many true nobles at all. As I was counting the steps across a narrow looking part of the cavern, three 'nobles' approached me. The first crouched into a fighting stance and charged me with his halberd. The second threw a fireball which reflected of my own magic. Being completely off-guard, I immediately grabbed a recall rune and transported myself away - to just outside the dungeon entrance. So many times my victims insult me and my ways, but I always give them a chance to buy their lives. These notoriety hunters were the truest villains of Sosaria. They so often attack without warning anyone the tyrant has branded 'dishonourable' or worse. Even though they are no better than any other murderer, because of their choice in victims, who are often honest men who made simple mistakes, they are regarded as nobles and great lords.[8]

The player-character's disagreement is in terms of the game's ur-Reality. He does not state that the game is coded wrong or that the designers changed too much. Rather, he puts it all in terms of Lord British and his "false virtues." Additionally, he weaves a sense of reality into his presentation. This is an individual not only recounting his actions, but also demonstrating the type of person he is. He is not simply filling a role, he is the character enrobed. He fulfils the attributes of the "role player" identity discovered so far, but he also brings them to life. A "role player" does not simply drop the role when she faces difficulty. The player-character is defined when she presents her grievances in terms of the fiction and the identity instead of simply opting out of the game. This practice brings the identity closer to what other audience members might discover in the non-game world. Most people do not stop "playing" at life if there are difficulties. Moreover, these pages also combine a sense of strategy with the schema. The player-characters are fleshing out the identity schema. By example, these

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rhetors are demonstrating how a player-character might surmount certain difficulties in addition to how he might display his disagreement with the software company.

As Burke explains, "personal identity comes to a focus in the complex of attitudes ('personal equations') that constitute the individual's orientation (sense of 'reality,' with corresponding sense of relationship)."[9] These performances are those "personal equations" and therefore require assignation to some sense of order. That ordering comes in terms of identity schemas and elements.

2.   Identity Schematics and Elements
A. "New Player" Identity Elements

After our analysis, we have uncovered the schema for five separate identities and how they are employed/displayed in Ultima Online. The first identity is one that all players start from. It is often a source of derision by other, more established players through the use of the epithet, "noob." However, that does not negate its existence. Indeed, the disdain other players have for this identity only further serves to prove its existence. Based upon the data analyzed so far, player-characters within Ultima Online can recognize a "new player" if the profile scrolls of a player-character has little to no information. Those scrolls also contain no fame/karma, professional, or tertiary titles. Other player-characters in Ultima Online also implicitly realize that "new players" are not involved in commerce nor are they a mule for another character.

B. "Role-Player" Identity Elements

The second identity discovered within Ultima Online is the "role-player." This identity tends to rely on the in-game fiction as a basis for its display. Moreover, the player-character employing such an identity seems to go to some length to maintain the illusion of the game fiction. In order to recognize and be recognized as a member of the "role player" identity group, player-characters within Ultima Online create profile scrolls that contain a great deal of abstract detail. Additionally, these player-characters tend to have Fame/Karma Titles in the medium to high range as well as displayed Professional Titles.

"Role-players" also realize that they must use first person references to describe themselves and their activities. Moreover, those descriptions concerning the player-character's abilities will align with the game fiction descriptions. When these player-characters attempt commerce, these attempts will also align with the roles being portrayed. Finally, there will be little, if any, attempt to distinguish statements between in-game references and real-life references.

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The analysis of the web sites has added the following to this schematic of identity. The theory developed so far is that the "role-player" identity adherent can be identified by the exchange of certain rhetorical tokens identified in the profile scrolls. The web pages now explain why those tokens are ascribed to this particular group. The web pages allow certain members of the identity group to be elevated to the status of translator. This status carries with it the ability to specify what is correct behaviour in terms of identity creation and performance. It is that elevation that also dictates why "role players" describe themselves only in terms of the language of the game's fiction. These adherents do so because they value the secrecy of the game. As Black describes it, secrecy is not only in terms of the unknown, but also the mystique. Specifically, "the mediator of revelation became distanced into mystery."[10] In keeping with the language of the game's fiction, "role players" continue the tradition of the façade, the tradition of secrecy. In order to maintain that veil of secrecy and mystique, minor deviations from the language of the game fiction can and will be ignored in order to maintain the identity façade.

C. "Gamer" Identity Elements

The third identity revealed within Ultima Online is the "gamer" schema. Like the "role-player," this identity is derived from the "new player" schema. However, this identity arrangement is not concerned with the game beyond the fact that it is a game to be mastered. Indeed, there are really no restraints as to what "gamers" will or will not do to prove their prowess within and without the confines of the game program. In order to express that prowess, "gamers" implicitly understand that their scrolls use very concrete details to describe their character. Additionally, these player-characters tend to have Fame/Karma Titles in the medium to high range as well as displayed Professional Titles.

"Gamers" also realize that they must use third person references to describe their character and its activities. Moreover, those descriptions concerning the player-character's abilities will be in the numeric equivalents. When these player-characters attempt commerce, the attempt will focus on the statistical data and not the narrative descriptions. Finally, there will be continued reminders to themselves and other players that this is a game and that they have mastered the game.

D. "Independent" and "Player" Identity Elements

The "Independent" identity follows no discernable pattern that is replicated amongst other gamers. Indeed, the only coherent theory to this identity is that employers of this identity will be unlike either the "role-player" or "gamer" identities. "Independent" player-characters do not seek to

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be recognized by their fellow gamers nor do they wish to be identified with a group of other players.

However, we can recognize "player" identity by its employment of elements from both the "role-player" and the "gamer" identities. The "player" users will freely borrow from both identities, as the player-character deems necessary. Other Ultima Online player-characters can recognize the "player" identity adherent when they see the combination of game fiction narratives alongside numerical statistics, a reference to out-game instances while using in-game fiction descriptions and a free use of both commerce styles as deemed suitable to the player-character.

3.   Overall Conclusions

The beginnings of identity in Ultima Online are as modest as those in real life. We start out as blank slates that are inscribed upon by our experiences and the world around us. As Maurice Charland tells us, "our first subject positions are modest, linked to our name, our family, and our sex." Such is the case with Ultima Online. The player profile scroll is the first beginnings of how player-characters find themselves within the rhetorical situation that is Ultima Online. However, as Charland further states, "as we enter the adult world, [our subject positions] become more complex." As the player-characters progress in the game, the profile scrolls are used to move beyond the first instance of their identities. The scrolls represent the accumulation of experience in the game. Each type of scroll calls to a particular identity adherent. The method of identity construction for each scroll changes the rhetor-creator and the auditor-reader. The scrolls become a cycle of change and reaction as the player-characters attempt to answer the exigencies present within Ultima Online. The scrolls, therefore, are the answer to the hailing that Ultima Online sends to players.[11]

As the player progresses in the game, the player-characters recognize themselves "as the subject in a text." The identity adopted by player-characters allows them to step beyond the boundaries of where they may be physically or temporally. As Charland reminds us, "it is to be a subject which exists beyond one's body and life span."[12] Moreover, it is the recognition of other player profile scrolls that allows individual player-characters to recognize that they are part of a "rhetoric of socialization"[13] and can thus be a "model of what the rhetor would have his real auditor become."[14] This recognition is further shaped by the mode of communication in which the rhetoric is transmitted. Carey reminds us that rhetors are not attempting to acquire information from other players, but are trying to confirm how to portray themselves within the world that is Ultima Online.[15] Player-characters read the texts and garner from them a sense of what it means to *be* other characters. From that sense of Being, player-characters construct what it means to be themselves. The collection of texts is Ultima

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Online's rhetoric of Being. That mode of being is then transmitted to others for reception and justification. The profile is the rhetorical discourse of being within Ultima Online. As Edwin Black states, the "best evidence in the discourse" of a link between an implied auditor and an ideology "will be in the form of stylistic tokens."[16] The player texts are the "stylistic tokens" of which Black speaks. By discovering that there are implicit categories within the profile scrolls, we can assign value to the stylistic tokens. Each category represents a stylistic token and is adopted or rejected by auditors as player-characters seek to build their identities. Most importantly, there is no arbitrary construction of these tokens. Rather, players are interpellated into a sense of who they are by implicitly recognizing which tokens to adopt. It is the use of certain tokens that allows the critic to recognize which group a particular rhetor belongs to. Moreover, this use allows the critic to determine what changes can be wrought by individual player-characters and by groups of player-characters.

The player profile scrolls represent the genesis of identity creation and performance within Ultima Online. It is here that the player-characters begin the process of creating a character that adheres to the schema outlined so far. Identities are also performed here, but the performances follow rules and guidelines that are outlined in other aspects of the Internet.

The web pages allow the identity holders to display their creation in a setting outside of the main Ultima Online community so that imitation and competition may continue and, perhaps, expand. Indeed, it is outside of Ultima Online that the identities have the potential to be more fully developed, as the identity creators have greater freedom in presenting aspects of the identity outside, rather than within the confines of Ultima Online.

The web sites foster the creation of understanding in that the pages allow some entry for new players into the game by allowing new players to view the performance of the identity schemas present within the game. Moreover, those "gamers," "players," and "role players" who wish to understand more about the world in which they play and live are able to view those other personas who seem to be similar to them on the web pages. By sharing information in the manner in which each identity user is accustomed to receiving it, each group of identity users begins to share an understanding of how the game and their new "lives" work. The web pages are ascribed an authority on par with the game itself because the web pages seek to describe the game and the identity creation found therein. The web page's author, therefore, has a great deal of influence in controlling information and, as Kermode reminds us, "once a text is credited with high authority, it is studied intensely; once it is so studied, it acquires mystery or secrecy."[17]

With the exposition or maintenance of the mystery, there comes a creation of meaning. The information ceases to just be instructions on how to play or live, and becomes something more substantive. The information

becomes, as Burke states, consubstantiation. Burke posited that consubstantiation can only come after identification. The process of establishing rhetorical identity schemas and the process of translating the information surrounding these identities creates the identification situation. From this, the aspects of the identity become even stronger. As the identity schemas are strengthened, the player-characters are able to find fellow characters that are of the same identity type and begin to re-tribalize. With the re-tribalization, the player-characters accomplish the establishment of stable, coherent identities or consubstantiation.

In performing the identity schemas, the users present a coherent whole to the auditors within the game and are thus recognized by their peers. Problems within the framework of Ultima Online that do not allow the player-character to perform an identity in an acceptable manner are addressed in a variety of contexts. Collective identities are formed by the combination of player-characters into guilds and other associations found within the game and also reinforced through web sites.

Those associations and identities are what Burke would term a "community of ways." Burke tells us "from the standpoint of "identification," what we call "competition" is better described as men's [and women's] attempt to *out-imitate* one another."[18] This imitation causes consubstantiality "by a community of ways (identification')."[19] From this identification, the players find not only their identity, but also how they fit within the community as a whole. Therefore, if there is a need to emulate those around them in the game, the players will naturally tend towards competition in order to fulfil that need. The conscious use of imitation/competition by the player-characters draws them together as a whole. A player-character seeking to become more involved with a group of gamers begins to see the need to "beat the game" in order to be more accepted by the group. Role-players must find new and different ways to be more involved in the game fiction in order to be accepted by role-playing guilds. It is an interesting conundrum that player-characters must actively seek out different ways to become more the same. However, the conundrum is solved when we understand that the player-characters must not just seek to imitate, but imitate the hierarchy of the imitation. Burke posits that imitation is, perhaps, a crude way to get at consubstantiality. In order for true identification to exist, there must be hierarchy. Specifically, the player must "imitate not its mere insignia, but the principle behind the *ordering* of those insignias."[20] When player-characters seek out similar professional titles possessed by other player-characters, they do so not just to be like the other player-character. Rather, they do so in order to be part of the hierarchy of insignias mentioned by Burke. The player-characters, whether they are gamers or role-players, imitate in order to be the best and, thus, be accepted by the group as a whole.

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Ultima Online provides further support for its sense of reality by providing insight into how identities maintain membership and community cohesion. Although the profile scrolls provide us with a sense of imitation and hierarchy, it is the web sites which provide us with information as to how the group is maintained over time. Black posited that an auditor could not employ a rhetor's terms without also adopting the ideology behind those terms. Ultima Online not only provides support for this thought, but also advances it one step further in that it uses the theory to maintain membership. In the web sites, the research found that the population of Ultima Online had created a procedure through which to refine and disseminate the rules behind identity performance. Those performance rules either allowed each player-character to fully demonstrate an identity, or the player-character was given the ability to withdraw from the membership. Adoption of the performance rules is the "fallible sign" that the player-characters have adopted "not just a position, but an ideology."[21] Acceptance of the performance rules, and the ideologies behind them, means that all of the player-characters have sufficient reasons to continue in the activity. Promulgating the performance rules, and thus, the identity schemas themselves, to other auditors allows the community to expand. Those who choose to leave the membership do so not because they have forsaken the ideologies behind the identity performances, but because they believe that particular identity performance, for them, is no longer possible. Indeed, when there is a change to the game that allows former player-characters to believe that their identity performance is once again possible, then they return to the game. Thus the player-characters not only have the basis for accepting rhetorical identities, but also a way to maintain and promote membership.

Not only are the performance rules examples of ideology acceptance, but we also see this in the terms employed by certain identities. When role-players adopt the language of Britannia, they not only adopt the speech patterns; they also adopt the way of thinking that goes along with it. Role-players seek to further the game in terms of the virtues found within the game among other things. However, in supporting those virtues, player-characters also align with the game itself. No longer is Ultima Online just a game to the role-player, but Ultima Online is a way of being in a rhetorical sense. The role-player becomes the rhetoric of the game and, in a sense, makes the game real to self and others. The ideology of the game is to make game play seem as real, or life-like, as possible, by imitating the NPCs in speech and action. The role-player not only achieves consubstantiation with others around him/her, but also supports the very idea that the activity is of more substance than "game," that it is real and carries with it all of the burdens that life itself does.

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Notes

[1] M C Bates, IV, *Implicit Identity Theory In The Rhetoric Of The Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Game (MMORPG), Ultima Online.* Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, The Pennsylvania State University, State College, PA 2005.

[2] J W Carey, *Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society*, Routledge, New York, 1992, p. 21.

[3] M P Lara, *Rethinking Evil*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 2001, p. 2.

[4] A "noob" is a "newbie," a new or inexperienced character.

[5] K Burke, *Permanence and Change: An Anatomy of Purpose*, 3rd ed., University of California Press, Berkeley 1984, p. 295.

[6] Ibid., p. 254.

[7] S MacArthur, 'Overconfident Fools,' Stratics, Inc., Sacramento, CA, n.d., http://uo.stratics.com/content/darkside/stories/shane-over.shtml (accessed May 18, 2004).

[8] Xavori, 'Notoriety Hunters,' Stratics, Inc., Sacramento, CA, n.d., viewed on 18 May, 2004, <http://uo.stratics.com/content/darkside/stories/xav-notor.shtml>.

[9] Burke, *Permanence & Change*, pp. 309-10.

[10] E Black, 'Secrecy and Disclosure as Rhetorical Forms.' *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, vol. 88, 1988, p. 135.

[11] Charland, 'Constitutive Rhetoric: The Case of the People Québécois,' in *Landmark Essays on Rhetorical Criticism*, edited by Thomas W. Benson,: Hermagoras Press, Davis, CA, 1993, p. 147.

[12] Ibid., p. 143.

[13] Ibid., p. 138.

[14] E Black, 'The Second Persona,' in Benson, op.cit., p. 113.

[15] F Carey, Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society, Routledge, New York, 1992, p. 21.

[16] Black, 'The Second Persona,' p. 112.

[17] F Kermode, *The Genesis of Secrecy*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1979, p. 144.

[18] K Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives*, University of California Press, Berkeley 1969, p. 131.

[19] Ibid., p. 131.

[20] Ibid., p. 131.

[21] Black, 'The Second Persona,' p. 165.

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Portraits of Evil in Wittgenstein: From Poetry to Disenchantment

Silvia Lanzetta

Abstract

In this paper I will look at the *Tractatus*' theory of meaning, which leads Wittgenstein to argue for the founding nature of ethics. For Wittgenstein, the world is made good or evil by the willing subject who has power over his own happiness and renounces the right to influence events. The non-contingent meaning of evil, by contrast, cannot be investigated scientifically.

In the phenomenological *intermezzo* of the thirties, Wittgenstein's snapshots on ethics are contrasts: nothing can assure us that our past evil actions occurred; only memory witnesses our guilt. Comparable reflections on the nature of evil are found in Lyotard's *Le Differend*. In this regard, I will discuss Lyotard's notion of non-speculative discourse.

In the *Investigations*, language-games are diverse to an indefinite degree. It makes sense to ask whether a single action, not a moral standard, is right or wrong (we can use the metre, but not ask for its length, cf. Luckardt's *Wittgenstein and ethical relativism*). Wittgenstein is the *weak draughtsman* who can trace sketches of 'landscapes' without indicating the way out of evil. The more Wittgenstein's language analysis grows complex, the more the theme of evil is concealed, while the importance of the unsayable leads to extremes in the *Tractatus*, where the word is a dead sign.

Is *On Certainty* nihilist? Some of its accounts are metaethically paraphrasable. Doubt about good and evil can show within a world-picture framework which is not a conventional point of departure, as the element in which arguments occur. Yet, even Wittgenstein finds it difficult to avoid ambiguously trying to go back beyond the initial framework. It is no more the abysmal lyric of the juvenile *Notebooks*, as the therapeutic stoicism of aphoristic that the dying Wittgenstein addresses to himself.

Key words: Responsibility, willing subject, logics, action, knowledge, unsayable, feeling, language-games, *differend*.

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1.   The Uniqueness of my Life

From the lyrical tone of the *Notebooks*, composed during the Great War, to what we could characterize as the post-modern disenchantment in Wittgenstein's last notes, collected in *On Certainty*, the exegesis of Wittgenstein's work leads to observe the gradual variation of an *unsayable* concept towards a shading off portrait of evil.

The *Tractatus*' theory of language as a mirror of factual reality leads the young Wittgenstein to deem ethics, like logic, as *what founds everything, without ever being founded*. Good or evil are connected with the meaning of the world through the willing subject who yet, in the performing of his will, has an influence on his happiness or unhappiness, and can only make himself "independent of the world […] by renouncing any influence on happenings."[1] Good or evil willing affects "the boundaries of the world, not the facts, what cannot be portrayed by language but can only be shewn in language. In short, it must make the *world* a wholly different one."[2] Life stops being, in an important sense, problematic (i.e., not in a sense which can be linguistically formulated) if one succeeds in living "in eternity and not in time."[3]

When Wittgenstein speaks of eternity, he means it not in a temporal sense, but as *eternal present*, setting the impersonal philosophical I against the empirical subject who is unaware of the immediate totality which it is part of. We read in the *Notebooks*:

> Only from the consciousness of the *uniqueness of my life* arises religion - science - and art […] And this consciousness is life itself[4] […]
> How can man be happy at all, since he cannot ward off the misery of this world?
> Through the life of knowledge [,] that can renounce the amenities of the world.
> To it the amenities of the world are so many graces of fate. [5]

The *Tractatus* concludes by stating that "the solution of the problem of life is seen in the vanishing of this problem,"[6] and this is "why men to whom after long doubting the sense of life became clear, could not then say wherein this sense consisted."[7] A necessary aspect such as the meaning of life, and likewise the non-contingent, ultimate meaning of evil, cannot be scientifically investigated.

Only propositions about facts are meaningful propositions; "The propositions show the logical form of reality. They exhibit it" (T 4.121), but they cannot *say* it.

Logic implies the mystical: no description of facts can be a pertinent answer to an ethical problem. We can only talk about the contingent. The mystic sense of world's (as it were, contingent) *giveness* (a giveness

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permeated by the will) is the keystone of the metaphysical I and its ethical sense: even more important is ethics in its unresolved and impossible formulation, as responsibility happens to be with no logical discourse indicating the way to good or evil.

In the *Tractatus*, as Marino Rosso claims, there is an ambiguity disguised by the insertion of the "part regarding solipsism on to the 'mathematical' account of our language."[8] The *Tractatus* leaves realism only in the solipsistic section in which it is the metaphysical subject – the "philosophical I" (T 5.641) - that ultimately signifies the world. In the other sections of the book the ordinary language lies on the same ontological level as the states of affairs which make it true or false.[9] On the other hand, just as solipsism cannot be explained, but can only show itself, realism rests upon the reality of the utmost objects of the world, a priori enacted, and it also can only be 'supposed', not described. Despite the dialectic, unresolved in the *Tractatus*, between empirical language and metaphysical language (dialectic which the *Philosophical Remarks* will render explicit and resolve by means of the redefinition of an impersonal language), in the *Tractatus* already the existence of thoughts and representations is claimed together with the non-visibility of a *subject* of such representations and thoughts.[10]

> Can there be any ethics if there is no living being but myself? If ethics is supposed to be something fundamental, there can. [...] For it must be all one, as far as concerns the existence of ethics, whether there is living matter in the world or not. And it is clear that a world in which there is only dead matter is in itself neither good nor evil, so even the world of living things can itself be neither good nor evil.[11]

Here, the I being the 'bearer of ethics' (*Notebooks*, 5.8.16) *vivifies* the world through his will. All that happens because "ethics does not treat of the world. Ethics must be a condition of the world, like logic."[12] This is an all-important answer to the question that Wittgenstein will ask himself on 15th November 1931 in his recently discovered manuscript diary[13]:

> Yet, if I now think of my sins, & that I made those actions is just a hypothesis, wherefore do I regret them as if there were no doubts on their reality? That I now remember them is my evidence & the foundation of my penitent and the rebuke that I am too cowardly to acknowledge them.

Wittgenstein keeps trying to speak a factual language to express the meaning of ethics. In the *Notebooks* we have seen the solution to this paradox, and it

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can be condensed in Otto Weininger's claim: "Logic and ethics are fundamentally the same, they are no more than duty to oneself;"[14] hence, for Wittgenstein "a bad life is an unreasonable life."[15] "Genius 'is the highest morality, and, therefore, it is everyone's duty.'"[16]

2.   Intermezzo

In the phenomenological *intermezzo* of the thirties, Wittgenstein's snapshots on ethics are made of overt contrasts: if nothing ensures us that our past evil actions really occurred, only our memory is a witness to our *feeling* the guilt.[17] Comparable reflections on the nature of evil lead to the post-modern recognition that logic can be used against man. We find an example of this in Lyotard's *The Differend*, where he examines the negation of the Holocaust by means of logical argumentations: if by hypothesis all documents concerning the Holocaust were destroyed, all non-tangible testimony resorting merely to memory would have no logical value, with the Holocaust thus proposed as never having been. These conclusions, for Lyotard both logical and absurd, leave a *feeling* that claims for an alternative form of discourse to the speculative variety.

Lyotard defines speculative discourse as a language game whose rules can be analysed according to the way statements can be linked to each other. The silenced player in a language game is the subject of the 'differend'. When there are no agreed procedures on how to present what is different in the current domain of discourse, the differend occurs, which results in the silence following the impossibility of phrasing, for example, an injustice:

> Is it up to the historian to take into account not only the damages, but also the wrong? Not only the reality, but also the meta-reality, that is the destruction of reality? Not only the testimony, but also what is left of the testimony when it is destroyed (by dilemma), namely, the feeling? Not only the litigation, but also the differend? Yes, of course, if it is true that there would be no history without a differend, that a differend is born from a wrong and signalled by a silence […]. But then the historian must break with the monopoly over history granted to the cognitive regimen of phrases.[18]

Language games in the Wittgensteinian sense cannot be purely reduced to the speculative variety. But they are only posterior to the formulation of the verification principle - "The meaning of a question is the method of answering it"[19] (PR 27); "To understand the sense of a proposition means to know how the issue of its truth or falsity is to be decided" (PR 43); "Every significant proposition must teach us through its sense how we are to

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convince ourselves whether it is true or false" (PR 148). An important self-exegesis of this principle, as it was pointed out by Marino Rosso[20], comes from the notebooks Wittgenstein wrote in between 1929 and 1930, from which the *Remarks* were drawn: on 13th December 1929 Wittgenstein writes: "in the end, from the reason why I believe something (that which I believe), the object of my believing comes into being."[21] This sentence is immediately followed by: "- We still might find Caesar's corpse: that this is thinkable is directly connected with the sense of the proposition about Caesar ['Julius Caesar crossed the Alps']" (PR 56): the verification principle houses a trap that the neopositivists seemed not to be aware of: the *real*, what you can authentically talk about, coincides with the present only. Unless - and the interpretation is open -Wittgenstein meant it in a phenomenological sense (on the level of an immediate experience as distinct from, but not irreconcilable with, the scientific one), Wittgenstein's epistemology seems, in those years, suspended on the edge of solipsism.

Circumscribing every thing within the opaque vision of the contingent can be risky. Is the *immediacy* of the appalling memory of Auschwitz real only in so far as the remains of the dead, of the concentration camps, the pictures, are the present vestiges where we read the absolute evil?

Wittgenstein in the thirties was, on an other hand, sharpening his critique of the common notion of progress. Man appeared to have put himself on a self-destructive track in giving up going beyond the surface of things - the level of technique - dismissing his most genuine curiosity. In a sense, man was becoming dehumanised. He writes on 6th November 1930:

> Our civilization is characterized by the world progress. Progress is its form, it is not one of its properties that it makes progress. […]. Its <u>activity</u> is to construct a more and more complicated structure. And even clarity is only a means to this end & not an end in itself. For me on the contrary clarity, transparency, is an end in itself. I am not interested in erecting a building but in having the foundations of possible buildings transparently before me. So I am aiming at something different than are the scientists […].[22]

3.   The Weak Draughtsman

In the *Investigations*, language-games are diverse to an indefinite degree. Their central claim is that the existence of the experimental method makes us think that science has the means of solving the problems which trouble us; though problems and method pass one another by: the nature of method is, in fact, experimental; the one of the problem at issue, *existential*

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instead.[23] Wittgenstein is now the weak *draughtsman* who can only "trace sketches of landscapes […] in the darkness of this time," yet with the clear task not to "spare other people the trouble of thinking."[24] Ethical responsibility emerges again with no logical discourse indicating the way to good or evil. The more Wittgenstein's analysis of language grows complex, the more the theme of evil is concealed. The importance of the unsayable is strongly emphasized while - in the *Tractatus* - words are relegated to be dead signs, their signification being taken away from their *living* use.

Wittgenstein's later reflections entail that moral judgements are based on a *standard* (an ethical language game) used by the members of a certain culture, who *adopt* a moral system by *acting* in a certain way. The ethical relativists are wrong to consider talking about actions and talking about standards as equivalent; judging standards and actions in the same way, they come to the conclusion that every moral standard is just. According to Wittgenstein it makes sense to ask if a single action is right or wrong, but the same question, when referred to moral standards, is nonsense. As we can use a unity of measurement to measure lengths, but we cannot ask for its length, so moral standards make it for people possible to judge an action; but if we ask if those standards are good or evil in themselves, then we need another standard, thus going out of the ordinary language game of good and evil. If I say 'this morality is the fair one', this, rather than meaning that I have compared different moral systems, means that I *adopted* that precise one.[25]

Not only relativism and absolutism are nonsense, but also determinism: unless we admit that we are subject to a transcendental delusion of freedom (in *On Certainty*, this will still appear as a meaningless judgement, but not as ridiculous as in the *Investigations*; rather, to declare the contrary will amount to a declaration of faith) and someone gives us the illusion to act according to our will, what differentiates the will from mechanical constraint is the awareness of the action that we are going to perform according to our will. The *Investigations* read:

> In the laboratory, when subjected to an electric current [,] someone says with his eyes shut 'I am moving my arm up and down' - though his arm is not moving. 'So […] he has the special feeling of making that movement.' - Move your arm to and fro with your eyes shut. And now try, while you do so, to tell yourself that your arm is staying still and that you are only having certain […] feelings[26]:

it is nonsense.

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4.   Disenchantment

It is no more the abysmal poetry of the juvenile *Notebooks*, but the therapeutic stoicism of the aphoristic that Wittgenstein addresses to himself in his very last notes; *On Certainty* is silent on ethics, but some of its *perspicuous accounts*, often obsessively reiterated in the endeavour to free himself and man from the chains that anchor us to obsolete metanarratives, can be metaethically rephrased. Doubt about good and evil can only arise within a world picture which is not a conventional and doubtful point of departure, as the element in which axiology has its life.[27] Wittgenstein wants to "expunge from philosophical language" those "propositions which one comes back to again and again as if bewitched" (OC 31) and "don't get us any further" (OC 33), not even to a better comprehension of good and evil.

Wittgenstein gets to openly maintain the groundlessness of any grounds of human knowledge.

He refers to Moore's statements such as "I *know*, with certainty, to be true [that] the earth […] existed for many years before my body was born,"[28] or "I […] *know* that […] here is one hand and here is another."[29] Those statements are fallacious: such things cannot be known, for they are the very grounds of all that can be known; moreover, they cannot be doubted, and what cannot be doubted cannot be known or true. Yet, even for the dying Wittgenstein "it is difficult to begin at the beginning. And not try to go further back" (OC 471): Wittgenstein's position on the nature of certainty remains ambiguous up to his very last days. *On Certainty*'s dominant weft is composed of a sturdy yarn - the *acceptance* of propositions such as "the earth existed before my body was born" is what makes it possible to formulate other propositions that *use* the former as grounds: "the propositions that stand fast for me [are] like the axis around which a body rotates. This axis is not fixed in the sense that anything holds it fast, but the movement around it determines its immobility" (OC 152). Yet, the thin warp weaving across the whole weft, hints at Tractarian reminiscences, as a few passages suggest that it is misleading *to say* that these propositions are true or known because they try to say the *unsayble* (necessity): "My life shews that I know or am certain that there is a chair over there" (OC 7); "I shew this knowledge […] by my actions and also in what I say" (OC 431). Wittgenstein did not live long enough to round the rough edges of these unpolished notes off, but, the following conclusions are in anyway predominant: my picture of the world is not something whose correctness I verified, but the ungrounded scaffolding of my thoughts, which I have inherited not just since my childhood, but maybe from unthinkable ages. It is, as it were, an archetype which allows my apophantic speech, but whose truth cannot in turn be tested. It is an ungrounded way of everyday acting, rather than a premise; a game that to be learned needs practice, not explicit rules. Every-day life rests upon a so-to-say *animal* certainty, which "corresponds to a *sureness*, not to a knowing"

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(OC 511) that, nonetheless, can change with time. This happens because "it is not just *my* experience, but other people's, that I get knowledge from" (OC 275). It is, first of all, the *form of life* of our community which roots our actions, as well as our sciences. If I wanted to say, in a Cartesian mood: "It has been revealed to me by God that it is so. God has taught me that this is my foot. And therefore if anything happened that seemed to conflict with this knowledge I should have to regard *that* as deception" (OC 361), it would again show "that knowledge is related to a decision" (OC 362), i.e.: the decision to believe that there is a God, and cannot be a deceiver; or the decision to believe that the earth existed long time before I was born, or my *declaration of faith* in an ethical framework that I only show through my actions. Yet, this is an instinctual rather than rational decision. Any transcendent certainty must be forgotten: rationality prospers within a world-picture, not before. This is why if I want to 'combat' another culture, I cannot always give them reasons: "how far [would] they go? At the end of reasons comes *persuasion*. (Think what happens when missionaries convert natives.)" (OC 612). I cannot lead *the other* to share my rational belief if we do not share the same form of life, unless I resort, at some point, even to violence.

On Certainty potentially opened the path to a positive form of nihilism, not so far from what Vattimo will later on call 'weak thought.'[30] In this sense Wittgenstein's conclusions anticipate postmodernism: they welcome the collapse of the great metanarratives, frail scaffolding for only seemingly firm buildings, which prove to be made only of cards.[31]

To create necessity has enabled man to live everydayness. Yet, to surrender to the impossibility of a rational discourse on evil is the only way not to make of absolute ratio a blind and destructive end.

This exegesis does not demand to be final. Of this one thing, yet, we can be certain: Wittgenstein never reduced the problem of evil to speculative language.

Notes

[1] L Wittgenstein, *Notebooks 1914-1916*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1961, G H von Wright and G E M Anscombe (eds.), with an English translation by G E M Anscombe, 11.6.16.
[2] Ibid, 5.7.16.
[3] Ibid, 6.7.16.
[4] Ibid, 1.8.16 and 2.8.16.
[5] Ibid, 13.8.16.
[6] L Wittgenstein, *Tractatus logico-philosophicus*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1922, 9th impression, 1962, 6.521.
[7] Ibid.

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[8] M Rosso, Introduction to L. Wittgenstein, *Osservazioni filosofiche*, Einaudi, Torino, 1999, Italian translation of *Philosophische Bemerkungen,* Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1964, p. l ("parte sul solipsismo sulla trattazione 'matematica' del nostro linguaggio"), my translation.

[9] Cf. ibid, pp. l-li.

[10] All the above is broadly exposed in ibid, p. l and ff.

[11] *Notebooks*, 2.8.16.

[12] *Notebooks*, 24.7.16.

[13] L Wittgenstein, *Denkbewegungen: Tagebücher 1930-1932 / 1936-1937*, ed. I Somavilla, Haymon-Verlag, Innsbruck, 1997, Teil I, p. 65: "Wenn ich aber nun an meine Sünden denke & daß ich diese Handlungen getan habe, ist nur eine Hypothese, warum bereue ich sie als ob kein Zweifel über sie möglich wäre? Daß ich mich jetzt an sie erinnere ist meine Evidenz & die Grundlage meiner Reue & des Vorwurfs, daß ich zu feig bin, sie zu gestehen", my translation.

[14] O Weininger, *Geschlecht und Character. Eine prinzipielle Untersuchung*, Braumüller, Wien, 1904, Engl. tr. *Sex and Character*, Heinemann, London, 1986, quoted in R Monk, *Ludwig Wittgenstein - The Duty of Genius*, Jonathan Cape, London, 1990), opening quote.

[15] Monk, op. cit., p. 146.

[16] Ibid, pp. 29-30.

[17] Cf. the above reference to L Wittgenstein, *Tagebücher*.

[18] J F Lyotard, *Le Differend*, Les Editions de Minuit, Paris, 198, Eng. Tr. *The Differend, Phrases in Dispute*. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1988, p. 57.

[19] L Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Remarks*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1975, edited from his posthumous writings by R Rhees and translated into English by R Hargreaves and R White from the first German edition, 1964, of *Philosophische Bemerkungen*, op. cit..

[20] Cf. Rosso, op. cit., p. lllxxx.

[21] My translation from German ("endlich wird aus dem Grund warum ich etwas glaube (das was ich glaube) das Object meines Glaubens"). This sentence "with no doubts belongs to the Remarks [56], but" cannot be found "in the published text, nor in the English translation," because Rhees expunged it, based on that Wittgenstein had himself deleted it, "in view of composing the so called *Big Typescript,*" from the copy of the typescript he had previously cut to compose the *Remarks*, and it is contained in "Manuscriptband IV," cf. Rosso, op. cit., lxxx, my translation.

[22] L Wittgenstein, *Vermischte Bemerkungen*, Surkamp Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 1977, revised second edition 1994), Eng. tr. *Culture and Value*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1998, MS 109 204: 6.-7.11.1930.

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[23] L Wittgenstein, *Philosophische Untersuchungen*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1953, third edition, 1967, Eng. tr. *Philosophical Investigations* by E Anscombe, Part II, § xiv.

[24] Preface to the *Investigations*, dated January 1945.

[25] Cf. G Luckhardt, 'Wittgenstein and Ethical Relativism', *Kirchberg* vol. 4, 1981.

[26] *Investigations*, part I, § 624.

[27] Cf. L Wittgenstein, *Über gewissheit*, Eng. tr. *On Certainty,* Blackwell, Oxford, 1969, revised 2nd edition, 1974, § 105: "All testing, all confirmation and disconfirmation of hypothesis take place already within a system. And this system is not a more or less arbitrary and doubtful point of departure for all our arguments: no, it belongs to the essence of what we call an argument. The system is not so much the point of departure, as the element in which arguments have their life."

[28] G E Moore, 'A Defence of Common Sense' in *Philosophical Papers* George Allen and Unwin, London, 1959.

[29] G E Moore, 'Proof of an External World' in Moore, op. cit.

[30] Cf., in particular, G Vattimo, *La fine della modernità*, Garzanti, Milano, 1987, Eng. tr. *The end of modernity: nihilism and hermeneutics in post-modern culture*, Polity, Cambridge, 1998.

[31] *Investigations*, part I, § 118: "Where does our investigation get its importance from, since it seems only to destroy everything interesting, that is, all that is great and important? (As it were all the buildings, leaving behind only bits of stone and rubble.) What we are destroying is nothing but houses of cards and we are clearing up the ground of language on which they stand."

Abbreviations

OC = *On Certainty*
PR = *Philosophical Remarks*
T = *Tractatus logico-philosophicus*

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Part 2

Boundaries and Frontiers

Finding Frameworks for Addressing Current Challenges

You Are What You Eat: Cannibalism, Autophagy and the Case of Armin Meiwes

Roger Davis

Abstract

This paper addresses the German cannibalism case of Armin Meiwes. After a brief summary of events, the essay examines the figure of the cannibal as outside institutionalized discourses and considers the self-cannibalism, or autophagy, of the cannibal's victim, Bernd Brandes. Drawing upon psychoanalytic theories of perversion, the essay argues that the self-destructive autophage could be a response to modern alienation and an attempt to reconstitute self-identity.

Key Words: Cannibalism, autophagy, psychoanalysis, perversion, psychosis, identity

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The title of this paper will shift the emphasis in the clichéd phrase "You *are* what you eat" to "*You* are what you eat," so the subject literally consumes itself in an act of self-cannibalism or autophagy. My topic is the cannibalism case of Armin Meiwes, and I am attending to two issues: after giving a brief account of events, I will address the eccentric position of the cannibal in the modern industrial world and examine the so-called victim of this crime, Bernd Brandes, who volunteered to be eaten, consumed his own flesh and then agreed to be killed. Situating these events in terms of psychoanalytic perversion, I will suggest that autophagy may be read as a perverse attempt to reveal the falsities behind the West's division of the self from the other.

The facts of the case are quite straightforward. In 2001, over the Internet, Meiwes solicited a willing victim to be cannibalized: one of his emails read "I search for a boy, if i can real kill him and butchering him. I am a cannibal, a real cannibal."[1] He had numerous replies, and several would-be participants individually visited Meiwes' house at different times. However, when faced with the actual killing, each man backed out. Meiwes even rejected one man "for being too fat."[2] Meiwes allowed the men to leave, even socializing with some after they backed out, which demonstrates that this is not a predatory killing. When Brandes arrived, Meiwes had his willing participant. According to reports, Meiwes and Brandes engaged in sexual relations, and, shortly thereafter, Meiwes cut off Brandes' penis at the latter's

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request. They fried it up and apparently ate it. After Brandes took a bath, Meiwes suggested that he finish the act, and Brandes consented. Meiwes cut Brandes' throat, thereby killing him, and proceeded to dismember his body and pack it for freezing and later consumption. Meiwes videotaped the night's events. When police finally arrested Meiwes, he had consumed approximately 20 kilograms of Brandes' body. The prosecution of Meiwes proved difficult, as cannibalism is not illegal in Germany. The court sentenced Meiwes to 8 ½ years in jail for two different crimes: killing upon request, which carried a five year sentence, and disturbing the peace of the dead, which carried 3 ½ years. The prosecution is currently appealing for a longer sentence. A decision is expected by mid-2006. In March 2006, German courts banned the release of a film *Rohtenburg* which is arguably based on Meiwes' acts.

The various media reports, responses, critiques and condemnations of Meiwes' acts have invoked numerous discourses: legal, psychiatric, anthropological, psychoanalytic. Each discourse attempts to contain Meiwes' actions in some kind of rational framework in order to regulate, to control or to explain the inherent violence and horror of the deed. However, the cannibal figure remains largely outside of institutionalized discourse, and, if addressed, it is often othered or abjected. First, legal discourse proves ill-equipped to deal with the nature of Meiwes' crime as the law has not classified or even recognized cannibalism as a crime. Perhaps the wickedness is self-evident. Moreover, it would appear obvious that cannibalism would require murder, and the law could prosecute accordingly. Yet, as we see here, the cannibal could eat just a part of the victim and leave him alive (in this case, temporarily), or the victim could consent to his own death. The non-aggressive nature of Meiwes' act forces the law to address cannibalism not as murder but as mercy killing. The act of consuming another person is not at issue; the death is at issue. Neither the criminal nor the ethical questions of cannibalism are ever addressed. As Meiwes himself stated after hearing his sentence: "I'm relieved. At least I'm not being branded a murderer."[3] Apparently, it is preferable to be a cannibal than a murderer.

Second, psychiatric, medical and psychoanalytic discourses have attempted to explain the reasons behind Meiwes' act through variations on Freudian approaches. On the simplest reading, Meiwes and cannibals in general must be insane. However, professionals deemed Meiwes to be of sound mind: "a court-appointed psychiatrist testified that he was not suffering from 'diminished responsibility' at the time of the killing."[4] Insanity is the reason for neither the crime nor the defense. Therefore, psychoanalytic discourse searches for the unconscious or repressed reasons for the act. Roger Boyes, a reporter of the trial, explains Meiwes' relationship with his mother who died in 1999: "He never left home[.] He was completely dependent on his mother - in an unhealthy way."[5] He adds, "He is reminiscent of a Norman

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Bates character, from the Hitchcock film *Psycho*….[His mother's] dressing gown is laid out on the bed and a mannequin's head lies on the pillow."[6] Also, Luke Harding reports that Meiwes "felt lonely and neglected as a child after his father walked out on the family. He had fantasised about having a blond 'younger brother', who he could keep forever by 'consuming him.'"[7] The problem, therefore, is his dependence on his mother coupled with the fact that he had no strong male role model. Yet, an unhealthy relationship with one's mother does not necessarily turn someone into a cannibal. As I will explain shortly, these popular psychoanalytic statements are in danger of rationalizing or harm-reducing Meiwes' acts rather than examining alternative ways of conceptualizing this case. To develop the complexities of the psychoanalytical reading, I turn to a third possible reading of cannibalism: anthropology.

While I cannot rehearse the voluminous body of literature on anthropological study of cannibalism, one common ritualistic motive for cannibalism is to retain the qualities of the other in the self. It occurs in war as exocannibalism - to acquire the strengths of your foe - and it occurs within a community as endocannibalism - to retain the memory of a family member or loved one. We see endocannibalism in Meiwes' case; he desired a friendship, and he sought it through cannibalism. Meiwes states, "With every bite, my memory of him grew stronger."[8] And, we see exocannibalism, too; Harding reports that "Brandes spoke good English…and since eating him [Meiwes'] English has improved."[9] In reporting such statements, the media tend to trivialize the nature of these acts as ritual rather than horror. Typical to much discourse about cannibalism, ritual forms of cannibalism often arise in discussion of the other, as occurring in lands far away geographically or far removed historically. The difference in Meiwes' case is that this potentially ritualistic cannibalism occurs in industrialized Europe, not some fictional or remote village halfway around the world. The cannibal is no longer the other but the self. Because this ritualistic reading is so seldom applied to so-called civilized culture in public space, the West has difficulty accepting the self as cannibal and trivializes or sensationalizes the matter. Of course, this is a common observation about myths of cannibalism; that is, the accusation of cannibalism in a different culture is a means to dehumanize the other, often to justify militaristic or colonialist projects against them. To turn this against the self is to recognize our own barbarity. In a sense, to acknowledge ritualistic cannibalism in Germany is to admit that the West is, to some extent, the cannibal.[10]

Indeed, we see the response to this discomfort in some of the attempts to humanize the cannibal in industrial culture. During the trial, Meiwes' lawyer Harald Ermel defended his client's humanity: "My client is not a monster" and "My client has dignity. My client has a personality."[11] Meiwes' new girlfriend gave similar testimony: "He's not a monster, he's a

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good man."[12] While from obviously biased sources, these comments deal in rather blunt binaries of the human and the monstrous and attempt to reconstitute the boundary between the two, that Meiwes' acts had dissolved. Simultaneous with these assertions of humanity is an infantilization: his girlfriend says, "He is very childish….He is a child himself."[13] Roger Boyes who reports on the case echoes this claim: "He was caught in different roles including that of a child," and "He's like a naughty schoolboy making faces."[14] One investigative reporter who surveyed online cannibal chatrooms notes that he discovered "how much [cannibals] craved respectability" and how "cannibals are ordinary people."[15] He even suggests that cannibals do not want "mere tolerance…but applause."[16] Of course, not all reports on the crime are sympathetic in nature. Another reporter calls Meiwes' videotape a shameless act where "terrible crimes are recorded as if they were home movies or family portraits. It is as if human nature had changed."[17]

However, it is not that human nature has changed; rather, we are largely unable to categorize or accept this kind of cannibalism under our existing knowledge of human nature. In all three discursive sketches, the institutionalized discourse cannot adequately address cannibalism. Either it finds nothing wrong, or it labels cannibalism a juvenile, pre-modern or prehistoric aberration. When the charge of cannibalism is directed back against the West, the response is to try to normalize, rationalize or reduce the nature of the crime. It is self-defense. And we see this quasi-exoneration in Meiwes' own apologies for his actions: "I had my big kick and I don't need to do it again….I regret it all very much, but I can't undo it."[18] Apparently, he, like a child, did something wrong and has learned his lesson. Similarly, in Western culture, we acknowledge our primitive possibly cannibalistic past but recognize, surely, that we are beyond it. Yet, conventional moral instincts are uncomfortable with such excuses when faced with this incident.

While the media focus on Meiwes' cannibalism, they largely ignore Brandes' autophagy. One type of cannibalism is news; the other, curiously, is not. In terms of acceptance and denial, Meiwes accepts his identity as cannibal but denies it as murderer, and the West accepts its primitive past but denies its continued presence. Similarly, the media sensationalize cannibalism, but they ignore autophagy. The second topic of this paper addresses the possible logic(s) behind autophagy, which is ultimately the destruction of the self, not the other, through cannibalism. I do this through psychoanalysis' concept of perversion for reasons which I hope will become clear. The difficulty for such an analysis, however, is that very little is reported about Brandes; therefore, it is hard to examine the events, let alone begin to understand his motives or desires, if any.

Because there are numerous differing interpretations and complexities of perversion, I risk oversimplifying the concept by using Jacques Lacan's short phrase which defines the pervert as a subject who

"makes himself the instrument of the Other's *jouissance*."[19] Additionally, the pervert's actions force the other to pronounce a law, sometimes "exposing the fantasy of the other and the various social lies that such fantasy necessarily enforces."[20] To use Meiwes as an example, he solicits willing victims. He assumes the role of cannibal to satisfy the other's desire, yet, in pressing the issue, he forces his victims to admit they are only fantasizing. He is not predatory; rather, he creates anxiety in the other to the point where the other abandons his fantasy, invokes the law, ends the encounter and redirects his desire. Similarly, Meiwes fulfils his perverse function by acknowledging his crime, satisfying the status quo's desire to see a guilty conscience or rehabilitation. All the while, with his smug satiety in accepting the cannibal label as morally preferable to murderer, he reveals the superficiality of such simplistic public moralizing, and the public is, again, disgusted with him. Read in this way, Meiwes would fall under the perverse category of sadism.

Now, to consider Brandes as perverse, one major issue arises. In proposing this, I create a configuration of a perverse couple, not as Jean Clavreul suggests it - as between a normal subject and pervert or between analyst and analysand - but between pervert and pervert.[21] The obvious difficulty for such a formulation is that one primary feature of perversion - that the other invoke the law - will potentially never be satisfied, as each member of the couple will continue self-sacrifice to the other and never invoke the law. Clearly, I do not have time or space to work out this problem here.

As a preliminary examination, it is worth considering that another feature of perversion is that the pervert is only ever temporarily satisfied, and the pervert does derive satisfaction in the perverse act. If we recall the night's events, Brandes desires to be eaten; that is, he will satisfy Meiwes' appetite. Recall also that Meiwes desired a male victim. Yet, we see that Brandes begins to undermine the cannibal's desire. As Meiwes tells the court, "It was important to [Brandes] that his member be cut off and that he witness it."[22] At the instant that Meiwes begins his cannibal act, Brandes is emasculated, somewhat feminized, and he partially disrupts Meiwes' desire to eat a man, as he renders the rest of his body as potentially feminine. After satisfying Meiwes' literal appetite, the pervert Brandes now must satisfy other appetites. As Judith Feher-Gurewich explains, "For the pervert, there is no comfort in the success of his operation. The fun is in the process, not in the result."[23] In other words, Brandes must continue to feed the desires of the other. Meiwes further describes the event: "[Brandes] screamed terribly and jumped around the table but after a while he said he was surprised it didn't hurt and was very pleased that the wound bled so strongly."[24] With this menstrual imagery, Brandes surmounts the pain in order to continue the perverse interactions, and he allows Meiwes apparently to assert his identity as cannibal by continuing with the killing.

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As a means to discuss autophagy, it is worth noting Ofra Eshel's clinical analysis of perversion as a version of biological autotomy which she defines as "the capacity of some living creatures to waive the wholeness of their body as a means of survival."[25] For Eshel, this analogy represents the pervert's self-sacrifice to the Other. One part "is left behind to be devoured by their predator, and another that thus succeeds in escaping and surviving, and later regenerates," with survival understood as the psychic survival of the pervert (and perverts need separation from the Other).[26] However, the difference in autophagy is that the sacrificed part is consumed by the subject. And, in this case, the killing is not predatory, yet the big Other may be construed as a predator if there is no separation. Autophagy, then, helps to signal a shift in Brandes' perversion as a doubled self-sacrifice both to the Other and to the self; he is both cannibal and cannibalized. Brandes' perverse autotomy satisfies Meiwes, yet his perverse autophagy satisfies himself: both as attempts at psychic survival.

Moreover, Eshel situates perversion in the realm of Pentheus, not Oedipus.[27] The Penthean model has the subject "torn to pieces and devoured alive by his mother," which can result in perverse acts such as "sado-masochistic violence and cannibalistic murder."[28] In autotomy, the other cannibalistically murders one side of the split self; in autophagy, the one side of the split self murders the other side of the split self, cannibalistically and suicidally. The autophagic act conflates the self and the Other. It facilitates the jouissance of the other (which is perverse), yet it destroys the barrier between self and other (which is more in line with psychosis and folie-à-deux). On the one hand, Brandes sacrifices himself to Meiwes in a perverse scenario. On the other hand, his autophagy enacts the desire of the other, thereby eliminating the alienation which separates psychosis from perversion.[29] The separation in autotomy for survival is offset against the separation in autophagy for self-destruction. This perhaps makes sense in a perverse couple, as neither pervert will invoke the law, and self-sacrifice will continue unabated. Therefore, given the lack of information about Brandes, it is unclear if his acts better fit perversion or psychosis, as elements of both are apparent.

While there is more to be said on autophagy, I will close by remarking that Meiwes' renunciation of his cannibalistic ways could be read as Brandes' final perverse revelation: namely, it exposes Meiwes not as a cannibal but as a pervert who is continually attempting to expose the fantasy of the Law. Cannibalism is merely one manifestation, or mask, of his perversion; what lies next to the mask is the perverted or psychotic autophage who assumes the mask to destroy the self-other binary and to gesture towards what Slavoj Zizek has identified in terms of technology through Horkheimer and Adorno's work: "unknowingly, we are our own greatest victims, butchering ourselves alive."[30] In terms of identity and progress, the

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autophage consumes himself in an attempt to turn perversion against itself, to turn cannibalism against itself, to turn the idea of a stable identity against itself, to turn progress against itself in an act of self-destruction.

Notes

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 <http://groups.google.com/group/alt.sex.snuff.cannibalism>.

[2] R Boyes, 'Cannibal Put Off by Man's Obesity: 'My Mother…insisted on lean meat,' *Calgary Herald*, 23 December 2003, sec. A, p. 16.

[3] R Boyes, 'Cannibal: Roger Boyes in Kassel Reflects on an Extraordinary Trial,' *Times Online*, 30 January 2004, viewed on 23 September 2005, <http://www.4law.co.il/cann31104.htm>.

[4] M Landler, 'Cannibal Advertises for Victim, Devours Man who Volunteered,' *Times-Colonist*, 31 January 2004, sec. A, p. 5.

[5] Boyes, 'Cannibal Put Off.'

[6] Ibid.

[7] L Harding, 'Victim of Cannibal Agreed to be Eaten.' *Guardian Unlimited*, 4 December 2003, viewed on 23 September 2005,
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[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid.

[10] M Kilgour, 'The Function of Cannibalism at the Present Time,' in *Cannibalism and the Colonial World*, Francis Barker et al., (eds.), Cambridge University Press, New York, 1998, pp. 238-259.

[11] H Ermel, 'Anderson Cooper 360 Degrees,' *CNN.com*, 22 December 2003, viewed on 30 November 2005, <http://transcripts.cnn.com/ TRANSCRIPTS/0312/22/acd.00.html>.

[12] R Boyes, 'Girlfriend Defends Cannibal in Court,' *Calgary Herald*, 10 January 2004, sec. A, p. 14.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Boyes, 'Cannibal: Roger Boyes.'

[15] G Jonas, 'Craving Respectability - and Human Flesh,' *National Post*, 29 March 2004, sec. A, p. 14.

[16] Ibid.

[17] G Owen, 'Crimes and the Camera,' *National Post*, 22 May 2004, sec. RB, p. 2.

[18] 'Jailed Cannibal Regrets Killing,' *Leader Post*, 31 January, sec. D, p. 12.

[19] J Lacan, *Ecrits: A Selection*, trans. Alan Sheridan, W. W. Norton & Co., New York, 1977, p. 320.

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[20] J Feher-Gurewich, 'A Lacanian Approach to the Logic of Perversion,' *The Cambridge Companion to Lacan*, Jean-Michel Rabaté (ed.), Cambridge University Press, New York: 2003, pp. 191-207.

[21] J Clavreul, 'The Perverse Couple,' *Returning to Freud: Clinical Psychoanalysis in the School of Lacan*, S Schniederman (ed.), Yale University Press, New Haven, 1980, pp. 215-233.

[22] 'Cannibal's Confession Shocks Court,' *Toronto Star*, 4 December 2003, sec. A, p. 29.

[23] Feher-Gurewich, 204.

[24] 'Cannibal's Confession.'

[25] O Eshel, 'Pentheus Rather Than Oedipus: On Perversion, Survival and Analytic 'Presencing,'' *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, vol. 86, 2005, pp. 1071-1097.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid.

[29] B Fink, *A Clinical Introduction to Lacanian Psychoanalysis: Theory and Technique*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1997.

[30] S Zizek, 'The Matrix, or, the Two Sides of Perversion,' *Lacan Dot Com*, viewed on 11 July 2005, <http://www.lacan.com/zizek-matrix.htm>.

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The Externalization of Justice

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Abstract

For thousands of years humanity has devised mechanisms to address undesirable behaviour and deviant acts. These mechanisms utilize different approaches that are determined by individual cultures and societies. Despite the differences between cultures, the argument can be made that traditional mechanisms of justice share a common thread, especially when compared to mechanisms within the modern system of justice.

In traditional systems of justice there is a focus on achieving peace by repairing relations between the conflicting parties and re-establishing harmony in the community. In contrast, the modern system focuses on punishment of the wrongdoer by prison sentencing or monetary reparations, and there is less emphasis put on repairing the relationship between the parties or rehabilitating the affected community.

This system separates the act of wrongdoing from the personal relations between the parties involved by imposing punishment payable to the state or government (as with prison sentencing). This paper will argue this division has, over time, changed the mindset of the individual in modern society, and as a result, has depersonalized acts of evil, or crimes. For the purposes of this paper, the process by which this transition occurs is defined as the externalization of justice.

Key Words: Externalization, justice, Plato, tribal justice, Navajo, American, Apache, compensation, international law, philosophy

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1.   Introduction

This paper explores the differences between tribal indigenous systems of justice and modern "western" systems, and argues that the widespread movement towards the "modern" system has brought about an "externalization of justice."[1] This term defines a process by which justice transitions from something that is internalized within the person or society, into something that is imposed externally on individuals and society through an elaborate system of laws, courts, and punishments determined and administered by the state.

This paper will explore this process by examining Plato's conception of the nature and origin of justice. Plato's definition and form of justice will provide the philosophical foundation for comparing the common

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characteristics found in tribal justice systems with those of the western justice systems. For simplicity and clarity, this paper will focus specifically on the justice systems of Navajo and Apache tribes and the United States justice system, while comparing and contrasting some of their values and processes.[2] The fundamental values and characteristics in these two specific systems are exemplary of the justice paradigms they represent (tribal and modern, respectively).[3] [See Table, p. 10.] Finally, this paper will conclude by highlighting some of the international aspects in the trend towards near universal adoption of the modern system of justice.

2.   Plato's Conception of the Good and Justice

Let us now turn to the origin and definition of justice as explored in Plato's *Republic*. Plato's concept of justice is based upon his theory of forms. This theory draws a connection between the idea (or form) - something that is known but not seen, such as the form of the Good or True, with its perceptible and tangible form (or the actualization of the idea). The essence of this theory is captured in the following passage from the *Republic* which describes the soul's recognition of good and truth:

> -Why, you know, I said, that the eyes, when a person directs them toward objects on which the light of day is no longer shining, but the moon and stars only, see dimly, and are nearly blind; they seem to have no clearness of vision in them?
> -Very true.
> -But when they are directed toward objects on which the sun shines, they see clearly and there is sight in them?
> -Certainly.
> -And the soul is like the eye: when resting upon that on which truth and being shine, the soul perceives and understands, and is radiant with intelligence; but when turned toward the twilight of becoming and perishing, then she has opinion only, and goes blinking about, and is first of one opinion and then of another, and seems to have no intelligence?
> -Just so.[4]

This passage illustrates Plato's theory of forms and also encapsulates the idea of externalization. "Just as the sun provides illumination by means of which we are able to perceive everything in the visual world, he argued, so the Form of the Good provides the ultimate standard by means of which we can apprehend the reality of everything that has value."[5] When the soul (or the individual) has sight of the Good, there is understanding and clarity, because it possesses an internal and innate sense of justice. However when the individual has no internal interaction with the form of the Good, and

justice is derived through conformity to laws and court decisions, then the form of the Good (or justice) is external in respect to the individual, and transient in respect to the form.

In the second work, Socrates engages in a dialogue with sceptical philosophers regarding his definition of justice. Although these philosophers' perspectives on justice vary to some degree, "the common element was that all [of] them treated justice as something external an accomplishment, an importation, or a convention, they have, none of them carried it into the soul or considered it in the place of its habitation."[6]

Conversely, Plato believed that it is the soul that is linked to and has knowledge of the Good, which he equates with justice. Plato holds that the utmost goal of education is knowledge of the Good - not simply an understanding of specific benefits and pleasures, but a connection with the Form itself.[7] He defines justice as a virtue that is good in and of itself. When justice is internal to the person, it is something that he or she seeks to achieve simply for the enjoyment a person derives by acting justly.[8]

By examining Plato's theory and definition of the form of justice, one can find similarities in his conception and the tribal conception of justice. In particular, both view justice as whole and inseparable from the being or society. This conception of justice stands in contrast to the social contract theory of justice, which Glaucon sets forth in the *Republic* as the true origin of justice. He states that "to do injustice is, by nature, good; to suffer injustice, evil...[and] not being able to avoid one and obtain the other…they agree among themselves to have neither; hence arise laws and mutual covenants."[9] He further asserts that "… justice is tolerated not as a good [to be pursued for its own sake], but as the lesser evil…"[10] This social contract theory of justice is the philosophical foundation of the modern system: a social agreement that people tolerate and adhere to under the requirements of law and for the benefits of reciprocity. This system will be explored following the examination of characteristics of the Navajo and Apache justice systems.

3.   Characteristics of Tribal Systems (Navajo and Apache)

The philosophical basis for the Navajo tribal justice system exemplifies some of the same values expressed in Plato's conception of justice as something internal to the soul and beneficial for its own sake. According to Plato, "justice in the life and conduct of the State is possible only as first it resides in the hearts and souls of the citizens." This understanding of justice is derived from and achieved through a holistic approach. It is taken by individuals within the context of their relationships and community and with respect to their mental, physical and spiritual well-being. The emphasis of a case is not simply on determining guilt or

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innocence (win or loss), but on identifying underlying problems that possibly contributed to the crime, and on.[11]*

In the Navajo system, justice is defined frequently in the anthropological literature as a "way of life."[12] Justice is not considered or identified as being separate from the community or everyday life. The judicial/penal system does not exist as an independent facet of life; rather it is a system that they *live*, one that is internalized within the individual and intrinsic to their surrounding community.

As one tribal judge recounts, "we would involve different elements of our society - the chief, the warrior societies, the families, the clan, the medicine man, and so on - in the resolution of the problem. Laws were not made by an institution such as a legislative body but by the normative power of the entire society. Each individual knew what was prohibited..."[13] This description of the justice process in a tribal society encapsulates the essence of Plato's justice; it is based upon education and interaction with the Good. Laws and justice are part of the fabric of community; however, justice not only envelopes the individual and society, but also resides within the individual.

The externalization of justice is not only dependent upon its perception and interaction with the form of the Good, but also predicated on its application. The process of externalization is most readily exemplified in the manner of restitution utilized to restore justice and the relations between the perpetrator and the victim. In Apache society, for instance, restitution is not necessarily monetary, but it is something that is meaningful and symbolic of the remorse felt for the wrongful act. Once it is given, it is up to the victim to discern whether or not the restitution is genuine. If the restitution is deemed by the victim as lacking or inappropriate, the perpetrator's reputation is marred until an appropriate and genuine restitution is given.[14] In the modern justice system, money is often paid to the victim, or jail time is served to the state. This type of restitution lacks an interpersonal and relational quality:

> In American society, there is no remorse. Remorse appears to be left to the victims and their families. A civil judgment is paid and business goes on; a punishment is meted and the remorseless criminal ferments his hatred in prison for years. How the remorselessness and the victimization collectively affect America is something worthy of exploration.[15]

This type of monetary compensation is impersonal because it is not reflective or symbolic of genuine remorse, nor does it usually have a restorative effect on relations between the two conflicting sides. A congruent

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analogy is someone receiving money as a gift. While it is often appreciated, the perception of the gift is that it is lacking in the thoughtfulness, care, and genuine effort which would usually accompany a non-monetary gift - one that demonstrates that the giver put forth time and energy into something he or she thought would especially please the receiver. Now let us consider money serving in a completely opposite role; not as a gift for a happy occasion but as compensation for a wrongful act. Where is the thought, the sacrifice, the genuine remorse? The lack of sacrifice or genuineness that comes with monetary restitution could be exacerbated in cases where the perpetrator has an abundance of monetary wealth.

Besides monetary compensation, another common form of restitution is prison sentencing. However, in tribal systems, the perpetrator is not usually removed from the society; instead, there is an "emphas[is] on group unity, reconciliation of individuals or groups, and peaceful reintegration into the community."[16] This process aims to achieve a "return to social harmony."[17]

4.   Characteristics of the Modern System (American)

In contrast to the tribal system, the modern system is based upon the social contract theory, which Glaucon claims is the basis for individuals behaving justly. He argues that people are just because the law requires them to be, and by relinquishing their evil desires in an attempt to observe the laws, they are provided with the benefit of receiving protection because this law prevents others from acting unjustly towards them.[18]

Glaucon's philosophical premise is that people are inherently evil and will act unjustly unless there are laws that coerce them into acting justly. The structure of the American system exemplifies this philosophy by employing a punishment-based structure, which furthers the externalization of justice by transitioning the responsibility of the perpetrator to the state and away from the victim and community at large. This system also takes an adversarial approach to justice, and there is "an adversarial exchange of arguments and evidence. Both parties present their cases before a neutral fact finder, either a judge or a jury. The judge or jury evaluates the evidence, applies the appropriate law to the facts, and renders a judgment in favour of one of the parties."[19] Another contrasting characteristic of the American system is its vertical power structure, meaning that the final decision is limited to one or very few people, rather than involving more aspects of the community that was affected by the act.[20]

Additionally, the use of "punitive sanctions limit[s] accountability of the offender to the state, instead of to those he or she has harmed or to the community."[21]

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> The retributive philosophy holds that because the victim has suffered, the criminal should suffer as well. It is premised on the notion that criminals are wicked people who are responsible for their actions and deserve to be punished. Punishment is used to appease the victim, to satisfy society's desire for revenge, and to reconcile the offender to the community by paying a debt to society. It does not offer a reduction in future crime or reparation to victims.[22]

However, finding someone "guilty" of committing a crime and imposing a prison sentence or a monetary fine serves to benefit society in some ways: the criminal is temporarily removed from society in the case of a prison sentence, or the fine assessed on the perpetrator is detrimental enough to deter future criminal acts. It may "appease" the victim, but it is not clear how it benefits and heals the victim or community or more importantly, how it changes the perpetrator's mindset and motivations for the future.

The failure to cultivate internal good and justice is evidenced by the number of repeat offence criminals in the United States. In the last national study in 1994, it was found that the recidivism rate within three years of the first arrest was 67.5%.[23] However, in an attempt to create an internal sense of justice and societal obligations, the US Courts have started to implement an alternative form of punishment: community service.

This aspect of the American justice system could be likened, at least prima facie, to the values inherent to the indigenous systems. This form of punishment is aimed at involving wrong-doers in society by requiring them to contribute to their community in some meaningful way.[24] While the goals of this method may seem comparable to the values outlined in indigenous systems of justice, the process by which this connection is manifested is inherently negative and counter-intuitive as a means of positively connecting the perpetrator with the community. The act of wrongdoing followed by the consequence of punishment (which inherently has a negative connotation), is generally aimed at deterring future acts of wrongdoing. When the administered punishment requires the criminal to give back to society, it begs the question of what exactly this process is aiming to achieve. The logical association of punishment (negative) with community service (positive) is at least a non-, if not a counter-intuitive method for instilling a positive sense of societal connections and obligations.

Retribution, whether it is monetary or otherwise, lacks a rehabilitative quality and fails to address the pain and suffering inflicted upon the victim by the perpetrator. This system serves to advance the process of externalization. This is accomplished by focusing the perpetrator's mindset on avoiding being caught in the future rather than preventing future evil acts by instilling a sense of justice (or good) within the individual. So while the

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motivations and intentions of this modern method of instilling justice to an individual is at least in theory based upon similar values as those of the tribal system, there remains a lack of connection between its intended objectives and the realization of internal justice.

5.   Conclusion

It is important to understand the attributes and dynamics of the systems that contribute to the externalization of justice. However, it can be argued that there are greater international implications for this process of externalization. The developed world continues to expand and become increasingly connected with the developing world (where indigenous justice systems still exist). This expansion is slowly but surely transitioning these formerly tribal-based societies and indigenous systems of justice into structures resembling those of the modern system. While it is certain that the most rapid and fundamental movement away from tribal lifestyles occurred during the colonization period, efforts to "modernize" and "develop" the third world presently includes the importation of modern justice systems. An example of this widespread transition can be seen in the establishment of the International Criminal Tribunals for Rwanda, a country from a continent rich in tribal heritage and custom. Despite their traditions and the possible benefits these traditions might offer for bringing justice to bear on the atrocities there, the international community has installed its own system and values to achieve justice.[25] The purpose of the tribunal is not only to "bring justice," but, more broadly, to deter current and future war criminals by showing them the consequences they face if they violate international law. Deterring grave international crimes is certainly an admirable mission; however it is important for the international community to consider the values and benefits offered when utilizing aspects of tribal justice. This is especially significant in the context of bringing "justice" to conflicts among indigenous cultures in remote regions of the world that have managed partially to preserve their tribal values.

The application of the modern justice system when adjudicating international crimes within tribal communities may negatively influence others to refrain from evil acts, but simply installing international mechanisms for trial and punishment does not promote an internal sense of good or justice. Cultivating an internal sense of the good and justice is essential to preventing evil acts, because, as Plato succinctly noted, "good people do not need laws to tell them to act responsibly, while bad people will find a way around the laws."

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Notes

1 The terms "tribal" and "indigenous" will be used interchangeably, as well as the terms "western" and "modern" in reference to identifying the different justice paradigms.

2 Navajo and Apache are tribes of North American indigenous peoples.

3 See Table.

4 Plato, *Republic*, 507b-508d.

5 G Kemerling, 'Plato: Education and the Value of Justice.,' 27 Oct 2001, viewed on 11 January, 2001,
 <http://www.philosophypages.com/hy/2h.htm>.

6 D R Bhandari, 'Plato's Concept of Justice: An Analysis,' n.d., viewed on 11 January, 2001, <http://www.bu.edu/wcp/Papers/Anci/AnciBhan.htm>.

7 G Kemerling, op. cit.

8 *Republic,* 508e.

9 *Republic,* 358d-362d.

10 *Republic*, 359d.

11 D Shinn, 'Traditional Forms of Healing Conflict in Africa.' Remarks Made at a Seminar: 'Examples of Reconciliation: Africa's Contributions to the Global Community.' Library of Congress, March 21, 2005. Shinn, former US Ambassador to Ethiopia, wrote that African systems of justice and restoring society have a holistic medicinal approach. He likens the contrast between traditional African systems and Western justice systems to the contrast found between holistic medicine (which aims to heal the problem underlying the symptoms) and the modern medicine system which often treats the symptoms rather than the cause. Definition of holistic: (1) Emphasizing the importance of the whole and the interdependence of its parts. (2) Concerned with wholes rather than analysis or separation into parts. Available at: <http://dictionary.reference.com/search?q=holistic>

12 A P Melton, 'Indigenous Justice Systems and Tribal Society.' *Judicature*, vol. 79, no. 3, November-December 1995, 128.

13 C N Vicenti, 'Re-emergence of Tribal Society and Justice.' Originally published in *Judicature*, vol. 79, no. 3, 134-141, Nov.-Dec. 1995, viewed on 14 January 2006, < http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/rest-just/ch1/reemerge.htm>

14 Melton, op. cit., p. 132.

15 Vicenti, op. cit.

16 Shinn, op. cit.

17 Ibid.

18 *Republic,* 358d-362d.

19 Description of adversarial system available at:
 <http://www.answers.com/topic/common-law>. More information on the adversarial system, available at

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<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adversarial_system>

[20] Melton, op. cit., p. 126.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid.

[23] In the last national study conducted in 1994, it was found that 67.5% of prisoners released were rearrested within 3 years, an increase over the 62.5% found for those released in 1983. 'Bureau of Justice Statistics, Recidivism of Prisoners released in 1994.' June, 2002, viewed on 18 February, 2006,
<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/reentry/tables/recidivismtab.htm >.

[24] As stated by the United States Court, the goals of community service punishments are to address "the traditional sentencing goals of punishment, reparation, restitution, and rehabilitation." 'U.S. Courts, The System and Its Officers.' n.d, viewed on 18 February, 2006,
<http://www.uscourts.gov/fedprob/supervise/community.html>.

[25] International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda.
< http://65.18.216.88/default.htm>

[26] C Zuni and A P Melton, 1999 National Victim Assistance Academy. Chapter 3, Section 4, Tribal Justice. US Department of Justice, Office of Victims of Crime.

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Characteristic Differences in Justice Paradigms[26]

American Justice Paradigm	*Indigenous Justice Paradigm*
Vertical	Holistic
Communication is rehearsed	Communication is fluid
Justice is Imposed[25]	Justice is achieved collectively
Written statutory law derived from rules and procedure, written record	Oral customary law learned as a *way of life* (emphasis added) by example
Separation of powers	Law and justice are part of a whole
Separation of church and state	The spiritual realm is invoked in ceremonies and prayer
Adversarial and conflict oriented	Builds trusting relationships to promote resolution and healing
Argumentative	Talk and discussion is essential
Isolated behavior, freeze-frame acts	Reviews problem in its entirety, contributing factors are examined
Fragmented approach to process	Comprehensive problem solving
Time-oriented process	No time limits on the process, long silences and patience are valued
Limits participants in the process and solutions	Inclusive of all affected individuals in the process and solving problem
Represented by strangers	Representation by extended family members
Focus on individual rights	Focus on victim and communal rights
Punitive and removes offender	Corrective, offenders are accountable and responsible for change
Prescribes penalties by and for the state	Customary sanctions used to restore victim-offender relationship
Right of accused, especially against self-incrimination	Obligation of accused to verbalize accountability
Vindication to society	Reparative obligation to victims and community, apology and forgiveness

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Perspectives of Cyberethics in the Information Society

Robert Bichler, Christian Fuchs, Celina Raffl

Abstract

We suggest that co-operation is a guideline of moral action in the information society that allows a sustainable design of social and socio-technological systems and lies at the foundation of a global sustainable information society.

Key Words: Ethics, cyberethics, cooperative ethics, information society, sustainability

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1. Introduction

Moral action is action that distinguishes good and evil behaviour, and communicates judgements and rules deriving from these judgements. Good and evil, freedom, and happiness are important categories of ethics.

The different ethical approaches can be classified into four categories that form a typology. This typology is based on the distinction between subjects and objects in society. 1. There are subjective, individual ethics that conceive norms and values as individually constructed. 2. There are objective ethics that conceive norms and values on an objective level. Objective here can be understood in two forms: either as intersubjectively obtained or as an absolute dimension of ethics. Hence there are two subtypes of objective ethics. Intersubjective ethics see norms and values as the result of discourse and communicative action. Absolute ethics conceive norms and values in transcendental terms. 3. Dualistic approaches argue that there is a subjective and an objective level of ethics and that these two domains are independent of each other. 4. Dialectical approaches maintain that there is an objective and a subjective level of ethics and that these two areas produce each other and are interconnected.

The important idea for us in subjective ethics is the cognitive dimension; the important idea in intersubjective ethics is that social norms, values, and rules emerge in communication processes; the important idea in transcendental ethics is that there are guidelines of morality; the important idea in Marxian ethics is that co-operation is a foundation of freedom.

2. The Self-Organization of the Moral System of Society

Our concept of the moral system of society is based on a notion of social self-organization as dynamic process in which human actors

communicate in such a way that they produce and reproduce social structures that enable and constrain further human actions and communications by which further structures emerge and are reproduced, etc. This is a self-producing, self-referential, and reflexive process that is termed re-creation.[1]

There are two levels of the moral system: a structural level and an actor level, and these levels are mutually connected. On the actor level we find an individual moral structure that is made up of a set of individual norms, values, and rules of behaviour.

Moral structures are made up of rules, norms, and values. Rules are techniques or procedures of action,[2] norms are regularized rules achieved by routinised, repeated, and repeatable action, values are a weighting and an evaluation of rules and/or norms according to moral judgements in terms of good and wicked. These three components can be found on the individual and on the social level of the moral system. Human action is an expression of the practical realization of individual rules, norms, and values.

Based on individual morals human beings enter social relationships and form social groups by communication processes. We enter the moral system of society when our individual or social practices are oriented on moral issues. When we communicate with other actors about moral questions and judgements, we act on the social level of the moral system. In and through communication processes, the moral social structure of society is constituted and reproduced. By moral communication, i.e., communication about moral issues, social rules, norms, and values emerge and are reproduced. Moral communication is characterized by certain degrees of conflict and co-operation. Social rules are techniques and procedures of social action; social norms are institutionalized and possibly sanctioned social rules[3]; social values are collective moral judgments on social phenomena in terms of good and wicked. Collective morals don't necessarily require consensus.

Collective morals in a process of downward causation enable and constrain individual rules, norms, and values. This is not a mechanical deterministic process; individuals who are socialized in certain social systems (e.g., children educated by parents, pupils educated by teachers) are confronted with certain dominant values by other actors. How they react is not exactly determined. There is only a certain space of possibilities determined by the overall social structure, while the exact individual moral judgements are chosen based on relative freedom of action.
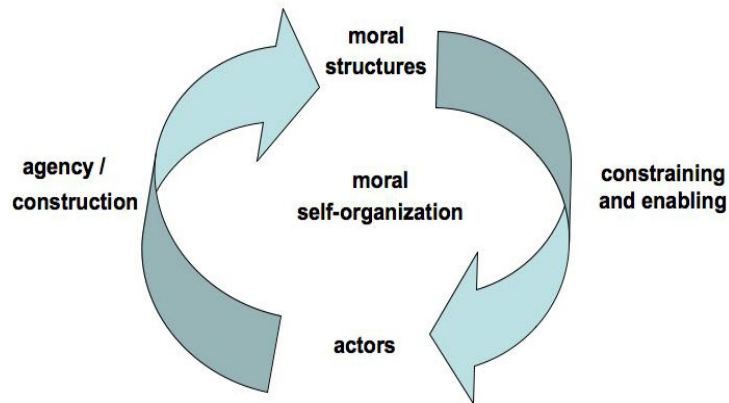
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Figure 1: The Self-Organization of the Moral System[4]

    The self-organization of the moral system is a process where individuals produce and reproduce social rules, norms, and values in and through communication; this results in social moral structures that enable and constrain individual rules, norms, and values that function as the foundation for further moral communication processes that result in the further emergence and reproduction of social morals, etc. (See Figure 1.)

    Self-organization can on the one hand be understood on a synchronous level as the autopoietic reproduction of structures. Here the work of Maturana and Varela has been important. On the other hand, Ilya Prigogine has shown that on a diachronic level, self-organization means that new qualities and order emerge in a phase of instability and systemic crisis. He terms this principle "order from noise."

    Because of the moral system's openness, new moral social structures always emerge in situations of crisis and the instability of at least one subsystem of society. This means that societal crisis, by the way of structural coupling, has a feedback effect on the moral system by which dominant morals of the specific system change, i.e., new qualities of the moral system emerge. The changes affect both the specific system in crisis and the moral structure of society in the specific realm in question. But this is not a deterministic process; crisis opens up a space of possibilities for new morals which are realized in concrete social processes. The deterministic element is that morals change in situations of crisis, but it is relatively open how they change.

    With the rise of modern society, religious morals have diminished in importance due to the role that the economy and polity play in society. Economic freedom in the sense of civic liberties and a right to private

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property has become a dominant social value that shapes society. Economic liberty in modern society means that each individual has the right to produce commodities and to sell them on markets. The moral values of modern society are to a certain extent antagonistic and self-contradicting.   For example, the right to private property organized in the form of capital accumulation often contradicts the human right to social security. The rise of economic competition as a dominant structural principle of modern society is due to the fact that modern society is based on capital and markets. Modern society is characterized by conflicts of interest. The state system is a monopolization of the means of coercion that is used for installing a political system that forces the different interest groups to carry out conflicts in an unarmed way. This results in the democratic political system in which parties that are an expression of different antagonistic interests compete for the favour of citizens. This system is based on the distinction between government and opposition, majority rules, and laws. Laws are social norms defined by the government, sanctioned with the help of the state-monopoly of the means of coercion organized in the form of the executive system that consists of the police system, the military system, and the prison system and the judiciary system. Competition and conflict are the dominant principles of moral communication in modern society. Social norms and values are constituted in conflicting ways that establish power differences (that are renegotiated in election processes) that enable certain groups to pass laws and exclude others from this process. Morals can, under certain circumstances, become ideologies that legitimate domination by strictly regulating human action by appealing to a highest, absolute, irrational authority such as God, race, and nation.[5]

The self-organization of the moral system is a threefold process of cognition, communication, and co-operation. The cognitive level is the domain of individual rules, norms, and values, while communication and co-operation are processes that form the social level of the moral system. Co-operation is a type of social relationship for achieving social integration that is different from competition. Co-operation is a specific type of communication where actors achieve a shared understanding of social phenomena, make concerted use of resources so that new systemic qualities emerge, and engage in mutual learning, so that all actors benefit, and feel at home and comfortable in the social system that they jointly construct. We argue that co-operation is the highest principle of morality; it is the foundation of an objective dimension of ethics, a co-operative ethics. All human beings strive for happiness, social security, self-determination, self-realization, and inclusion in social systems so that they can participate in decision processes, co-designing their social systems. Competition means that certain individuals and groups benefit at the expense of others, i.e., there is an unequal access to structures of social systems. This is the dominant

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organizational structure of modern society; modern society hence is an excluding society. Co-operation includes people in social systems; it lets them participate in decisions and establishes a more just distribution of and access to resources. Hence co-operation is a way of achieving and realizing basic human needs, while competition is a way of achieving and realizing basic human needs only for certain groups and excluding others.

We argue that co-operation forms the essence of human society, and that competition estranges humans from their essence. One can imagine a society that functions without competition. A society without competition is still a society. In contrast, one cannot imagine a society that functions without a certain degree of co-operation and social activity. A society without co-operation isn't a society; it is a state of permanent warfare, egoism and mutual destruction that sooner or later destroys all human existence. If co-operation is the essence of society, then a truly human society is a co-operative society and competition is a form of evil and human wickedness. Co-operation as the highest principle of morality is grounded in society and social activity itself; it can be rationally explained within society and need not refer to a highest transcendental absolute principle such as God that can't be justified within society. Co-operative ethics is a critique of lines of thought and arguments that want to advance exclusion and heteronomy in society. Co-operative ethics is inherently critical, subjecting commonly accepted ideas, conventions, traditions, prejudices, and myths to critical questioning. It questions mainstream opinions and voices alternatives to them in order to avoid one-dimensional thinking, and strengthen complex, dialectical, multi-dimensional thinking. The method of critique goes back to Socrates. In the 20th century, it has been advanced by approaches such as Critical Theory and Discourse Ethics.

3.   Co-Operative Cyberethics

Computer technologies and knowledge transform society; transformation means that new questions of how social relationships should be regulated arise. New options for development, i.e., opportunities and risks, emerge. The challenge for Cyberethics is to discuss principles of morality that can guide human action so that people are empowered to establish a sustainable, participatory, global information society. Cyberethics can discuss real possibilities of development of the information society and criticize ideologies that portray the information society in uncritical and one-dimensional ways.

In Computer Ethics there is a debate on the question if new information and communication technologies imply new ethics: Expansionists like Carl Mitcham and Walter Maner argue that ICTs transform society to an extent that requires a new ethical framework, while traditionalists say that we can apply our ordinary scheme of ethical analysis

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to issues involving cybertechnology.[6] Our position is that both arguments are simultaneously false and true: the information society is a societal formation that is both continuous and discontinuous; it is neither an entirely new society, but one structured around an asymmetrical distribution and accumulation of economic, political, and cultural capital,[7] nor an entirely old society. The way that structures work has been transformed, but not revolutionized by the increasing importance of ICTs, knowledge, communication, and network logic. If society has partly changed, we partly need to adapt our ethics. Given such an analysis, one can assume that in the Information Age we are still confronted with fundamental questions of ethics such as how to increase freedom, autonomy, participation, and co-operation in society, but the societal context has to a certain extent changed. Hence the realm of possible developments of society has also changed, hence the real options for action that humans have are somehow different, and hence we need to rethink which alternative paths of development are desirable and which ones are not.

Deborah Johnson argues that computer ethics will disappear in the future because computer technology will become an ordinary phenomenon and this will result in the integration of computer ethics into ordinary ethics (Bynum[8] refers to this assumption as the Johnson hypothesis). Tavani argues that computer ethics won't disappear because new phenomena like bio-informatics and Artificial Intelligence create new ethical questions.[9] In a similar vein, Moor says "novel applications of computing will generate new policy vacuums and hence new ethical problems."[10] We think that the disappearance of computer ethics would only be possible if computer technology no longer has any novel effects on society. But this is unlikely to happen. For example, the rise of nanotechnology will probably have huge effects on society that have thus far only been little discussed.

That we term our approach Co-operative Cyberethics stresses that co-operation is a principle that could strengthen the sustainable character of the information society and that it should practically be applied to questions of the information society, a society that is increasingly shaped by technology (cyberspace) and information. Co-operative Information Society Ethics is a more precise term, but because of its clumsiness we prefer to speak of Co-operative Cyberethics.

How has the space of possibilities of societal development changed? How has it remained unchanged? Modern society is based on an antagonism between self-determination and heteronomy, inclusion and exclusion. Co-operation is inherently inclusive, whereas competition advances exclusion and separation. Modern technologies have advanced both co-operation and competition under the premise of rationalizing the accumulation of economic, political, and cultural capital. In the information society (which might be better described by the term informational capitalism), social systems and

structures are increasingly shaped by knowledge, communication, and computer-mediated communication. This has resulted in the increasing importance of network logic and the globalization, i.e., time-space-distanciation, of social relationships. ICTs foster *networked forms of co-operation and competition*. New electronic media based on digitization, networking and computer technology are immersed in and embedded into the modern antagonism between competition and co-operation. Hence they don't have clear cut, mechanically determined, one-sided effects, but instead result in a set of multiple antagonistic uneven economic, political, and cultural tendencies; they pose both opportunities and risks. The task of Co-operative Cyberethics is to analyze the antagonisms of the information society, to question the uncritical appraisal and demonization of ICTs and the information society, and to stress the importance of the principle of co-operation for realizing sustainable developmental paths for the information society.

ICTs and knowledge today have effects that advance both the sustainable, co-operative, inclusive and the unsustainable, competitive, exclusive character of society. Depending on how ICTs are socially designed and applied, they can have positive and/or negative effects on society. The task of Co-operative Cyberethics is to point out the problems of the information society, and to provide arguments that suggest that co-operation advances a sustainable information society and suggest practical means for strengthening the sustainability of society.

Sustainability is based on the desire of all human beings to live in a fair, just, and beautiful society. All humans want to live a good life, if one desires the right to have a good life, one must also recognize that all humans have the right to live such a life. Hence sustainability can broadly be defined as a good life for all. A sustainable society encompasses ecological diversity, technological usability, economic wealth, political participation, and cultural wisdom.

4.   Conclusion

Cyberspace is embedded into societal structures that don't result in an entirely new society, but also don't leave society unchanged. Old questions such as the conflict between co-operation and competition that appears in modern society in the form of conflicts on property, power, and symbols take on a new form. The task for Co-operative Cyberethics is to point out the real possibilities for strengthening societal co-operation and the co-operative character of cyberspace in the information age, and to criticize approaches and arguments that advance the competitive character of society and cyberspace. It rests on the principle that co-operation enables forms of social life that are more fulfilling, self-enhancing, democratic, inclusive, and participatory than the ones brought about by competition. To provide

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arguments that show the superiority of co-operation over competition is one of the central tasks of ethics in the information age. A sustainable information society, i.e., a society that guarantees a good life for all, will be a co-operative society.

Notes

[1] C Fuchs, 'Some Implications of Pierre Bourdieu's Works for a Theory of Social Self-Organization,' *European Journal of Social Theory,* vol. 6, no. 4, 2003a, pp. 387-408. See also C Fuchs, 'Structuration Theory and Self-Organization,' in *Systemic Practice and Action Research*, vol. 16, no. 4, 2003b, pp. 133-167.

[2] A Giddens, *The Constitution of Society,* University of California Press, Berkeley/ Los Angeles, 1984, pp. 16-25.

[3] Ibid.

[4] R Bichler, 'Self-Organization and Ethics,' in *Proceedings of the Cultural Context of Self-Organization*, *International Interdisciplinary Scientific Conference*, Kiev, April 28-29, 2005, Irina Dobronravova (ed).

[5] L Althusser, 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses,' in *Lenin and Philosophy,* Louis Althusser (ed), Monthly Review Press, New York, 1971, pp. 127-186. See also E Balibar et al., '*Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities,*' Verso, London, 1991, and A Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, International Publishers, New York, 1971.

[6] H T Tavani, 'The Impact of the Internet on our Moral Condition. Do We Need a New Framework of Ethics?' in *The Impact of the Internet on our Moral Lives,* R J Cavalier (ed), State University of New York Press, Albany, NY, 2005, pp. 215-237. See also H Tavani, 'The State of Computer Ethics as a Philosophical Field of Inquiry: Some Contemporary Perspectives, Future Projections, and Cur-rent Resources,' in *Ethics and Information Technology* vol. 3, 2001, pp. 97-108.

[7] Fuchs, 2003a.

[8] T W Bynum, 'Computer Ethics: Its Birth and Its Future,' in *Ethics and Information Technology,* vol. 3, 2001, pp. 109-112.

[9] Tavani, 2001.

[10] J H Moor, 'The Future of Computer Ethics: You Ain't Seen Nothin' Yet,' in *Ethics and Information Technology*, vol. 3, 2001, p. 90.

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Predicting Evil:
I-D Orientation and Its Implications for Human Nature

Greg M. Turek & Darin J. Challacombe

Abstract

In this paper, we describe how I-D orientation, a personality variable derived from cultural differences between societies with immediate- and delayed-return systems, can predict certain types of evil behaviours. Although immediate-return systems inherently involve frequent feedback about progress toward clearly defined, proximal goals (e.g., hunting), delayed-return systems do not and entail long-term planning and consequent uncertainty and lack of control (e.g., agriculture, college degree; not to be confused with immediate and delayed gratification). Humans have spent the vast majority of their evolutionary past exclusively in immediate-return systems. In the comparatively few years since the Neolithic Revolution, however, most humans have been forced into delayed-return systems. Thus, a more delayed-return I-D orientation represents the extent to which individuals function in particular ways that are demanded by the predominantly delayed-return systems of cultures in modern societies yet are potentially in conflict with genetic predispositions that evolved in the immediate-return systems of cultures in ancestral societies. Our research has demonstrated that individuals with a delayed-return I-D orientation, but not those with an immediate-return I-D orientation, tend to be (a) unwilling to help victims in emergency situations when other bystanders are present or appear unconcerned and (b) obedient of institutional authorities that expect them to ignore the pleas of people suffering from cruelty and injustice. Given that these particular behaviours appear to be carried out by individuals who function in certain culturally determined ways, we further contend that the evil inherent in such behaviours may not be a true reflection of human nature. We conclude with a discussion of some of the implications these arguments have for individual differences in the susceptibility to various forms of social influence in general as well as more practical concerns about social problems such as cult indoctrination and terrorism.

Key Words: I-D Orientation, bystander apathy, obedience

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1.   Introduction

Are humans inherently good or evil? Plato was among the first in the extant literature to address this question, and like the early Christians

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centuries later, argued that humans are inherently evil. Not until much more recently, with the writings of Locke and especially Romantics like Rousseau, did the opposing viewpoint become influential.

The present paper does not pretend to solve this debate, but it does offer some limited insight into the true nature of humans, at least as it pertains to a couple of specific kinds of situations. The first is related to obedience to authority and is when people commit malevolent acts because they were ordered to do so by someone they perceived to be a legitimate authority figure. The second is the bystander effect, which is when people fail to help victims in emergency situations because other bystanders are present.

We begin by reviewing the social psychological literature on obedience to authority and the bystander effect. Next, we present a personality dimension that seems to be able to predict who is and who is not susceptible to these kinds of social influence along with some of the empirical research that supports this claim. Finally, we conclude with a discussion of the implications these findings have for our original question about whether humans are naturally good or evil and the relevance these findings have for social problems such as cult indoctrination and terrorism.

2.   The Evil in Social Influence

Although there are many, two examples of social influence that can facilitate the perpetration of evil on others are obedience to authority and the bystander effect.

A. Obedience to authority

In an attempt to interpret the behaviour of the Nazis slaughtering thousands of Jews during World War II, Stanley Milgram developed a series of studies to test obedience to authority.[1] It has become probably the most infamous studies in the field of social psychology.[2]

Using the guise of a simple memory task, Milgram created an environment where participants dubbed as "teachers" were told to administer electrical shocks to other participants who were the "learners." What the teachers did not know was that the learner was actually a confederate who had been primed to respond to the increasing levels of shocks with a script, and they were not aware that the shocks were not really being administered to the learner.[3]

Milgram went to great lengths to create a very realistic laboratory setting to conduct these series of experiments. The "shock generator" consisted of a box with 30 switches, corresponding to the thirty levels of shocks (from 15 to 450 volts). The learner, in many of the experiments, was in another room and had been strapped down to the "shock chair" by the teacher and the "experimenter" (a high school biology teacher). The teacher would read a list of words pairs to the learner, and the learner would have to

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pick the correct pair from a list of three. The learner did this by pressing the switch that corresponded to the correct association, which displayed the answer to the teacher on a box above the shock generator. If a mistake was made, the teacher administered a shock. With each mistake, the voltage level of the shock was gradually increased, and the learner would respond vocally (or silently) to the increased voltage.[4]

The actual participant (e.g., the "teacher") was put in a condition in which the experimenter was the authority figure, and was actively "prodding" the participant to continue with the experiment.[5] The results of the original experiment shocked Milgram and entire psychological community: 26 out of 40 participants administered the 450 volt shock to the learner.[6]

In this study, the experimenter was seen as the authority figure. He was wearing a white lab coat and looked official. During the prodding (if the participant hesitated continuing), the experimenter would say "you must continue" or reiterate the importance of the study. This served to further substantiate the claim of the authority figure. As seen by the results, a good majority of the participants would administer shocks that would (if they had been real) have killed the learners. The participants, however, were just following the orders of the authority figure with very few using their own judgment to temper the procedure. In this case, Milgram showed that people are willing to commit murder when instructed to by a person in authority, even if the authority is questionable (viz., the experiment did not have the authority to instruct the teacher to kill the learner) - evil by action.

B. The Bystander Effect.

With the startling reports of the Kitty Genovese murder in 1964 in which 38 neighbours were aware of the crime happening outside their windows but did not call the police, Bibb Latené and John Darley set out to explore the effects of bystanders in helping behaviour.

In order to explain this and other similar events, Darley and Latené first defined characteristics[7] that were typical of emergencies.[8] Given that the bystander in an emergency event is in a position that is "unenviable," the question was raised on why anyone would offer to assist.[9] The next step was to develop a model to describe the intervention process, which involved noticing, interpreting, taking responsibility, developing a form of assistance, and implementing these forms. As a corollary, the presence of other bystanders may cause a bystander to take on a state of "pluralistic ignorance" (e.g., refusal to interpret the event as an actual emergency).[10] Using these ideas as a framework, Latené and Darley constructed a series of experiments to examine whether the presence of other individuals would discourage a bystander to assist during an emergency.

The initial experiment involved a participant filling out a questionnaire by himself. The questionnaire was administered in a room in

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which, after a few moments from the beginning of the experiment, smoke was introduced into it via an air vent, and, after six minutes, the room was so steeped with smoke that the participants had trouble seeing. From this "alone" condition, 18 out of 24 participants reported the smoke to the experimenter (who was in another room). A follow-up experiment was conducted in which the participant was in the room with two "passive confederates."[11] Out of the ten participants who were in this condition, only one reported the smoke.[12] Several other experiments were conducted using similar emergency events (e.g., a lady in another room who fell off a chair and injured herself and a discount liquor store that was "robbed" of a case of beer while the sales associate was checking the inventory in another room). The results of these experiments were very similar – a significantly lower number of participants acted in response to the experiment when in a group than when alone, regardless of whom the other member of the group was (e.g., a stranger or a friend). [13]

Darley and Batson's [14] "Good Samaritan" study showed that religiosity did not necessarily predict helping behaviour in an emergency. Darley, Teger, and Lewis[15] examined whether the concern or lack of concern of another person present with the participant predicted action. The study showed that when participants were able to see the other person's concern (e.g., were face-to-face with the other person), they were more likely to act, than if they did not see the concern (e.g., were back-to-back with the other person).[16]

In another study, participants were asked to talk about personal issues that they were facing as students.[17] In order to keep the opinions secret, the participants were told that it was intercom-based conference (in order to protect the confidentiality of the statements) with several other individuals, and that the experimenter would not listen to the discussion (he would only get the report from the exit-questionnaire). One of the other discussants (a confederate) stated quite sheepishly that they had trouble with seizures that were brought on by stress. A few moments after stating this, the discussant started experiencing a seizure. The participant was put in a position in which they had to decide whether they should act or let another person act (since there were more "discussants" than just two). The results showed the same, indicating when there was a diffusion of responsibility (i.e., other individuals present), there was a less-likely chance that the participant would act in response to the emergency.[18]

From these studies, it has been shown that the participants all notice the event. However, when participants relied on the judgments of other people in the room, a state of pluralistic ignorance was created in which they typically failed to recognize the event as an emergency. Further, when responsibility was diffused to many other people, people had a tendency to

not take action. With these studies, a person's inaction to help someone in need can cause the person to die - evil by inaction.

3.   I-D Orientation

I-D orientation is a personality variable that can predict susceptibility to the two forms of social influence reviewed by this paper as well as others such as norm formation and conformity.[19] It was derived by Turek, Challacombe, and Egert[20] from cultural differences between societies with immediate- and delayed-return systems, a distinction identified by Woodburn.[21] As a personality variable, it represents the extent to which individuals think, behave, and interpersonally relate along certain dimensions like those in cultures with delayed-, as opposed to immediate-, return systems. Specifically, individuals differ in the extent to which they do the following: (a) think about their past; (b) think about their future; (c) engage in effortful activities for long periods of time before receiving the benefits for doing them; (d) keep things for later use; (e) participate in long term, binding commitments with other people; (f) depend on specific other people for specific things; and (g) try to gain advantages over other people. These dimensions are measured using the I-D Orientation Inventory (IDOS).[22]

The subsistence activities of people in exclusively hunting and gathering societies such as the Eastern Hadza of northern Tanzania, those with immediate return systems, inherently involve frequent feedback about progress toward clearly defined, proximal goals.[23] When these people decide to get something (e.g., zebra), they customarily find out rather quickly whether they succeeded in obtaining it. If they succeed, then the time and effort they invested was worthwhile. If they fail, then they can quickly move on to an alternative pursuit (e.g., berries) with little loss of time and energy. The subsistence activities of people in all other societies, including other hunting and gathering societies, do not inherently involve frequent feedback about progress toward clearly defined, proximal goals. These societies have delayed return systems. Oftentimes, when people in these societies decide to get something (e.g., a car, a new job), they normally need to develop a long term plan and must usually wait for an extended period of time to find out whether they succeed in obtaining it. If they eventually succeed, at least some of the time and energy invested was worthwhile. If they eventually fail, the sizeable amount of time and energy already wasted can be redirected into an alternate pursuit only with some cost. According to Martin,[24] people try to compensate in various ways for the lack of frequent feedback about goal progress in scenarios like these because of the uncertainty and lack of control they entail.

The concept of immediate and delayed return should not be confused with that of immediate and delayed gratification, however.

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Although both concepts involve waiting, that which is being waited for in delayed return systems is the feedback about progress toward goals, not the gratification from accomplishing the goals themselves. Furthermore, although immediate return systems facilitate the receipt of frequent feedback indicative of goal progress, it does not necessarily imply that they are "better" than delayed return systems in any other respects. In sum, the personality variable of I-D orientation represents the extent to which individuals (a) are like those in cultures with delayed-return systems in certain ways, and by extension, (b) try to compensate for uncertainty and lack of control.

A. Obedience to authority.

Research has shown that people turn to others for informational and normative reasons, and are thereby influenced by others, when they are experiencing uncertainty and lack of control. Given that being more delayed-return involves a greater tendency to try to compensate for uncertainty and lack of control, people who are more delayed-return should be more susceptible to social influence. To test this idea, Turek, Challacombe, and Shrira[25] did a conceptual replication one of the most infamous and powerful demonstrations of social influence, the classic research on obedience to authority by Milgram.[26]

For obvious ethical reasons, the "replication" was quite different than Milgram's research. After completing the IDOS, participants were led through what ostensibly was a study on the effects of viewing magazine advertisements on body image. After the participants indicated their actual and ideal body image, the researcher (a) explained that she was being treated unfairly and threatened by the department chair, (b) threw away the body image measure and replaced it with a blank one, and (c) told the participant to fake the data to be more consistent with the hypothesis even though it was technically wrong and could get them in trouble. In this way, the study created a dilemma in that participants could obey the student researcher who was being threatened and unfairly treated by helping her fake data or obey the institutional authority/department chair by not helping. Accordingly, like in Milgram's research, the study created an opportunity to cooperate with a legitimate, but malevolent, authority. Unlike in Milgram's research, however, participants could feel good about their decision and view it as "right" regardless of the choice.

The initial outcome of the study was a complete surprise, because all but one participant faked the data, and many were quite eager to do so! Consequently, the degree of obedience (i.e., how much did they change their body image ratings) was used as the dependent variable instead of whether they obeyed or not. As expected, participants who were more delayed-return in I-D orientation obeyed authority to a greater extent.

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B. The Bystander Effect.

Another classic example of social influence is the bystander effect.[27] Although those with a more delayed-return I-D orientation were expected to be more susceptible to the bystander effect for the same reasons as other forms of social influence, there was even more reason to think so in this case.

A core feature of societies with immediate return systems is assertive egalitarianism. The equality that exists among people in societies with immediate-return systems is more than just a lack of self aggrandizement, the presence of which is a core feature of societies with delayed-return systems. "Egalitarianism is asserted as an automatic entitlement which does not have to be validated."[28] Self aggrandizement is actually one of the few ways to lose esteem in these societies.[29] For example, among one society with an immediate-return system, the Mbuti, "some men, because of exceptional hunting skill, may come to resent it when their views are disregarded, but if they try to force those views they are very promptly subjected to ridicule."[30]People in societies with immediate return systems tend not to be self aggrandizing, but instead, assertively egalitarian. Likewise, people who are less self aggrandizing, people who are more immediate return along this dimension of I D orientation, tend to be assertively egalitarian. Not only do people who are not self aggrandizing not try, they also try not, to gain advantages over other people and make sure others do not as well.

Thus, for people who are less self-aggrandizing (i.e., more assertively egalitarian), whether the situation is really an emergency or whether they really are personally responsible for helping become more irrelevant. The focus instead is more on the disadvantaged state of the victim. They are more concerned about removing inequalities among people instead of the implications helping may have on their advantageous state.

To test this idea, Turek[31] designed a study in which participants overheard an audiotape recording of the researcher ostensibly falling and becoming injured in a room that connected to theirs and had the chance to offer assistance (or decline to do so) while either alone or with what they thought was another participant in another room adjacent to the one with the researcher. In the conditions in which participants thought that they were participating with another participant, they were able to see the other participant reacting as though she was concerned or unconcerned about the incident on a monitor, which was actually a videotape recording passed off as closed-circuit television. The participants also completed the IDOS to obtain a measure of self-aggrandizement.

As expected, the influence on the odds of helping that bystanders have over people in emergency situations was essentially eliminated among people who were less self-aggrandizing. The results suggested that, although the odds of people helping are lower when other bystanders appear

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unconcerned than when they either appear concerned or are not present, these differences are more pronounced for people who are more self-aggrandizing and less pronounced or nonexistent for people who are less self-aggrandizing.

4.   Implications
A. Human nature.

Humans have spent the vast majority of their evolutionary history in societies with immediate return systems and mostly likely are still predisposed accordingly. It was not until the Neolithic Revolution that most humans found themselves forced into the delayed-return systems of modern societies. The Neolithic Revolution, which took place between 8000 and 6000 BC, was characterized by the transition from hunting and gathering to agricultural ways of life.[32] Thus, a more delayed-return I-D orientation represents the extent to which individuals function in particular ways that are demanded by the predominantly delayed-return systems of cultures in modern societies yet are potentially in conflict with genetic predispositions that evolved in the immediate-return systems of cultures in ancestral societies.

Regarding human nature, associations between I-D orientation and psychological phenomena can be examined to understand the extent to which such phenomena are a product of our evolutionary past versus our sociocultural environments (i.e., nature vs. nurture). Essentially, if a tendency is strictly evolutionary-based, one's I-D orientation should not be related, in that the tendency should be observed both among people with more immediate- and more delayed-return I-D orientations. If a tendency is a consequence of cultures with delayed-return systems, however, I-D orientation should be related, in that it should be observed to a greater extent among people with a more delayed-return I-D orientation. Given that the studies described in this chapter demonstrated that both obedience to authority and the bystander effect tend to be more likely among people with a more delayed-return I-D orientation, it suggests that these psychological phenomena are not the consequence of innate tendencies, but instead, the product of the delayed-return systems of cultures in modern societies.

B. Cult Indoctrination

While cult membership estimates in the United States alone have fluctuated from thousands to tens of thousands, their overall worldwide presence has become increasingly alarming.[33] Names such as Jim Jones or David Koresh or Aum Shinri Kyo can illicit emotionally-charged memories by many people[34]. Although more and more is being learned about cults, their anatomy and physiology, and prevention techniques, their tenacious hold remains firm.

Broadly speaking, the typical indoctrination of new cult members can be seems as a gradual, stepwise process.[35] The first step would be creating affiliation between the target person and the cult. This is established by having current members associate with and accept the target. The frequency and intensity of these meetings increase until group membership is offered or interest in the group by the target dissipates. Following this bonding phase, an "all or nothing" request is usually made of the neophyte. Miller and others describe the drinking of blood as being this request for "vampire" cults;[36] Jim Jones asked churchgoers to move to Guyana with him.[37]

Unfortunately, limited research has actually been conducted on the personality make-up of members and ex-members of cults. Walsh, Russell, and Wells[38] reported that the increased levels of neuroticism and sociotrophy found in ex-members normalized as a function of time post-cult. Walsh and Bor,[39] while assessing individuals who joined a cult as an adult, found that these individuals scored lower on neuroticism than a normal population. While these results are quite interesting, they cannot provide any personality characteristics that predict venerability to cult membership. Miller and others,[40] while looking mainly at vampire cults, suggest that attachment issues and an inherent need for affiliation are common drivers for future members.

One of the static conceptions of cults that appears to be congruent with our theory is that they have a more delayed-return environment than with cult followers being more delayed-return in orientation. As shown from the Milgram study, individuals with a more delayed-return orientation were more likely to obey the authority figure, regardless of the command or consequence. This tends to fit what is known about cult followers (i.e., lower neuroticism).

C. Terrorism

Since the mid-90's, terrorist activities worldwide have appeared to become more exacerbated.[41] Intelligence organizations worldwide have attempted to determine characteristics of individuals involved. In the past, it was likely that individuals who were "young, uneducated, and unskilled" would be involved.[42] However, it is becoming increasingly common for upper-class, educated individuals to become involved in this type of activity.

Umek and Areh[43] examined these terrorists, noting that they have a greater likelihood of suffering from borderline and narcissistic personality disorders. They, however, do not attribute this to original dispositions, but believe that this is the cause of the terrorist cell that they are associated with. Bond echoes these points by talking about the leaders: "these powerful

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leaders [typically men] attract other men [typically] to their cause and join forces in wreaking violence."[44]

Our research has shown that people who have a more delayed-return orientation are susceptible to control by leaders. Again, the Milgram study demonstrated this theory. Further, as displayed by the bystander effect studies, individuals who are more delayed-return look to others for guidance when determining whether they should help someone. Since research and theories on terrorists have shown that they are guided by a strong leader, it is indicative that terrorist followers would look to their leaders for guidance in this matter.

Notes

[1] S Milgram, *Obedience to Authority: An Experimental View*, Harper & Row, New York, 1974, p. 45.

[2] D G Myers, *Exploring Social Psychology*, McGraw Hill, Boston, 1994.

[3] Milgram, p. 45.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

[6] S T Fiske, *Social Beings: A Core Motives Approach to Social Psychology*, John Wiley & Sons, Hoboken, NJ, 2004.

[7] B Latené and J M Darley, 'Bystander 'apathy.'' *American Scientist*, vol. 57 1969, p. 247. According to them, emergencies typically contain the following elements: a) involve threat or harm; b) are an unusual or rare event; c) differ from one another; d) are unforeseen; and e) require instant action.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid; See B Latené and J M Darley, "Group inhibition of bystander intervention in emergencies." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 10, 1968, pp. 215-221 for a complete review.

[13] J M Darley and C D Batson, ''From Jerusalem to Jericho': A study of situational and dispositional variables in helping behavior." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* ,vol. 27, 1973, pp. 100-108.; J M Darley, A I Teger, and L D Lewis, "Do groups always inhibit individuals' response to potential emergencies?" *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 26, 1973, pp. 395-399.

[14] Darley and Batson, op. cit. p. 100.

[15] Darley, Teger, and Lewis, op. cit., p. 396.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Latené and Darley, op. cit., p. 247.

[18] Ibid.

[19] G M Turek, D J Challacombe, and I Shrira, *Revisiting classic studies of social influence: The Role of Relative Hemisphere Activation and I-D Orientation in Norm Formation, Conformity, and Obedience to Authority.* (Manuscript in preparation).

[20] G M Turek, D J Challacombe, and D D Egert, *The Nature of Individuals in Societies with Immediate-return Systems: A key to Understanding Subjective Well-being?* (Manuscript submitted for publication).

[21] J Woodburn, 'Egalitarian societies.' *Man*, vol. 17, 1982, pp. 431 451. See also: E S Burch, Jr., 'The future of hunter gatherer research.' In *Key issues in hunter gatherer research*. E S Burch, Jr. & L J Ellanna (eds.), Berg, Oxford, 1994; T Ingold, *The Appropriation of Nature: Essays on Human Ecology and Social Relations*, University of Iowa Press, Iowa City, IA. 1987; Alain Testart, 'The significance of food storage among hunter gatherers: Residence patterns, population densities, and social inequalities.' *Current Anthropology*, vol. 23, 1982, pp. 523 537.

[22] Turek, Challacombe, and Egert, op. cit.

[23] Woodburn, op. cit., p. 431; J Woodburn, 'African hunter gatherer social organization: Is it best understood as a product of encapsulation?' In *Hunters and Gatherers: Vol. 1. History, Evolution, and Social Change*, T Ingold, D Riches, and J Woodburn (eds.), Berg, Oxford, 1988.

[24] Martin.

[25] Turek, Challacombe, and Shrira, op. cit.

[26] Milgram, op. cit., p. 45; S Milgram, 'Behavioral study of obedience,' *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, vol. 67, 1963, p. 371.

[27] Latené & Darley, op. cit., p. 247.

[28] Woodburn, op. cit. p. 446.

[29] Wiessner & Schiefenhövel, 1996.

[30] Turnbull, 1965, p. 183.

[31] G M Turek, *The Disposition to Follow an Altruistic Path to Helping that Obviates Empathy and Circumvents the Bystander Effect* (Manuscript submitted for publication).

[32] See Goldsmith, 1993; Hasegawa, diRienzo, Kocher, & Wilson, 1993; Horai, Hayasaka, Kondo, Tsugane, & Takahata, 1995; Lee & DeVore, 1968; Maryanski & Turner, 1992; Sahlins, 1972)

[33] D J Challacombe, 'Exploring religious cults that ended in tragedy: Principles of social influence.' *Journal of Psychological Inquiry,* vol. 10, 2005, p. 29.; R S Ellwood, *Religious and Spiritual Groups in Modern America*, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1973.; E A Lottick, *Prevalence of Cults in the USA.* 27 July 2005 (21 December 2005); M T

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[34] Challacombe, op. cit., p. 30.
[35] C Gard, 'The power and peril of cults,' *Current Health,* vol. 2, no. 23, 1997, p. 18; T W Miller, L J Veltkamp, R F Kraus, T Lane, and T Heister, 'An adolescent vampire cult in rural America: Clinical issues and case study.' *Child Psychiatry and Human Development* vol. 29, 1999, p. 209.
[36] Miller et al, op. cit., p. 209.
[37] K Hurray, 'The truth about Jonestown.' *Psychology Today* vol. 25, 1992, p. 62.
[38] Y S Walsh, R J H Russell, and P A Wells, 'The personality of ex-cult members,' *Personality and Individual Differences*, vol. 19, 1995, p. 340.
[39] Y S Walsh and R Bor, 'Psychological consequences of involvement in a new religious movement or cult,' *Counselling Psychology Quarterly,* vol. 9, 1996, p. 50.
[40] Miller et al, op. cit., p. 210.
[41] J Deutch, 5 Sept. 1996
[42] P Umek and I Areh, 'Osebnostne znacilnosti teroristov [Terrorist Personality],' *Varstvoslovje* vol. 3, 2001, p, 247.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Bond, op. cit., p. 214

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'The Splendour of Little Girls': Social Constructions of Paedophiles and Child Sexual Abuse

Sarah Dalal Goode

Abstract

The issue of adults sexually attracted to children is one which contemporary society finds particularly disturbing and unsettling. Mainstream media imagery of paedophiles as 'evil monsters' sit alongside easily-accessible websites romanticising the love of little girls, while thousands of men who do not identify as paedophile are arrested for buying child pornography online. Hollywood too, with the release of the film *The Woodsman* in 2005, provides opportunities for society to explore the question of what a paedophile is and how we should respond. This chapter aims to contribute to this exploration and questioning of the social construction of paedophiles by providing an overview of three key incidents occurring between 2000 and 2006 which have been widely reported in the British media and which have contributed towards contemporary understandings of paedophilia and child sexual abuse. The chapter contrasts mainstream understandings of paedophiles as being 'in a category entirely on their own' with alternative constructions which suggest that sexual attraction to children and sexual contact with children are far from being only the province of deviant and evil 'others' and in fact that to suggest otherwise does not protect children. The chapter concludes by examining legal and social responses to the issue of paedophilia and child sexual abuse: approaches which rely on centralised and formalised processes of surveillance and control and which make clear distinctions between the 'normal' and the 'criminal' or, alternatively, more informal and local approaches which are sensitive to the complex human nature of this issue and which are based on community engagement and individual responsibility.

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1.   Introduction

This chapter deals with how people in Britain think about paedophilia and child sexual abuse. The focus of this chapter is on heterosexual paedophilia and child sexual abuse, because statistically it is heterosexual abuse which affects the greatest number of children.[1] The first

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section starts by reviewing three key events over the last six years which have shaped our understanding and triggered significant public responses. The second section will then go on to discuss competing understandings of paedophilia and child sexual abuse, and the third section will then conclude with some implications and recommendations for developing our response to this urgent social problem.

2.   Three Key Events in the UK from 2000
A. 2000, murder of Sarah Payne

The narrative begins on the 1st July 2000, when Sarah Payne, an 8-year-old, was murdered by a man who had served a prison sentence for previously sexually attacking a young girl. The police had known, since his release from prison in 1995, that he was a threat to girls but were unable to do anything about this until he committed another offence. After her death, the parents of Sarah Payne, supported by a national newspaper, *The News of the World*, campaigned for people to have the right to know if there were convicted paedophiles living in their community. This campaign for community notification was known as Sarah's Law, similar to Megan's Law in the United States.

Prior to this, earlier cases of children being sexually attacked and murdered had given rise to the Sex Offenders Act, passed in 1997. This Act had imposed a requirement for the first time on those convicted of sex offences against children and other serious sex offences to register their name and address, and any subsequent changes, with the police. In the debate leading up to the passing of this Act the MP David Mellor, in the House of Commons in 1997, had expressed the view:[2]

> Having decided that it is right that the police should be able to keep tabs on people and that their addresses should be notified, we shall have to confront the problem …that, if the police have a right to know, why do the public not have the right to know? If someone with a string of convictions for sexual offences against children moves into a house, why should the nice young family living next door not be told about him? Why should the community not be told?
>
> If we believe that paedophiles are in a category entirely on their own, we should consider whether it would be appropriate to take the exceptional step of saying that, when a paedophile lives in a neighbourhood, all those living in the neighbourhood should know. … I believe that, in the longer run, we shall be hard put to resist the claims, which will undoubtedly come, that something should be

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> done so that the public are let in on the secret about who is
> living in their street.

Three years after Mellor's speech those claims did come, in the public response to Sarah Payne's murder, with unprecedented anti-paedophile rioting which lasted over two months in areas across England and Wales. Nevertheless, in contrast to the adoption of community notification in the United States, the UK has so far resisted claims to make details of convicted paedophiles available to members of the public. Although the Government decided against any form of Sarah's Law, it did allow public involvement - in a very diluted form - in the form of membership as a lay adviser of MAPPA (Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements) panels. Proposed in the wake of the public outcry for a right to know, this scheme now involves a maximum total of eighty-four members of the public across the country – a far cry from the public knowledge demanded by proponents of Sarah's Law.

There continue to be calls for changes in legislation to allow communities to know if sex offenders are living in their neighbourhoods; the latest example is from Scotland, where a petition of 5000 signatures was presented to the Scottish Parliament on 8th September 2005, calling for 'Mark's Law' after the murder of 8-year-old Mark Cummings, again by a known sex offender.[3]

B. 2002, Murders of Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman

The next event in the narrative is the murder of two ten-year old girls by a man working as a school caretaker, and known to the police in another part of the country as a possible risk to girls (following a number of allegations). Again, although the evidence of risk was there, it had not been acted on, this time because it was obscured both by non-communication between authorities and also because the man involved had not actually been convicted of any offences, only cautioned.

This double murder of Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman led to the setting up of a formal Inquiry chaired by Sir Michael Bichard. The remit was to inquire into child protection procedures, with a focus on record-keeping, vetting practices and information-sharing. The Report of the Bichard Inquiry was published two years later on 22nd June 2004. It called for a national computer-based intelligence system and a new centralised registration or barring scheme for those working with children, to be delivered by 2007. Progress was made rapidly and less than a year later Bichard commented that "[W]e are on the verge of having in the United Kingdom a coherent set of protective measures unrivalled anywhere."[4]

The main response to the Bichard Report was to establish ViSOR - the Violent Offender and Sex Offender Register, operational across the UK from May 2005. This national database, set up by PITO (the Police

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Information Technology Organisation), holds information on individuals convicted of sex offences or jailed for more than twelve months for violence. From August 2005, it has also held information on people not convicted of any offence but suspected of offences and who are assessed as posing a risk.

C. 2006, Sex Offenders Working in Schools
        The third event in the narrative occurred on 8th January 2006, when disclosure of the case of a sex offender being allowed to work in schools highlighted the existence of a number of separate and incompatible sex-offender lists being used by different departments, and anomalies such as ministers over-ruling police advice.[5] Again, there was a rapid response by Government and a tightening-up of procedures. Just eleven days after the scandal broke, a public statement was issued announcing an overhaul of the current system to make it "immeasurably strenghtened and fundamentally rebalanced"[6] by proposed new vetting and barring procedures, providing access for "all employers, including domestic employers such as parents contracting private tutors, to make secure, instant online checks of an applicant's status." [7]
        Thus it is evident that, over the last six years, there has been a series of incidents which have prompted a response of increasing information-gathering. However, this is not primarily by or to inform the public (which was the original intention of the public campaign) but primarily by and to inform the authorities, anxious to vet and bar and make clear distinctions between the good, normal, individual and the dangerous, deviant, individual.

3.   **Conflicting Understandings**
        This response in the UK relies on a particular understanding of paedophiles and child sexual abusers, an understanding summed up by the MP David Mellor in the phrase "paedophiles are in a category entirely on their own." This view of paedophiles as unique, and uniquely dangerous, allows us to endorse encroachments on fundamental civil rights, including (by keeping a register of those who are suspected but not convicted) overturning the basic principle of English law that suspects are innocent until proven guilty in a court of law. Our demand for "a coherent set of protective measures unrivalled anywhere," as Sir Michael Bichard described it in 2005, has led us now to the brink of having "secure, instant online checks" available for all employers, including householders wanting home tutors, and these measure are likely to be fully in place by this summer.
        Is this what we wanted? Why have we arrived at this point? Would these measures have prevented the murders of Sarah Payne, Holly Wells, Jessica Chapman or Mark Cummings? Will they prevent future sexual murders and future child sexual abuse?

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Every year in the UK, of approximately 12 million children, around eight children will be murdered by strangers.[8] A proportion of these murders will be sexually-motivated. Meanwhile, roughly another seventy will be murdered by someone known to them.[9] Around a third of these - over twenty - will be babies killed by a parent.[10] Altogether over 4000 children aged from birth to fourteen will die of causes other than murder,[11] usually from accidental injury.[12] Again, if we compare the murder rate for children (around 80 per 12 million children) with the murder rate for adults (approximately 800 per 48 million[13]), the murder rate for adults is nearly three times as high.

These statistics suggest that responses such as ViSOR are an over-reaction. If we want to prevent agonising and needless deaths of children, then preventing half-a-dozen sadistic murders by paedophiles may, from a utilitarian point of view, be of less merit than, say, stopping stressed-out parents shaking their little babies to death, or enforcing speed-limits, or fitting smoke-detectors.[14]

At the same time, somewhere in the region of one in every six children (around two million children in the UK) will be sexually abused, frequently by someone known to them and often by a member of their own family.[15] This reality is not generally represented in the popular media, where the emphasis on paedophiles and 'stranger danger' tends to encourage a sense that if we can protect ourselves and our children from 'those people out there' then all will be well - if we can only know who those people are who constitute the danger, and if we know where they live and where they work, then the problem of child sexual abuse will be solved. A number of influential organisations in the United Kingdom, including newspapers, national charities and at times the Government, tend to encourage this optimistic view. If only we can add enough names to the ViSOR database, then we will be safe.

This sharply-defined distinction between 'the normal' and 'the paedophile' also encourages the use of a particular language of extreme evil and wickedness. It becomes easier, within this moral dichotomy, to portray paedophiles as ruthless, cunning and devious 'others', more animal than human – like sharks or vultures circling round their prey, like snakes hiding in the grass or, like foxes, fit only to be hunted down.

While the popular media is offering this vision of clear moral distinction and unambiguous consensus on evil, one has only to log on to the internet to find significantly different versions of reality. It is clear that the internet hosts a number of sites actively promoting paedophilia as both an activity and as a political identity akin to other oppressed sexual minorities. On these sites, paedophilia is often presented in terms of a romantic appreciation of young children, little girls in particular, where paedophiles talk of being 'in love' with children. Self-defined paedophiles such as Lindsay Ashford, who runs a number of websites on paedophilia, are keen to

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make a distinction between paedophiles (good) and 'child molesters'(bad), arguing that children should have the right to have sex with adults, and that without this legal right children are unfairly disenfranchised.

The website Puellula (www.puellula.com), which greets visitors with saccharine invitations to celebrate 'the splendor of little girls', also includes a memorial website called 'Taken from our Midst' on girls who have been murdered, including those murdered for sexual gratification. Here we can see photographs of Sarah Payne, Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman, among many others. Visitors to this site may find it startling and unsettling to be confronted with sentimental memorials to 'little angels' murdered by - among others - paedophiles, on a pro-paedophile web-site. Incongruities such as these point to the extreme level of conflicting understandings on paedophilia within contemporary society.

However, despite the efforts of Ashford and his colleagues to promote a positive view of paedophilia as caring and protective of children, there is still a clear disjuncture for many men between their experiences of being sexually attracted to children and their wish to define themselves as paedophile. For example, a police operation conducted in 2002, Operation Ore, picked up 7272 men in Britain who had accessed sites advertising images of little girls (aged from 9 upwards) advertised as looking 'pretty' or 'pretty and sexy.'[16] One user of such internet child porn sites, a man known as Jim Bell, in an article in the *Guardian* newspaper, explains why men using such sites do not identify as paedophiles, even though they are collecting and masturbating to images of young girls, and at least some of whom are likely to be actively sexually abusing children, as well as accessing pornography. In his explanation, the men are masturbating not because the images are sexually graphic but because the men see the girls as being innocent and pretty and this fits in with cultural norms of men being attracted to and 'protecting' innocent little girls.[17]

An example of this is explored in the 2005 movie *The Woodsman*,[18] the only mainstream Hollywood movie where the central character is a paedophile. In one scene in the film, we see the central character, Walter, a 45-year-old man played by the actor Kevin Bacon, 'chatting up' an 11-year-old girl, Robin, in the park. Walter wants to hold Robin, sit her on his lap, smell her hair, and rub himself against her. He links this back to his feelings as a small boy for his little sister, whom he still loves and misses. Walter distinguishes in his own mind between himself and a character he calls Candy, who is clearly shown seducing young boys. He also distinguishes himself from men who have violently sexually assaulted girls.

In the film Walter regards himself as gentle and loving, perhaps almost as the Woodsman of the title - in the traditional children's story the Woodsman who rescues Little Red Riding Hood from the Big Bad Wolf. Walter therefore would agree with the distinction between the 'good'

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paedophile who wants to cherish and 'celebrate' little girls (by masturbating against them) and the 'bad' child molester who wants to hurt little girls (by raping them). Walter's attitude, that he is loving and appreciative - and protective - towards young girls, is one which appears to be shared by many of the men picked up by Operation Ore, of whom a significant proportion regularly worked with children. As Jim Bell describes it, the content of much internet child pornography is not about sex but:

> about innocence: the sexual innocence of the child offered for the pleasure of adults [sic] who have no innocence left. … it was fatally easy for 7000 men to convince themselves that looking at pictures of heartbreakingly pretty little girls was not wrong. It is why I do not find it surprising that men who enjoyed teaching children, or keeping them safe in society, should have enjoyed such pictures. … In prison I met perhaps 100 men who had been convicted of offences against children. None of them admitted that they were paedophiles – none. The social stigma is too appalling. I cannot admit what I am to myself. ... None of us use that word or even admit to ourselves the thought.[19]

In this extract Bell makes two interesting comments. Firstly he refers to men 'looking at' (although perhaps a more accurate description might be 'masturbating to') pictures of 'heartbreakingly pretty' girls. 'Heartbreakingly pretty' is a very romantic, adolescent, even asexual, turn of phrase. It is reminiscent of puppy-love, Valentine's Day, slushy love songs … but it also has an undertone of aggression. If you break my heart, you have wounded me. The wound is to *me*. I, the adult man, am the victim of something this little girl has done to *me*.

The second comment is his description of men 'enjoying' teaching children or keeping them safe (for example as social workers or police officers) and 'enjoying' pornographic pictures of children. This conflation of two meanings of the verb 'to enjoy' - to derive pleasure and satisfaction from caring about others, and to derive arousal and orgasm from sexual fantasies - seems to point to a fundamental confusion about how adults (usually men) relate to children (usually girls). One wonders about the content of the sexual fantasies: are the men fantasising about protecting and caring for little girls as they sit by their computer keyboards? Altogether, Bell's references to 'innocence offered for the pleasure of adults', the breaking of (adult) hearts, and the double meaning of 'enjoy' suggest to the reader an earlier, 18th century, interpretation of the word 'enjoy', containing the meaning of patriarchal entitlement to pleasure.

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Men such as these are certainly not rare. Operation Ore identified over 7000 from just one police investigation. But does the current and proposed legislation by the Government provide an effective response to the beliefs and actions of men such as these, and others sexually attracted to children?

4.   Alternative Constructions: Implications and Ways Forward

This chapter has traced out a number of issues about child sexual abuse and child protection. It has noted that of the over four thousand children who die each year in the UK, probably fewer than ten will be killed by sex offenders. Nevertheless, a very significant number of children will be sexually abused, typically by a family-member. There are also, as noted, thousands of men in UK society who, while not identifying as paedophiles, believe that 'enjoying' pornographic imagery of girls is not wrong. This chapter has noted that the response of the Government in the last few years has been to increase the capacity of the police to identify and monitor offenders and to 'vet' and 'bar' known offenders from occupations involving children, by using databases such as ViSOR. This is an approach which could be seen as analogous to the War on Terror, an attempt to seek out a hidden but well-defined threat and render it harmless before damage is done. This approach relies on sophisticated and expensive tools of information-gathering, surveillance and registration and it springs from the same simplistic and reductive world-view which sees identity cards as making us safer in the fight against terror. Such an approach is partial and inadequate. Like the War on Terror, the fight is, in reality, not so much against an isolated and extremist few (those who attack and murder) but for the hearts and minds of wider segments of society, including those thousands of men who see themselves as harmlessly 'enjoying' little girls. It will always be only a small minority of sexual abusers who are known to the authorities: therefore any child protection strategy which relies on bureaucratic processes of monitoring, surveillance and registration to vet and bar offenders from working with children will always be largely unsuccessful in its stated aim of protecting children and preventing abuse (although arguably it may be more successful in the unstated aim of softening-up the British population for rapidly-increasing erosions of civil liberties). Even where those who are merely suspected, as well as those who are actually convicted, are included on offender databases this will continue to represent only a tiny proportion of all the people who have or who are currently sexually abusing children, or who have the desire and intention to sexually abuse in the future.

In conclusion, this chapter endorses a more radical approach to child protection. In distinction to a centralised and formalised top-down reliance on professional intervention and surveillance, there are now approaches being developed which are informal and small-scale. They locate sexual abusers in their everyday environment - their local community.

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The first example is the Stop It Now! campaign. This was started by Fran Henry in 1992 in the United States and is now operating in several areas around Britain and Northern Ireland. It is based on three simple principles. The first is to talk openly about sexual abuse, without shame, as we would talk about drink-driving or cancer or any other public health issue. The second is to hold abusers accountable, at the same time as we understand them as human beings. The third is to focus on prevention by strategies such as awareness-raising and sex education for the general public, together with effective treatment including voluntary treatment and work with abusers, their partners and their families.

The second example is more narrowly focused on the treatment of abusers, and in particular relapse prevention, but again adopts a community-based, public health approach which avoids demonising paedophiles and child sexual abusers. Like Stop It Now!, this example shifts the balance of responsibility away from professionals back to the local community. Circles of Support and Accountability (known simply as Circles) is a Canadian initiative which has also now begun to be used in Britain. It is based on the premise of the community taking responsibility for protecting itself. On release from prison, a convicted sex offender is resettled into the community with the help of six trained volunteer supporters, who each commit to spend time with the offender one day per week, and who all get together with him as a group on the seventh day. The goal is to support the offender on a daily basis, and to hold him accountable for his actions. As members of Circles explain:

> It's all about people forming and creating community, and not excluding anyone. It's about looking at people as people. … The key thing is the acceptance of that individual as a member of society - a contributing member - not as a paedophile, who has only and will only ever have that label. If you don't let them forget that, then that's all they will ever be - a paedophile.[20]

These approaches see paedophilia and child sexual abuse as complex human experiences which take place within relationships and communities, and which are the outcomes of an irreducibly intricate mix of beliefs, understandings, histories, fantasies and desires. The key to child protection lies less with formalised bureaucratic processes than with 'forming and creating community, and not excluding anyone'.

If we, in whichever country we live, really want "a coherent set of protective measures unrivalled anywhere" as Sir Michael Bichard for the UK suggested, then we cannot afford the response of demonising paedophiles as evil. We must have the courage to accept that there are many thousands of

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men in our societies who see themselves as 'enjoying' and 'celebrating' the 'splendor of little girls' and we must recognise that an integral part of any protective measure needs to include community-based initiatives which reinforce ordinary, everyday, human interactions and individual responsibility - initiatives which hold us all accountable for all our actions. In the final analysis, this may be the most realistic way to keep all our children safe.

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Interviewing the Embodiment of Political Evil:
An Ethnographic Reconstruction of the Experience
of Meeting with President Echeverría[1]

Alejandro Cervantes-Carson

To the memory of Galo Gómez Ogalde.
My dear friend, whom I can't stop missing.
In silence and in Spanish I remember Derrida:
¨Cada vez única la muerte significa el fin del mundo.¨

Abstract

To meet with *the* person you had perceived to be, for decades, the embodiment of political evil can only but create a subjective crisis, a crisis of the moral order, and a crisis of ethical standards. The experience of meeting with President Echeverría, in a three-hour long interview, did that to me - all at once, before, during, and after the interview. While the interview was not on themes related to the reasons why he was being prosecuted for crimes against humanity in a democratizing Mexico, the spectres of them hung heavily over the entire experience. It was the terrain of the unspoken; it was life and collective memory that were to be silenced. But, the symbols were there, they were all there because I read them all to be there. I met his social and political embodiment with my social and political embodiment. In many ways it was not he and I who met; but rather the historical, political, and symbolic forces behind each one of us. It was a meeting of forces beyond our selves, of signifying circumstances beyond our control, of the embodiments of energies (perhaps) that were struggling to define political democracy, at that precise historical point, in Mexico. This paper is the first exploration of this experience; it constitutes a first instalment of a longer research and book project that will try to make sense of these types of encounters.

Key Words: Authoritarianism, Democracy, Tlatelolco and the Dirty War in Mexico, Spectres, Complicities, Political Systems, Subjectivity, Embodiment of the Political, Political Sociology, Cultural Sociology.

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1.   Introduction

In August of 2003 I conducted a three-hour long interview with former Mexican President Luis Echeverría. The central purpose of that interview was to explore the paradigmatic changes that so profoundly transformed population policies during his term 1970-1976 in office. While the central text was population policies, our interview was crisscrossed by

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multiple subtexts that linked our conversations with historical memory and biography, violence and authoritarianism, and, of course, politics, power, and democratization. These subtexts were all condensed under the metaphor of Tlatelolco: the Mexico City student massacre of October 2, 1968.

Canak and Swanson describe the events and its historical impact in the following way:

> In 1968, a series of large-scale student demonstrations erupted in Mexico City to demand free and mass education. As the protest expanded to include workers, peasants and unions, ideas of democracy and redistribution of wealth were adopted. The student movement was significant for several reasons. First, participation in the demonstrations included approximately 400,000 people … Second, the student march to Tlatelolco Plaza in Mexico City, October 2, 1968 ended violently with Mexican police and army attacking the [unarmed and peaceful] group: 325 protesters were killed and thousands were injured … Third, a number of students involved in the 1968 student movement influenced or became leaders of the urban popular movements in the early 1970s.[2]

For many analysts this was a political watershed moment in Mexican contemporary history.[3]

> The student movement of 1968 and the brutal government repression that brought it to an abrupt end deeply disturbed the Mexican people. A political, social, and moral crisis ensued that has not yet been resolved.[4]

Not only was the repressive state reaction excessive and unwarranted, but the systematic cover-up and official denial of the number of people dead and injured came to signify the beginning of a political crisis of state legitimacy that did not end until the elections of 2000 when the one-party system was defeated in the presidential elections.

More than three decades later this metaphor hung as a spectre over our interview. Echeverría was being investigated by a special prosecutor for his alleged involvement in these crimes as Secretary of Government (Interior Minister) and later as President. My generation had grown up scarred by these events and thinking of him as the embodiment of political evil. In this paper, I would like to ethnographically reconstruct these subtexts, and offer some interpretations of their political and moral meaning.

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2.   Gaze upon the Gaze (or Scrutinizing is a Two-way Street)
          "I want to thank you, most sincerely," I said while making a gesture
to gauge the hour on my watch, "for devoting three hours of your time to us.
You have been most kind and generous. Plus, I want to especially thank you
for the lavish breakfast you arranged for us. I very much enjoyed it." I was
not exaggerating; it had been a five course breakfast in one of the dining
rooms of his house, not his office, but his private home.
          "You are welcome," he said, with a pause that suggested something
to follow. "Yet I noticed you did not finish your chilaquiles!"[5] There was a
very subtle smile on his face.
          "You are absolutely right," I replied with no hesitation. And then we
both engaged a pause that, in my mind, lasted an eternity. It was obvious that
I could not but feel obligated to follow that statement with a minor revelation
as to why I had not finished that dish. But, my thoughts were elsewhere. He
had noticed that I had not finished that particular dish, one of five. One detail
among many, among thousands that happened during three hours had caught
his attention. He had noticed that my plate of chilaquiles had enough food on
it to warrant a mental note, to warrant the filing of a comment.
          "They were delicious," I offered with honesty. "But, you have to
understand that I was concerned about the interview. In fact, to be frank, I
was a bit nervous about the outcome. It is not everyday that I get to interview
a president of Mexico!" His reply was unmistakably ambiguous: he smiled.
          I had also noticed the "state" of his plates: he had not left a bit on
any of them. And I had also made a mental note: at age 81, I thought, that is
one healthy appetite. So, why was I surprised about his observations?
          This was not the first time, in an interview, that my sense of
curiosity had been reciprocally shared by an interviewee, but this was beyond
that experience. It was not that he was curious to know who I was or my level
of sincere engagement with the interview process. What was at stake here
was the degree of control over the entire interview process. The gaze over the
observed, it is true, had been turned onto the observer; that is, it had been
turned onto me. More importantly though, I believe, this was his way of
making two points. First, that I had been constantly under his gaze,
systematically scrutinized, and he wanted me to know this. Second, that
ultimately he had control over the whole interview process. Let me be clear
here, it is not that there had been any doubt about that: he had controlled the
pace, the transitions, the timing, and the dynamics; he also had full control
over his team of six advisors who for the first hour tested my knowledge, and
my intellectual stamina, until he called them off; plus it had taken me one full
year to negotiate the interview and the conditions under which it would
happen.
          The negotiation of the interview established two things: the theme
and the boundaries within which I could inquire. It was out of the question to

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address anything that was related to the prosecutor's case, which meant nothing that had a connection to the Tlatelolco massacre or to the unrecognized "dirty war" of the 70s. Yet, I was never constrained about the questions I could ask, as long as I worked within the general issues of population policies. By way of the negotiations I had formally empowered myself for the interview, yet in the same move I had relinquished the power to surprise on thorny issues; in a sense I had relinquished the real power of the interviewer. But did I really have an alternative?

"Well, make yourself at home," he said, effectively ending our interview. "If you happen to need anything, Juan is here to assist you." He left the room and behind his presence a guard, perhaps a bodyguard, stood in silence and folled attentively all our moves, every move we made. Juan became our shadow for the next hour; a shadow that I noticed when I tried to go to the bathroom and the shadow became a body that blocked my way.

The interview had ended. The film crew was gathering the video material. I stood in the middle of the room trying to gain centre. What had happened, exactly? Had I just interviewed President Echeverría, the "embodiment of political evil?" Yes, no doubt, my collaborators and friends could confirm that. Yet, I still could not believe it. The question was less about the empirical reality of the interview, and more about the morality of the experience. I stood there, silently in awe: had I really interviewed the "embodiment of political evil?" I will come back to this question later, hopefully with an answer.

3.   Bureaucracy, Rituals, and Politics

One of the campaign promises of Vicente Fox, when he was running for president, was to prosecute those who were responsible for having perpetrated crimes against humanity in previous administrations. When he won the elections, Fox became the first candidate from the opposition to be sworn-in as president; the Institutional Revolutionary Party had ruled Mexico for almost 75 years. Of course, he was very interested in appearing as a candidate who promoted justice and opposed authoritarian politics. He was not to be associated with the past. His administration was to be one of the future and of a different Mexico. Campaigns can never be equated with governing, we all know that. Nevertheless, when in office Fox felt obligated to honour that particular promise; he appointed a prosecutor to look into those issues of Mexico's thorny past. That was the same year that I started my negotiations for the interview.

It was a late Sunday night. Sitting in my dinning room, I was thinking about the number of phone calls invested, the faxes sent, the contacts mobilized, the time that had passed, the number of questions formulated; I was honestly a bit tired: one year, one full year of negotiating!

Yet, there I was dialling the number once again, just to follow the trail, just to be consistent, just to have a story to share with my friends, just to have a narrative to tell in the very likely case of not getting a damn thing! And then the concert of clicks began.

"Hello, hello?" I heard on the other side.

"Hello. This is Dr. Cervantes calling, I was wondering if we could talk about setting a date for the interview." Even when one ignores the threshold, there is a degree of familiarity that develops after repeated phone calls. Many phone calls back I had dropped the introductions and explanations. One way or the other, in my mind, it was time to define the issue. I needed a date or else a flat out rejection.

"Yes of course. Let me try to reach his personal secretary. Can you hold for a second?" Click, click.

In many ways, I thought, one can read bureaucratic procedures as modern rituals and bureaucratic institutions as highly ritualistic modern temples. It was the first time I had gained enough distance to have a certain lightness about bureaucracies that surprised me. I was no longer tied to an angry or impatient reaction. Mexico has been always full of institutions that ritualize all sorts of procedures.

Click, click. Click and click. "Dr. Cervantes? How can I help you?"

"Well, I am trying to set a date and time for an interview with President Echeverría." In the lingo of government and politics, once president always president!

"Yes, yes. Can you hold a second?" Click, click, and click.

At a point, in the 70s and 80s, the state was the largest employer of the nation. While on hold, I could imagine hundreds of thousands of people engaging in all kinds of rituals, repeating the same procedures over and over again, delaying and complicating processes, and scolding folks for not knowing the precise documents to bring or treating them like human garbage. But I no longer saw them as mean spirited or small minded people who were out to get the ordinary citizen. Now they appeared, instead, as members of congregations poised to engage in rituals and to follow them from beginning to end. But these were not fanatics, they were bureaucrats.

Click, click. "Dr. Cervantes? Well, I am going to transfer your call to the person who keeps his appointments."

"Great, thank you."

To the extent that their rituals are experienced as jobs, to that extent bureaucrats see themselves as problem-solvers, as satisfying requirements, as developing specific tasks, as following orders. Bureaucrats, efficient or not, are modern subjects. They all participate in complex organizations that rationalize different dimensions of social life, dimensions that are indispensable for the functioning of societies. In this sense, it is impossible for bureaucrats to see their activities as rituals. It would make the narrative of

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the traditional past equivalent to that of the modern present - narratives that are not meant to collapse one into the other.

"Dr. Cervantes? Sorry for keeping you on hold. We have gotten approval for the interview. All that is left is to arrange an appointment."

"That is no doubt good news," I said. "Let's schedule the appointment."

"Oh, no, I still need to transfer you to the person who keeps his appointments."

"Really? Okay then." Click, click, click. The silence on the other side made me wonder if I was still connected.

Modern rituals? Within a rudimentary binary system of thought, that opposes the traditional to the modern, rituals belong to a pre-modern past, and bureaucracies are by no means seen as sites of tradition. Sure, they are not as efficient as they should be, but without them we modern subjects would not know how to survive. True, this was no ordinary bureaucratic procedure I was negotiating. It wasn't a driver's license, a renewal of a passport or a copy of a birth certificate, but actually an interview with a president. Yet, the rituals were all there. Each fax and phone call was like a tiny rite of passage, a small step in a one-year journey to the top of the bureaucratic mountain, a piece towards gaining access to the high priest, in fact, to the highest of all priests.

Click, click. Click, click, and click. "Hello." The voice was unmistakable. It was him; it was Echeverría on the phone! But how on earth was he on the phone? Nobody had warned me that I would actually be talking to him today. "So, tell me, why would you be interested in interviewing me?" And there he was, putting me through my last rite of passage before the final approval of the interview.

4.   Demonizing Subjects and Hiding Complicities (or the Political Games of Blame-Displacement)

The simple yet profoundly thoughtful design of the Truth and Reconciliation process in South Africa has always caught my attention. The idea that entire nations need to live through a collective process of confronting and recognizing the horrors of its social and political past is in and of itself a very powerful idea, that has (in my estimation) ramifications beyond the obvious. But what I find most brilliant has to do with the counterintuitive decision to define the Commission and the process with no prosecutorial and legal consequences. Lifting the burden of prosecution, trial, and punishment from the Commission created a collective and public space with the mission and capacity to cope with the complexities of the pain and suffering of social and political injustices. Mexico is very far from that place.

Appointing a special prosecutor to investigate state sponsored human rights violations was the boldest political move that Mexico has

witnessed in three decades. But, as much as the appointment represents an initiation of a most needed process, it also hides serious flaws. I fear that targeting prosecution will push Mexico to skip over the most important part of the process, that is, a public and collective recognition of the horrors of the past, but most importantly of the intricate network of complicities that allowed the massacre of Tlatelolco to remain in the dark, unaccounted for, non-recognized. The massacre was heinous. But the cover-up required a silent and systematic intervention of thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands of people, both civilians and bureaucrats. There were more than three hundred bodies that needed to be disposed of, immediately; there were hundreds of disappearances that became "paranoid stories" and millions of authoritarian actions that were explained-off or tolerated by bystanders. The most important process that Mexico needs to live - in my mind - is the recognition of the intricate and multilayered complicities which the society had with the authoritarian regime that ruled the nation for the greater part of the 20th century.

In February of 2006 (just two weeks before presenting this paper), a report prepared by a team of researchers from the special prosecutor's office was leaked to an academic in the U.S. As a director of the Mexico Project,[6] at the National Security Archive, Kate Doyle decided to make the report publicly available by posting it on the internet. In 800 pages, the report makes the crucial argument that the massacre of Tlatelolco was followed in the 70s and 80s by a dirty war orchestrated by two consecutive administrations: that of Echeverría, from 70 to 76, and of Lopez-Portillo, from 76 to 82. The dimensions of the atrocities and numbers of victims cannot not be compared to those of El Salvador or Guatemala (in Central America) or to those in Argentina and Chile (in South America), but the intention to erase political dissidence was the same. The Tlatelolco massacre was just the beginning of a systematic war against a politically critical and democratically active civil society, and the costs need to be accounted for.

"Nothing more than to think what we are doing," is how Hanna Arendt described her book in the introduction of *The Human Condition*. As a way of explaining the continuity of her work and the internal, substantive connections of her thought before and leading to the report on the "Banality of Evil," Bernard Bergen offers a reformulation of her intellectual intentions: "To think what we are doing by thinking over from the very beginning everything we ever thought we were doing."[7]

I will start with my part, with my responsibility. I did not expect to find a kind and generous man, but I did the day of the interview. I was not confronting the embodiment of political evil, yet at the same time, in the same space, but under a different narrative, I was. In this same sense, during the interview I was also an embodiment of the politically critical and

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democratically active in Mexico, and simultaneously, I was an embodiment of the silent and the complicit.

Notes

[1] As a conference paper, it was written at the Amelie Restaurant, Barcelona, Spain. First of all, I have to thank my friend Jaime Casillas, without whom the interview would not have happened, period. The arguments made in this text, and the project in general, benefited from the discussions held in my ongoing research seminar ("Specters of Violence, Authoritarianism, and Biography") held in the spring and fall of 2005, and the spring of 2006. I want to thank my students Elizabeth Monk, Elizabeth Dowling, María García, and Emily Schott for their enthusiastic collaboration. A Faculty Development Grant (from the University of Mary Washington) allowed me to develop research for the project in the summer of 2005.

[2] W Canak and L Swanson, *Modern Mexico*, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1998, p. 176.

[3] See H Aguilar-Camin and L Meyer. *In the Shadow of the Mexican Revolution: Contemporary Mexican History, 1910-1989*, University of Texas Press, Austin, 1993; K Doyle, "Forgetting is not Justice. Mexico Bares Its Secret Past," *World Policy Journal*, Summer 2003, pp. 61-72; M Gutmann, *The Romance of Democracy: Compliant Defiance in Contemporary Mexico*, University of California Press, San Francisco, 2002; E Poniatowska, *Massacre in Mexico*, University of Missouri Press, Columbia,1992; P I Taibo II, *68*, Seven Stories Press, New York, 2004.

[4] O Paz, ;Introduction,' in *Massacre in Mexico*, p. vii.

[5] There are many regional variations of this dish in Mexico, yet it basically consists of corn tortillas strips lightly fried and mixed with a cooked hot sauce (chile, tomato or tomatillo, onion, and spices), and meats (chicken, mostly), vegetables or eggs (scrambled or fried) on top.

[6] George Washington University, Washington D.C.

[7] B Bergen, *The Banality of Evil: Hannah Arendt and "The Final Solution,"* Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham, Maryland, 1998, p. xiii.

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Part 3

Evil and Terror

i. ***Evil, Terror and Rhetoric***

How Civilians Became Targets:
The Moral Catastrophe of "Collateral Damage"

William Andrew Myers

Abstract

It is a commonplace of the history of warfare that non-combatants have, from ancient times to the present, been victims of martial violence, sometimes taken as hostages or slaves but more often killed and wounded by accident. Yet in the 20th century we saw the development of weapons and tactics, especially aerial bombardment, that entailed deliberate targeting of non-combatant populations. During the superpower arms race that ensued after the first use of nuclear weapons in wartime, it was part of military doctrine that threatening to destroy the adversary's cities was of the essence of deterrence, and the world settled in for decades of acquiescence in the idea that, theoretically, everyone in the world was a potential target. It was in this context that the phrase "collateral damage" was coined to sanitize the inevitable outcome of weapons whose use could not discriminate between combatants and non-combatants. While the arms race has ended, targeting of civilians has not; the more recent perfection of tactics of terrorism has meant that, once again, though on a smaller scale, everyone is a potential target. I make a case for regarding these developments, seemingly unconnected, as a moral catastrophe with far reaching influence on Western culture and self understanding. More specifically, they constitute an erosion of our most fundamental humanistic value frameworks, without which civil society cannot exist, an erosion that reveals a prepolitical underlay of nihilism.

Key Words: Non-combatant immunity, World War II, aerial bombardment, Just War Theory, law of war, "collateral damage," Jonathan Glover

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Introduction

It is a commonplace of the history of warfare that non-combatants have, from ancient times to the present, been victims of martial violence, sometimes taken as hostages or slaves but more often killed and wounded by accident. Yet in the 20th century we saw the development of weapons and tactics, especially aerial bombardment, that entailed deliberate targeting of non-combatant populations. Despite developments in ethical theory and in international law protecting non-combatants and civilians in general from direct assault, military technologies as well as terrorist tactics have rendered these protections moot in many places. These developments, and the

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widespread acquiescence of civilian populations to them, point to an underlying nihilism in society that in turn militates against truly effective measures to curb threats of violence.

1.   A Brief History

Prior to the 20th century only siege warfare resulted in the deaths of large numbers of civilians. The idea of non-combatant immunity, a slow development of medieval theories of just wars, never strongly applied to sieges. Apart from this exception, warfare that directly targeted civilians was rare and limited by available weaponry and customary practices.[1] Occasionally, people with nothing to do with the conflict of arms have become victims not by accident but by deliberate intent. But on the whole, such events have been exceptional in warfare through most of Western history. Jonathan Glover comments, "At the start of the 20th century, massacres by soldiers were seen as aberrations." He adds, in light of events at My Lai in Vietnam and more recently in Bosnia, "Perhaps this was too optimistic."[2] Nevertheless, the guiding perception of war theorists up to the First World War was that deliberate targeting of civilians was out of bounds.

This all changed with the development of aircraft capable of carrying bombs, and the concomitant development of doctrines of strategic bombing. But the psychological preparation for area bombing as a justifiable means of warfare came during World War I, when British strategists created a naval blockade - a form of siege warfare - that prevented food and other goods reaching Germany. Precise numbers are impossible to establish, but at least 400,000 and perhaps as many as 800,000 civilian deaths can be attributed to the deprivations caused by the blockade, which lasted the duration of the war. "The blockade's importance as a human disaster goes further still. It was a stage in the development of a new psychology of war, a psychology adapted to large-scale killing of civilian populations."[3]

World War II saw the development of technologies of bombing that largely obliterated any useful application of ethical restraints in direct attacks on civilians. The progress of the Allied bombing raids on Germany is a case study in rationalizations, as strategists struggled to justify the manifest imprecision of the raids. In the first phase of the RAF attacks on Germany, civilian targets were banned, but because bombers had to fly at high altitude and at night to avoid German fighters and antiaircraft fire, the crews' ability to find their targets and bomb them accurately was severely compromised. When it became clear early on that civilian areas were being destroyed anyway, RAF Bomber Command faced a "choice between abandoning bombing altogether or intentionally continuing to bomb civilians. What gave way was the ban on civilian targets."[4] Strategic doctrine had shifted, and the new rationale for what had been happening perforce was that hitting civilian areas could be justified by the idea that damaging civilian morale could count

as advancing the aims of the war. The empirical implausibility of this view should have been evident to Allied war planners, had they compared the responses of Londoners during the Blitz to the probable reactions of German citizens to being bombed, but instead, by 1944, deliberate targeting of civilians had become standard doctrine, and the technique of creating firestorms in cities resulted in the destruction of Hamburg and Dresden in Germany as well as Tokyo. From these applications of air power it was a quite small conceptual step to the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It was against this background that the phrase "collateral damage" was coined to sanitize the inevitable outcome of weapons whose use could not discriminate between combatants and non-combatants.

As an index of how lethal our species has become, Jonathan Glover quotes an estimate that "from 1900 until 1986 . . . war killed 86 million people."[5] Still, despite the fact that the 20th Century was the bloodiest in history, it is also the century in which we see the most concerted attempts to create ethical and legal frameworks to contain the violence.

2.   Ethical Frameworks

Here I will only sketch some of the ideas that pertain to non-combatant immunity. Just War Theory has two main divisions, rules governing when it is just to enter into a war in the first place, the *jus ad bellum*, and rules governing the conduct of warfare once a state is engaged, called the *jus in bello*. The ethical restraints Just War Theory places on war-making reflect a natural law ethics orientation to the actions of state leaders, in contradistinction to the political "realism" that denies that there is any moral framework applicable to the actions of states toward each other. That is, Just War Theory attempted to put *moral* boundaries around the use of state power.

Jus in bello principles of proportionality and discrimination attempt to capture the long standing moral intuition that non-combatants in general as well as wounded or captured soldiers should not be subjected to lethal violence. The principle of proportionality requires that military means be proportional to the political and military ends to be achieved.[6] Thus means of warfare aimed at the complete destruction of an adversary's society are forbidden, as this would go beyond what is necessary to reestablish a just social order. "The principle of discrimination prohibits direct intentional attacks on non-combatants and non-military targets."[7] This principle thus rules out weapons that cannot discriminate between military objectives and civilian and other non-combatant assets, i.e., weapons of mass destruction. However, much ingenuity has been applied to the task of validating use of non-discriminatory weapons as theorists (and strategists) bow to the realities of military technologies. William O'Brien, for example, claims that the

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principle ought not to be regarded as an absolute prohibition of "any use of means that kill non-combatants."[8]

At stake here is a more general moral principle, called the Doctrine of Double Effect. It is always morally impermissible to intend direct harm, and thus "evil may never be done in order to produce a good result."[9] However, it is possible that an action aimed at some good, yet having an unintended (though foreseen) harmful side effect, is permissible, because according to double effect thinking, the harms are not directly intended. If the harms are not actually means to the good end aimed at but unavoidable side effects, the act that brings about those harms may be permissible. Thus use of what have come to be called weapons of mass destruction, which will inevitably kill many civilians, might be morally acceptable so long as the civilian deaths are not directly intended, but are unavoidable consequences of pursuing an acceptable military objective. It is also required that the "collateral damage" be minimized as much as practicable. More limited actions which would violate an absolute principle of discrimination, such as deploying anti-personnel land mines or torpedoing civilian ships at sea thought to be carrying military materiel, might also be justifiable under the Doctrine of Double Effect.

One persistent response to this reading of Just War Theory has been that of pacifists who, O'Brien comments, "rightly argue that war inevitably involves violation of the absolute principle of discrimination. If that principle is unconditionally binding, a just war is difficult if not impossible to envisage."[10] O'Brien rejects this move. Writing during the height of the superpower nuclear arms race, his argument was that the "exigencies of modern war and deterrence" made an absolute principle of discrimination so difficult to reconcile with the realities of military technology and the geopolitical order of say the 1980s that it would not provide adequate moral guidance. He opts instead for a view that does not "distinguish an absolute, moral, just-war principle of discrimination from a more flexible and variable international-law principle of discrimination."[11]

But that "more flexible and variable" international law standard should not provide much comfort to leaders using weapons of mass destruction. De Lupis's survey of international law pertaining to warfare shows clearly that a strong principle of discrimination has been incorporated in the Law of War. She summarizes,

> The Law of War has the individual as its exclusive focus and the rationale of all rules can be derived from a common agreement to keep compulsory standards of behaviour. There is no doubt that the use of any indiscriminate weapon is illegal, as no weapon must be used that is not adequately aimed at military targets. There

is no doubt that weapons that cause unnecessary suffering are forbidden. There is no doubt that the civilian population and all who are *hors de combat* must at all times be exempt from attack and given necessary medical assistance.[12]

Moreover, the principles developed as part of the Law of War have a different, and pragmatically stronger basis than Just War Theory, as a result of their different contexts of development. For Just War Theory, having developed within Catholic moral theology, can be regarded as (merely) parochial. Adherents of a political realism of the sort associated with Machiavelli or, in our era, Henry Kissinger, U.S. Secretary of State during the Vietnam war - or indeed, moral sceptics in general - need feel no compunction about ignoring disputes about the proper application of, say, the Doctrine of Double Effect. The Law of War, on the other hand, is part of international covenants entered into by states and is enforceable by criminal prosecution of state leaders. Structures such as the International Criminal Court constitute practical applications of protections of civilians in wartime, embodying some of the very principles to be found in Just War Theory. In addition, numerous specific weapons, such as poison gas, have been outlawed for use in combat. While the overlap between international law and Just War Theory is far from complete, the development of legal protections for civilians is an important advance in our evolving conceptual frameworks of responses to violence. Non-combatant immunity is much more strongly supported as a binding principle than before World War II.

Nevertheless, some statistics should give us pause, as they indicate that the law has fallen behind both the technologies of warfare and humans' willingness to use them deliberately against civilians. De Lupis says,

history shows that civilians, despite this protective regime, are increasingly at risk in war. In the First World War some 5 percent of the victims were civilians; in the Second World War this figure had risen to 48, to escalate in the Korean War to 84 and in the Vietnam War to 90 percent. Not all the increase in this proportion can be explained by difficulties of distinction between combatants and civilians.[13]

Or, put another way, the international legal protections as yet do not provide a sufficient deterrent to war-makers who, for whatever reasons, intend to attack civilian populations.

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3.   The Catastrophe

During the superpower arms race that ensued after the first use of nuclear weapons in wartime, it was part of military doctrine that threatening to destroy the adversary's cities was of the essence of deterrence, and the world settled in for decades of acquiescence in the idea that, theoretically, everyone in the world was a potential target. The term 'omnicide,' coined I believe by John Somerville, was invented to denote a wholly new possibility: that we humans could kill all of ourselves virtually at once. Attempts to supply frameworks limiting the use of violent means such as Just War Theory and international conventions restricting use of specific weapons seem to have been swept aside by the development and deployment of large scale weapons, and by the actions of non-state groups deliberately pursuing policies of indiscriminate murder. In their place we have a *de facto* kind of political realism, crudely pragmatic, in which civilian deaths are regarded either as inevitable side effects of otherwise legitimate means of warfare, "collateral damage," or are treated as themselves means to political ends. Either way, we see the ascendancy of deeply anti-humanistic values.

The paroxysms of shock and rage that followed the events of September 11, 2001, provide further evidence of the disconnect between ongoing reality, the fact that absolutely anybody can be a target, and our determined psychological denial of this fact. What the hijackers did on a small scale was not different in kind from what has been imbedded in military planning for decades: an attack on a city with the intent to kill as many of its inhabitants as possible.

The ethical malaise of general populations with regard to the death of non-combatant immunity may count as another form of what Hannah Arendt called the banality of evil, based as this malaise seems to be, on a kind of thoughtlessness. Her concept of *thinking*, which she described as "the habit of examining and reflecting upon whatever happens to come to pass, regardless of specific content and quite independent of results,"[14] is precisely what is lacking in both the political responses and the ways in which publics have come to think of security. Neither addresses in any useful way the underlying causes of violence against peoples.

In this paper I have treated three large scale interlocking phenomena, fully aware of the difficulty of attempting to establish empirically the existence and scope of such broad occurrences as ethical malaise. Yet I believe we should regard the almost universal willingness of the peoples of the Earth to regard attacks on the innocent as inevitable, unavoidable, perhaps even "natural," as a moral catastrophe with far reaching influence on Western culture and self understanding. More specifically, it constitutes an erosion of our most fundamental humanistic value frameworks, without which civil society cannot flourish, an erosion that reveals a basic underlay of nihilism in contemporary culture.

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Notes

[1] W V O'Brien, 'Just-War Theory,' in J P Sterba,(ed)., *War and Nuclear Deterrence*, Wadsworth, Belmont, CA, 1985, p. 40.
[2] J Glover, *Humanity: A Moral History of the 20th Century*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2001, p. 64.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid., pp. 70-71.
[5] Ibid., p. 47.
[6] O'Brien, p. 37.
[7] Ibid., p. 39.
[8] Ibid., p. 41.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid.
[12] I D De Lupis, *The Law of War*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1987, p. 363.
[13] Ibid., p. 241.
[14] H Arendt, 'Thinking and Moral Considerations: A Lecture,' *Social Research*, vol. 38, no. 3, Fall 1971, p. 417.

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The Rhetoric of Evil: How Failure is Turned to One's Own Advantage

Joshua Mills-Knutsen

Abstract

As is well known, President Bush has adopted the concept of evil to define both those engaged in terrorism and the activities they undertake. Through the analysis of the rhetoric of the "war on terror," my paper explains both how the ascription of evil signals an inability to intelligibly confront an event, and, more importantly, how it indicates that those affected by evil have abandoned human efficacy in favour of faith in divine justice. Ultimately, if the rhetoric of the evil Other is successful, it fosters support for extreme measures in pursuit of evil's eradication; yet since part of the rhetoric relies on the general picture of the earth as fallen, it is understood that evil can never be eradicated. Thus, a power hierarchy is both generated and perpetuated, conveniently unmoored from success or failure of the endeavour to win the war. Instead, those in power gain applause by demonstrating their faith in the existence of "evil." In this way, we can conclude that the more "evil" appears as a problem, the more solidified the power base of those fighting "evil." Such an examination will enlighten not only the rhetoric of the present war on terror, but also provide a framework for understanding the presidential election of 2004.

Key words: Nietzsche, War, Terror, Evil, President Bush, terrorism

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My approach to the topic of evil is not to ask, "What do we say about something or someone when we call it evil?" Instead, I am interested in asking, "What are we saying about ourselves when we ascribe the word "evil" to something or someone?" This is not to say that evil as such does not exist. Of course it exists; as the papers [in this volume] have readily demonstrated, there are a lot of evil acts and people in the world. Yet I am not interested in this as an ontological phenomenon. Instead, I am interested in it as a linguistic phenomenon for the purposes of self-understanding. To this end I will look at the rhetoric of the war on terror in order to hopefully demonstrate two things: first, that the ascription of evil comes about in response to an event or individual that engenders a feeling of powerlessness in the face of a world we cannot change or control; second, and as a consequent of the first point, to say something is evil is to say that human efficacy is of no account and that what is needed is faith.

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To begin, let me first just recount how it was that this rhetoric progressed in the week following September 11th. At 9:30 am on September 11th, President Bush delivered the following:

> Today we've had a national tragedy. Two airplanes have crashed into the World Trade Center in an apparent terrorist attack on our country. I have spoken to the Vice President, to the Governor of New York, to the Director of the FBI, and have ordered that the full resources of the federal government go to help the victims and their families, and to conduct a full-scale investigation to hunt down and to find those folks who committed this act. Terrorism against our nation will not stand.[1]

The reserved nature of these remarks gave way less than eleven hours later to the first instance of the rhetoric of evil. On the night of the 11th Bush explained, "Today, our nation saw evil, the very worst of human nature."[2] Throughout this brief speech of five minutes, President Bush employed "evil" a total of four times to describe the events of the day. This rhetoric was escalated on September 13, as the President proclaimed a day of remembrance. In his proclamation is the following:

> Civilized people around the world denounce the evil-doers who devised and executed these terrible attacks. Justice demands that those who helped or harboured the terrorists be punished -- and punished severely. The enormity of their evil demands it. We will use all the resources of the United States and our cooperating friends and allies to pursue those responsible for this evil, until justice is done.[3]

At the National Cathedral on the 14th, President Bush defined America's purpose. He said, "Just three days removed from these events, Americans do not yet have the distance of history, but our responsibility to history is already clear: to answer these attacks and rid the world of evil."[4] This sentiment was echoed two days later, but comes as a statement not as the nation's purpose, but his purpose. "My administration has a job to do and we're going to do it. We will rid the world of the evil-doers."[5] In fact, during this 13 minute press conference on the 16th of September, President Bush used the word "evil" nine times, including five references to "evil-doers." (By comparison those individuals are called terrorists only three times). In five days, the initial charge to find and bring to justice those responsible for September 11th had become a historical mission to rid the world of "evil" and "evil-doers." The rhetoric of evil was off and running.

It is worth noticing that despite whatever else might be said about the employment of such rhetoric, one thing that happens as a result is the increasing complexity of the mission the President set out for himself. On face at least, it is a far easier and more reasonable goal to capture and bring to justice those few individuals responsible for the attacks on September 11th than it is to rid the world of evil. The President did not fail to recognize that the call of history to eradicate evil took his obligations far outside the realm of those directly (or even indirectly) linked with the September 11th attacks. As an indication of this expansion of both mission and rhetoric, in the "State of the Union" address on January 29th, 2002, President Bush famously referred to North Korea, Iran and Iraq as an "axis of evil."[6] What happened here? In rereading these transcripts it became clear that the President, as well as the rest of the nation, had been overwhelmed by the event of 9-11 and in very real ways is still held hostage to it. As I will go onto explain below, it's not that the rhetoric got away from President Bush, but rather that the rhetoric was all that we, and he, possessed to respond to the situation.

Before I do, it is necessary to provide a little primer on Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals*, which is indispensable to this paper. The first essay of the *Genealogy* claims to recount the etymological and historical development of the contemporary concept of "good." What Nietzsche uncovers through his philological investigations is that in the ancient world, the word "good" was first and foremost applied to the noble class and was synonymous with such traits as courage and strength. Nietzsche explains,

> What was the real etymological significance of the designations for 'good' coined in the various languages? I found they all led back to the same conceptual transformation - that everywhere 'noble,' 'aristocratic' in the social sense, is the basic concept from which 'good'… necessarily developed.[7]

He bolsters this argument with etymologies of the Greek "*esthlos*" and the Latin "*bonum*," both of which, he demonstrates, find their roots as applying to evaluations of the noble warrior class. Likewise, his etymological investigations reveal that designations for "bad," most notably the German "*schlecht*," and the Greek "*kakos*" and "*deilos*," carry the concomitant denotations of baseness, commonness and being ill-born.[8]

For Nietzsche, the good/bad distinction of master morality is based in the master class first positively evaluating itself and its characteristics as "good" and only as an afterthought assigning "bad" to that which exhibits other traits, namely the slave class. It is not the content of Master morality that matters, but rather it is the way in which the Master approaches the world that makes a Master. Certainly Nietzsche believed content and approach went

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hand in hand, but for me, it is the assertion of active self-definition and interpretation that matters in the Master way of being. In counter-distinction to this movement in the good/bad dichotomy, the Slave, filled with resentment at the master's power and lacking the active power to self-define, first declares the other evil, and only comes to the conclusion of its own goodness as the result of a kind of deduction. "He [the slave] has conceived 'the evil enemy,' 'the Evil One,' and this in fact is his basic concept, from which he then evolves, as an afterthought and pendant, a 'good one' - himself!"[9]

Nietzsche, of course, proceeds to use his genealogical discovery in order to indict Judeo-Christian morality for its weakening of the human spirit. I will not follow down his path here. Instead, at this point the salient aspect of Nietzsche's distinction between bad and evil is the way in which, for Nietzsche, the ascription of "evil" belies a reactive mindset that abandons any positive self-definition. The concept of evil is the preeminent concept in the good/evil distinction such that only after evil has been identified does the good appear as an opposing concept. In other words, the slave's way of being in the world is to be held hostage to the "Evil Other" as a dependent, and therefore is a signal to Nietzsche of a fundamental helplessness in the face of the world.

While Nietzsche often employs language to indicate that he believes in master and slave natures, as I have already indicated, I will use his differentiation to discuss ways of being in the world. Thus I will employ Nietzsche's terminology in such a way as to discuss the dichotomy between being master of, or slave to, a situation or event. By employing Nietzsche's language in this way, I hope to make the categories more fluid, so that any particular individual or group can vacillate between being master and slave.

This way of conceiving the war on terror will bring to light how the ascription of evil - and I believe this would be cross-applicable to any ascription of evil - is concomitant with an abdication of self-definition. As stated above, Nietzsche's slave is powerless to assert him or herself into the world of action. In other words, Nietzsche's slave feels that he or she can neither prevent nor alter the factical conditions of the world, and thus is forced to rely upon the master's categorizations, even as the slave assigns value. This is why the slave must evaluate the master first, as evil, and only secondarily assigns the value good to him or herself. The master creates the world in action, the slave responds in rhetoric. Thus the slave way of being is merely reactive, and if I am right about the fluidity of these categories, any previous master-like tendencies to self-define fall by the wayside in the face of the "evil" other.

It should come as no surprise then, that in the war on terror, the rhetoric of evil masks just such an abdication of self-definition in favour of the reactive logic of the slave. For the sake of brevity I will rely on the

example of the recently exposed program of warrantless wiretapping employed by the Bush administration, but one could easily make the same case with the Patriot Act, the prison abuses at Abu Ghraib or the legal, if not physical abuses taking place at the detention camp at Guantanamo Bay.

To see the transition from master to slave wrought by the events of September 11th, it is important first of all to look at the United States Constitution as that society's sacred act of self-definition. This constitution, like all constitutions, expresses not merely another set of laws that inform other sets of laws, but is the best expression of that society's attempt to say not only who it is, but also who it wants to be. Thus, the constitution determines the scope of future possible laws and is a standard to which the nation sees fit to hold itself.

The fourth amendment to the U.S. Constitution reads, "The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized."[10] This typically has been juridically defined as a protection against unwarranted search and seizure. Yet, to make the application of the Fourth amendment more clear, the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) was passed in 1978 as a result of abuses by the FBI under the direction of J. Edgar Hoover, as well as by operatives of President Richard Nixon.

The act itself is very generous in the power it gives to the executive. In accord with the act, the president can effectively spy on any non-U.S. resident without warrant for the purposes of national security. United States residents are immune from such warrantless information gathering. Instead, the act provides for a special court that will hear the government's cause for information gathering on a U.S. resident. The procedure is not adversarial, and there is no provision for making public its proceedings or decisions. This means that the FISA court approves warrants for the surveillance of U.S. residents privately and in absence of any disputation of the claims made by the government.[11]

Still, FISA is important because it, in conjunction with the fourth amendment, upholds the general principle that warrants are required for search of U.S. residents, and that activities of the executive be overseen by members of the judiciary. In short, FISA reaffirmed that the United States is not, nor does it wish to be, a country that spies on its residents without reason or warrant, even when the broad justification of "national security" is invoked.

This attempt at self-definition, however, falls by the wayside in the current political discourse which is slave to the event of September 11th. President Bush, of course, has unabashedly admitted to abandoning the need

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for a warrant to spy on U.S. residents. His argument is a straightforward example of the reactive logic of the slave. Bush explains, "I did so because the enemy still wants to hurt us. And it seems like to me if somebody is talking to al Qaeda, we want to know why."[12] Again he explained, "They attacked us before; they will attack us again if they can, and we're going to do everything we can to stop them."[13] In short we can construct the reactive syllogism. The terrorists are evil; warrantless wiretaps are opposed to terrorism; therefore, warrantless wiretaps are good. Instead of looking at who we are or who we want to be, the Bush administration looks at who the terrorists are and devises who we must be in response. Take the president's following analysis:

> What we quickly learned was that al Qaeda was not a conventional enemy. Some lived in our cities and communities and communicated from here in America to plot and plan with bin Laden's lieutenants in Afghanistan, Pakistan and elsewhere. Then they boarded our airplanes and launched the worst attack on our country in our nation's history. This new threat required us to think and act differently.[14]

This is all commensurate with Nietzsche's description of the slavish way of being in the world. Yet, one would expect that if we in the west, especially in the U.S., are to abandon some of our most cherished presuppositions and values, we should at least expect some measure of success in this war to eradicate "evil." While it is difficult to say that the war on terror has been a complete failure, it lacks the success one would expect given the cost in terms of loss of self. I now turn to the second part of my paper, on how the rhetoric of evil replaces human efficacy with faith.

In the presidential election of 2004, Bush squeaked out a narrow victory over his rival John Kerry. For my purposes, what matters is not that Bush won, but the mindset of those that voted for Bush. Like many on the left I was surprised and saddened that so many of my fellow citizens voted to re-elect the president, especially in the face of his apparent failure to achieve any of the objective September 11th seemed to set before us. My vote was not based upon the war on terror, but surely, if one thought terrorism the most pressing issue, the utter failure of the Bush strategy to capture Osama Bin Laden or his top lieutenants, the utter abandonment of the investigation into the Anthrax letters, and the success of al Qaeda operatives in Iraq (more than 1000 U.S. troops had died with no end in sight) all point to a President who lacked any clear plan for victory in this war. And so what if John Kerry couldn't clarify a plan of his own or often merely aped the president's own plan? He certainly could do no worse.

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According to the exit polls from the election, however, of those who listed terrorism as the most important issue in deciding their vote, 86% voted to re-elect President Bush, the most lopsided of the issue-based splits. Of those who saw Iraq as part of the war on terror, 81% voted to re-elect Bush, despite no clear sign that things were improving. To explain this we need to look at the overall picture of the Bush voter. Where Bush scores highest (and for those who voted on these lines Bush garnered about 80% or higher) are the following categories. On issues, in addition to terrorism, moral values were a big Bush winner. On the question of what personal quality was most important, Bush succeeds in his religious faith, strong leadership, and his clear stand on an issue.[15] We can start to see a pattern emerge. What matters for Bush is not that he is successful in the war on terror, but rather that he first believes in evil, clearly divides the world between good and evil, and is unwavering in that belief.

Thus we can say that not only is Bush's relative lack of success in the war on terror not a detriment to his political success, it is actually to his advantage. Like so many who have invoked the fear of the "evil" other for political gain - the Catholic Church during the Inquisition, Robbespierre, Senator Joseph McCarthy - the more evil appears omnipresent, the more political power Bush is able to accrue. Success in the war would mean that we no longer needed a leader whose faith is his greatest asset.

Here I want to demonstrate this by examining the criticisms of John Kerry in the run up to the election. Where Kerry faltered was not his lack of a plan to conduct the war on terror (whether he had one or not), but rather his lack of faith in evil relative to President Bush. Shortly before the election, Kerry made the following comment in an interview with the New York Times, "We have to get back to the place we were, where terrorists are not the focus of our lives but they're a nuisance." Kerry went on to say:

> As a former law enforcement person, I know we're never going to end prostitution. We're never going to end illegal gambling. But we're going to reduce it, organized crime, to a level where it isn't on the rise. It isn't threatening people's lives every day, and fundamentally, it's something that you can continue to fight, but it's not threatening the fabric of your life.[16]

Here Kerry seems to be speaking on the limits of human efficacy. He has traded the rhetoric of evil for the approach of criminal law enforcement and thus outlined what can be done and what cannot with an eye toward overcoming the reactive slavishness of the country to the event of 9-11.

Chairman of the Bush re-election campaign, Marc Racicot said in response, "Quite frankly, I just don't think he has the right view of the world.

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It's a pre-9/11 view of the world."[17] Republican party chairman Ed Gillespie responded by saying,

> Terrorism is not a law enforcement matter, as John Kerry repeatedly says. Terrorist activities are not like gambling. Terrorist activities are not like prostitution. And this demonstrates a disconcerting pre-September 11 mindset that will not make our country safer.[18]

In one sense we have already discussed what it means to have a pre-September 11th mindset, but in another, to clarify these comments, we need to look to a more open and perhaps less politically minded commenter. Fred Hutchison, writing on the ultra-right website renew America dot com, explains in reaction to Kerry's comment:

> The war on terror is clearly a fight between good and evil…[but] Liberal ideology denies the objective existence of evil and the power of evil… Such wishful thinking and self deception enables us to view terrorism as a "crime" problem or as "nuisance" as John Kerry seems to view it in his pensive moments when he is at ease with his liberal friends…[19]

Daniel Henninger of the Wall Street Journal made the division even more clearly:

> The events that are coinciding with this election may be forcing a referendum on the nature of radical Islam similar to an earlier one on Soviet Communism. Is radical Islam a political problem to manage with our allies and the U.N. or an implacable enemy, a radical evil, that is simply trying to kill us?[20]

This latter assessment of the situation drives the point home. For Henninger, the choice is not between efficacy and inefficacy, but between belief in human capacities to manage and alter the world and the adoption of the radical dichotomy of good v. evil. In short we might say that the choice is between affirming what we can actively do in accord with who we want to be, or slavishly accepting the world as it has been presented to us by others over whom we have no control, and cannot possibly understand. The last election shows that we are still slaves to the event of September 11th and that there are those who profit from perpetuating that mindset.

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       Does evil exist in the world? Of course it does. But I contend that it exists as a linguistic phenomenon that indicates our abdication to a world beyond our control. It exists when we say it does, and we say it does when we feel helpless in the face of some overwhelming event or Other. That there are those that would seize upon our sense of helplessness and abdication of self for political advantage is unquestioned throughout human history. The real question is whether we hang onto the description of some overwhelming event or Other as evil, whether such an ascription is beneficial in terms of human efficacy in the face of the world. In other words, are we to play the role of slavish victims, or become masters of our world and ourselves?

Notes

[1] G W Bush, 'Remarks by the President After Two Planes Crash into World Trade Center,' September 11, 2001, viewed on 1 April 2008, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010911.html> .

[2] G W Bush, 'Statement by the President in his Address to the Nation.' September 11, 2001, viewed on 1 April 2008, http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010911-16.html>.

[3] G W Bush, 'Proclamation for a National Day of Prayer and Remembrance,' September 13, 2001, viewed on 1 April 2008, <http://www.patriotresource.com/wtc/president/010913c.html>.

[4] G W Bush, 'Remarks at Prayer Service on National Day of Prayer and Remembrance.' September 14, 2001, viewed on 1 April 2008, <http://www.patriotresource.com/wtc/president/010914a.html>

[5] G W Bush. 'Press Conference: White House South Lawn.' September 16, 2001, viewed on 1 April 2008, <http://www.patriotresource.com/wtc/president/010916a.html>.

[6] G W Bush. 'The President's State of the Union Address.' January 29, 2002, viewed on 1 April 2008, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html>.

[7] F Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann, in *The Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, Modern Library, New York, 1992, I, 4. In place of page numbers, this citation refers to the first essay, section four. All following Nietzsche citations follow this format.

[8] *Ibid*., I, 4-5.

[9] *Ibid*., I, 10.

[10] For a complete text of the Constitution of the United States see <http://memory.loc.gov/cgibin/ampage?collId=llac&fileName=001/llac001.db&recNum=4>. (Last accessed 1 April 2008.)

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[11] For the complete text of the FISA statutes see
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<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Foreign_Intelligence_Surveillance_Act>. (Last
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[12] G W Bush, Speech in Louisville, KY, cited in 'Bush would Welcome
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[13] G W Bush, 'Question and Answers with Troops at Brook Army Medical
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<http://www.juiceenewsdaily.com/index.php/2006/01/11/president-bushs-qa-
with-troops-at-brooke-army-medical-center/>.

[14] G W Bush, 'Year End News Conference.' December 19, 2005, viewed on
1 April 2008,
<http://www.cnn.com/2005/POLITICS/12/19/bush.transcript/index.html>.

[15] A break-down of exit polls from the 2004 presidential election can be
found at
<http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2004/pages/results/states/US/P/00/epolls.
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[16] John Kerry cited in M Bai, 'Kerry's Undeclared War.' *The New York
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[17] Mark Racicot appearing on CNN's *Late Edition*, October 10, 2004. Cited
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[18] Ed Gillespie from an interview with CBS' *Face the Nation* October 10,
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<http://www.cbsnews.com/htdocs/pdf/face_101004.pdf>.

[19] F Hutchison, 'Terror: Kerry's Grand Illusion?' October 13, 2004, viewed
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[20] D Henninger, 'Not Just a Political Problem: Does Kerry Think It's Evil to
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Posturing Fear in a World of Performed Evil: Terrorists, Teachers and Evil Neo-liberals

Namita Chakrabarty and John Preston

Abstract

Since Mohammad Sidique Khan, a teacher from the UK, appeared posthumously in the much viewed post-7/7 suicide bomber video, the links between education, terror and posturing are being drawn in the *Theatre of Fear*. We seek to make these links at a global level of meta-posturing through examining of representation, gesture and posture of international leaders. In this paper we explore the concept of *posturing* in performance, drawing on a number of theoretical traditions including queer theory, critical race theory, and "in-yer-face Theatre."[1]

We consider that white supremacy and capitalism are objective, inhuman systems of exploitation and oppression whereas 'good' and 'evil' are performed social constructs. Ideologically, members of the white ruling class of these systems have returned to pre-modern conceptions of 'good' and 'evil' aligning themselves with the former. Educators have been allocated a role by the state in policing what is seen as 'evil'. In constructing resistance to capital, racial and other forms of oppression we consider that educators could reclaim and 'queer' the meaning of 'evil' for subversive, revolutionary purposes.

Using contemporary theatre and performance, through the filter of contemporary culture, we explore this posturing of evil, in the context of contemporary, live, and recorded drama. We argue that transgressive performance in 'uncontrolled' public space is potentially transformative and presents an opportunity for drama educators, working with young people, to renew educational use of Boal, Brecht and Marxist theories towards a *Theatre of Revolutionary Change.*

Key words: Fear, 7/7, performance, whiteness, suicide bomber video, Mohammad Sidique Khan, critical race theory, queer theory, critical pedagogy, Marxism.

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1. Introduction - A World of Performed Evil

I had planned to start by referring to the great US writer, Don DeLillo, but….I recently entered the *Theatre of Fear*.[2] The United States of America. Since leaving London Gatwick on route to the USA in February I entered this new theatre. I have been cast as a potential threat to Western

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culture. This multifaceted character is a tough part to play in that, as with all acting, I have to suppress my personality. So, although I left the UK as an independent political woman of London's social centre, after undergoing two UK and three US body inspections and a number of intimidating verbal interrogations, having my photograph and fingerprints taken, being verbally abused by a US immigration officer and likened to and treated as an animal; yes, after these scenes from the theatre of fear I emerged performing a character of subjugated terror: I felt confused. I missed Europe and I craved Asia.

In my hotel room in Columbia, South Carolina later that night, I watched the Shiite religious rituals in Iraq on CNN and felt suddenly elated by the aggression of Islamic ritualistic performance, in the *Theatre of Revolutionary Change*. I thought of our paper, and of my creative writing, and the Theatre of Fear treating me, an atheist, as a potential Islamic terrorist, allied with the fear on the streets of a small town in South Carolina, that first night where we realised that 'no one' walks and if you do you are a foreign alien. And somehow the trigger of the Shiite energy led me back to watching my 'favourite' suicide bomber video, that of Mohammad Sidique Khan, the leader of the 7/7 suicide bombers.[3] Before exploring MSK, and to contextualise this, I shall return to DeLillo:

> There's a curious knot that binds novelists and terrorists. In the West we become famous effigies as our books lose the power to shape and influence….I used to think that it was possible for a novelist to alter the inner life of the culture. Now bomb-makers and gunmen have taken that territory. They make raids on human consciousness. What writers used to do before we were all incorporated….News of disaster is the only narrative people need. The darker the news, the grander the narrative. News is the last addiction before what? I don't know. But you're smart to trap us in your camera before we disappear.[4]

DeLillo's *Mao II* prophesied the beckoning chasm of artistic endeavour after 9/11 in a fictional conversation between a novelist and a photographer. The dominant motif of this novel is the crowd; we have been fascinated by posture and gesture over the power of the crowd, in particular in the third week in January 2006 as the Middle East entered a new era with the democratic success of Hamas[5] in Palestine and the Occupied Territories. UK news bulletins devoted sombre coverage to Western doom-mongering on evil - Rice, Bush, Netanyahu - interspersed with jubilant and ecstatic scenes of Palestinian crowds waving green flags and celebrating their democracy.

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The over-riding theme of Western commentators and politicians was of Hamas as an evil 'terrorist' organisation, responsible for numerous suicide attacks. One of the major aspects of "human consciousness"[6] which the force of the crowd encounters in the time we are dealing with, and which is also at the heart of the ideology behind groups like al-Qaeda, is the fight against the enduring double standards of the imperialism of the past, alive and kicking in the era of the neo-conservatives. For the West there is a hierarchy of death and terror, in that humans are not equal and have to remain that way for capitalism to survive. Baudrillard detailed how the new terrorism has brought together the crowd, modernity and spectacle amidst the terror and fear of the neoconservative century:

> We have to face facts, and accept that a new terrorism has come into being, a new form of action which plays the game, and lays hold of the rules of the game, solely with the aim of disrupting it….they have taken over all the weapons of the dominant power. Money and stock-market speculation, computer technology and aeronautics, spectacle and the media networks - they have assimilated everything of modernity and globalisation, without changing their goal, which is to destroy that power.[7]

The meta-drama of evil in 2005-6 is reflexive. Those who are labelled 'evil' perform 'good,' but are then in turn seen as 'evil' by the people they in turn label as 'evil' who are also performing 'good' *mise-en-abîme* (and these *are* performances, there is nothing essentialist about good and evil). These performances have become cyclical, rather like the cycles of violence and death performed by students and monitored by teachers which we have explored elsewhere.[8] Good and evil are performances, and although this fact gives states power to classify teachers performances as 'good' or 'evil' it also opens a possibility for drama teachers to use 'evil' and 'posture' against empire. This is one potential escape from a nihilistic cycle of a *Theatre of the Depressed* (rather than 'of the oppressed'[9]) which we counter with a potential *Theatre of Revolutionary Change*.

2.   Meta-posturing Fear: Terrorists and Evil Neo-liberals, and Meta-gestures

> Our words are dead until we give them life with our blood.[10]

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> I'm sure by now the media's painted a suitable picture of
> me; this predictable propaganda machine will naturally try
> to put a spin on things to suit the government and to scare
> the masses into conforming to their power and wealth-
> obsessed agendas.[11]

Since Mohammad Sidique Khan, a UK teacher ('learning mentor' and youth worker), appeared posthumously in the prime time favourite post 7/7 suicide bomber video, links between education, terror and posturing are being drawn. We seek to make these links at a global level of meta-posturing through considering issues of representation, gesture and posture of international leaders and the value judgements placed on hierarchies of evil performance.

The video by MSK (UK intelligence shorthand for Mohammad Sidique Khan, the assumed 'leader' of the 7/7 suicide bombers) is interesting as a launching point for looking at the performed gestures and postures of 'evil', and towards unmasking the clichés of performed evil – if evil as a term is used to describe those who kill, and we are looking at meta-theatre evil-killings from 7/7 to the Occupied Territories to the mountains of Pakistan.[12] MSK uses a soft tone, speaking with a broad Yorkshire accent to the global crowd. This was one of the aspects of his performance which most enthralled the UK media and audience – that a terrorist could speak with a UK accent, a Yorkshire accent (stereotyped in the UK as being associated with warmth, trustworthiness and straight talking), and in English, and on al-Jazeera. One of the 'evil' aspects of this 'performance' was that Britishness had changed (a New Labour vision since 1997), and that it was changed by a suicide bomber video. Of course what is more frightening is that it took this for people to wake up and ask the questions that need to be asked about media and the political representation of so called 'ethnic minorities'. The other key aspects of the MSK video are the soft, persuasive 'teacher' style of his delivery, his use of a pen to make points and the softened but definite gangsta rap style of gesture which have become a part of UK teen performance of debate insofar as Jerry Springer has de-educated teenagers on debate (because shouting, posturing over your opponent and Springer / Blairite 'final thoughts' fake sincerity is now accepted as debate). In a recent interview, the director of Liberty, also UK-Asian like MSK and of a similar age, reflected what many Asian people in the UK felt upon watching the MSK video:

> He pushes the liberal's buttons by saying you've tortured
> and murdered my Muslim brothers and sisters and now you
> too are going to taste the reality of this situation. I imagine
> …I would say: because innocent lives have been taken in
> Iraq, that doesn't mean you're allowed to take innocent

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lives in London. If that word terrorist is about anything it is
about people who say the ends justify the means. That's
why we can't compromise our values because if we do we
rob ourselves of the ammunition in the propaganda struggle
against terrorism.[13]

Drawing together these strands - a soft-spoken style combined with
persuasive rhetoric of terror-violence - leads us to the recent performative
spectacle of the Iranian president (Mahmoud Ahmadinejad) announcing to a
student audience in Iran, that Israel should be "wiped off the earth." He used
what seemed like very little physical gesture to emphasize his verbal posture
(not a new posture but rather a repeated one), whereas the UK Prime Minister
used the paternalistic verbal and physical posture (the point of the finger at
the imagined foe, the wild but melancholic eyes to indicate that choice is
taken away, and the up-turn in the voice – "this is not a question, but I'll
make it sound like one"), to say to the global audience that the pacifists will
stop asking about the UK/USA military intentions towards Iran and instead
ask, "what are you going to do?" Blair's speech was of course performed to
an audience of EU members in the hall of Hampton Court, a site that
launched hundreds of years of colonial incursion by harnessing one working
class against another, but in the global market it was really (like the Iranian
message) performed to the global TV crowd, to the weapons makers, to the
epic audience. So that the global TV has become a vast stage where wars are
threatened, where terror and evil are performed and postured.

Using our earlier work on posturing[14] as a starting point, and
developing a critique of our key textual references, we intend to demonstrate
a path through post-modern culture towards the challenges for drama
education in the twenty-first century, towards a *Theatre of Revolutionary
Change*. As Baudrillard wrote:

If terrorism arises… out of this excess of reality and its
impossible exchange, out of this profusion for which
nothing is given in return and this forced resolution of
conflicts, then the idea of extirpating it as an objective evil
is a total illusion since, such as it is - in its absurdity and its
meaninglessness - it is the verdict this society passes on
itself, its self-condemnation.[15]

'Evil' performance and performativity are currently used both by new
imperialisms and those aiming at a change of status quo, to regulate global
and national public space.

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3.   Re-making Whiteness by Performing 'Good' / Forming 'Evil'
Performing good or evil is work. Evil is a form of aesthetic and emotional labour where the aesthetics and emotions are twisted away from that which is outwardly pleasing and accommodating. There are various commercialized performances of evil in contemporary culture: actors, dancers, pantomime villains (in the British context); popular music performers who base their personas on portrayals of 'evil' (Marilyn Manson, Eminem, wrestling, Death Metal, Goth); theme park characters (Captain Hook in Disneyworld); and there is academic work in documenting and presenting evil. Whilst there is not an 'evil' industry to speak of, there is at least a growing market for the consumption of evil personas and characters.

The converse of evil (good) is also performed, and ruling-class whites (Blair, Bush, and corporations promoting various commodity racisms re-aligning whiteness as multicultural, clean and efficient) have in their political posturings mirrored whiteness with the concept of 'good', thus returning to Victorian conceptions of whiteness and 'purity'. Without denying that whiteness is exploitative, we note that it is not necessarily monolithic and shows the capacity for movement over time - slippery, flexible, whiteness.[16] Its movement and apparent accommodation is one of the ways in which white supremacy hides its true nature. Although it is often the white working class which has been subject to ethnographic and historical investigation in terms of relocations of whiteness[17] it is the members of the ruling class who have most recently returned to pre-modern formations of whiteness and 'goodness', propagating this ideology throughout society. As Alastair Bonnett explains, this primitive hyper-white formation was associated with "religious devotion and purity," "health" and "expansionist capitalism."[18] This has resurfaced as flexible racist whiteness[19] which enables ruling class hyper-whites to appear neutral - indeed that they transcend racism, disappear from race - by naming 'evil'. 'Good' has become synonymous with Christian, capitalist whiteness. The contemporary use of the converse (evil) is an example of the way in which race is fixed "…so that denotations are submerged and hidden in ways that are offensive through identification."[20] The use of the term 'evil' ("the new evil in our world," "the forces of good and evil," "an evil ideology") has been made by Blair several times since 9/11. In that Blair and the New Labour government have identified that there are ideologies which are 'evil', education workers have been allocated a unique role in identifying and regulating that evil in schools and universities. Teachers and lecturers are bound up in this by 'regulating' those whom the state deems to be evil, with certain universities (such as Imperial College, London) banning veils, motorcycle helmets and hoodies. Other measures include: the identification and control of extremist attitudes on campuses; strong, compulsory and prescriptive values education in

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schools; and a general attack on academic freedom of speech. Those who supported UK school strikes by young people over Iraq, and who speak out against capitalism and imperialism at universities are classified (and monitored) as 'evil-doers' or 'terror apologists'.

4.   Queering Evil, Embracing Evil: Teachers and Critical Pedagogy

In current circumstances, where teachers are being co-opted in the performance of hegemonic hyper-whiteness, critical pedagogy may seem to offer an alternative to teachers whether of the critical theory, multi-cultural, feminist or Marxist variant. An insight from queer theory is that what may seem to be essentialist roles are actually performances and as such, are always contingent.[21] In performing hegemonic hyper-whiteness, both Blair and Bush's performances are also performances of white negatives - the capitalist vampire, the rich white trash (Bush), the white mask of death (Both), the arrogant public school boy (Blair). While these contradictions can be used to *their* advantage (for example, Bush's homely way of speaking appealing to rural white people). These images are also recycled and performed by protesters, forming a basic insight of critical pedagogy - that the established order is not as it seems. However, whilst relying on these contradictory images to inform the content of lessons involving critical pedagogy, teachers need to be aware of internal contradictions of their own performances. A casual observation that we have made about practitioners of critical pedagogy is the extraordinary levels of worthiness with which they pursue their task- as if to counter the 'evils' of the world it is necessary to set themselves up as universally 'good' or 'neutral' people - an unattainable, and frankly, quite frightening objective. As a performance, teaching is often reliant on the Judeo-Christian persona of 'good' or 'neutral' (educative) in order to maintain its symbolic power. In counterpoint, we argue that teachers using critical pedagogy should consider whether there is something about performing, playing with and using evil (and it is after all a performance – there is nothing essentialist about this role) as a posture in the classroom / lecture room and in civil society which could be used as a political tool. In terms of the drama lessons we observed,[22] this could be as simple as picking up and using the manifestations and citations of 'evil' - the subversive - which the pupils made in their lessons. However, teachers and lecturers could go further, such as outing themselves as supporting those with supposedly ideologically evil views, or at the very least supporting their right to express such views. Teachers could subversively embrace rather than reject their positioning as evil and ideologically driven.[23]

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5.   Posturing Fear in Contemporary 'Drama': Performance of Evil

> What can thwart the system is not positive alternatives, but
> singularities…..not necessarily violent, and there are some
> subtle ones, such as those of language, art, the body or
> culture.[24]

Performance as *studied evil* in the 21st century runs from evil as acts morally
wrong (deaths caused by allied troops or terrorists) to 'excellent or
outstanding' as seen in contemporary British cultural terminology ('wicked'),
reflecting a cultural range from 90s Madonna, (sex as evil posturing, the
clash of Jean Paul Gaultier conical bra and Christian symbolism), to the 'evil'
posturing of gang culture caught in a cycle of manufactured romance and
death as educative career in Dibb and Johnston's *Bullet Boy*.[25] In our earlier
study we outlined what we see as a *Theatre of the Depressed* which reflected
the atmosphere, themes, culture and narratives we witnessed in youth
improvised drama in London schools after 7/7, and the vicious performative
culture and the *student/teacher axis of evil*:

> Teacher: If you're performing, the commitment is to your
> audience. What you want them to think, to feel.
> Student: What if I just want to scare them?
> Teacher: No, maybe what you're trying to teach someone is
> that murdering someone is bad…you don't actually do it.
> You can use suggestion, metaphor.

As the above vignette indicates, there was a constant tension
between education and terror. The major themes of our ethnography were of
a never ending sex-crime-violence-death cycle in 'the system', reflecting a
culture influenced by gangsta rap and at the same time absorbed in the beauty
of death as ballet, of movement where a gun / cell phone is an extension of
the hand and the voice is drowned out by music, gun shots, and women's
tears, - posture in the death of beautiful young people. In many ways this is in
a direct performance line with the 'In-Yer-Face-Theatre' of the 90s,[26] the
work of Modern British Artists[27] and mass cultures' portrayal of terror as
middle-eastern or black. Ridley's *Mercury Fur*[28] was one of the first new
contemporary plays to stage white terror / evil, reversing the current media
cliché whilst echoing Pinter and Bond.
       A new *Theatre of Revolutionary Change* would require teacher and
students to be equals in connection with possible texts or theories, as dialogic
chorus figures, and in intention towards an audience. What we are positing
here is a theatre that takes on the powerful meta-postures of our times: the

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lyricism of the suicide bomber video, with its shared gesture, posture and emotional link with the global arena of the political address, whilst sharing a stage with the chorus of yesteryear - the Shakespearean, the Greek - and being the interlocutor of stories of the street. We see the *Theatre of Revolutionary Change* enacted by Dario Fo in his work in Milan using theatre buildings, school buildings, plays and addresses to ferment change; we see it also in Pinter's turning to poetry and the political demonstration, and in the Stop The War movement's staged picnics in Parliament Square as a means of getting around the new British ban on protest around parliament. But above all we see the *Theatre of Revolutionary Change* as being the scenes of dance and drama in urbanoid sites where teenagers act and re-enact the tortures of the teacher / student /west / east *axis of evil*: the confusion and double standards by which they learn to submit to the system, or to rebel.

Notes

[1] A Sierz, *In-yer-face Theatre: British Drama Today*, Faber and Faber, London, 2001.

[2] This paper is a step for us towards writing in the area of Critical Race Theory which employs experience, storytelling and scholarship to reveal the truth that capitalist societies are *constructed* on the basis of racism, and to suggest confrontational strategies by which white supremacy and other systems of oppression can be overthrown. See G Ladson-Billings, 'Critical race theory' in *The RoutledgeFalmer Reader in Multicultural Education*, G Ladson-Billings and D Gillborn (eds.), Routledge, London, 2004, p. 51.

[3] After the presentation of the South Carolina paper we were told by a number of US participants that they had not heard the phrase, 7/7, and did not know what it referred to. It refers to the 7 July 2005 co-ordinated suicide bombings in central London, UK.

[4] D DeLillo, *Mao II*, Vintage, London, 1992, pp. 41-2.

[5] Hamas gained control of the Palestinian Authority on 26th January 2006. BBCi, "Hamas sweeps to election victory", 26 January 2006, viewed on 3 July 2006, <http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4>.

[6] DeLillo, op. cit., p. 41.

[7] J Baudrillard, *The Spirit of Terrorism*, Verso, London, 2002, p. 19.

[8] N Chakrabarty and J Preston, 'Posturing on the street is the new theatre: teens, queers and transgressive performance in 'uncontrolled' public spaces.'

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Performing Rights Conference, 14-18 June 2006, Queen Mary, University of London, London.

[9] A Boal, *Theatre of the* Oppressed, Theatre Communications Group, New York, 1985.

[10] BBCi, 'London Bomber Video aired on TV', 2 September 2005, viewed on 3 July 2006, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/4206708.stm>. The quotes are the words spoken on the video by Mohammad Sidique Khan.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Since the October, 2005 earthquake in Pakistan many people have died from the cold whilst awaiting help.

[13] S Jeffries, 'Freedom Fighter,' *London Guardian*, 10 December 2005, viewed on 3 July 2006, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/terrorism /story/0,,1664188,00.html>. Quotations are from Shami Chakrabarti, director of Liberty.

[14] Chakrabarty and Preston, op. cit.

[15] Baudrillard, pp. 104-105.

[16] L Zeus, 'The souls of white folk: critical pedagogy, whiteness studies and globalization discourse' in *The RoutledgeFalmer Reader in Multicultural Education*, G Ladson-Billings and D Gillborn (eds.), Routledge, London, 2004, pp. 117-136.

[17] A Bonnett, in *White Identities: Historical and International Perspectives*, Prentice Hall, London, 2000) at least deals with other class fractions. For a discussion of reformations of class and whiteness see: John Preston, 'White Trash Vocationalism? Formations of Class and Race in an Essex Further Education College,' *Journal of Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning*, vol. 5, 2003, pp. 6-17.

[18] Bonnett, op. cit., p. 33.

[19] Leonardo, op. cit., p. 127.

[20] G Ladson-Billings, 'Critical race theory' in Ladson-Billings and Gillborn, op. cit., p. 51.

[21] Judith Butler, 'Critically Queer' in *The Routledge Reader in Politics and Performance,* L Goodman and J de Gay (ed.), London: Routledge, 2000, 167-171.

[22] Chakrabarty and Preston, *op. cit.*

[23] Politically, this would need collective support from teachers, as in the UK in 2003 teacher job security was called into question for those who directly opposed the 'good' war in Iraq .

[24] Baudrillard, op. cit., p. 96.

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25 S Dibb and C Johnson, *Bullet Boy*, Video Collection International Limited, London, 2004, videorecording.

26 Sierz, op. cit.

27 R Allison, '9/11 wicked but a work of art, says Damien Hirst,' *London Guardian,* 11 September 2002, viewed on 3 July 2006,
 <http://arts.guardian.co.uk/news/story/0,11711,790058,00.html>.
See also: C Longrigg, 'Sixty Minutes, Noise: By Art's Bad Girl,' *London Guardian*, 4th December 1997, viewed on 3 July 2006,
<http://arts.guardian.co.uk/turnerpeoplespoll/story/0,,1057896,00.html>.

28 P Ridley, *Mercury Fur,* Methuen, London, 2004.

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Leonardo, Z., 'The souls of white folk: critical pedagogy, whiteness studies and globalization discourse.' In Ladson-Billings and Gillborn, op. cit., p. 117-136.
Preston, J. 'White Trash Vocationalism? Formations of Class and Race in an Essex Further Education College.' *Journal of Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning*, vol. 5, 2003, pp. 6-17.

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Part 3

Evil and Terror

ii.   *9/11 and Beyond*

Post-modern Narratives of Evil and 9-11:
The Case of Frédéric Beigbeder

Scott M. Powers

Abstract

In the wake of the Holocaust, theorists including Arendt and Lyotard outlined a post-modern perspective on evil by reconsidering human tragedies as the products of multiple forces and historical conditions that exceed human agency. More recently, post-modern thinkers such as Tzvetan Todorov and Miguel Benasayag, in their analysis of social discourse, have demonstrated how the ways in which we think and speak about evil are themselves implicated in the genesis of events that society considers evil. It remains to be seen how this philosophical perspective on evil translates into fiction. The following paper begins such an inquiry by identifying a post-modern account of evil in Frédéric Beigbeder's best-selling *Windows on the World* (2004), a fictional account of the events of September 11, 2001.

Key Words: Evil, postmodernism, fiction, Frédéric Beigbeder, 9-11, French literature.

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An investigation into a post-modern perspective on evil risks raising objections to the very possibility of such a perspective. And indeed, it has. When asked to submit an essay on evil and post-modernism, Holocaust scholar Berel Lang responded with an article on why he could not. He argues: "If post-modernity expected to leave anything behind, [it would be precisely] the nostalgia for the binary or dualistic thinking [that] opposes virtue to vice and then asserts that we can tell [...] the difference between them."[1] But in fact, he claims that despite the advent of the so-called post-modern era, we are not beyond good and evil. Instead of conceiving history in terms of rupture, which the notion *post*-modern implies, Lang contends that our understanding of the world has always reflected a "moral continuum" within history, in which the wrongfulness of an event appears as evident "as the quality of any human exchange or transaction can be."[2] He gives the example of Nietzsche, the undisputed herald of the post-modern. Despite formulating a philosophy "beyond good and evil," Nietzsche responded to the cruelty he perceived in a cab driver beating his horse by instinctively flinging his arms around the animal's neck in protest. Convinced that "post-modernity does not

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offer any more compelling [...] explanation of its own," Lang concludes by recognizing the post-modern as simply a *style*.[3]

While Lang's notion that there exists a common denominator across time for events perceived as evil is worth pursuing, and I will briefly do so, this does not rule out the possibility of a new, post-modern perspective on evil. Post-modern thinkers increasingly speak about evil as they begin to sort through the events of 9-11 and respond to the prevailing neo-Manichaeism discourse that ensued in American society. If we can temporarily suspend our objections to a post-modern employment of the term, we may begin to discern what it is about contemporary thought on evil that is new.

I would like to initiate such an inquiry through a brief analysis of *Windows on the World*, a French bestseller and prizewinner.[4] Written in 2003 by Frédéric Beigbeder, one of France's most post-modern writers, this fictional account of September 11 weaves together two alternating narratives. In one, the narrator, who reveals himself as Frédéric Beigbeder himself, spends his mornings breakfasting in the restaurant on the top floor of the *Montparnasse* Tower, Paris's only skyscraper, as he attempts to imagine what it was like for those trapped inside the World Trade Center. The other narrative, seemingly the product of Beigbeder's imagination, features narrator Carthew, who, trapped with his two sons inside *Windows on the World*, the restaurant atop the north tower of the WTC, comes to grips with his imminent death.

Beigbeder makes it clear that *Windows* is about evil. The novel's epigraph - Marilyn Manson's proclamation that the artist's function is "to plunge into the depths of hell" - foregrounds the theme.[5] Just as revealing is Beigbeder's self-identification with Baudelaire, the French writer of evil *par excellence*. After breakfast one morning, Beigbeder visits the poet's tomb. There, he takes a photograph of a statue of Baudelaire in the reflective pose of Rodin's thinker, which he includes in the chapter. The narrator takes note of the statue's title, "Genius of Evil", as well as the poet's prominent chin. This is an important detail because Beigbeder, in his novels, has often commented on his own prominent chin as his defining facial feature.[6] In fact, critics and fans have come to speak of Beigbeder, synecdochically, by referring to his chin.[7] As the narrator looks up to the poet for a snapshot, likewise, Beigbeder looks up to Baudelaire as his spiritual father. In the tradition of *The Flowers of Evil*, Beigbeder's writing betrays a fascination with evil, and an overarching investigation into the sources of human suffering.

An inquiry into the question of evil always involves two stages: the registering of a case of human suffering, and subsequently, an investigation of the causes. Beigbeder's impetus to write *Windows on the World* was the need he felt to record the human suffering of 9-11. He states that in writing this novel, he has dared to go where even the media dared not go. That is to

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say, inside the burning towers.[8] The narrative contains a handful of scenes that vividly depict the victims' intense emotional distress, the heat, the burnt flesh, the smoke, the vomit, and the bodies sounding like exploding melons as they hit the pavement below.[9] Far from constituting a callous, insolent recount of the 9-11 atrocities, such descriptions respond to the moral imperative not to ignore such extreme human suffering.[10] Beigbeder states, "In *Windows on the World*, the customers were gassed, burned and reduced to ash. To them, as to so many others, we owe a duty of memory."[11] Halfway through the novel, the narrator takes a trip to New York, where he visits Ground Zero and the surrounding memorials to the dead. Beigbeder's initial response is visceral, as he is brought to silence and to tears: "I bring my hand to my mouth. [...] Here in the midst of this terribly saccharine suffering stood a cynic in tears."[12]

Both Beigbeder's reaction to 9-11 and Nietzsche's reaction to a case of animal cruelty seem to constitute a transhistorical, moral response to what they instinctively recognize as human evil, that is to say, the infliction of bodily suffering. But perhaps Beigbeder and Nietzsche simply belong to a broader historical era that equates evil with the infliction of bodily pain. As twentieth-century thinkers such as Michel Foucault and Miguel Benasayag have argued, the notion of bodily suffering, and specifically human bodily suffering, has only been perceived as a sure sign of evil since the modern, secular era. Drawing from Foucault's work, Benasayag presents the notion of evil, in pre-modern times, as contingent upon the role of God as the sacred symbol of renouncement for civilized society. Evil was perceived as that which violated the spiritual realm, including the human soul, such as the disrespect for the rights of last confession, communion, and proper burial.[13] Tortured bodies, as Foucault has described, were often perceived as serving a good purpose, and were publicly displayed for the public's edification.[14] However, during the Enlightenment, a time of historical shift toward secularisation and the "rights of man," God was replaced by Man as the symbol of renouncement for civilized society. The human body, as the figure of Man, became the Good, the sacrosanct, the untouchable.

In both the modern and post-modern periods, the sign of evil is human bodily suffering. A well-known illustration of this secular vision is Susan Sontag's description, in *On Photography,* of her initial reaction to the graphic photographs of Holocaust victims as "a negative epiphany," as photographs of evil:

> Nothing I have seen [...] ever cut me as sharply, deeply, instantaneously. Indeed, it seems plausible to me to divide my life into two parts, before I saw those photographs and after. [...] When I looked at those photographs, something broke.[15]

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In *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Hannah Arendt similarly responds to the Holocaust atrocities, and specifically, to the treatment of the human body, by describing the Nazi death camps as Hell itself.[16] Other twentieth-century instances of extreme bodily suffering, especially cases of state-implemented torture, have provoked similar reactions.[17] In *Windows on the World*, Beigbeder instinctively describes the towering infernos as an evil phenomenon. And he insists on the gravity of this catastrophe through the description of suffering bodies. To be sure, for the contemporary consciousness, evil's victims are easily identifiable. In this respect, I would agree with Lang that a post-modernist vision of evil does not offer anything new. Conversely, what I believe post-modernism adds to the question of evil is a new perspective on the *origins* of evil, origins that, for the first time, are not perceived as transparent.

Post-modernism may have been initially used to describe a style of architecture that combines classical structures with modern forms. As a literary hodgepodge of old and new narrative styles, *Windows on the World* is certainly post-modern. The narrators' minute-by-minute diary-like account of one day's events often shifts to other textual forms, including poem reproductions, sometimes of classical verse, sometimes of modern forms. Pop hit lyrics, excerpts from the *Michelin* guide of New York City, questionnaires, and tourist photographs also accompany the main plot. But more than simply an eclectic mixture, the post-modern style, in literature, has been described by its irony and self-contradictions, the frequent use of parody, as well as what Brian McHale calls *heterotopia*, or the textual deployment of various contradictory discourses on the perceived reality of the world.[18] These elements of the post-modern style, I would argue, have inevitable implications for post-modernism as a veritable vision of evil. A text's deployment of multiple, competing discourses reflects, if not occasions, the rejection of those "grand narratives" that attempt to account for all historical events or human behaviour.[19] Indeed, the death of grand narratives such as Marx's economic theories on capital and class struggle, and Freud's theories of the unconscious and the Oedipal complex, constitutes the historical rupture denoted by the "post" in post-modernism. A post-modern cynicism about a single explanation for Being, expressed by a writer's unresolved engagement with competing paradigms, reflects a vision that refuses to identify one source of evil, and a perspective that recognizes the question of evil as multifarious.

In considering a post-modernist account for evil, a word must also be said about human agency - traditionally one of the most important factors considered by philosophers in the question of evil. Already a waning notion during the modern period, in which grand narratives pushed the conscious human will to the wings of history's stage, individual agency seems to have become all but effaced by post-modernists, who underscore countless

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linguistic, discursive, social, and economic forces, which, especially in today's *media*ted, information age, are perceived as the veritable actors in historical events. The self, no longer predicated on individual agency, constitutes the vehicle, often unknowingly, through which impersonal forces act out. Arendt's portrayal of Eichmann not as a scheming, demonic executioner with a hatred for Jews, but rather as a simple cog in the wheel of a much larger socio-economic machine, epitomizes this vision of evil, in which the notion of the "evildoer" is rendered problematic.[20]

In this post-modern vein, narrator Beigbeder borrows from the film *Airplane!* the image of a plane with no pilot in order to speak of present-day society as, "an autonomous [system], an organization that ha[s] neither management, nor purpose."[21] Correspondingly, Carthew, the narrator trapped in the north tower, in trying to understand his approaching death, expresses the feeling of complete impotence. He observes that "the only thing I control is my real estate office."[22] On the one hand, Carthew asserts that he did not willingly hurt anyone: "I don't know whether I am the embodiment of Good, but I never wished Evil on anyone."[23] And yet, he begins to recognize that he has participated, despite himself, in a massive economic system responsible for poverty and oppression: "Okay, so I'm not so innocent [...]. [But] what could I do if Guatemalan kids were working fifteen hours a day for slave wages to do the job for me?"[24] Such observations highlight a common dilemma that the post-modern consciousness faces, that is to say, the feeling of responsibility for something that one did not will.[25]

In his attempt to understand 9-11, narrator Beigbeder considers the hijackers themselves. He poses the question: "Who are these men capable of such a thing?"[26] In contrast to the Bush administration's portrayal of the hijackers solely as scheming evildoers, Beigbeder considers a variety of interpretations. In fact, he constructs a multiple-choice question that asks who these men are, and then presents the reader with a number of possibilities from which to choose. Among the list are the more traditional depictions of the scheming evildoer, including "Towel-headed fundamentalists" and "Psychotic madmen." But Beigbeder also proposes answers such as "Morons manipulated by a billionaire who is an ex-CIA agent" and "Heroes of the exploited third world."[27] Such interpretations suggest that the hijackers, rather than scheming evildoers, were themselves the instruments, if not the victims, of larger economic and religious belief systems that breed inequality and death.

Elsewhere, Beigbeder targets the role of the entertainment industry and the media. As if an illustration of Guy Debord's notion of the "society of the spectacle," throughout the novel characters are recurrently interpreting their life experiences by referring to films. In attempts to apprehend the reality of the terrorist attacks, characters rehash the plots of popular films such as *Independence Day, Die Hard 2, Armageddon*, and *Apocalypse Now*.[28]

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Carthew, the narrator, who finds himself playing the role of victim trapped in a towering inferno, feels that he should win an Oscar for such a casting, while his child imagines him as Clark Kent, preparing for his next heroic exploit.[29] But the novel illustrates that our dependence on film for the understanding of reality can have grave consequences. Narrator Beigbeder speculates that bystanders died in the streets in Lower Manhattan because "they didn't run for cover, so convinced were they that they'd seen it all before."[30] In this spectacle society, the citizen, accustomed to viewing "reality" at it is projected on the screen, becomes, indeed, a passive spectator. In a passage edited from the English translation, Beigbeder states: "Several bystanders died perhaps because they remembered that the last time they saw such a thing, it was while eating popcorn, and one hour later, they had left the theater safe and sound."[31] Just as disturbing is Beigbeder's portrayal of the role of the media in the perpetration of human catastrophes and warfare. In this information age, entire populations become the puppets of new forces:

> We live in strange times; war has shifted. The battlefield is
> the media: in this new war Good and Evil are difficult to
> tell apart. Difficult to know who the good guys and the bad
> guys are: they change sides when we change channels.
> Television makes the world jealous.[32]

Beigbeder goes on to underscore the media's role in provoking a global clash of civilizations. In line with other contemporary post-modern thinkers, such as Tzvetan Todorov and Miguel Benasayag, Beigbeder suggests that the ways in which society's representations of good and evil are themselves responsible for events commonly considered evil.[33]

In his exploration of a variety of explanations for evil, Beigbeder also considers the notion of an evil American Empire. Motivated by its dualist perception of the world as a battlefield between an axis of evil and freedom fighters, such an Empire is described as a breeder of terrorism. In the second half of the book, narrator Beigbeder, during his trip to New York, visits the United Nations sculpture garden, where he contemplates a monument entitled "Good Defeats Evil," which depicts St. George slaying a dragon. Sculpted from the remains of two missiles, one Soviet and one American, this monument celebrates the triumph of good America over the evils of nuclear war. Beigbeder takes a picture of the sculpture, which he features in the novel. But rather than ending the chapter here, Beigbeder juxtaposes this positive account of an America in pursuit of peace, with the U.S. campaign for war in Iraq. He takes note that while at the sculpture garden, "the members of the Security Council are gathered to vote on a resolution about the war in Iraq."[34] And in a subsequent paragraph omitted from the English translation, Beigbeder argues that "since 9-11, America is at

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war against Evil. One may see this as ridiculous, but that's the way it is. The problem is that it's not her job. It's the United Nations."[35]

Beigbeder's novel paints a picture of a society subjected to multiple, destructive forces that exceed human agency, including age-old religious ideologies, economic systems, the entertainment industry, the media, and society's very discourses of good and evil. But Beigbeder's vision of evil is even more post-modern in its refusal to express with certainty any possible origin of evil. For instance, he does not end his chapter on the multiple-choice question with a correct answer. The reader is left staring at a dozen possible answers with boxes that remain unchecked. Nor does Beigbeder propose any definitive remedy for evil. In the chapter on America's usurpation of global political authority, Beigbeder proceeds to consider the possibility of "a global republic governed by an international parliament elected by universal suffrage." But he quickly rejects such a notion as simply the best he could come up with, and as a "post-September 11 utopia."[36] At the end of his analysis of the media, Beigbeder steps back to state:

> OK, I'll stop there, not being competent to analyse everything. If you want to unravel the geopolitical tangle of terrorism, call the offices of Spengler, Huntington, Baudrillard, Adler, Fukuyama, Revel... But I can't guarantee that things will become immediately clearer.[37]

In what could be considered a meta-post-modern awareness, Beigbeder recognizes the tradition of post-modernist thinkers that he is following, as well as the impossible task to paint a clear picture of the world that post-modernists describe.

The anti-conclusions that end the chapters of *Windows on the World* are characteristic of post-modernist fiction. However, this "style," far from being evidence, as Berel would suggest, of a post-modernist impossibility of providing its own explanation of evil, illustrates, rather, a vision that recognizes evil's complexity and affirms the reality of numerous potential sources of evil. In a post-modern vision, the existence of evil is reaffirmed and its victims easily identified. However, post-modernism responds to the advent of a new age of information and all that this implies. In its recognition of the complexity of extra-human forces, its indeterminacy and anti-conclusions are, in part, a position of sincerity in recognizing the limits of human understanding. But even more, they constitute a call to vigilance, an ethics that requires us to constantly reassess our ways of thinking and speaking about evil.

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[1] B Lang, 'Evil Inside and Outside History: The Post-Holocaust versus the Post-modern,' in *Evil after Postmodernism: Histories, Narratives, and Ethics,* J L Geddes (ed.), Routledge, New York, 2001, p. 11.

[2] Ibid., p. 13.

[3] Ibid., pp. 21-22.

[4] In 2003, *Windows on the World* was awarded the prestigious *Prix Interallié*.

[5] F Beigbeder, *Windows on the World*, trans. F Wynne, Miramax Books, New York, 2004, v. Unless otherwise noted, all quotes from *Windows on the World* are taken from the English Translation

[6] In F Beigbeder, *Mémoires d'un jeune homme derange*, La Table Ronde, Paris, 1990, 17, the author-narrator speaks at length about his "second nose." In F Beigbeder, *L'égoïste romantique*, Grasset, Paris, 2005, p. 15, the author-narrator jokingly tells the reader that he must protect his chin from harmful sunrays. There are various other coincidences between the two writers that Beigbeder mentions, such as their Catholic upbringing and that they attended the same high school, Louis-le-Grand.

[7] For instance, in an article aptly entitled "Cyrano de Beigbeider" from the popular French magazine *Le point,* Christophe Ono-dit-Biot refers to Beigbeder as "homme aux deux nez" (the man with two noses). C Ono-dit-Biot, 'Cyrano de Beigbeder,' *Le point*, 31 March 2005, viewed on 8 April 2006, <http://www.lepoint.fr/litterature/document.html?did=160804>.

[8] Beigbeder, op. cit., p. 295. Beigbeder states: "Nowadays, books must go where television does not. Show the invisible, speak the unspeakable."

[9] Ibid., pp. 119, 139, 149, 167.

[10] Unlike the infamous conspiracy theories of 9-11 that French writers have become known for, Beigbeder's account constitutes a sincere attempt to describe the harsh reality of this day. As an example of a best-selling conspiracy theory on 9-11, see French author T Meyssan's *September 11: The Big Lie*, Carnos, Paris, 2002.

[11] Beigbeder, op. cit, p. 274. The English translation censored parts of this passage. In the original French text, Beigbeder compares 9-11 to Auschwitz, and the restaurant *Windows on the World* to a gas chamber. FBeigbeder, *Windows on the World*, Gallimard, Paris, 2004, p. 334.

[12] Beigbeder, op. cit., p. 171.

[13] M Foucault, *Surveiller et punir: Naissance de la prison*, Gallimard, Paris, 1975, p. 61 and M Benasayag, *Utopie et liberté*, Editions La Découverte, Paris, 1986, pp. 66-70.

[14] Foucault, pp. 121, 125.

[15] S Sontag, *On Photography*, Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, New York, 1977, pp. 19-20.

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[16] H Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Harcourt Brace & Company, New York, 1979, pp. 445-47, 459.

[17] See, for instance M Benasayag, op. cit., which presents state-implemented torture as contemporary society's "absolute evil." See also L Tanner, *Intimate Violence*, Indiana University Press, Indianapolis, 1994.

[18] B McHale, *Post-modernist Fiction*, Methuen, New York, 1987, p. 163.

[19] Jean-François Lyotard defines post-modernism as "incredulity regarding metanarratives, that is to say, "grand stories about the world and the place of inquiry in it." J-F Lyotard, *The Post-modern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1984, pp. xxiii-xxv.

[20] H Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*, Penguin Classics, New York, 1965. Arendt's analysis of Eichmann in fact implies that the Nazis themselves were the victims of socio-economic forces, in particular the disintegration of class society and the concomitant emergence of a European mass society.

[21] Beigbeder, op. cit., p. 203.

[22] Ibid., p. 286.

[23] Ibid., p. 287.

[24] Ibid., 286-87.

[25] In contemplating other catastrophes of his time, including Chernobyl and Exxon-Valdez, narrator Beigbeder states: "I'd like to think that I am not complicit in such horrors. And yet, like every human being, at a microscopic level, I am complicit." Ibid., p. 25.

[26] Ibid., p. 264.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid., pp. 44, 266, 289.

[29] Ibid., pp. 75, 207.

[30] Ibid., p. 266.

[31] Beigbeder (original French version), p. 324. English translation mine.

[32] Ibid., p. 111.

[33] Several contemporary post-modern thinkers have made this point. See for instance, T Todorov, *Mémoire du Mal, tentation du Bien*, Robert Laffont, Paris, 2000, and M Benasayag and E Charlton, *Cette douce certitude du pire* Editions La Découverte, Paris, 1986). See also D Schalkwyk, "Truth, Reconciliation, and Evil in South Africa," in *Truth, Reconciliation, and Evil*, ed. M S Breen. Rodopi, Amsterdam, 2004, pp. 3, 13.

[34] Beigbeder, op. cit., p. 245.

[35] Beigbeder (original French version), p. 301. My translation.

[36] Ibid., p.247.

[37] Ibid., p. 111.

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Terrorism - Then and Now

Agnes B. Curry

Abstract

In 1794 Robespierre, on behalf of the French Revolutionary government, famously characterized terror as "nothing other than justice, prompt, severe, inflexible; it is therefore an emanation of virtue; it is not so much a special principle as it is a consequence of the general principle of democracy applied to our country's most urgent needs." But as it gradually lost its legitimizing links with the state, 'terrorism' became a term of condemnation for any political challenges to state order that ignore the rules of war and are thus, by definition, criminal.

Nevertheless, Robespierre's original linkage of terror with virtue and equality remains intriguing, for it suggests that modern terrorism and the rise of the modern, individual democratic subject are chiasmatic phenomena. The author will argue that the historicity of terrorism is inseparable from the rise of modern subjectivity and its now globalizing regimes; this is a thesis that unites the otherwise dissimilar thinkers Jürgen Habermas, Jacques Derrida and Jean Baudrillard. In this light, the paper will compare these three thinkers' responses to the events now mythologized as '9/11'; what do the convergences and divergences of their analyses imply for our thinking about both the nature of evil and new possibilities for subjectivity? Considering the responses of Habermas, Derrida and Baudrillard faces us squarely with the problem of hope and its possible sources. The author suggests that surprisingly, Baudrillard's stance is actually the most hopeful of the three. This raises the question of the source of his hope and the possible sources of our hope.

Key words: Terrorism, September 11, hyperreality, Habermas, Derrida, Baudrillard

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1. Introduction

In 1794 Robespierre, on behalf of the French Revolutionary government, famously added the term "terrorism" to the lexicon. He characterized terror as "nothing other than justice, prompt, severe, inflexible; it is therefore an emanation of virtue; it is not so much a special principle as it is a consequence of the general principle of democracy applied to our country's most urgent needs."[1] But as it gradually lost its legitimizing links with the state, 'terrorism' became a term of condemnation for general

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political challenges to state order that ignore the rules of war and are thus, by definition, criminal.[2]

Nevertheless, Robespierre's original linkage of "terror" with "virtue" and "equality" as "the soul of the republic" remains intriguing, for it suggests that modern terrorism (state and non-state) and the rise of the modern, individual democratic subject are chiasmatic phenomena.[3] Insofar as we're now facing the simultaneous full-flowering and shifting of the possibilities of Statehood in the post-modern era of globalization, we are witnesses (and participants) in a new form of terrorism.

The idea that current terrorism is largely an outgrowth of modern subjectivity and the modern state in its now globalizing regimes is a point about which several philosophers in Continental traditions agree. In spite of notorious differences, the analyses offered by Jürgen Habermas, Jacques Derrida and Jean Baudrillard converge in many respects. All characterize "September 11" as an "event," an eruption of genuine historic novelty. In explaining its significance as an event, they stress the attack's symbolic register and read the attack as a barometer of new forms of conflict, intra-psychic as well as inter-social. All locate the logic of current terrorism in globalization, which they read as a phenomenon that has hitherto served to entrench US hegemony. All recognize that globalization encourages proliferation of terrorism, and that we cannot read current patterns of terror simply in terms of the past. An implication of all their analyses is that we cannot return to the past. This implication would seem to apply to the dreams of Enlightenment that nevertheless haunt their discourses.

2.   Terrorism and Modernity

The notion that both the terror and the possibilities wrought by it are importantly *new* is a crucial complication to the sort of idea typified by this opening sentence in a reader on terrorism: "to study the history of terrorism is to study the history of human civilization."[4] This broad characterization encourages us to see all manifestations of political violence through history as terrorist in some similar way. Even more troubling in the current world context, however, are the many soundings of a religious key in popular and academic discourses, and the categorizing of religious actors as diverse as the first century Jewish Zealots and Hindu Thugs with today's suicide bombers.[5] It is important to ponder connections between 'religion,' 'violence,' 'politics,' and 'terror,' particularly as they circulate around the theme of transcendence. But flat chronologies and readings of today's terrorism as a return to its religious roots, as vestiges of feudal thinking, or as "fanaticism" *simplicitur* are misleading and dangerous.

Jürgen Habermas takes on the issue of the 'religious roots' of current terrorisms in a 2001 interview about the attack on New York City's World Trade Center. He provides the essential reminder that "one never

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really knows who one's enemy is."[6] "Osama bin Laden" and "Al Quaeda" are intangible stand-ins that cannot be pinned down by the moniker "Islamic Fundamentalism." For Habermas, the intangibility of the referents marks a new phase in struggles around globalization. As for fundamentalism itself, he reminds us that Islamic fundamentalism (like Biblical literalism) is a quintessentially modern phenomenon. It is not merely a holdover of pre-modern worldviews, but rather a response to the stresses of modernization and the ineluctable fact that today "world society is …*split up* into winner, beneficiary, and loser countries."[7] As such, the notion that we are dealing with a cultural clash of civilizations is often a smokescreen for ignoring the need to deal politically with the effects of capitalism.[8]

Habermas interprets "religious fundamentalism" in terms of his general theories of modernization and communicative action. His decades-long social-theoretical project has been to correct the overdrawn conclusions of Horkheimer and Adorno's dialectic of Enlightenment in light of a critical reconstruction of Weber's theories of rationalization. In Europe, modernization involved a gradual separation and need for mutual accommodation of multiple spheres of rationality. Inquiries in the natural and hermeneutic sciences developed in line with the different interests grounding them.[9] In tandem, social life split into spheres, geared in the main either to strategically-oriented action or to communicative understanding. In connection with these developments, institutions arose which allowed for accommodation of differing religious beliefs. Modernization in Europe allowed for a more gradual and genuinely progressive (though far from seamless or non-violent, as Habermas admits) balance between the universal claims of one's religious beliefs and the relativity of the believer's position.

On the other hand, 'modernization' in many other parts of the globe has, in large part, meant economic exploitation by the West and the dismantling of previously stabilizing forms of identity. Offering little opportunity for the growth of self-reflexivity that would, at least in part, compensate for the loss of spiritual sustenance, globalized consumerism can instead prompt rejection of secularism. In response, people adopt beliefs and practices that relate to (often quite violent) pre-modern forms but which must be understood as radical re-interpretations in light of new contexts. (The long career of the idea of *jahiliyyah* is a case in point.) In a world of differentiated discourses where epistemological "innocence" is no longer possible, however, this reversion generates specific forms of cognitive dissonance and psychic repression unparalleled in earlier times.

Habermas contrasts the aims exhibited by the September 11 actors with other forms of terrorism in places like Palestine and Chechnya. Even when decentralized and shadowy, these movements can be understood in familiar terms as attempts to gain political power, strike at individual enemies, or promote nationalist agendas. In contrast, the global movement

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signified by September 11 is extreme in two respects: its lack of realism in the sphere of conventional goals and its "cynical" perceptiveness in exploiting the possibilities for interruption of complex societies.[10]

Habermas spends less time considering reactions to the attack on the part of those to whom its message was intended, i.e., the US. He notes his disconcertion with the flag-waving and demands for unquestioning solidarity that arose immediately after the attack and still continue to percolate through life in the US. In a 2003 essay in the *German Law Journal*, Habermas characterizes the spectacle of a "technologically supreme and heavily armed superpower's fear of terrorism" as a "Cartesian anxiety" aiming for complete self-objectification and control of others in a situation of overweening complexity. But irrevocably, "[t]he world is no longer accessible to a centralized control, through politics backed up by military power."[11]

3.   Terrorism and the Logic of Autoimmunity

Whereas Habermas focuses on diagnosing the subjectivity of the non-state terrorist, Derrida and Baudrillard more thoroughly interrogate the motives of both the 9/11 perpetrators and their viewers/victims - the "we" known collectively as the "West." Derrida characterizes the logic of current terrorism as an autoimmunity logic - a process where the mechanisms intended as protections reverse their positions. The attack produced a peculiar sense of vulnerability for its witnesses in part because it took place on US soil and succeeded in destroying an iconic set of buildings. But this is only a small and perhaps even significant part of the explanation. More salient is the fact that the method of the attack included all the symbols and means of global advancement and accreditation monopolized by the US and *needed* by all, attackers included.[12] Additionally, he links autoimmunity logic to the issues of the "geopolitical unconscious"[13] and the inevitable return of the repressed:

> For now we know that repression in both its psychoanalytical sense and its political sense - whether it is through the police, the military, or the economy - ends up producing, reproducing, and regenerating the very thing it seeks to disarm.[14]

This fact - that we know and have known all along this inadmissible thing - is an element of the ongoing, self-generated trauma and shame intrinsic to reactions to the attack, and, indeed, to contemporary Western experience. To this we must add the recognition, since Hobbes, that terror is "the very condition of the authority of law and of the solemn exercise of power, the very condition of the political and the state."[15] Thus, in addition to the ongoing trauma stemming from the recognition/disavowal of its source,

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there is the trauma that we know what sorts of political, military and economic choices would reduce terror for all, yet we also know we lack the will to implement them. Those of us who try to think know, too, that intellectual responsibility demands destabilizing the term 'terror' itself, discussing state terrorism, and interrogating the US interest in its own victimization. On this point Derrida is forceful:

> More than the destruction of the Twin Towers or the attack on the Pentagon, more than the killing of thousands of people, the real "terror" consisted of and, in fact, began by exposing and exploiting, being exposed and exploited, the image of this terror by the target itself. This target (the United States, let's say, and anyone who supports or is allied with them in the world, and this knows almost no limits today) had it in its own *interest* (the *same* interest it shares with its sworn enemies) to expose its vulnerability, to give the greatest possible coverage to the aggression against which it wishes to protect itself. This is again the same autoimmunity perversion.[16]

As noted above, all three thinkers stress the symbolic dimension of the attack, with Habermas calling it the "first historic world event in the strictest sense."[17] For Derrida the point that calls for deconstruction - simultaneous affirmation, situation, and critical interrogation - is the recognition that this was a "transgression of a new type" which opens a murky future.[18] Baudrillard ups the ante, calling it "the absolute event, the 'mother' of all events, the pure event uniting within itself all the events that have never taken place."[19]

3.   The Event of the Twin Towers

In attempting to specify why the World Trade Center destruction qualifies as an "event," Habermas focuses on the fact that "the impact, the explosion, the slow collapse - everything that was not Hollywood anymore but, rather, a gruesome reality, literally took place in front of the "universal eyewitness" of a global public."[20] This explanation is problematic, however. It is not clear whether it was its gruesome *overtaking* of the Hollywood trope that made the attack world-historic, or whether it was the worldwide public sphere of witness that was more significant for Habermas. Each of these conditions undercuts the other, and both problematize our relation to reality. If the first, then we have a case where the Hollywood fantasy is an inescapable referent for the real event. It is unique in its horror because unlike the movies, real humans were harmed in the production. If the second, then the witnessing is irreducibly refracted through a sensationalist media.

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Habermas' further elaborations only further subvert the notion that there was any shared "reality" to the event at all. Speaking of a friend's experience as a New York resident watching the unfolding from his roof, Habermas notes it was no doubt different from his although they *saw* the same thing. But in what way did they even see the same thing? Only via the media. Unwittingly, Habermas veers closer to Baudrillard than one might expect.

Baudrillard is known for erasing any distinction between image and reality. The sublime efficiency of the system in absorbing all distinctions between real and representation has propelled us into a hyperreality where events have been impossible - until September 11. It was the genius of the new terrorist to "bring about an excess of reality, and have the system collapse beneath that excess of that reality."[21] For Baudrillard, the excess of reality and of flesh-and-blood death does not take us into gruesome literalness, however, but into the realm of exorbitant *symbolic* exchange. At the Twin Towers, Baudrillard asserts, death assumed a new meaning.

To understand the power of the event for Baudrillard, we need to mention his theory of the simulacrum, built on a critique of the logical structures of Marxist and Freudian readings of production and representation. Very briefly, Marx's attempt to anchor production and labour in a system of use-value (something real on which to ground critique) did not fully grasp the logic of capital, which has shown itself fully capable of subsuming all aspects of life into commodification. Further, the commodity is no longer a thing, or a sign of a thing, or even the sign of an absence or loss of a thing.[22] We have entered the epoch of simulation, of a world of altered space-time relations and endlessly re-circulating representations with no mooring to reality.[23] Concomitantly, the movement of modern rationalization has for the last five hundred years or so shifted the relations between time, death, value and accumulation such that "value, in particular time as value, is accumulated in the phantasm of death deferred, pending the term of a linear infinity of value."[24] More simply, Baudrillard holds that the modern West attempts to sanitize negativity and build its economies (material and psychic) on a denial of death,[25] a deferral of death through accumulation that is, paradoxically, an ambivalent obsession with death.[26] Death lurks in the interstices of even hyperrpreal systems of exchange, unsusceptible to programming and normalizing.[27] But insofar as the system cannot own up to death, or to the violence of an incessant exchange that is in fact a one-way homogenization, *sacrificial* death – a remnant of social relations that do not follow the logic of capital[28] - remains the one signifier potentially capable of disrupting the system. What distinguishes September 11 from other "suicide attacks" (which Baudrillard reads as ineffectual) is the combination of the archaic logic of sacrifice with the *modern* resources available via globalization. In this respect Baudrillard echoes points by Habermas and Derrida noted above.

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        For Baudrillard, as for Derrida, the symbolic effectiveness of the attack also depended on an unspeakable moral complicity of its witnesses: "At a pinch, we can say that they *did it*, but we *wished for* it."[29] It is not simply endemic human darkness but also "that superpower which, by its unbearable power, has fomented all this violence which is endemic throughout the world, and hence that (unwittingly) terroristic imagination which dwells in all of us."[30] Its efficiency of reach is key here. While there may have been historical analogues in past empires and the present age has no monopoly on atrocity, this particular form of moral madness, premised on the triumph of Good, rationality and liberation,[31] is new.[32]

4.   Dreams of Enlightenment and the Return to Metaphysics

        Where to go from here? Despite reservations, both Habermas and Derrida hearken back to the Enlightenment, particularly the internationalization of law. Habermas argues on the grounds of logical and performative consistency; criticisms of totalizing universalism presuppose universalistic standards for their intelligibility.[33] Derrida frames his response in terms of a choice that "in principle, by right of law, leaves a perspective open to perfectibility in the name of the "political," democracy, international law, international institutions, *and so on*."[34] Even Baudrillard invokes the Enlightenment. On one hand "there is no remedy for this extreme situation,"[35] there is only "a morality of analysis, a duty of honesty."[36] On the other, he rejects charges of fatalism: "I don't resign myself, I want clarity, a lucid consciousness. When we know the rules of the game, then we can change them. In this respect, I am a man of the Enlightenment."[37]

        Of course, Baudrillard's Enlightenment is qualitatively different from that of Habermas or even Derrida. Baudrillard's scepticism about institutions is uncompromising. And here I am unsure of precisely how to go on. For years I have considered myself a Habermasian of some sort, and I saw Baudrillard's analyses of media as totalizing. But now, after witnessing four and a half years of what can only be described as mounting absurdity, the invocations – incantations - of international rule of law by both Habermas and Derrida strike me as ineffectual. Further, Derrida's framing his hope in terms of even an open-ended perfectibility seems susceptible to criticism in light of Baudrillard. Hasn't even the *ideal* of perfectibility proven dangerous? On the other hand, Baudrillard's project of coming to know the rules of the game is contradictory and hopeless by his own terms, unless, perhaps, it is premised on something left unsaid - unsayable - within the philosophy itself. The unsayable condition haunting Baudrillard's discourse is some sort of hope. But what kind? In thinking about this, I, perhaps foolishly, attribute at least some seriousness to his 2003 remarks to *Der Spiegel*:

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> I love the world of the Cathars because I am
> Manichaean….the Cathars held the material world to be
> evil and bad, created by demons. At the same time, they put
> their faith in God, the holy and the possibility of perfection.
> This is a much more radical view than that which sees in
> evil only the gradually diminishing auxiliaries of the
> good.[38]

In this light, Jonathan Smith's interpretation of Baudrillard's project as sketching out not only a metaphysics, but a Gnostic Manichaeism, seems on track.[39] The Manichean thesis that evil is due not to human freedom but to a pre-existing condition is a huge topic; I cannot discuss it here. But it raises for me questions about hope and helps me start to describe one important but elusive difference I find between Habermas and Derrida, and Baudrillard. For all their attempts to pin hopes on international law or the open-ended possibility of a perfected conception of the political, Habermas and Derrida strike me as actually a bit hopeless. (This is in spite of Derrida's late moves to rethink religion and Habermas' recent work to accommodate religious discourse and its motivating force; neither seems to me to get to the heart of the issue.) On the other hand, only a radical form of faith can fuel Baudrillard's critical project and account for its intensity.

Does the topic of hope, and what might *ground* it (in however convoluted a way) turn out to be an Other left out of contemporary philosophical discourse? Is it the great unsaid, the forbidden motor of our searching? Should we talk about it? Can we talk about hope without returning to metaphysics?

Notes

[1] 'Modern History Sourcebook: Maximilien Robespierre: Justification of the Use of Terror,' from Maximilien Robespierre, *On the Moral and Political Principles of Domestic Policy*. P Halsell, August 1997, viewed on 30 November 2005, <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/robespierre-terror.html>.

[2] See A Badiou, *Infinite Thought: Truth and the Return to Philosophy* Continuum, London and New York, 2003, p. 144.

[3] 'Modern History Sourcebook: Maximilien Robespierre: On the Principles of Political Morality, February 1794,' From Maximilien Robespierre, *Report upon the Principles of Political Morality Which Are to Form the Basis of the Administration of the Interior Concerns of the Republic* (Philadelphia, 1794). P Halsell, August 1997, viewed on 30 November 2005, <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1794robespierre.html>.

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[4] P L Griset and S Mahon, 'Introduction,' in *Terrorism in Perspective*, P L Griset and S Mahon (eds.), SAGE Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA, 2003, p. 1.

[5] D C Rapaport. 'Fear and Trembling: Terrorism in Three Religious Traditions.' Reprinted in *Terrorism in Perspective*, pp. 15-37. Rapaport's analysis is actually quite subtle; what concerns me is the way it has been broadened into equivalences popularized and perpetuated in diverse contexts. For a representative example, see M Burgess, 'A Brief History of Terrorism,' produced by the Center for Defence Information, which references Rapaport for its discussion of the "religious roots" of terrorism. Likewise, see the link, 'The History of Terrorism: More than 200 Years of Development,' (last updated May 17, 2005) linked to First Gov.gov, the official portal for the United States Government, viewed on 27 January, 2006,
< http://www.state.de.us/cjc/terrorism/history.shtml>.

[6] Quoted in G Borradori, *Philosophy in a Time of Terror: Dialogues with Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 2003, p. 29.

[7] Ibid., p. 32.

[8] Ibid., p. 36.

[9] J Habermas, *Theory of Communicative Action: Volume 1: Reason and the Rationalization of Society,* trans. T McCarthy, Beacon Press, Boston, 1984, pp. 143-243, 366-399. *Knowledge and Human Interests*, trans. J Shapiro Beacon Press, Boston, 1968.

[10] Borradori, op. cit., pp. 33-34.

[11] J Habermas, 'Interpreting the Fall of a Monument,' trans. M Pensky, *German Law Journal*, vol. 4 no. 7 - 1 July 2003. Originally from *Frankfurter Allgemein Zeitung*, April 17, 2003, viewed on 1 February, 2006,
<http://www.germanlawjournal.com/article.php?id=291>.

[12] Borradori, op. cit., pp. 94-95. Baudrillard makes a parallel point: "Money and stock-market speculation, computer technology and aeronautics, spectacle and the media networks – they have assimilated everything of modernity and globalism, without changing their goal, which is to destroy that power." J Baudrillard, *The Spirit of Terrorism,* trans. C Turner, Verso, London and New York, 2003, p. 19.

[13] Borradori, op. cit., p. 99.

[14] Ibid., p. 99. See N Mardas, "Terrorism - Within and Without" in this volume.

[15] Ibid., p. 102.

[16] Ibid., pp. 108-09.

[17] Ibid., p. 29.

[18] Ibid., pp. 94, 102.

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[19] Baudrillard, *The Spirit of Terrorism*, p. 4.

[20] Borradori, op. cit., p. 28.

[21] Baudrillard, op. cit., p. 18.

[22] See J Baudrillard, *Symbolic Exchange and Death*, trans. I H Grant, Sage Publications, London, 1993, pp. 14, 16. "The entire sphere of production, labor and the forces of production must be conceived as collapsing into the sphere of 'consumption,' understood as the sphere of a generalized axiomatic, a coded exchange of signs, a general lifestyle." (*Symbolic Exchange and Death*, p. 14) "Simultaneously, when this sphere of signs (including the media, information, etc.) ceases to be a specific sphere for representing the unity of the global processes of capital, then we must not only say with Marx that 'the production process has ceased to be a labour process'…but that 'the process of capital itself has ceased to be a production process'." (*Symbolic Exchange and Death,* p. 16)

[23] Baudrillard writes, "The hyperreal is beyond representation…only because it is entirely within simulation, in which the barriers of representation rotate crazily, an implosive madness which, far from being ex-centric, keeps its gaze fixed on the center, on its own abyssal repetition." (*Symbolic Exchange and Death,* pp. 73-74).

[24] Ibid., p. 146.

[25] Borradori, op. cit., p. 95.

[26] Baudrillard, *Symbolic Exchange and Death*, pp. 144-8.

[27] Ibid., p. 126.

[28] I leave a more detailed discussion of Baudrillard's analysis of symbolic exchange for another opportunity.

[29] Baudrillard, *The Spirit of Terrorism,* p. 5.

[30] Loc. cit.

[31] "This is the Fourth World War: the *Der Spiegel* Interview with Jean Baudrillard," trans. S Gandesha, *International Journal of Baudrillard Studies*, vol. 1, no 1, January 2004. International Journal of Baudrillard Studies, 2003, viewed on 10 January, 2006, <http://www.ubishops.ca/baudrillardstudies/spiegel.htm>. Baudrillard continues: "Globalization is based, as colonialism was earlier, on immense violence. It creates more victims than beneficiaries, even when the majority of the Western world profits from it…It is pitched as the endpoint of the Enlightenment, the solution to all contradictions. In reality, it transforms everything into a negotiable, quantifiable exchange value. This process is extremely violent, for it cashes out the idea of unity as the ideal state, in which everything that is unique, every singularity, including other cultures and finally every non-monetary value would be incorporated. See, on this point, I am the humanist and moralist…The universal values, as the

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Enlightenment defined them, constitute a transcendental ideal. They confront the subject with its own freedom, which is a permanent task and responsibility, not simply a right. This is completely absent in the global, which is an operational system of total trade and exchange…[globalization] pretends to liberate people, only to deregulate them. The elimination of all rules, more precisely the reduction of all rules to laws of the market is the opposite of freedom, namely, its illusion."

[32] Ibid. Baudrillard notes, "With its totalizing claim, the system created the conditions for this horrible retaliation. The immanent mania of globalization generates madness, just as an unstable society produces delinquents and psychopaths. Terrorism is everywhere, like a virus." Here I suggest that the logic is that of autoimmunity rather than an externally-introduced virus.

[33] Borradori, op. cit., p. 43.

[34] Ibid., pp. 114-115, my emphasis. In her interpretation Borradori stresses that for Derrida, it is crucial that something in this formulation be left unspecified: "The quality of what is beyond politics and law is never spelled out in terms of any content or value but simply indicated as the condition of possibility for what politics and law articulate." (Borradori, p. 145)

[35] Baudrillard, *The Spirit of Terrorism*, p. 34.

[36] Baudrillard, 'This is the Fourth World War,' op. cit.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid.

[39] J Smith, 'The Gnostic Baudrillard: A Philosophy of Terrorism Seeking Pure Appearance,' *International Journal of Baudrillard Studies*, vol. 1, no. 2, July 2004, viewed on 20 November, 2005, International Journal of Baudrillard Studies, 2003.<http://www.ubishops.ca/ baudrillardstudies/vol1_2/smith.htm>.

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Terrorism - Within and Without

Nancy Billias

Abstract

  This paper addresses the question of the terrorist within each of us. After the events of the last four years, we should no longer speak of terrorism without recognizing that the key to combating this global pandemic is the recognition that it is, in fact, an auto-immune disease. Following Badiou and Baudrillard, I propose that we must look beyond the traditional polarities of Good/Evil and Other/Same; instead, we must look at terrorism through the looking-glass. "Philosophy," says Badiou, "is always the breaking of a mirror." For "terrorist actions are both the magnifying mirror of the system's violence, and the model of a symbolic violence that it cannot access, the only violence it cannot exert: that of its own death." (Jean Baudrillard, "The Spirit of Terrorism," *Le Monde*, Nov. 2, 2001.) If we survive terrorism, it will be because we free ourselves from the delusion that terror lies somewhere 'out there', and realize instead that we must take a much more radical approach to the problem, by understanding and coming to terms with our own deep-seated propensities for terrorism. The paper concludes with a call to a radical form of hope which will attempt to begin a rapprochement between the philosophies of Badiou and Levinas on the subject of evil.

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  In the preface to Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus - Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Michel Foucault wrote:

> *"The strategic adversary is fascism... the fascism in us all,*
> *in our heads and in our everyday behaviour, the fascism*
> *that causes us to love power, to desire the very thing that*
> *dominates and exploits us."*

  After 9/11 and its horrible, gut-wrenching sequelae, we should no longer speak of terrorism without recognizing that the key to combating this global pandemic is the recognition that it is, in fact, an auto-immune disease. Following Badiou and Baudrillard, I propose that we must look beyond the traditional polarities of Good/Evil and Other/Same; instead, we must look at terrorism through the looking-glass. "Philosophy," says Badiou, with a nod to Lacan, "is always the breaking of a mirror." As Baudrillard has said, "terrorist actions are both the magnifying mirror of the system's violence, and the model of a symbolic violence that it cannot access, the only violence it cannot exert: that of its own death."[1] If we do manage to survive terrorism, it

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will be because we free ourselves from the delusion that terror lies somewhere 'out there', and realize instead that we must take a much more radical approach to the problem, by understanding and coming to terms with our own deep-seated propensities for terrorism, with the fact that we are all terrorists at heart. The difference, I will argue, is that some of us have integrated our fears in such a way that we are not compelled to act them out. This means that we may need to reconsider the origins and meaning of such actions. One way to do so is from a psychoanalytic perspective.

The question of subjectivity - the self in relation to the other - is central to philosophy, and most especially to the study of ethics. While postmodernism seems to throw the question wide open, and give rise to several new problems, it seems to me that the rising tides of terrorism demand that we continue to examine this question.[2]

Over the past few years, I have been working to find a way of thinking about ethics that can be intelligible within a postmodern framework. I have proposed that we change the focus of our ethical determinism: that we look at the ethical agent *within* the network of social interactions in which it finds itself, but not as *defined by* these interactions. I suggest that we assess the moral worth of an action not in terms of one social construct or contract, but rather phenomenologically, that is, in terms of our ineluctable ongoing engagement with others in the phenomena of everyday life. Breaking down the traditional Western duality between self and other, the aim of this proposal is to draw all parties into a phenomenological understanding of mutuality, privileging neither self nor other, but rather simply pointing to the myriad layers of their interpenetrating actions. The recent rise of terrorism seems to me to pose an urgent challenge to philosophers to reinterpret, to understand anew the possibilities of our engagement with one another.

My desire is to offer a new idea of ethics that might be acceptable within a postmodern worldview, an ethics, that is, which does not rely on a metanarrative of meaning, an ethics which is based on and in the events themselves. In the schema I have proposed, the ethical value of an action lies simply and solely in the *intensification* of the event.

I have found an (unexpected) ally for this development in the thought of the contemporary French philosopher Alain Badiou, in his theory of the event. Badiou

> takes it as given that in the contemporary world the subject
> can no longer be theorized as the self-identical substance
> that underlies change, nor as the product of reflection, nor
> as the correlate of an object.[3]

Like many others in the French thought currents that flow back and forth between philosophy and psychoanalysis[4], Badiou is troubled by

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questions of ethics and ontology, and the relationship between the two. Two basic problems confront him: the question of identity, and the question of agency.

Badiou attempts to resolve these questions by an unusual reconfiguration of ontology and subjectivity. Let me quickly sketch out Badiou's theoretical project. Badiou does not equate the two, as Levinas often seems to. Rather, Badiou focuses on the event of a subject's coming-to-be in the development of any given situation. A subject is not understood as pre-existent, but rather as emerging from, as a consequence of the event. As the phenomena of our everyday life flows around us, we must (*nolens volens*) make decisions; as we do, a sort of self is formed. Insofar as we respond to the events in what Badiou calls a "faithful" way, these events transform us into subjects. We are faithful, in Badiou's meaning of the word, if we allow an event to disrupt and change our lives, both in its initial phase and as we discover what we can from it. Not all events are catalytic, and not all humans are so transformed. Only chance determines what occurs. Events happen. Neither does someone who has become a subject remain a subject – that is determined by subsequent events in an ongoing process.[5] Badiou uses two key examples to illustrate this point, one microcosmic (falling in love) and the other macrocosmic (the Copernican revolution).

Rather than argue the subject as some sort of ontological entity, Badiou prefers the term "situation", which he "defines as a 'presented multiplicity', or as the 'place of taking place'.[6] Each of us, then, is a canvas on which life splashes paint. The decisions we make in response form us into artists, or not. Badiou makes no attempt to argue for the self as a unity, nor even for being-as-such as a unity. He sees no need to equate unity and being. Yet for the purposes of working out an ethics, he insists very strongly on the notion, following Lacan, that the structure of the self depends on the development of some one(ness). "*Il y a de l'un.*"

> That is, although unity is not primordial, there is some kind of effect of unity in the presentation of being. Badiou's solution to this problem is to argue that situations - presented multiplicities - do have unity, but such unity is the result of an operation termed the *count-for-one*…Unity is the effect of structuration - and not a ground, origin, or end.[7]

"Counting-for-one" is what may happen when a situation of disruption occurs, when someone takes up, even for a moment, an identity as an active element of some unity. Thus, for Badiou, subjectivity always occurs within relationality, and in the context of the between - the ontological void within which all being can be said to exist. So being is always belonging, and

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to not belong is, in a sense, to lose the structure by which one could 'count for one' (because without some structure, one is unrepresentable).

> So, for Badiou, every situation is ultimately founded on a void. This is not Heidegger's *Ab-grund*, nor is it some theological creation *ex nihilo*. The void of a situation is simply what is not there, but what is necessary for anything to be there.[8]

Each situation, Badiou asserts, can be seen as occurring in the context or against the backdrop of the void. It is representable first by virtue of its distinction from the void, and then, by the various ways in which it 'counts-for-one'. For example, I count-for-one as a woman, as an American, as a philosopher, as a teacher, and so on. I count-for-one not by virtue of my passive membership as an element of a set, but rather only in terms of my active engagement, by taking actions which proclaim or reify my membership. The multiplicities which form my 'self' are constantly shifting as I react to new events. Counting-for-one is the result of an individual choice, a choice to differentiate oneself which, paradoxically, leads to unity. Counting-for-one provides the structure within which the dynamic process of the situation unfolds.

For Badiou, if counting-for-one is to be considered ethical, it must be responsive to the other who presents itself to my situation. The event of otherness becomes the event of my 'self'. But counting-for-one has one other very important defining characteristic, as far as Badiou is concerned, namely: an action which is going to be transformative must be part of a truth-process. Thus, all actions of counting-for-one are inherently good in themselves. "Evil is the process of a simulacrum of truth. And in its essence, under a name of its invention, it is terror directed at everyone."[9]

Any action which is aimed at the destruction of an other is by definition anti-intersubjective. The object relations analyst Otto Kernberg has written at length about the psychoanalytic roots of terrorism. Kernberg maintains that much (or even all) terrorist activity is a result of primitive paranoid process, rooted in the fear of the other as the earliest internalization of a persecutory experience - separation from the mother. Following Melanie Klein, Kernberg proposes that we can link the desire for "the natural love and trust and dependent longing for the good mother" with

> the profound need for affiliation, for 'belonging', for being positively responded to by those around us, who, generally, share our language, accent, skin colour, clothing, behaviour patterns and preferences, [which] becomes contrasted with potential fear and suspicion of those who are different,

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> alien, 'not like us'. From a psychoanalytic perspective, 'maternal' and 'paternal' principles are involved here…the 'maternal' principle here refers to the search for an idealized, symbiotic relationship with a mothering image, the ecstatic fusion in an 'all good' relationship that provides total pleasure, security and closeness…[10]

Thus, intolerance is difference perceived as trauma, as wound or lack. The desire for totalization is intolerance of the other **as** other, of the otherness of the other, and the desire to annihilate the other is the desire to annihilate otherness, at whatever cost. It is unreasoning, irrational, beyond good and evil, because it is in the service of the id, of the primitive processing that desires only fulfilment of its primary narcissistic need.

As any student of existentialism knows, the void is terrible. But it is also terribly important, because without the gap of the void, differentiation can never occur. The id strives to wipe out the reality or even the memory of the void. But without the void, nothing can ever emerge. No change can ever occur. The ironic paradox is that we need otherness as much as we fear it, in order to become separate from what surrounds us, to emerge from the background of the void.

According to Badiou, whatever is in the service of the id is in the service of a simulacrum of truth, and thus inherently unethical, or anti-ethical. Simulacra of truths can give rise to political fidelity, to blind faith in a religion or an ideal. "The exercise of fidelity to the simulacrum is necessarily the exercise of terror."[11] A simulacrum of truth reduces the other (and the would-be subject) to counting for less-than-one, in two ways. First, it reduces the one who acts to counting for less-than-one by virtue of being pre-determined by something other than the event in which it finds itself. Second, it reduces the other to less-than-one, by refusing to accept the other as wholly other than itself, as capable of also emerging from an event and being transformed by it. It strives to eliminate the otherness of the other, reducing the other to a nameless, faceless, passive abstraction, rather than an active or interactive reality. Thus a simulacrum of truth strives to undo that primary narcissistic wound.

In this struggle, ideology is the enemy of the truth, because ideology does not allow for me to 'count-for-one' except as part of a group: not by an individual choice responding to an other's unique and individual needs or demands, but only from within the framework – or prison – of a pre-figured, pre-determined set of options. It replaces the individual conscience with an 'immoral', fascistic conscience that demands absolute allegiance to the same, no matter what the cost. The ideologies of radical Islamism are no different, in this respect from the ideologies of capitalism or Marxism. Ideology does not allow situations to flower into events.

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As noted earlier, for Badiou an event is the opportunity for action within which transformation may occur. A genuine event brings into being a singular, particular response, the possibility of a truth. A truth is "the real process of a fidelity to an event" – a lived response in a transformed way to the circumstances of a particular phenomenal situation, by means of which a human being becomes someone new. What Badiou calls the "ethic of a truth" is "the principle that enables the continuation of a truth-process…*that which lends consistency to the presence of some-one in the composition of the subject induced by the process of this truth.*[12]

This understanding of the event flows from Badiou's ontology, from the notion that being itself is absolutely neutral.

> What allows a genuine event to be at the origin of a truth…is precisely the fact that it relates to the particularity of a situation only from the bias of its void. The void…neither excludes nor constrains anyone. It is the absolute neutrality of being – such that the fidelity that originates in an event, although it is an imminent break within a singular situation, is none the less universally addressed.[13]

Like chance, being is impersonal – it addresses itself equally to all, and all must respond in their own, singular fashion.

Badiou seems to follow Heidegger to some extent (in concept if not in language) in relating the notion of truth to ethics and art alike. What is true, or genuine, is that which is singular and disruptive.[14] As Heidegger and Lacan did before him, Badiou acknowledges that this type of disruption necessarily entails violence.[15] But it is the violence of birth, not death. "The process of truth *induces* a subject."[16]

So although the idea of a single, unified subject has been shattered, Badiou makes a strong argument for the case that each fragment can and does retain an individual value. He would encourage us to see each event in its own light, unobscured by any overarching ideological framework, although it will always be subject [no pun intended] to its capacity to be reacted to severally by each participant. And any hope, such as it is, lies in that event: fidelity to the process of truth, the painful emergence of some subject, no matter how fragmentary, which can maintain itself in the development of a presentation in differentiation to the void.

This, finally, is where my proposal comes in. Suppose we define the ethical quality of an interaction in terms of its impact on both the agent and the one acted upon. In this structure, right and wrong cease to be abstract and absolute. Only one course of action will yield the optimal impact, the greatest amount of intensity that the moment has to yield, the greatest potential for

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mutually interactive unfolding and fulfilment. Then, the event itself will disclose to me what is right and wrong.

One could, of course, argue that intensity is a poor standard by which to measure ethical action; for example, murder is the most intense impact one person can have on another. Witness the spectacular intensity of the events of 9/11. But according to my proposal, such an action would be unethical precisely because it would foreclose any further activity on the part of the other.[17] Such an action would be *merely* an action, not an interaction, and would preclude any further interaction. Therefore, such an action would intensify the moment only *in actu*, and not also *in potentia*. It would preclude the other's ever again counting-for-one, or the possibility that they could act in fidelity to that event. An action which could intensify the moment in both activity and potentiality would clearly be more ethical.

I want to argue that the event of life is utterly and unquestionably ethical: life has everything to do with me, and everything to do with the other. Through the intensification of the moment, I can get a clearer, brighter picture of that 'self' of mine. Thus I rely on the other to provide the greatest possible intensification of that experience of myself - yet it is also my doing, my responsibility to pack the moment with as much intensity, as much mutuality as possible, to extend myself out against the other who is all around me. Locating the ethical value within the event itself frees me to experience this otherness and to experience myself more fully. It therefore becomes my ethical responsibility to intensify the moment for the other whom I encounter, as far as I am able. The ethical thing to do is that which sees the other as 'counting-for-one' and facilitating the progression of that movement.

In this understanding, the traditional Western understanding of the ego disappears into the community of those who respond to one another. The agent and the one acted upon are constantly exchanging roles, both with one another, and within the community. This is a true liberation: if the self is undefined, with permeable boundaries, there is no limit on the scope of 'my' activity or the sphere of 'my' influence. Constantly acting and being acted upon, I am a member of the infinite set of my community of responsive others.[18]

In fact, the notion of a fragmented and undetermined self makes possible the freedom inherent in the concept of autonomy in a new way, and perhaps for the first time, for in this view autonomy arises organically from the interaction with and intermediation of the world around me. In this theory, autonomy can be found in living without being categorized or otherwise determined. Whatever determination I have (if necessary or even possible at all) comes about through my interaction with the others, but is not determined by *them*, but rather by the events in which I participate. From this perspective, I accept autonomy as an inescapable ontological condition: all that I am is what I am right now, the self that is acting and being acted

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upon, in the company of those with whom I move through time. This is not only a condition to be achieved, but an event to be celebrated: the event of life itself.

Notes

[1] J Baudrillard, *The Spirit of Terrorism*, Verso, London, 2002, p. 14.

[2] Any new ethical theory must consider seriously the hold that postmodern thinking has taken on the Western world, and attempt to present an ethical framework that can both incorporate postmodern 'truth' and allay the postmodern fear of the loss of personal meaning 'Truth' in scare quotes since, of course, according to the postmodern perspective there is no such thing as objective or absolute truth.

[3] O Feltham and J Clemens, "An Introduction to the Philosophy of Alain Badiou," in *Infinite Thought: Truth and the Return to Philosophy*, Continuum, New York, 2003, p. 3.

[4] I am thinking primarily of Miller, Foucault, Lacan, and the Strasbourg school of post-structuralism

[5] Of course, this schema does not solve the problem of how something new ever comes into being, of why events happen at all, and then of how or why certain events lead to the development of a subject. But I am not here to argue Badiou's ontology. I merely mention it in passing. I would refer the reader back to *Infinite Thought* for a full discussion of Badiou's theory.

[6] Feltham and Clemens, op.cit, p. 9.

[7] Ibid., p. 10ff.

[8] Ibid., 16.

[9] A Badiou, *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil*, Verso, London, 2001, p. 77.

[10] O F Kernberg, "Sanctioned Social Violence: A Psychoanalytic View, Part II", International Journal of Psychoanalysis, vol. 84, 2003, p. 960. (953 – 968)

[11] Loc.cit.

[12] Badiou, *Ethics,* p. 44.

[13] Op.cit., p. 73.

[14] To put this in Heideggerian language, one might say that where being discloses itself in a rupture, truth emerges. If one is faithful to the rupture, one allows being to disclose itself and responds to it by striving towards it. To put it in Lacanian terms, one allows a hole (*trouée)* to be made from the realm of the symbolic into the Real. In either case, the activity may result in a subject.

[15] In *The Anaximander Fragment*, Heidegger spoke even of the violence of translation, of wrenching ideas from one language into another.

[16] Badiou, *Ethics*, p. 43.

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[17] Thus, in one sense, I am back where Hegel and Levinas started: with the recognition of the other as the primal and primary ethical moment.
[18] Much of Badiou's ontology is based on set theory. See *Infinite Thought*, especially the introduction.

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Terrorism and Human Rights: Confronting Evil and Remaining Good

Shlomit Harrosh

Abstract

This paper addresses the question of how an open, democratic society is to confront the evil of terrorism while remaining good. I focus on the recent public debate in Britain regarding the curtailing of human rights in the face of mounting threats to national security from domestic and foreign terrorists. I begin by outlining the two opposing outlooks dominating current debate. While the *security-based view* regards national security as firstly a matter of protecting lives, according to the *values-based view*, national security is a matter not simply of survival but of preserving society's core moral and political values. I then examine the major arguments put forward in the public sphere by the two sides. Based on a distinction between survival and security, I propose an alternating two-tiered approach to the question of balancing freedoms and security within normative constraints. Though respect for basic rights and freedoms can cost lives, I conclude that if an open and democratic society is to maintain its moral integrity and political tradition, this is a risk it must take.

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1. Introduction

This paper addresses the question of how an open, democratic society is to confront the evil of terrorism while remaining good. Specifically, I want to address the problem of balancing security concerns with respect for basic values and liberties within the human rights framework. My focus shall be the recent public debate in Britain regarding the content and scope of human rights in the face of mounting threats to national security from domestic and foreign terrorists. At the centre of this debate is the introduction of new and controvertial security measures such as indefinite or prolonged detention without trial, outlawing the glorification of terrorism, the use of torture-based evidence in judicial proceedings, and deporting foreign terrorist suspects to countries where they risk torture and death.

I begin by briefly outlining the two sides of the debate. I shall then look at the major arguments put forward by the two sides and conclude by proposing an alternating two-tiered approach to the problem of balancing freedoms and security within normative constraints.

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2.   Setting the Scene

On the issue of terrorism and human rights, current debate in Britain vacillates between two outlooks espousing different conceptions of national security. There is first what I shall call the security-based view, according to which national security is firstly about protecting the life and limb of citizens. Heading this view is Prime Minister Tony Blair, supported by the security and intelligence services. "We need to be very, very clear as to why we are legislating to strengthen anti-terrorist laws," said Blair in reference to the 90-day detention without trial proposal.[1] "We are doing it because the police, the head of the anti-terrorist operations in this country, say they need these powers to protect British citizens."[2] For those committed to the second view, however, national security is not simply a matter of survival, but, to quote Lord Hoffmann, one of the nine law lords who on December 16, 2004 ruled against the legality of Britain's new anti-terrorism laws, it is also a matter of "a people living in accordance with its traditional laws and political values."[3] I shall call this the values-based view of national security. Its proponents consist primarily of human rights activists, lawyers and the courts.

Both views track important moral truths. Protecting the lives of innocent civilians from terrorist attacks is clearly of vital importance, as is the protection of a way of life grounded in respect for human rights, particularly in an open democratic society. Indeed, despite their disagreements, proponents of both views acknowledge the validity and importance of the security- and values-based conceptions of national security. The disagreement between the two views is thus more a matter of emphasizing and privileging different elements within the human rights framework than of a conflict between opposing outlooks.

The question remains, however, how to adjudicate between these two views. To answer it, I want to first look at the actual arguments put forward by proponents and opponents of the two views.

3.   Arguments in the Public Sphere

At the heart of the security-based view is the claim that rethinking the content and scope of basic human rights is necessary in the war against terrorism. Implied in this claim is the idea that the new reality of global terrorism poses security challenges that cannot be adequately met using existing legislation and procedures, so that new measures must be introduced even at the cost of violating basic rights and liberties.

By basic human rights I understand the right to life, to freedom from torture and inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, the right to liberty and security of person and the right to a fair trial.

To the necessity claim, proponents of the values-based view respond that what is needed in the fight against global terrorism is not so much new

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and tougher measures, as a clearer and more efficient use of existing powers within the human rights framework. A case in point is the government's proposal to outlaw the glorification of terrorism. Abu Hamza al-Masri, a radical UK Islamist cleric who urged his followers to kill "kaffirs," or non-believers, was recently convicted of soliciting murder and inciting racial hatred largely on the basis of a law dating from 1861. This supports the view that further legislation may not always be necessary to combat home-grown and foreign terrorist threats, its symbolic force notwithstanding.

The claim of necessity is also challenged on grounds of efficiency. First, it is not at all clear that the proposed means can achieve the end in question. This can be because the ends are so general and vague that either too much or too little would be captured by them, as in the case of the proposed law banning the glorification of terrorism. Another possibility is the absence of objective and reliable evidence regarding the efficency of the proposed means, as in the case of interrogative torture. Questions of legality and morality aside, this in itself undermines the argument in favour of detaining or deporting suspected terrorists on the basis of torture-based information.

In addition, proponents of the values-based view argue that the new anti-terrorist legislation is counterproductive in that it will alienate and antagonize Britain's Muslim community, resulting in increased support for terrorism at home. Indeed, the perception of an open democratic state curtailing or even violating basic human rights, as when habeas corpus is suspended and torture-based evidence introduced in courts, leaves it open to charges of relativism and hypocracy. Furthermore, to propose measures that increase the likelihood of innocent people being harmed, whether through mistaken use or abuse of power, runs counter to the bedrock moral principle underlying the legal and political traditions of an open democratic society, namely, the prohibition on intentionally harming the innocent. It is this principle that the human rights framework expresses and protects, hence the particular importance of the idea of due process and the right to a fair trial.

In reply, adherents of the security-based view maintain that only those who belong to "the fringe of extemism," to quote Blair, will be affected by the new powers.[4] Innocent, law-abiding citizens have nothing to fear from these measures. Proponents of the values-based view, however, remain unconvinced, reminding us of the ever present possibility of error and abuse of state power.[5] In the face of anti-terrorist measures that do away with the presumption of innocence and the idea of due process, the rights and freedoms of all individuals are that much less secure.[6]

In fact, neither side really believes that a rights-based democracy can avail itself of any and all necessary and efficient means in the course of protecting public safety, though Blair with his rhetoric of "the rules of the game are changing" may give the opposite impression. In an open,

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democratic society, certain practices like intentionally killing the innocent, torture or indefinite executive detention are simply unacceptable. Thus, gross infringements of basic human rights cannot be justified by appealing to the necessity defence.

A second argument used by proponents of the security-based view focuses on the right to life and freedom from fear. They argue that a government's first duty to its citizens is to ensure that this basic right is protected. Referring to the defeat of his 90-day detention without charge plan, Blair summed up this point when he said, "The country will think parliament has behaved in a deeply irresponsible way."[7]

And yet, we have seen that in a rights-based democracy the responsibility of elected officials to their constituents does not extend to sanctioning gross human rights violations. There is room to rethink the balance of freedoms and security, as the compromise on a 28-day detention without charge period shows. But the basic human rights framework must not be breached. Proponents of the values-based view rightly maintain, I believe, that it is the responsibility of government to protect all basic human rights, not just those pertaining to personal security.

Proponents of the security-based view further argue that leaders in a democracy have a particular duty of care to the citizens of the state, a duty that outweighs obligations towards non-nationals. Speaking in the House of Commons, Blair said, "I have to […] try to do my best to protect people in this country and to make sure their safety and their civil liberty to life come first."[8] According to Blair, the extent of the government's obligations towards non-nationals is determined by the principle of reciprocity. "Coming to Britain is not a right," said Blair, "and, even when people have come here, staying here carries with it a duty. That duty is to ensure and support the values that sustain the British way of life. Those who break that duty and try to incite hatred or engage in violence against our country or our people have no place here."[9]

Clearly, Blair is right in saying that considerations of reciprocity matter in determining what is owed to those wishing to come to Britain. But not simply to them. Considerations of reciprocity also pertain to the treatment of citizens who may enjoy their rights only insofar as they do not use them to harm others. Only when it comes to the right not to be tortured is the prohibition absolute, obtaining irrespective of reciprocity. With respect to all other rights, distinctions between nationals and non-nationals simply do not apply and both are subject to the consideration of reciprocity. In fact, Article 14 of the European Convention of Human Rights to which the British government is a signatory, prohibits discrimination on any basis, including nationality. The government is thus bound by international and domestic law

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to uphold the human rights of all persons within its jurisdiction, nationals and non-nationals alike.

I want to turn now to the values-based view of national security. At its heart is concern for the moral integrity and democratic character of British society. Proponents of this view argue on moral grounds that certain violations of human rights, like torture and the introduction of torture-based evidence in judicial proceedings are so "offensive to ordinary standards of humanity and decency," that they "involve the state in moral defilement."[10] There is further the concern that by allowing the government to employ such measures in its fight against terrorism, it is not the rules that will be changed but the society itself. We should not forget that a society's way of life or normative character is a dynamic social construction whose existence at any point in time is contingent upon members of society affirming in word and deed society's core moral and political values. Measures contrary to these core values could undermine society's way of life. According to Lord Hoffmann, indefinite executive detention is one such measure, for it "calls into question the very existence of an ancient libery of which this country has until now been very proud: freedom from arbitrary arrest and detention,"[11] while admitting torture-based evidence in British courts "corrupts and degrades the state which uses it and the legal system which accepts it."[12] That these practices serve as means for the protection of innocent civilians against terrorist attacks does not change the fact that if a society is to maintain its moral integrity and open and democratic character, it must reject such measures without qualification.

In response one could point to the obvious fact that the survival of a society's way of life or normative character is dependent upon the physical survival of its members, arguing that in the face of a concrete and immanent threat of extinction or mass-killings, to worry about the open and democratic character of society would be tantamount to arranging deck chairs on the Titanic. I will say more on this point shortly. Clearly, however, no terrorist group at present literally threatens the survival of British society. To risk its survival as an open democratic society is thus unjustified in my view.

In fact, the real threat to the integrity of society's core moral and political values consists of infringements of human rights by state officials and agents abusing their power. The need of an open democratic society to guard against such abuse can be traced to the historical and conceptual links between terrorism and human rights.

The concept of terrorism was first coined in response to the Jacobin "Reign of Terror" of 1793-4, a period of systematic state violence, mass executions and widespread fear. Not surprisingly, this addition to our political vocabulary occurred shortly after the idea of human rights was transformed from a philosophical ideal to a political reality. For the concept of human rights as codified in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and

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Citizen and embedded in the French constitution of 1791, was set up precisely in order to prevent the kind of abuse of political power perpetrated by the Jacobins.

The most basic of human rights establish normative limits to the legitimate exercise of violence and coercion by state agents, ensuring the freedom from arbitrary, unnecessary or unlicensed cruelty and the fear such cruelty inspires.[13] It is these basic rights and freedoms that terrorism flouts.

However one defines the notoriously contested concept of terrorism,[14] its core consists of gross infringements of basic human rights. Unlike the criminal, the terrorist regards the use of violence against civilians as ideologically justified. When not pursuing specific limited objectives, the terrorist seeks to undermine rather than exploit the existing social and political structures. Often, domestic terrorists no longer regard themsleves as part of society. The London bomber, Mohammad Sidique Khan, clearly stated that "his people" were not the British people, as did the UK based Islamic radical Ubu Uzair. "We don't live in peace with you any more," he said, "which means the covenant of security no longer exists."[15] In fact, terrorists usurp traditional state powers such as declaring and waging war, judging and punishing offenders, and coercing people to act or refrain from acting in specific ways. Yet unlike a rights-based democracy, whose use of power is legitimized by its respect for basic human rights, terrorists do not recognize such normative constraints in pursuing ideological visions. When fighting terrorism, an open democratic society must therefore stop short of measures which undermine basic human rights to the extent that the proposed solution to the spread of fear and violence by terrorists itself becomes part of the problem.

4.   The Model

This, then, is the current state of the public debate in Britain. I would now like to briefly sketch a possible model for balancing respect for human rights against the need for effective counter-terrorist measures. I distinguish between two scenarios. In the first, a society faces the risk of mass killing or extermination, say through the use of nuclear or biological weapons, while in the second the potential loss of life does not literally threaten the survival of society.

When debating the justification of a specific security measure involving curtailment or violations of human rights, the following six conditions apply.

First, balancing freedoms and security within the human rights framework requires that we adhere to the basic moral principle underlying this framework, namely, the prohibition on intentionally harming innocents. This is a necessary condition. It applies even in extreme emergency

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situations. The state may not attempt to avert the imminent threat of extermination by capturing and threatening to torture or kill innocent family members of terrorists. Torturing the guilty in a ticking bomb scenario, however, is another matter. When facing extermination, I believe society would be justified in stepping outside the human rights framework provided that the suspect's guilt was adequately established, the threat imminent and the use of torture necessary, proportionate and sufficient to ensure the deactivation of the bomb. However unlikely such a scenario is, were it to obtain, the security-based view would take precedence over adherence to human rights. However, anything short of mass killing or extermination will not justify the use of torture, as the practice is incompatible with the core moral values of an open democratic society.

The second condition requires that in rethinking the content and scope of human rights, we do not sanction security measures that are conducive to the abuse or mistaken use of state power. For that could potentially lead to the harming of innocents. To that end, the security services must operate within the bounds of the law. This is the third condition. A fourth condition requires that the necessity and efficiency of the proposed means be demonstrated. A fifth is the condition of proportionality of response to the perceived threat. And the final condition requires that the security measures be non-discriminatory.

I now turn to the model. Bearing in mind the unconditional prohibition on intentionally killing or torturing the innocent, in extreme emergency situations an open democratic society must give precedence to the security-based view as its first guideline. In such a situation, the means used must still be efficient, but the burden of proof is weaker, particularly with respect to the necessity condition and evaluating long-term consequences. Within these constraints, however, the values-based view serves as a second guideline, reminding us that when the threat of physical destruction passes, we will have to face the consequences of our actions. Without endangering its survival, society should therefore try to refrain from redefining the scope and content of basic human rights in a way that will impede its ability to resume its open and democratic character once the state of emergency has ended.

In the absence of any immanent threat of physical annihilation, the preservation of the society's moral integrity and open and democratic character requires that greater emphasis be placed on adhering to conditions 2 through 6. This means using the values-based view as our first guideline in deciding on a course of action involving curtailment of human rights. When it comes to practical considerations of necessity and efficiency, standards of proof are relatively high, with particular attention given to assessing long-term consequences, both practical and normative. And yet, the security-based view is right in pointing out that curtailing certain human rights may be necessary to prevent terrorist attacks. The question is which rights will be

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affected and to what extent. But certainly there is room for rethinking issues like freedom of expression, freedom of movement and privacy. The security-based view is also correct in reminding us that a leader has a special duty to members of society and that reciprocity matters. Thus I believe that British society is within its rights to deport foreign terrorists or preachers of hate who threaten its security provided that a panel of judges ensures the evidence warrants deportation and was not obtained through torture. Though persons may risk torture or death in the countries to which they are deported, and this despite these countries having signed 'memorandums of understanding' to the contrary, this is a risk for which the advocates of violence can only blame themselves. In this matter, the security-based view obtains.

To recap, what I propose is an alternating two-tiered approach to the problem of balancing security considerations with respect for human rights and the preservation of society's open and democratic character, conditioned by the absolute prohibition on intentionally killing or torturing the innocent. When the nation's survival is literally at stake, we should adopt the security-based view as our first guideline, referring to the values-based view only when the former has been satisfied. In the absence of such a threat, however, the values-based view takes precedence, with the security-based view operating within the constraints of respect for basic human rights.

5.   Conclusion

In the fight against terrorism, we should not forget that too rigorous a commitment to basic freedoms could cost lives. And yet, unless the very survival of the nation is at stake, this is a risk that an open democratic society must take if it is to maintain its moral integrity and political traditions. So while there is room to rethink the scope and content of specific rights and freedoms in light of changing circumstances, the balance between freedoms and security must be found within the human rights framework. In a morally complex and imperfect world, suffering evil is sometimes the only way to remain good.

Notes

[1] C Dyer, 'It Calls into Question the Very Existence of an Ancient Liberty of which this Country is Proud: Freedom from Arbitrary Arrest and Detention,' *The Guardian,* 17 December 2004, sec. Main Paper, p. 4.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Quote from Prime Minister's Press Conference, 5 August 2005, viewed on 1 March 2006, <http://www.pm.gov.uk/output/Page8041.asp>.

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[5] Dyer, op. cit.

[6] See, for example, R Norton-Taylor, 'When Pragmatism Prevails,' *The Guardian*, 9 December 2005, viewed on 1 March 2006,
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/humanrights/story/0,7369,1663318,00.html>.

[7] G Jones, 'Blair's Blackest Day,' *Telegraph*, November 10 2005, viewed on 1 March 2006,<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=
/news/2005/11/10/nblair10.xml>.

[8] 'Anti-Terror Laws Face Opposition,' *BBC News*, 12 October 2005, viewed on 1 March 2006, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/4333180.stm>.

[9] Quote from Prime Minister's Press Conference, 5 August 2005,
viewed on 1 March 2006, <http://www.pm.gov.uk/output/Page8041.asp>.

[10] These quotes are from Lord Birmingham and Lord Carswell respectively, in 'What the Judges Said,' *Telegraph*, 9 December 2005, viewed on 1 March 2005,<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2005/12/09/
ntort109.xml>.

[11] Dyer, op. cit.

[12] 'What the Judges Said,' op. cit.

[13] See J N Shklar, 'The Liberalism of Fear,' in *Political Thought and Political Thinkers*, S Hoffman (ed.), The University of Chicago Press, Chicago & London, 1998, pp. 3-20; B Williams, 'The Liberalism of Fear,' in *In the Beginning Was the Deed*, G Hawthorn (ed.), Princeton University Press, Princeton & Oxford, 2005, pp.18-28.

[14] According to C A J Coady, it is estimated that over one hundred definitions exist in the scholarly and political literature on terrorism. C A J Coady, 'Terrorism, Morality, and Supreme Emergency,' *Ethics*, vol. 114, no. 4, 2004, pp. 772-789.

[15] D Gardham, 'Preachers of Hate Could be Charged with Treason,' *Telegraph*, 8 August 2005, viewed on 1 March 2006,
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2005/08/08/nextre
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