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Pacifism, Politics, and Feminism

Intersections and Innovations

Edited by

Jennifer Kling



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Introduction

Jennifer Kling

This collection explores the many and varied connections between pacifism, politics, and feminism. Each of these topics is often thought about in academic isolation; however, when we consider how they intersect and interact with each other, it opens up new areas for exploration and analysis. Taking an intersectional feminist lens to pacifism, for example, enables us to re-conceptualize violence and what sorts of actions count as violent, while thinking about pacifism and political theory allows us to regard different physical and social areas as possible sites of (both feminist and non-feminist) resistance against war and political realism. And on a meta level, considering how and why we might link peace studies to gender studies brings out the distinctively political assumptions, alliances, and conclusions of both programs of study.

Having recognized that that “the future is female,”¹ the chapters gathered in this volume discuss a) how feminist analyses allow for and encourage the re-conceptualization of concepts and ideas once thought familiar from traditional ethical and political philosophy, and b) traditional political topics and issues through pacifist and feminist lenses. The chapters that focus on the former explore the possibility of “queering” such concepts as autonomy, violence, resistance, peace, religion, and politics, by engaging in detailed discussions of how we should think about these concepts in a historically, and still existent, patriarchal, racist culture. The chapters that focus on the latter bring feminist and pacifist sensibilities and arguments to bear on classic political questions such as when and how violence and war are justified, the appropriateness of various kinds of responses to climate change, and the correct way to engage with such topics and themes in educational, institutional settings.

It is no surprise that our world faces a number of seemingly intractable social and political problems, including oppressive violence of various kinds, militarism, climate change, academic stagnation, and widespread injustice. This volume takes as its hypothesis that the best way to understand, and begin to solve, such complex social and political phenomena is to approach them from

1 This slogan began as part of the 1970s feminist separatist movement, but has since evolved to evoke many different feminisms. In its current iteration, it references the need and desire to have more women and non-binary persons positioned in the public sphere, to re-conceptualize what it means to be in a position of public authority and/or power, and to re-think our social and cultural concepts of, among others, gender, sex, and sexuality.

several complementary disciplinary directions and analytical frameworks. Such global, interdisciplinary thinking encourages publicly engaged social and political philosophy of the sort found here, work that attempts not only to analyze the various conceptual issues involved, but also to provide practical pathways forward towards resolving, or at least ameliorating, some of our most deeply entrenched social and political problems.

In the first chapter, John Lawless argues that a feminist approach to autonomy can help draw out the ways in which violence, especially interpersonal violence, can undercut autonomy and thus political liberty. He points out that, contrary to traditional, atomistic understandings of autonomy, relational understandings of autonomy include not only having the ability to make choices about the direction of one's life, but also having practical authority in some domains. And having practical authority, Lawless contends, depends on being embedded in relationships with others. Violence can subvert, distort, and destroy such relationships, and thus is a threat both to a person's practical authority and, more broadly, to their autonomy or agency itself. Violence is morally significant, on this view, not only because it poses a threat to bodily security and reduces a person's available options (as many traditional analyses of violence point out), but also because it threatens the structures of the interpersonal, social, and political relationships that are necessary for practical authority, agency, and, at the limit, political liberty. By inviting us to reconceptualize autonomy, Lawless encourages us to reconsider what violence does, and how it alters those real, relational communities in which it occurs.

In his contribution to this volume, Barrett Emerick considers how we ought to understand and frame the phenomenon of *silencing*, that is, the act of preventing someone from communicating (broadly construed). He contends that, contrary to traditional conceptions of both violence and free speech, we should agree with the feminist and anti-racist activist's claim that silencing is—at least sometimes—a form of violence. Following and expanding upon Vittorio Bufacchi's view of violence, Emerick writes that violence is perhaps best analyzed as a violation of a person's integrity. So, when silencing violates the integrity of the person who is silenced by diminishing their epistemic capacities, it becomes an act of violence; specifically, it becomes an act of epistemic violence. Following Miranda Fricker, Emerick understands epistemic injustice to be when someone is wronged in their capacity as a knower; either their testimony is not given the credibility that it warrants, or "some significant area of [their] social experience [is] obscured from collective understanding." Since being a knower is essential to being a person, suffering epistemic injustice can sometimes, over time, diminish one as a person. When someone's personhood is diminished due to suffering epistemic injustice, Emerick concludes,

we should understand this violation as a form of violence. Emerick finishes by inviting us to consider whether such violent silencing is ever justified, given “the unjust meantime” in which we live.

Megan Mitchell, in Chapter 3, further broadens our understanding of violence by providing a unifying analysis of fragility, both white and male. She argues, from a feminist perspective, that fragility is a kind of failure of intellectual humility; it is a disposition to epistemic arrogance by whites and/or men with respect to racist and sexist oppression, respectively. As Mitchell notes, consciously or unconsciously, fragile agents mistakenly believe that their perspectives, with regards to these domains of oppression, are more reliable because they are white and male. This is part and parcel of understanding racism and sexism as ideologies that center whiteness and maleness, and that marginalize, Other, and otherwise denigrate other social identities. Such ideologies encourage a range of epistemic vices, including fragility. Fragile agents, due to their racist and/or sexist ideologies, believe that they enjoy a position of epistemic privilege with regards to racism and/or sexism. When such conscious or unconscious beliefs about their epistemic advantages in critically discussing and analyzing these domains are challenged, fragile agents respond inappropriately, often with epistemic and sometimes with physical violence. Thus, Mitchell concludes that fragility (both white and male) is objectionable at least in part because it is an epistemic vice, and reminds us that it is also, and perhaps more centrally, objectionable because it leads to epistemic violence—in the form of silencing—and physical violence against those marginalized on the basis of race and/or sex, and so functions to maintain white and male supremacy.

In “Eight Dimensions of Resistance,” Tamara Fakhoury examines the concept of resistance, and argues that, contrary to traditional evocations of resistance to oppression as loud public activism and civil disobedience, resistance can take many forms. She contends that resistance can be violent, flagrant, morally devious, or dramatic and it can be quiet, covert, peaceful and even gentle. Fakhoury argues in favor of this more expanded notion of resistance, and provides a classificatory schema that identifies different instances of resistance to civilized oppressions. Civilized oppressions, she explains, are distinct from more blatant forms of oppression such as colonialism or slavery in that they do not explicitly rely primarily on state-sponsored or state-sanctioned violence to survive, but rather are maintained and supported by a variety of informal political and social norms and practices and psychological mechanisms. Thus, they produce distinctive challenges that require special forms, or modes, of resistance. Modes of resistance against civilized oppressions, according to Fakhoury, include not only well-known forms such as loud, social, public, and global activism of various kinds, but also quiet, personal, private,

and local forms of resistance. Fakhoury concludes by encouraging theorists to take a closer look at the everyday modes and forms of resistance that she describes, and to incorporate them into more inclusive, realistic political theories of oppression, resistance, justice, and peace.

Jane Hall Fitz-Gibbon's chapter explores the relationships between religion, violence, and peace. She argues that current understandings of religion paint the divine as male, with traditional masculine attributes of strength, power, and superiority, and that this understanding of the divine contributes to and legitimizes the use of violence within and across cultures and societies. A feminist re-imagining of the divine might, Fitz-Gibbon claims, de-legitimize violence, but only if it receives uptake in popular culture. While feminist theologies have engaged in the task of freeing God from its masculinist presentation, such work remains in the academy, for the most part, and has not permeated societies outside of academia. Fitz-Gibbon does not end on such a pessimistic note, however; she contends that a feminist image of God could, if popularized, lead to a re-conceptualization of religion, which could lead to religion becoming a true force for peace both within and across societies, and could encourage a more just and less violent world.

With my contribution, the volume switches gears from re-conceptualizing ideas and concepts once thought familiar from traditional ethical and political philosophy, to exploring traditional political topics and issues through pacifist and feminist lenses. For my part, I bring a feminist sensibility to bear on the question of whether, as Jeff McMahan argues, we should not integrate what he refers to as the "deep morality" of war into our military and international public policies and laws, because of the possible negative consequences of doing so. On the basis of feminist epistemology, I argue that McMahan is wrong to think that publicizing and legalizing the deep morality of war will have the negative consequences that he claims, because I disagree with his argument that combatants are highly likely to act in stupid, thoughtless, and brutish ways. Through a comparison with the Women's Suffrage Movement in the United States, I argue that McMahan's argument is epistemically biased, in that it reflects and incorporates stereotypical views of poor people. We would do better to think hard about how we conceptualize combatants, and to recognize in our arguments that the abilities to reason well and to act morally are not restricted to the upper echelons of society. I conclude by suggesting that moral and political theories ought to at least attempt to do things in the world, and so we should be wary of any theory that "argue[s] for a moral position and then contend[s] that the world should not strive to be moral."

In Chapter 7, Harry van der Linden considers the proposal that the UN Security Council (UNSC) ought to engage in military action against countries

that are failing to mitigate their greenhouse gas emissions in an adequate manner. This proposal rests on the idea that climate change is a “threat multiplier” that is likely to bring about significant future conflicts if it is not effectively stopped or ameliorated. Considering the shortcomings of the Paris Agreement, van der Linden argues that providing the UNSC with the authority to enforce climate change mitigation through military coercion remains a real political option. However, in light of feminist and pacifist critiques of just war theory, van der Linden goes on to claim that this option, while it might have good effects, is ultimately morally flawed and deeply antithetical to productively addressing climate change. Mitigation wars would be counterproductive, and in violation of international just war norms, policies, and laws. More broadly, he concludes that “war is not the answer” in order to avoid disastrous climate change. Instead, we should engage in massive nonviolent resistance against non-mitigating and inadequately mitigating countries, and should increase local and regional efforts to adopt green technologies, values, and ways of living.

William C. Gay, in “Pacifism, Feminism, and Nonkilling Philosophy: A New Approach to Connecting Peace Studies and Gender Studies,” discusses the conceptual connections between pacifism and feminism, and points out that the various stereotypes that plague those domains hamper their uptake in educational, institutional settings. In particular, although peace studies and gender studies are not wedded to pacifism and feminism, respectively, many people take them to be, and so are less open to such studies than perhaps they should be, given the reality of our violent and oppressive world. Gay suggests that integrating the new approach of nonkilling philosophy could provide practical and even more radical ways of advancing, and possibly uniting, peace studies and gender studies. This is especially the case because, although nonkilling philosophy incorporates important aspects of both pacifism and feminism, it is not dogged by the same negative stereotypes. Nonkilling philosophy rejects essentialist doctrines of human nature as essentially or intrinsically violent, and argues in favor of “conflict transformation,” whereby people transition from negative conflict management or elimination to working through their conflicts with others nonviolently, via cultivating linguistic and behavioral habits of nonviolence and peace. It is thus committed to the mutual recognition and empowerment of all humans in the quest for a more just and peaceful world. Nonkilling philosophy is an interdisciplinary approach that is more radical in scope, Gay claims, than either pacifism or feminism, and is more feasible in its implementation; so, he concludes, we should adopt it as an essential element of both peace and gender studies.

In the final chapter of the volume, David Boersema makes the case that the arts, although they have been, and continue to be, used to support violence

and oppression, can be a tool for peace building and justice. Intrapersonally, Boersema points out that the process of making art can be transformative for the artist. Making art can not only encourage the nonviolent release of negative emotions, such as resentment, fear, and anger, but also can inspire the artist to see the world, and its potential, differently. The process of art-making can lead the artist to feel empowered, and can engender hope, love, and fellow-feeling, all of which are important attitudinal components of peace building. Interpersonally, Boersema notes the social aspects of art-making, whereby artists working together and in the same space learn to respect their different points of view, empathize with each other, and collaborate in creation rather than destruction. Also at the interpersonal level, the experience of encountering art as a product can lead audiences to empathize with the artist, and can help audiences learn to interpret the world, and its meanings, through the eyes of another. This is essential to peace building, as peace is predicated on the elimination of oppression and injustice, which itself is predicated on those in power coming to understand, to the extent possible, the experiences and positions of those who are oppressed. Boersema reminds us that we should not be fooled by art's sometime association with the "irrational feminine," and ultimately concludes that art, both as process and product, can foster the creation of a more peaceful world.

By taking up new approaches and embracing the possibility of conceptual paradigm shifts, *Pacifism, Politics, and Feminism* attempts to both identify and make progress on the persistent questions and issues that arise at the intersection of pacifism, politics, and feminism. It is both significant and unique, being one of the first book-length treatments of this intersection from a philosophical perspective. The main goal of the book is to further scholarship on these important issues, and to inspire new work that explores the deep and often subtle interplay between pacifism, politics, and feminism. The book should be of interest to scholars and students of these, and other related, domains. And, given contemporary social and political circumstances, the book may also be of relevance to activists and others who would like to better understand the interrelations between gender, violence, and peace, and who would like to think about the possibility of creating a more just, and more peaceful, world.

Violence and the Boundaries of the Community: A Relational Approach to Autonomy

John Lawless

A concern for individual autonomy lies at the foundation of liberal political theory.¹ This concern emerges from our conceptions of ourselves as agents – as the authors of our own stories, and not simply members of the audience. Traditionally, moral and political philosophers have characterized agency as a power to choose the goals that one pursues. In this respect, agents differ from mere matter, which simply drifts along in the current of causes and effects; and from mere instruments, which may have purposes, but which receive these purposes from the agents that define and use them. However, moral and political philosophers have also recognized that human agency is fragile. People tend to share an intuitive sense that certain conditions – say, addiction or coercion – foist certain goals upon us, and so render us the unwilling playthings of alien forces. While these conditions may not deprive us of our agency entirely, they do compromise our abilities to make choices that are robustly, authentically our own. A concern for autonomy is a concern for *uncompromised* agency.

However, many feminist philosophers have argued that autonomy is a distinctively masculinist ideal. That is because autonomy has long been thought to require a kind of rugged individualism that stands at odds with women's lived experiences and concerns. On the most unabashedly individualist approaches, for instance, the fully autonomous agent could not make it one of her central projects to care for others, because in her devotion, the caregiver would become a mere prop supporting another person's agency. She could not make it a guiding principle that her projects fit harmoniously with others', because in doing so, she would allow other people's goals define her own. To be sure, she might sacrifice her own autonomy in order to fit herself within caring relations with others, but this would be a sacrifice. Autonomy, so

1 Perhaps we might say more precisely that a concern for *liberty* lies at liberalism's foundations. But liberals often cast liberty as an aspect of autonomy, one compromised by essentially interpersonal threats to autonomy: interference, coercion, or domination. A concern for liberty, on this approach, emerges from a more fundamental concern for autonomy. See John Lawless, "Agency in Social Context," *Res Philosophica* 94, no. 4 (2017): 3–7.

understood, might find a natural home in domains like business, law, politics, or war – domains governed by impersonal rules and defined by competition and conflict. But it stands at odds with the ideals that we associate with traditionally feminine pursuits: ideals of care, mutual dependence, and trust.

For some, the fruit of this critique is a deep skepticism of autonomy as a moral and political ideal, and the rejection of those liberal moralities built upon its foundation.² For others, though, the critique only reveals the weakness of overly individualist conceptions of agency and of autonomy. And feminist philosophers have been at the forefront of developing alternative, *relational* conceptions. These conceptions do not only emphasize the compatibility of autonomy with human relationships. More radically, relational approaches to autonomy aim to reveal the extent to which autonomy is possible *only* for those embedded in caring, respectful relationships with others. These approaches teach us that, if we aim to promote individual autonomy, we must not build walls between people, but must foster the conditions in which these relationships might flourish. The feminist critique of liberalism, then, transforms from a critique of autonomy (full stop) into a critique of the “atomist” conception of autonomy on which liberalism, at least in certain forms, seems to depend.³

Of course, there are a number of routes by which to unearth autonomy’s relational bases. As Natalie Stoljar and Catriona Mackenzie put the point, “relational autonomy” is an umbrella term that gathers together a wide variety of approaches.⁴ My goal in this chapter is not to catalogue them, but to focus on what I take to be a relatively unnoticed thread in this rich tapestry, and to identify the lessons that we can learn from this approach about the moral significance of violence. In particular, I argue that agency does not simply involve a capacity to decide the direction one’s life takes, but involves also practical authority in some domains. Certain choices *belong* to particular agents, and not to others. Our practical authority emerges from our relationships with others, relationships that the use of violence threatens to distort, or even to destroy.

The chapter has four parts. In Section 1, I sketch a traditional approach to agency, and identify some of the species of non-autonomous behavior that

2 See, for instance, Lorraine Code, “Second Persons,” in *What Can She Know? Feminist Theory and the Construction of Knowledge* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 71–109.

3 Jennifer Nedelsky first coined the term “relational autonomy,” and she has been among its most influential advocates. See, for instance, Jennifer Nedelsky, *Law’s Relations: A Relational Theory of Self, Autonomy, and Law* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

4 Catriona Mackenzie and Natalie Stoljar, “Introduction: Autonomy Refigured,” in *Relational Autonomy: Feminist Perspectives on Autonomy, Agency, and the Social Self*, ed. Catriona Mackenzie and Natalie Stoljar (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 4.

this approach makes comprehensible. In Section 2, I characterize the connections between agency, practical authority, and interpersonal relations, and I illustrate the ways in which attention to these connections adds nuance to our conceptions of non-autonomous behavior. In Section 3, I focus in particular on the ways in which violence threatens people's agency, arguing that it influences the structures of our relationships with one another, threatening at the limit to undermine our practical authority altogether.

1 **Autonomy as Mastery**

In this first section, I sketch a general approach to autonomy that I will call "the mastery approach." In later sections, this approach will provide a backdrop against which we will clarify the core insights that relational approaches advance. The mastery approach proceeds by distinguishing the person from the world around her. We lose agency to the extent that those things that are *not us* define our paths for us, pushing us in directions that we have not chosen for ourselves. Conversely, we enjoy autonomy when we enjoy mastery over the things that are not us. This has three dimensions: self-mastery (that is, mastery over potentially rebellious elements within one's own psychology), mastery in one's relations with other people, and mastery over the world at large.⁵

We enjoy self-mastery when we do not suffer psychological conditions that disrupt our perceptual, cognitive, or deliberative capacities – those capacities that jointly constitute the psychological capacity to choose from the options available to us. When we suffer conditions like phobia, addiction, mania, or compulsion, we are, in S.I. Benn's phrase, "inner-impelled," finding ourselves dragged along undesirable paths by forces rooted within our own minds. "Kleptomaniacs do not decide to steal," Benn writes. "[I]ndeed, they may decide not

5 It is not my intention in this section to pin the mastery approach on any particular thinkers. After all, those who develop relational approaches to autonomy invoke (something like) the mastery approach for two distinct purposes: first, to indict individualist biases in traditional moral and political thought; and second, to construct a foil against which to develop their own positive approaches. I take the second strategy in this chapter, because my primary goal is not to reveal the flaws in any particular thinker's conception of autonomy, but to reveal some overlooked dangers that attend the use of violence. Nonetheless, I do believe that the mastery approach is at the very least implicit in many contemporary approaches to autonomy (and especially in many contemporary approaches to liberty – see note 1). Proving the point, unfortunately, would require exegetical efforts that lie beyond the scope of the chapter. See, though, Lawless, "Agency in Social Context," in which I argue that prominent conceptions of freedom as non-interference (or non-vulnerability to interference) at least implicitly rely on something like the mastery approach.

to, but steal all the same. Reminding a compulsive handwasher that he washed his hands only moments ago will not stop him washing them again.”⁶ Conditions like addiction, mania, and compulsion disrupt the connections between the agent and her behavior, making her less responsible for her behavior than she would be in their absence. We appropriately attribute the kleptomaniac’s theft, not entirely to *her*, but at least in part to her kleptomania.

Why do these psychological conditions count as threats to our capacities for choice? On the mastery approach, an agent enjoys “self-mastery” only if her choices manifest her *true* or *authentic* desires or values. For instance, Harry Frankfurt has argued that there must be a kind of coherence between her “first-order” desires – that is, the desires that motivate her – and her “second-order” desires – that is, her desires about which desires *should* motivate her.⁷ A person’s second- (or higher-) order desires establish the boundaries between those desires that constitute her “self” from those that do not: When a person enjoys coherence between her first- and second-order desires – that is, when she is motivated by all and only those desires that she wants to motivate her – she “identifies” with the choices she makes. Self-mastery, then, requires that agents identify with their own actions, seeing themselves in their works. In contrast, the non-autonomous agent suffers motivations that she repudiates. While these motivations may be internal to her own psychology, they are at the same time alien to her. The kleptomaniac, for instance, may not identify with her yen to steal, and yet find herself unable to quell the motivation. Since she is unable to resist a motivation with which she does not identify, she does not fully direct her own life.

Interpersonal threats to agency include individual interactions, like coercion; or persistent relationships, like the relationship between the slaveholder and the slave. These interactions and relationships often involve limitations on people’s options. For instance, when the gunslinger offers you a choice between your money or your life, she narrows your range of options quite radically, taking away (for instance) the option of continuing on your way safely and in full possession of your valuables. However, something sets essentially interpersonal phenomena like coercion or subjugation apart from the mere limitation of one’s options. In particular, coercion and subjugation suffice to transform one person into an instrument of another person’s agency. Those who coerce or subjugate us act *through* us. Even though we might physically hand our valuables over to a gunslinger, it would be more accurate to say that

6 S.I. Benn, “Freedom, Autonomy, and the Concept of a Person,” *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 76 (1975): 116.

7 Harry G. Frankfurt, “Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person,” in *Free Will*, ed. Gary Watson, Second Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 322–36.

the gunslinger takes the valuables from us. Her threats of violence make us passive in the interaction. Slavery (on this approach) aims to drive the phenomenon to its extreme, transforming the enslaved into the animate property of the slaveholder.

How does this transformation occur? On the mastery approach, we enjoy autonomy within those domains in which our choices are decisive. Through coercive interference in another person's choices, the coercing agent effectively brings her victim into a space within which *her* choices, and not her victim's, are decisive. In denying the pedestrian the option of continuing down the street in full possession of his valuables, the gunslinger brings the pedestrian's activities into her domain, and so gains a share of responsibility for his ensuing activities. The gunslinger's agency effectively cannibalizes her victim's.

Mastery in one's relations with others, then, requires that no one else interfere in one's activities,⁸ or (on more sophisticated views) that no one have a *capacity* to interfere in your activities without your (at least tacit) consent.⁹ And all else equal, the broader the domain within which one suffers no interference in one's activities, the more autonomous one is. At first glance, this might seem a strictly negative ideal: Our autonomy seems to require only that no one else enjoy mastery over us. However, if those who are able to withstand others' attempts to interfere in one's activities are (*ceteris paribus*) more autonomous than those who are not, then the pursuit of autonomy transforms into a pursuit of power. Mastery in one's relations with others seems to require mastery over others. As Berlin puts the point, "freedom for the pike is death for the minnows."¹⁰

Finally, in addition to intrapersonal and interpersonal threats to agency, some argue that generic constraints on our options might in themselves count as threats to our autonomy, whether they are the products of intentional interference in our activities or not. The idea here is that we often thwart others' attempts to hold us responsible for some state of affairs by pointing out to them that no alternative was available to us: We could not choose otherwise. This suggests that, for some possibility P, if we could not choose between P and not-P, then we cannot be held responsible either for P or for not-P. On this basis, we might find it tempting to represent limitations on our options as

8 Isaiah Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," in *The Proper Study of Mankind: An Anthology of Essays*, ed. Henry Hardy and Roger Hausheer (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1997), 191–242; Benn, "Freedom, Autonomy, and the Concept of a Person."

9 Philip Pettit, *Republicanism: A Theory of Freedom and Government* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 184–6.

10 Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," 196. On versions of liberalism that adopt this kind of approach, equality appears as an exogenous concern, one requiring equal distributions of freedom.

threats to our autonomy: The fewer the options available to us, the less control we exert over our histories, and the more we become spectators to our own lives. Robust agency requires an expansive domain in which one is master of one's fate. We are fully autonomous, then, only when we enjoy mastery over the world at large – that is, only when we enjoy a wide range of options from which to choose.

These, then, are the main threats to agency on which the mastery approach focuses our attention. Intrapersonally, she must not suffer those psychological conditions that would prevent her from identifying with her own actions. Interpersonally, she must not be subject to coercion or to subjugation; no other person may choose the range of options from which she chooses. And non-personally, she must enjoy a relatively broad range of options. The picture that emerges is of an agent threatened by hostile forces on three fronts: by rebellious forces within her own psychology, by the wills of other agents, and by the diverse natural forces at play within the indifferent cosmos in which she finds herself. These forces do not dominate the fully autonomous agent. On the contrary, she dominates them: She enjoys mastery over her own psychology, mastery in her relations with others, and mastery over the natural world itself.

Taken to its limit, this approach forges a clear connection between agency and a propensity toward violence. When other people stand between the agent and her goals, the fully autonomous agent will be in a position to force them to acquiesce to her vision of the future. Simone de Beauvoir saw this clearly, writing that “Violence is the authentic proof of each one's loyalty to himself, to his passions, to his own will.”¹¹ It should be little wonder, then, that many feminists have long judged autonomy an unattractive ideal, and have drawn connections between the celebration of autonomy, so understood, and the valorization of war. The alternative is an ethic that celebrates our connections to nature and to one another, that recognizes the interdependence of all members of our vast natural and social ecology. And some have drawn on these insights to advance alternative conceptions of agency and of autonomy.

2 Agency, Responsibility, and Practical Authority

While the mastery approach to autonomy distinguishes the agent from the world around her, relational approaches proceed in part by blurring

11 Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (New York: Random House, Vintage Books, 1974), 371; quoted in Iris Marion Young, “Humanism, Gynocentrism and Feminist Politics,” *Women's Studies Int. Forum* 8, no. 3 (1985): 175.

these distinctions, emphasizing the connections between the agent and her environments – and especially between the agent and the people with whom she interacts. By blurring these boundaries, relational approaches reveal mastery to be a false idol, one that ultimately threatens the master's own agency.¹²

As I have mentioned, there is not one relational approach to autonomy. There are many. Some of the most influential relational approaches begin with an investigation into the nature of *self*-mastery, arguing that this apparently intrapersonal ideal in fact has significant interpersonal elements. For instance, some argue that self-mastery requires, not that we simply enjoy the kinds of psychological coherence we sketched above, but that we achieve and maintain this coherence *ourselves*, through what Gerald Dworkin calls “the practice of autonomy.”¹³ And those who take a relational approach to autonomy sometimes argue that these practices have significant interpersonal forms or elements,¹⁴ or that the quality of our interpersonal relations can affect our capacities to engage in these practices.¹⁵ Other relational approaches target agents' self-conceptions, arguing that the content of a person's self-conception can affect the quality of a person's autonomy, and that these self-conceptions are, in part, a matter of the agent's orientation toward others.¹⁶

In contrast with these approaches, I will focus on explicitly interpersonal phenomena. In particular, I will argue that an important aspect of agency – namely, practical authority – emerges from our interpersonal relationships. That is, the structures of our interpersonal relations affect the quality of our autonomy, not just indirectly – say, by affecting the quality of our pursuit of

12 Relational approaches largely aim to blur the boundaries between the agent and other people, but we might also (and many do) focus critical attention on the other boundaries central to the mastery approach: between the person and the diverse aspects of her own psychology, or between the person and her natural environment. See, for instance, Diana T. Meyers, “Decentralizing Autonomy: Five Faces of Selfhood,” in *Being Yourself: Essays on Identity, Action, and Social Life* (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2004), 49–76.

13 Gerald Dworkin, *The Theory and Practice of Autonomy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

14 Diana T. Meyers, *Self, Society, and Personal Choice* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989).

15 Paul Benson, “Autonomy and Oppressive Socialization,” *Social Theory and Practice* 17, no. 3 (1991): 385–408.

16 Andrea C. Westlund, “Selflessness and Responsibility for Self: Is Deference Compatible with Autonomy?,” *The Philosophical Review* 112, no. 4 (2003): 483–523; Paul Benson, “Taking Ownership: Authority and Voice in Autonomous Agency,” in *Autonomy and the Challenges to Liberalism: New Essays*, ed. John Christman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 101–26.

self-knowledge, or by affecting the content of our self-conceptions – but immediately. Our relations with others partially constitute us as agents.

(a) *Agency and responsibility.* In order to make this case, it will be useful to shift our attention slightly. In characterizing the mastery approach, we began with the claim that agents choose the directions that their lives take. However, it might be more appropriate to begin with a more fundamental claim, that agents are responsible for the lives they lead.

In refocusing on responsibility, I do not mean to focus on *causal* responsibility. Rather, following P.F. Strawson, I assume that our conceptions of ourselves as responsible beings relate to the sense that we are the apt targets of “reactive attitudes”: resentment, gratitude, contrition, forgiveness, admiration, and the like.¹⁷ When we are responsible for something – an event, an object, a state of affairs – people appropriately attribute that thing to us in a way that organizes the kinds of reactive attitudes they can appropriately bear toward us. The attitudes that we take toward an artist who has splattered some paint on a canvas – whether they be attitudes of admiration or contempt – are very different from the attitudes we take toward an earthquake that has the same effect, because the artist is responsible (in this distinctive mode) for the painting.¹⁸ To be sure, it could be that the painting is attributable to the artist in this distinctive mode *because* the painter (or perhaps more precisely, the painter’s free will) is causally responsible for it. But that is a substantive interpretation of the conditions in which something is attributable to us in this mode, and one that we need not adopt here.¹⁹

The conceptual distance between agency and responsibility (in this mode)²⁰ is negligible. As Westlund argues, those who do not exhibit any sense of their own responsibility for their own activities are liable to exhibit “a kind of confusion over [their] very status as a separately answerable agent.”²¹ This kind of

17 P.F. Strawson, “Freedom and Resentment,” in *Studies in the Philosophy of Thought and Action: British Academic Lectures*, ed. P.F. Strawson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 72–96.

18 Susan Wolf, “Responsibility, Moral and Otherwise,” *Inquiry* 58, no. 2 (2015): 130.

19 I should emphasize that I do not mean to focus strictly on moral responsibility any more than I mean to focus strictly on causal responsibility. Moral responsibility is related to responsibility in the sense that interests me, since the morally responsible agent is the apt target of distinctively moral reactive attitudes, including moral praise and moral blame. However, as the example of the artist should show, certain activities, works, or states of affairs can be attributable to us in ways that make us the apt targets of reactive attitudes other than moral praise or moral blame.

20 I drop the qualification from this point forward.

21 Westlund, “Selflessness and Responsibility for Self: Is Deference Compatible with Autonomy?,” 487.

confusion might take several forms. In some cases, the confused party might see herself as akin to inanimate matter, whose activities are mere entries in a causal chain. (Imagine a brief exchange envisioned by Richard Moran: “Do you intend to pay the money back?” “As far as I can tell, yes.”²²) In other, perhaps more familiar cases, the confused party might see herself as an instrument apt for others’ use. Westlund, for instance, invites us to consider a deferential wife. Of course, there are many forms that deference might take. In particular, we might distinguish *principled* deference from *thoroughgoing* deference. In a case of principled deference, we defer to another’s judgments or choices, but are prepared to explain or justify our deference when others press us.²³ In a case of thoroughgoing deference, when others attempt to discuss our values, desires, and motivations, we simply appeal to the judgments and choices of the person to whom we defer, caught in a groundless justificatory loop. This is the kind of deference on which Westlund focuses, and the deferential wife she envisions consistently adverts to her husband’s choices and judgments when others attempt to discuss her values, desires, and motivations:

When pressed to say *why* she should always come second, she ends up re-articulating what her husband wants and re-asserting her already manifest commitment to putting what he wants first. Each of her answers simply re-expresses her deference – it is as though she simply cannot *hear* questions meant to challenge that deference.²⁴

The deferential wife, Westlund argues, “seems to experience others’ questioning as aimed *through* her at her husband.”²⁵ She does not see herself as an agent at all. Rather, she sees herself as an instrument for the pursuit of her husband’s projects and for the promotion of his values.

This case is extremely rich. For our purposes, though, the most important feature of the case is that it illuminates the significance of a shift in attention from the connections between agency and choice, toward the connections between agency and responsibility. Presumably, Westlund’s deferential wife

22 Richard Moran, *Authority and Estrangement: An Essay on Self-Knowledge* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 26.

23 In this vein, Westlund characterizes “an extreme Anti-Feminist... who believes that women ought to put their own interests last and defer to their husbands in all matters relevant to their joint lives.” Westlund contends that this kind of deference need not in itself compromise a person’s autonomy. Westlund, “Selflessness and Responsibility for Self: Is Deference Compatible with Autonomy?,” 512.

24 *Ibid.*, 487–8.

25 *Ibid.*, 510.

in question understands that she has a *capacity* for choice, and that through these choices she can affect the world around her. She must experience the psychological process of confronting a range of options, selecting one, and enacting that selection. Her agency suffers, however, because she does not take herself to have responsibility in any matters. Her own activities are not properly attributable to her, but to her husband. As a result, she takes herself to have no reason to probe her own values, desires, and motivations, because she does not see these as having any significant bearing on her activities. To her mind, it is her *husband's* values that matter, and these manifest in his judgments and choices – the very judgments and choices to which she consistently adverts when others attempt to challenge her sense of herself. She does not see herself as an agent, not because she is ignorant of her own psychological capacities for choice, but because she is ignorant of her own responsibility.

(b) *Responsibility and practical authority.* Once we take as our starting point the connections between agency and responsibility, we can demonstrate the significance of our interpersonal relationships to our agency. Put simply, we are the apt objects of others' reactive attitudes, not (only) because we enjoy capacities for choice, but because we are bearers of practical authority. And our practical authority emerges from our relationships with one another.

To have practical authority in some domain is to “own” choices within that domain.²⁶ It is for choices within that domain to belong to you. This is an essentially normative and relational matter. We can illustrate the point by appeal to the distinction between ownership and possession. To own a material good is not simply to possess or control it, but to have some complex and variable bundle of prerogatives to use the good in question, claims against others' use of the good, powers to waive those claims, powers to transfer ownership to others, and so on. Whether one enjoys these properties depends on one's relationship with others, because the properties are themselves relational. One cannot have a claim against others' use of a material good unless others have a correlated obligation, nor can one have a prerogative to use some good if others have a claim against that use. Practical authority in some range of choices emerges from the same kind of relational properties. In broad strokes, it involves prerogatives to make those choices, and claims against various kinds of interference or oversight in one's decisions. Crucially, the scope of a person's

26 Paul Benson emphasizes this theme in Paul Benson, “Feeling Crazy: Self-Worth and the Social Character of Responsibility,” in *Relational Autonomy: Feminist Perspectives on Autonomy, Agency, and the Social Self*, ed. Catriona Mackenzie and Natalie Stoljar (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 72–93. There, however, Benson – like Westlund – focuses more immediately on the ways in which agents conceive of themselves, rather than on the social relations constitutive of ownership on which I focus here.

practical authority – that is, of the domains in which she enjoys the relevant prerogatives and claims – is not necessarily coextensive with the scope of the domains in which she enjoys mastery as we characterized it above. The mere capacity to choose from among a range of options without interference is not identical to the practical authority to do so. A thief may enjoy the capacity to decide to whether to sell my car to a fence, or to keep it for himself, but the (legal) authority to decide what to do with my stolen car remains with me.

We can show that the distribution of practical authority affects the distribution of responsibility by showing that *misjudgments* about the scope of a person's authority yield misjudgments about the scope of her responsibility – that is, about the kinds of things that are attributable to her in ways that make her the apt target of various reactive attitudes. In the following two cases, one person is *not* responsible for some state of affairs, even though (by assumption) he or she enjoys the capacity to decide whether that possible state of affairs should become actual. But another person incorrectly judges that she *is* responsible for the state of affairs, because he misjudges the scope of her practical authority.

Chivalrous Misogynist: After a night out, Joe and Daria share a taxi back to their neighboring apartments. Daria has had a lot to drink, but Joe opts not to make a pass at his drunk friend. The next day, he is surprised – and a little disappointed – that she is not more grateful for his gentlemanly restraint. As time goes on, he frequently recounts this anecdote to illustrate his deep concern for women.

Pragmatic Boyfriend: While Laura walks down the street, a man she does not know suddenly jumps in front of her and shouts: “Smile!” She continues walking without a response, and the stranger unleashes a slew of familiar misogynist slurs. Laura recounts the experience later to her boyfriend Tom, who shrugs and asks: “Why didn’t you just smile? It wouldn’t have cost you anything, and you would have avoided an unpleasant situation.”

In Chivalrous Misogynist, Joe may enjoy a capacity to choose between sleeping with Daria, or not. In Pragmatic Boyfriend, Laura may enjoy a capacity to choose between avoiding the stranger's abuse by complying with his demand for a smile, or not. But to bear a capacity to make these choices does not suffice for responsibility.

In Chivalrous Misogynist, Joe has internalized misogynist assumptions in which women's bodies belong to men. On these assumptions, sexual assault is a matter of men's virtues and vices rather than of women's rights: Men have the practical authority to enjoy women's bodies, but ought to do so chivalrously, with a concern for women's well-being. Of course, Joe's assumptions are incorrect. Daria – and not Joe – has the authority to decide who will touch her, and

how. Far from revealing his own virtues, Joe's misrepresentation of his inaction as lordly beneficence reveals the depth of his disrespect for his (putative) friend. More relevantly to our purposes, though, Joe's assumptions bear on his judgments about the distribution of responsibility: He expects gratitude and praise for a choice that was not his to make, because he believes that it *was* his to make. He (incorrectly) believes that he is responsible for the fact that they did not sleep together, because he (incorrectly) believes that the choice to do so or not belonged to him. If Daria were to overhear him recounting tales of his own gracious restraint, she would be well within her rights to correct him: "We didn't sleep together because *I* didn't consent."²⁷

In Pragmatic Boyfriend, Tom holds Laura responsible for the abuse she suffered, because it was within her power to avoid it. She had the capacity to choose not to risk the passerby's anger, and she did not exercise it. Tom's response to the situation reveals his own misogynist assumptions, on which men enjoy the prerogative to police women's facial expressions, and women lack the prerogative to relax their faces while in public without men's permission. Of course, Tom's assumptions are as inaccurate as were Joe's. It was not Laura's responsibility to protect herself from the abuse she suffered. The responsibility for that abuse lies squarely with the man who issued it. (In general, the familiar activity of "blaming the victim" relies on incorrect assumptions about the distribution of practical authority: We hold victims responsible for wrongs perpetrated against them when we assume that they do not have claims against the treatment in question, and have a responsibility to protect themselves from it, if they wish to avoid it.)

These two cases show that the distribution of responsibility depends on the distribution of practical authority.

(c) *Practical authority and representation.* Here we reach the crucial thesis: that the systematic misrepresentation of a person's responsibility in itself can effect the cannibalization of her agency by another's.

When we represent one another as agents, we rely on what I will call the "public concepts" effective in our communities – concepts that define various roles, and afford the occupants of those roles practical authority in specific domains. Some of these roles are defined in law. Many others are implicit in our social practices; we learn them, not by reading the legal code, but in large part by exposure to the narratives that pervade our discourses.²⁸ These extra-legal

²⁷ Of course, he *would* be responsible for the *violation* of her rights against assault.

²⁸ Hilde Lindemann explores the roles that "master narratives" play in the ongoing construction of our relationships, and the effects that these constructions have on our agency. However, she focuses in particular on the ways in which these narratives can affect our

public concepts include concepts of gender, sexuality, race, nationality, ability and disability, and the like. I do not mean to imply that these concepts are simple, static, or easily defined. In particular, theorists of intersectionality have demonstrated that these concepts do not apply independently of one another, but inflect one another in countless ways. As a result, we cannot investigate (for instance) the content of our racial concepts independently of any investigation into the content of our gender or class concepts. My only point is that we rely on concepts from our discourses – malleable concepts, imprecisely articulable at best, but generally accessible – in order to judge the scope of any person's practical authority. This suggests a further sense in which our agency emerges from our relationships with other people. The concepts on which people rely as they judge the scope of our practical authority depend, not on choices that we make, but on the stories that people tell – both literally, and in their interactions – and on the stories to which people listen.

Moreover, when these concepts are badly formed – in particular, when they serve as part of an oppressive ideology – they can yield systematic misjudgments about the scope of a person's practical authority. For instance, the misogynist society educates its members into a set of gendered concepts with which they misrepresent the scope and structure of women's practical authorities. These sexist concepts generate the systematic misrepresentation of women's practical authority by their peers, yielding systematic misjudgments about women's responsibilities. Moreover, this leads to systematic distortions in the reactive attitudes that people direct toward women. When we internalize these concepts, we (like Joe) praise men for choices that were not theirs to make – putatively chivalrous choices not to abuse or assault women. And (like Tom) we implicitly assume that men have the practical authority to oversee women's activities, right down to the facial expressions women wear. In these kinds of cases, men cannibalize women's agency, not only by interfering in women's activities, but simply by claiming and affirming one another's practical authority over women's lives, and so claiming and affirming one another's responsibility for women's activities. (In fact, in Chivalrous Misogynist, Joe effectively claims responsibility for what happens to Daria's body without actually interfering in Daria's activities at all.)

senses of people's characters and talents, causing us to represent some people as overly excitable or morally immature. I suggest that we can extend Lindemann's general idea once we notice that narratives play further (though related) roles in our social lives. Not only do they affect our senses of one another's characters, they also affect our judgments about the kinds of choices that belong to people in different social locations. See Hilde Lindemann Nelson, *Damaged Identities, Narrative Repair* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001).

Let's summarize the argument so far. First, an interest in agency involves an interest in responsibility for the course that one's life takes. Second, one's responsibility for the course that one's life takes depends, in part, on the structures of one's relations with others, and on the distribution of practical authority that emerges from these structures. Systematic misrepresentations of one's practical authority yield systematic distortions in others' judgments about one's responsibility, and so distort the reactive attitudes that others adopt toward you. These distortions generate important maldistributions of agency, akin to the kinds of cannibalization on which the mastery approach focused our attention. However, the mastery approach's focus on interference (or on vulnerability to interference) misses all of this. It overemphasizes the significance of one's capacity to choose from among a range of available options, in a way that obscures the significance of our representations of one another.

3 Anger, Violence, and Public Concepts

So far, I have argued that to be an agent is, in part, to enjoy practical authority within some domains, and that our practical authority emerges from our relationships with others – relationships constituted (at least in part) by distributions of prerogatives, claims, and obligations. Here, I argue that by representing agency simply as a capacity to choose without interference from among the available options, the mastery approach obscures morally significant differences between two distinct modes of influencing the flow of events: those that count as exercises of practical authority, and those that simply rely on brute force. First, it causes us to misunderstand those forms of anger with which we exercise practical authority in our interactions with others, misconstruing them as interpersonal threats to agency akin to violent subjugation. And second, it causes us to miss the multiple ways in which violence threatens people's agency: not only does violence involve the forceful direction of another's life, it also affects the kinds of public concepts effective in our communities, often for the worse.

(a) *Misunderstanding anger.* First, the mastery approach yields impoverished conceptions of anger. Here, our argument dovetails with another important theme in feminist philosophy: the mischaracterization of women's anger as hysterical and unreasonable.²⁹ The expression of certain forms of anger, particularly resentment, is an appropriate response to someone's encroachment

29 Marilyn Frye, *The Politics of Reality* (Berkeley: Crossing Press, 1983), 84–94; see also Rebecca Kukla, "Discursive Injustice," *Hypatia* 29, no. 2 (2014): 440–57.

into the domains in which one enjoys practical authority. But the mastery approach risks construing anger in general as a weapon with which others might encroach on our activities, cannibalizing our own agency. By way of illustration, consider a new case:

Compliant Husband: Georgia calls her husband, Calvin, to tell him that she will be working late, and that he will have to pick the kids up from their after-school activities. Calvin accepts the burden without complaint. But when he tells his coworkers that he can't join them for a drink after work, they ask why he didn't just tell her he had plans. "I just don't want to set her off," he answers with a shrug.

I assume that Georgia has a claim on the equitable distribution of the burdens of parenting. And we might well expect that, were Calvin to ignore these claims, she might reasonably become angry with him. In dismissing his wife's hypothetical anger as a bomb that might be set off, though, Calvin reveals that he would not properly understand that anger as resentment at his violation of her claim. Presumably, he has internalized misogynist assumptions on which mothers have distinctive obligations to attend to the needs of their children, and to take on a greater share of the burdens of parenting than do fathers. As a result, he does not take Georgia to have the authority to decide that he will pick their children up from school. ("That's really her job," he might think to himself.) As a result, he would not understand Georgia's anger as expressive of a legitimate demand, but would only see how unpleasant for him it would be to endure her irritation. And he would conceive of himself as the victim of the same kind of cannibalization that we first saw in the gunslinger's case: By (metaphorically) holding her finger poised over a detonator, Georgia reduces Calvin to an instrument in the pursuit of her own goals. We should reject Calvin's self-representation, because we know that the choices that his wife denies to him fall within the scope of their shared authority as co-parents to their children. She does not cannibalize his agency, and so does not threaten his autonomy, because the choices in which she involves herself were not fully his choices to make in the first place. Through her anger, Georgia simply expresses a demand that Calvin recognize and respect her practical authority.

Crucially, moreover, Georgia's practical authority emerges from the very same relations that generate Calvin's practical authority. Calvin is subject to the reactive attitude of resentment because of the ways in which his relationships construct his agency. He is the apt target of reactive attitudes in part because certain choices belong to him, and these choices belong to him in virtue of his normative relationships with others – including his relationship with Georgia. Outside of those relationships, Calvin might yet enjoy *causal* responsibility for changes in the world around him, but we could not attribute those

choices to him in the way that we attribute choices to people. Eliminate those normative relationships, and you do not simply liberate Calvin from Georgia's authority; you liberate Calvin from responsibility, and so from agency itself.

By emphasizing the significance of practical authority to agency, then, the relational approach to autonomy reveals that anger is not contiguous with the violent subjugation of those who would stand between us and our goals. When deployed properly, expressions of anger are important tokens with which agents exercise their practical authority in their interactions with one another, and not simply weapons with which others threaten us in order to force us to do as they want.

(b) *Misunderstanding violence.* At the same time, reliance on the mastery approach yields impoverished resources with which to understand the ways in which violence threatens individual agency. We saw above that the mastery approach characterizes essentially interpersonal threats to agency like domination, subjugation, or oppression in terms of one person's interference in another's activities. However, we saw in Section 2 that the maldistribution of practical authority can in itself lead to the cannibalization of one person's agency by another's. And violence is liable to generate precisely these maldistributions of practical authority. Violent subjugation threatens people's agency, not only by affecting the range of available options, but by affecting the kinds of concepts on which we rely in the course of our interactions with one another.

Consider, for instance, a confrontation between protesters and the police. And assume, in particular, that the protesters are peaceful, but the police arrive on the scene decked out in riot gear, wielding mace and nightsticks. In presenting themselves in this fashion, the police express a view of their relationship with the protesters: The use of riot gear serves less to contain possible violence from the protestors than to communicate to onlookers that the protesters are violent. The way in which the police meet the protesters serves to deliver the message that those toward whom their violence is directed are not members of the normative community. It expresses a judgment that the protesters in question stand in no normative relations with others – or at least, that the protesters cannot be trusted to regulate their own activities as these normative relations require. This message, of course, affects the ways in which other people represent their relations with the protesters. Onlookers who respect the police, who take the police to be admirable and reasonable, will allow these expressions to inform the concepts on which they rely in their representations of the protesters. They will come to read violence into the protesters' actions, even when those actions are entirely benign. At the limit, they will cease to understand the protesters as beings with whom they stand in normative relations

at all, and so will cease to see the protesters as bearers of practical authority.³⁰ The concepts that arise from these understandings, and on which people rely as they represent their neighbors' practical authority in the course of their interactions, will be concepts on which the protesters, and others like them, do not count as agents. In general, violence threatens agency, not only by limiting people's options, but by generating systematic distortions in the ways in which we attribute practical authority and responsibility within our communities.

Of course, violence does not simply threaten the practical authority of those against whom it is enacted. To some extent, the violent subjugation of others may even be destructive of the perpetrator's agency. If my general mode of carrying myself through the world expresses my commitment to mastery, then there might come a point at which I communicate to others that I have no obligations to any of them, and so cannot be trusted to regulate my own actions as any obligations might require. I understand myself as an unconstrained will, bound by no normative relations with the other members of my community. If, through the enactment of my commitment to mastery, I affect the concepts that others invoke as they represent my actions, then I will teach others to see me as someone who bears no obligations to anyone. And once others cease to see me as possessed of obligations, they also cease to see me as possessed of prerogatives or claims; they cease to see me as a bearer of practical authority at all. By my reliance on violence, I cease to present myself as the apt target of any reactive attitudes, and I assimilate myself to the natural forces of the world – to the earthquake or the hurricane. However significantly I might broaden the range of options available to me, however effectively I might discourage others from interfering in my activities, I do not secure my own agency. I destroy it.

This phenomenon likely manifests in the kinds of confrontations between police and protesters that we characterized above. To be sure, the police may maintain their practical authority in their interactions with *some* members of the community, namely, those who fall within the boundaries that the police draw with their violence, between the members of the community and those outside of it. However, if their violence generates a set of public concepts according to which *no* normative relations govern their interactions with the people against whom they exercise that violence, that will undermine police

30 We might expect police to behave in this way if many of the protestors are people of color. The message that police would communicate by this behavior would then would fit into (and reproduce) narratives already pervasive within our public discourses, organized around the racist construction of "the state of nature" – a condition essentially outside of civil society and beyond human law – as a state to be found in those spaces occupied by people of color. See Charles Mills, *The Racial Contract* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997).

officers' own authority in their engagement with the communities they police – and not only the authority of the specific officers who engage in violence, but of police as a social class. The message that the police officers send with their mace and nightsticks will generate a set of public concepts in which there are no normative relations between civilians and *any* police officers – whatever their individual virtues and vices. In the analysis of relations between the police and the people, the individualist model of “a few bad apples” fails to capture this systematic phenomenon, that *all* police officers' normative relations with the people with whom they interact are defined by the ways in which police officers in general comport themselves.³¹

4 Toward a Case for Nonviolence

In the preceding section, I identified some of the dangers inherent in the use of violence. By attending to these dangers, we can of course begin to build a case for nonviolence. However, we should expect this argument to yield an ambivalent conclusion, at best. Two caveats are in order.

First, not all violence expresses the message that the victims of violence are beyond the boundaries of the community. If the parties to an interaction locate that violence within clearly marked boundaries, they may be able to maintain their broader normative relations with one another outside of those boundaries. The ropes around a boxing ring and the lines painted along the edges of a football field can serve to establish these boundaries. There may be much that is objectionable about violent sports like boxing or football, but the fact that these sports involve violent clashes does not suffice to show that they tend to undermine those normative relations out of which our practical authorities emerge.

Second, and perhaps more importantly, not everyone bears an equal burden of securing concepts by which we will be able to judge the scope of people's practical authority correctly – certainly not in non-ideal circumstances like ours. In particular, those who live and labor under oppression do not always bear the burden of revising the public concepts that generate our distorted judgments about the scope of their practical authority. All too often, they may have little choice but to resort to violence in order to defend themselves

³¹ For an interesting sociological study of the kind of phenomenon I aim to characterize here, see Charles R. Epp, Steven Maynard-Moody, and Donald Haider-Markel, *Pulled Over: How Police Stops Define Race and Citizenship* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2014). For further discussion, see the essays in Angela J. Davis, ed., *Policing the Black Man* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2017).

against those who oppress them. Their violence may well have the potential to affect the public concepts effective in our communities adversely. However, it remains an open moral question how we ought to distribute the burden of containing that potential. And there is good reason to suspect that it should fall far more heavily, not on the shoulders of those who suffer oppression, but on the shoulders of those who benefit from it.

In light of these qualifications, the case for nonviolence that I envision here would seem to fit within the tradition that Carol Cohn and Sara Ruddick name “antiwar feminism.” This tradition, Cohn and Ruddick write, involves “an abiding suspicion of the use of violence, even in the best of causes,” partly on the grounds that “[t]he ability of violence to achieve its stated aims is routinely overestimated, while the complexity of its costs is overlooked.” Nonetheless (Cohn and Ruddick continue), antiwar feminism “neither rejects all wars as wrong in principle nor condemns people just because they resort to violence.”³² In this chapter, we have attempted to illuminate some of the hidden costs of violence, but we should not think on this basis that we have a principled case for pacifism. We have identified one kind of concern to which we ought to attend as we plan our political strategies, but we cannot yet insist that that concern should override all others.

5 Conclusion

Relational approaches to autonomy are no less diverse than are the forms of human sociality themselves. And we easily could develop a critique of violence by focusing on any one of the diverse ways in which we depend on caring, respectful relationships with others for the cultivation and maintenance of individual agency. In this chapter, I have focused on only one aspect of human agency that emerges from (and so depends on) our interpersonal relations. I have focused, not on our capacities to bend the world to our wills, but on our practical authority in some choices; and I have argued that whether we enjoy this authority depends on the concepts that other people rely on in their representations of us. Attending to this aspect of agency affords us resources with which to draw a morally significant distinction between, on the one hand, the exercise of practical authority (even in the expression of negatively tinged attitudes like anger); and on the other hand, the violent subjugation of those who stand between us and our goals. Any practical philosophy that truly derives

32 Carol Cohn and Sara Ruddick, “A Feminist Ethical Perspective on Weapons of Mass Destruction,” in *Ethics and Weapons of Mass Destruction*, ed. Sohail H. Hashmi and Steven P. Lee (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 405–7.

from a concern for individual autonomy must take this distinction to heart. In particular, first, we must be suspicious (though not outright dismissive) of any attempt to label particular actions “violent,” because such labels might obscure the allegedly violent actor’s practical authority. At the same time, when we *do* encounter violence, we must be alert to its many hidden costs. By attending in these ways to the distinction between violence and authority, we shed light on some common modes of discourse concerning political protest. Pejorative descriptions of peaceful protesters as members of a violent mob, and calls to arm the police against such protesters, might reflect an inchoate concern to protect people’s agency from the threats that an anarchic mob might represent. But this representation of the protesters confuses outrage with unbridled force, and so sees violence where there is none; and the call to arm the police against them ignores the ways in which this will affect the content of our public concepts, distorting the relationships among the members of our communities. This mode of discourse, then, fundamentally betrays the concern for individual autonomy from which it arises.

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The Violence of Silencing

Barrett Emerick

Few words carry more normative weight than “violence” and many of those that do imply violence themselves.¹ It is important, then, for those concerned with acting rightly or promoting social justice to think through the ways in which violence is done. Especially important for theorists is to help shine a light on those types of violence that might be easy to overlook. In this chapter I aim to do just that by focusing in particular on epistemic violence – the way in which violence might be done to someone in their capacity as a knower. Specifically, I focus on the claim that *silencing* can be an act of epistemic violence. Consider four cases involving silencing:

Case 1 – Campus Protests of a Racist Speaker

A speaker has been invited to give a lecture on a college campus. Their views are well-known and are considered by many to be racist (promoting the view, for instance, that black people are inherently more violent than white people). Student protesters rally against the speaker, write op-eds, hold protests, and threaten various forms of civil disobedience should the speaker be allowed to present. As a result, the campus withdraws its invitation. Alternatively, the speaker does come to campus but is unable to give their lecture because student protests noisily disrupt them, making it difficult for the speaker to be heard.

Case 2 – Sexism in Class

Students in a college class use sexist language, make sexist jokes, or argue that women are inherently bad at the discipline in which the class is situated. Because of the role that sexist stereotypes have played historically, and because of the social meaning that such language, jokes, or

¹ Many thanks to Annaleigh Curtis, Tyler Hildebrand, Emily Saari, Kayleigh Doherty, Jason Wyckoff, Fiona Maeve Geist, Martin Armstrong, Shane Gronholz, Audrey Yap, Chris Blocher, Mark Lance, Rosa Terlazzo, Michael Doan, Michelle Panchuk, Kelly Weirich, and three anonymous referees for their invaluable critiques and insight.

arguments have in contemporary society, it becomes difficult for some women in the class to take part.

Case 3 – Smartphone App

A smartphone app allows users to post anonymous comments within a geographically local area. At first, students on a college campus use the app to post about parties and to complain about exams. Over time, students begin posting homophobic comments on the app, using anonymity as a cover for expressing what would otherwise be widely condemned beliefs. After deliberation, the college bans the use of the app on its network, forcing students to use their personal cell phone plans to access it and thereby effectively shutting down the app's local network.

Case 4 – Employee

An employee at a company writes and circulates a memo in which they argue against the value of affirmative action and diversity within the industry. Upon learning of the memo, managers of the company fire the employee. Alternatively, an employee is fired from a company when it is discovered that they took part in a neo-Nazi rally. In both cases the employee is fired, not for overtly failing to do their job, but because the views that they expressed were inconsistent with the core values of the company.

Cases like these have recently appeared in the news in the United States. All bear on a larger conversation about what the right to free speech means and whose speech it should protect. In this project I will leave many aspects of that conversation to the side. Instead, my purpose here is to explore both the concepts of violence and silencing, as well as the claim that silencing can be an act of violence, in order to make that conversation more productive. I will argue that silencing is sometimes a form of epistemic injustice that can result in the violation of the integrity of the person who is silenced by diminishing their epistemic capacities. In those cases where such violation occurs, silencing becomes an act of violence.

I will proceed as follows. In Section 1 I will adopt and develop a particular definition of violence, laying out broadly what conditions must be met for something to count as violence. In Section 2 I will analyze silencing as a form of epistemic injustice before going on to argue that silencing can indeed be an act of violence. In Section 3 I will explore when someone ought to silence another, even if doing so is an act of violence.

1 What Is Violence?

'Violence' is used to refer to many things. In the Western philosophical literature, it has primarily been used to refer either to intentional, excessive physical *force* or to the *violation* of morally considerable objects like persons, personal property, or non-human animals.² The main problem with the former is that it excludes some things we might want to call violence (like psychological or institutional violence).³ The main problem with the latter is that it includes too much, and by understanding violence as violation we run the risk of watering down the term's meaning.⁴

In this project my goal is not to reinvent the wheel, nor is it to give a full-throated defense of either account of violence. Instead, my project is to adopt the second definition and then expand it in order to make sense of the claim that silencing can be an act of violence. In doing so I will ultimately adopt Vittorio Bufacchi's definition of violence as violation of integrity. First, in order to illuminate both Bufacchi's definition and my subsequent application, it will be helpful to review Newton Garver's classic account of violence (from which Bufacchi borrows).

Garver argues that violence can be overt or covert, personal or institutional. What is common to each is not force but violation, and not just violation of any type of object, but the violation specifically of a *person*.⁵ Since "person" is a metaphysically robust concept, and for Garver violence is fundamentally about violating persons, violence itself should be understood to be similarly robust. Persons, after all, are more than their physical bodies; they also have at least some of the following: beliefs, desires, interests, self-awareness, the capacity for sensory experience, as well as the capacity to plan for and anticipate the future. Perhaps most important for Garver is that persons have a will; in having a mind with desires and interests, as well as the ability to plan for the future, persons are able to work to bring about for themselves one future rather than another.

On Garver's view, violence can be done to persons in three ways. The first is by violating the *body* of a person; this is straightforward physical violence, where someone's bodily integrity is undermined.⁶ The second is by violating

2 For a helpful overview of the different views of violence that can be found in the literature, see Vittorio Bufacchi, "Two Concepts of Violence," *Political Studies Review* 3 (2005): 193–204.

3 *Ibid.*, 198.

4 *Ibid.*, 197.

5 Newton Garver, "What Violence Is," *The Nation*, June 24, 1968, 819.

6 *Ibid.*, 819.

the *dignity* of a person.⁷ This is best understood as a violation of another's autonomy; that a person has essentially the capacity to make decisions and choose one option over another means that when another violates their ability to choose, they don't merely undermine or thwart their choice, but what it is even to be a chooser in the first place. Finally, the third method of violence on Garver's view is violating the *freedom* of a person to do what they would actually choose to do.

Bufacchi refines and moves beyond Garver's view when he develops this definition:

An act of violence occurs when the integrity or unity of a subject (person or animal) or object (property) is being intentionally or unintentionally violated, as a result of an action or an omission. The violation may occur at the physical or psychological level, through physical or psychological means. A violation of integrity will usually result in the subject being harmed or injured, or the object being destroyed or damaged.⁸

Bufacchi argues that Garver's analysis of violence is too *exclusive*, since it precludes the possibility of doing violence to non-persons (most notably, to non-human animals). That's one reason why it is helpful to broaden the definition to focus specifically on violations of integrity.⁹ By "integrity" Bufacchi means to use the term "in a non-philosophical sense," and to refer to "wholeness or intactness,"¹⁰ "unity," or the quality or state of being complete or undivided.¹¹ Persons, like bridges and skyscrapers, have an integrity that can be undermined, causing them to fracture, become unstable, or to collapse altogether. And, since non-human animals and personal property have an integrity that can be degraded or destroyed, they can be the objects of violence as well.

I contend that Garver's analysis is also too *inclusive*, in so far as he claims that thwarting the freedom of a person to act as they would is a type of violation. This casts the net too wide, since it would allow all efforts to prevent another from achieving their chosen ends to count as violence. For instance, if a parent secures a cabinet with a child-proof lock to prevent their toddler from getting into the toxic cleaning supplies, though they have thwarted their child's ends,

7 Ibid., 819.

8 Vittorio Bufacchi, *Violence and Social Justice* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 43–4.

9 The other reason Bufacchi gives is that Garver's account ultimately is concerned with the violation of a persons' rights "that are essential to personality," rather than with the violation of persons themselves. Ibid., 41.

10 Ibid., 40.

11 Ibid., 41.

they have not done violence to them. That said, there is something to Garver's third type of violation. In particular, it helps to make sense of the claim that threats are a form of violence, since what you do when you threaten someone is attempt to constrain their freedom and force them to comply with your will. It also helps to make sense of the claim that violence can be institutional. If some background social structure systematically thwarts someone's choices over time it does violence to them. And, cutting now in the other direction and returning to the interpersonal, if a domineering parent routinely and habitually undermines their child's decisions, not as they do when they prevent a toddler from drinking poison (which ultimately promotes the child's freedom) but in a way that leaves them in a state of constant frustration, it makes sense to say that they do violence to their child.

This helps to illuminate a crucial insight to Garver's project. Though Bufacchi is right to want to build a more inclusive definition than Garver (since it seems clear that violence can be done to non-persons), Bufacchi is also right to follow Garver in recognizing that there is a type of violence that can be done uniquely to persons. In such a case it is someone's "integrity as a person that is infringed, since in the process of being violated one is *reduced to a lesser being*, in physical and/or psychological terms." (Emphasis added.)¹²

Susan Brison develops a similar understanding of violence. Throughout her extraordinary book *Aftermath: Violence and the Remaking of the Self*, she explores in light of her own experience of violence what it is for a person to be "undone, demolished, shattered, and destroyed."¹³ Like Garver, Brison argues that one method of causing such destruction is to undermine the autonomy of another. Since one characteristic of personhood is the capacity for autonomy, one method of violating persons is to undermine that capacity. When someone violates another's ability to choose, they don't merely thwart the person's choice, but undermine what it is to be a chooser in the first place. That will often come about as a result of being routinely and systematically prevented from exercising one's autonomy but can also be the result of isolated, traumatic actions.¹⁴

Because my task is to explore the claim that silencing can be an act of violence, and since I take persons to be the only types of objects that can be silenced, for the remainder of this project I will use "violence" to refer to the violation of the integrity of persons in particular. A person's integrity can be

¹² Ibid., 41.

¹³ Susan Brison, *Aftermath: Violence and the Remaking of the Self* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 25–6, 40, 110.

¹⁴ See Susan Brison's discussion of the way in which a single act of violence can undermine one's autonomy. Brison, *Aftermath*, Chapter 3.

violated both physically (by destroying someone's body you violate not just their physical form but also their capacity to choose) and non-physically.¹⁵ I am here modifying the traditional distinction between physical and psychological violence; by contrasting the physical with the non-physical (rather than psychological) we are able to recognize types of violations of integrity someone might suffer that are not bodily, but also that are not straightforwardly psychological. Specifically, I want to consider epistemic violence, in which a person is violated in their capacity as a knower.

Physical and non-physical violence can be carried out both interpersonally (where one person violates the integrity of another) and institutionally (where some institution or social structure violates the integrity of a person or group of persons). Institutional violence can occur independently of particular actors, which is to say that it is a part of the fabric of society and is not necessarily intentional or aimed at by those who designed the laws, policies, or institutions in question.¹⁶ Understood in this way, social structures can cause violence, even if they leave no physical marks on their victims, and even if there are no clear perpetrators that can be held responsible for their harms.

Importantly, the account of violence on which I will rely is an *outcome-based* model of violence, which is to say that whether something is an act of violence is determined by whether its outcome includes the violation of the integrity of a person, rather than by determining in advance (by way of intention or how the act is performed) whether it so qualifies. In this way my approach aims to start from the standpoint of the victim, asking what happened to them, rather than the perpetrator, asking what they intended to do or how they intended to do it.¹⁷ In short, when a person or social structure violates the integrity of a person or group of persons, violence has been done.

At the same time, one might commit an action violently, even though the action does not itself qualify as violence. Bufacchi notes that it is helpful to distinguish the adverb "violently" from the noun "violence," where the latter refers to what action was committed and the former refers to how the action was committed.¹⁸ It makes sense to say that someone performed an

15 Garver, "What Violence Is," 820.

16 For more on the concept of structural violence, see Johan Galtung, "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research," *Journal of Peace Research* 6, no. 3 (1969): 167–91. Galtung uses the term "structural violence," where Garver uses the term "institutional violence." Both "institutional" and "structural" have been used in a variety of ways in different literatures, and though they might imply different degrees of formality, design, or agency, I use the terms interchangeably here.

17 Bufacchi, "Two Concepts of Violence," 199.

18 Bufacchi, *Violence and Social Justice*, 16.

action violently even if they did not cause violence in so acting (as when someone with the flu coughs violently), just as it makes sense to say that they caused violence even if they did so via what would typically be taken to be non-violent means (as when someone accidentally poisons another by unknowingly serving them food to which they are seriously allergic). In short: if someone shoots a gun at another and misses they have acted violently though they have not committed an act of violence, since they did not violate the integrity of the person they were attempting to harm.

This distinction might seem strange; after all, actions like firing guns at people seem intrinsically violent, so why should we need to determine their outcomes in order to assess whether they are acts of violence? That strangeness is diminished when we note two things. First, though actions committed violently often cause violence they do not always do so, a fact that is easier to recognize when we consider attempted but unsuccessful acts more generally. Just as it makes sense to say that someone committed attempted (rather than successful) burglary, so too does it make sense to say that they committed attempted (rather than successful) violence. Second, part of the reason why the outcome-based account of violence may appear problematic is that it might seem to suggest that the actor who tries but fails to do violence (though they do act violently) does not act wrongly. But, just as we can hold someone morally responsible for attempted burglary, so too can we hold someone responsible for attempted violence. The same is true for acts that do not aim at violence but could foreseeably cause it. In other words, the strangeness of distinguishing between acting violently and committing an act of violence is diminished in light of the fact that we already frequently draw that distinction (when distinguishing between attempted and successful acts), as well as when we recognize that whether (and to what degree) someone should be held morally responsible is a different question from whether they committed an act of violence or performed an act violently.

Putting these pieces together it becomes clear that the world contains considerably more violence than is typically recognized.¹⁹ One might be troubled that this analysis of violence is much more inclusive than ordinary uses of the term imply. As I said at the outset, my project here is not to argue for this analysis of violence but instead to adopt it in order to make sense of the claim

19 For instance, advertising that bypasses consumers' agency might, over time, diminish their capacity for free choice. Consumers would thereby be subjected to violence, on my view. Some might object to this outcome on the grounds that it is too inclusive. For my part, I think it helps to reveal part of what's problematic about capitalism. Thanks to Rosa Terlazzo for this helpful example.

that silencing can be an act of violence. I do believe, however, that this more expansive analysis is helpful because it focuses on the underlying moral issue that we should care about in many cases of harm, wrongdoing, or injustice. Killing, physical assault, and rape all involve a violation of a person's bodily integrity. Threats, coercion, exploitation, being Otherized or treated with disrespect, can all involve violation of a person's will, of their dignity or sense of self, or of their social status or position. And, as I will argue, silencing can involve violations of a person's epistemic capacities, thereby undermining or diminishing their ability to serve as a giver and receiver of knowledge, and short-circuiting their ability to interpret the world in a way that is meaningful and that fits with their experience. In short, part of what is valuable about the analysis of violence as violation of the integrity of a person is that it elegantly identifies an important and unifying feature of many of the serious harms that can be inflicted on others. It also is consistent with Brison's testimony as a survivor of violence as well as her analysis as a philosopher. It seems both analytically and practically useful, then, to tie a term as normatively laden as "violence" to that underlying feature. If, however, you object to this definition, you may simply substitute "violation of the integrity of a person" for "violence" throughout the rest of this chapter, since I will take the latter to refer to the former.

2 What Is Silencing?

Employing Garver's taxonomy of violence, silencing can occur interpersonally or institutionally, overtly or covertly. Here are some examples of the way that silencing plays out in all four senses (though this list is far from exhaustive).²⁰

Overt Interpersonal – If one person physically restrains another (putting their hand over the other's mouth), or disables their access to the internet or social media, or constantly talks over them such that they are never able to effectively communicate their view, they have silenced the other overtly.²¹

Covert Interpersonal – If one person in conversation with another constantly rolls their eyes, responds patronizingly, or fails to pay attention to the speaker, who then stops speaking rather than suffer such continued disrespect, they have silenced the other covertly.

20 Thanks to Annaleigh Curtis for helping me think through these examples.

21 Note that killing someone or physically injuring them in a way that leaves them unable to communicate are also instances of silencing (though that will very likely be the less morally serious wrong in most cases).

Overt Institutional – If the state passes a law that prevents its citizens from communicating with each other – if it blocks social media or shuts down the free press – the state has silenced its people overtly by thwarting their ability to communicate in the first place. Or, if the state passes a law that allows only a particular social group to vote, all other groups have been overtly silenced institutionally.

Covert Institutional – If the state enacts various types of voter suppression, making it more difficult and costly for citizens to vote in an election and thereby discouraging communication of their political will, then the state has silenced its people covertly. Or, if a dominant ideology or features of a culture train members of a particular social group not to attempt to communicate or even to have a view in the first place, members of that group have been covertly, institutionally silenced.²²

In short, I take silencing to occur when someone is prevented from communicating.²³ Such an outcome can be brought about more or less overtly by both individuals and institutions or social structures. As with violence, we should adopt an outcome-based account of silencing: we determine whether someone has been silenced by determining whether they have been prevented from communicating. (Consider a case where the state tries (but fails) to shut down the press or where one person tries unsuccessfully to talk over another at the dinner table; such cases would be instances of attempted but unsuccessful overt institutional and interpersonal silencing, respectively.)

This definition is more inclusive than those generally defended in the literature. Though Rae Langton grants that one way to silence someone is to

22 For more on the ways in which culture might lead to violence, see Johan Galtung, “Cultural Violence,” *Journal of Peace Research* 27, no. 3 (1990): 291–305.

23 There is an important difference between *feeling* silenced and *being* silenced. Our beliefs can make up an essential part of who we are. It is therefore easy to feel injured or deeply wounded when one’s beliefs are challenged, ridiculed, or when they fail to secure uptake. It is very often true that our feelings are a good guide to what has happened to us, but it is not always so. In the case of silencing, precisely because we identify with our beliefs, and in particular with the beliefs that are likely to be silenced, it is easy to overstep our assessment and feel as though we have been silenced when we have not. Imagine that someone is at a holiday dinner with their family and expresses an unpopular political opinion. In arguing for their view the person’s family actually hears them out, understands both their conclusion and the reasons the person gives in support of it, but ultimately does not change their minds. The person might report feeling silenced – “No one ever listens to me!” – but was not. On the other hand, if someone elderly is being cared for by their family, but they are never listened to when they report feeling a certain pain or experiencing inadequate or harmful care in their retirement community, the person would both *feel* silenced and actually *be* silenced.

“prevent them from speaking at all,”²⁴ she is concerned primarily with the ways in which someone might be silenced even though they are able to express themselves. Jennifer Hornsby and Langton later defend what has come to be the go-to definition of silencing, which says that someone is silenced when their illocutionary intention in communicating is prevented systematically from securing uptake by their intended audience.²⁵ Mary Kate McGowan argues that silencing also happens not only when someone’s illocutionary intention fails to secure uptake, but when a speaker’s sincerity – whether they mean what they are saying – in performing a particular speech act fails to secure uptake.²⁶ Kristie Dotson outlines two particular types of silencing, what she calls testimonial quieting and testimonial smothering, both owing to pernicious ignorance on the part of the intended audience. Testimonial quieting “occurs when an audience fails to identify a speaker as a knower.”²⁷ Testimonial smothering occurs when “the speaker perceives one’s immediate audience as unwilling or unable to gain the appropriate uptake of proffered testimony.”²⁸ My definition is compatible with each of these accounts – it recognizes all of them as silencing – but it also includes additional forms of silencing that these authors might omit, since, for instance, my view does not entail that silencing be grounded in pernicious ignorance, that it be systematic, or that it be focused in particular on the intended audience’s behavior (though many instances of silencing might entail all three conditions).

Have I cast the net too wide? One reason for accepting a more inclusive definition of silencing is that it better syncs up with ordinary usage. Consider Case 1 with which I began. In the current political climate in the United States, talk of silencing on college campuses is common. When student protesters disrupt or cause public lectures to be canceled, those speakers (and those commenting on the events) have often claimed that they were silenced. And, in many cases, preventing the speaker in question from communicating what students anticipate will be morally repugnant views is exactly what the protestors aim to accomplish. This is overt, interpersonal silencing. Or, consider Case 2, in which students in a college class make sexist jokes or appeal to sexist stereotypes that thereby make it difficult for women in the class to take part. This is covert,

24 Rae Langton, “Speech Acts and Unspeakable Acts,” *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 22, no. 4 (1993): 299.

25 Jennifer Hornsby and Rae Langton, “Free Speech and Illocution,” *Legal Theory* 4 (1998): 21.

26 Mary Kate McGowan, “Sincerity Silencing,” *Hypatia* 29, no. 2 (2014): 460.

27 Kristie Dotson, “Tracking Epistemic Violence, Tracking Practices of Silencing,” *Hypatia* 26, no. 2 (2011): 242.

28 *Ibid.*, 244.

interpersonal silencing.²⁹ Next, consider Case 3, in which a college blocks the use of a particular smartphone app on its network on the grounds that it was being used to communicate homophobic beliefs. This is overt, institutional silencing. Finally, consider Case 4, in which a company fires its employee for communicating racist or sexist beliefs. In this case the company does not silence the employee; that they were able to communicate their views is what led to them being fired. Instead, the company sends a message that others who express such views will also be sanctioned. This is covert, institutional silencing.

Another reason to adopt a more inclusive definition is not only that it better tracks contemporary, ordinary usage, but also that it better captures the underlying component that runs throughout many of the analyses that can be found in the literature. Hornsby and Langton, for instance, are fundamentally concerned with the disruption of communication, and focus on how misogynist ideology (and the prevalence of pornography in particular) undermines the way in which women are able specifically to communicate that they do not consent to sex.³⁰ In contrast with Hornsby and Langton, Rebecca Kukla explores what she calls discursive injustice, in which (moving beyond a focus on silencing) the performative force of a speaker's speech act is distorted, owing to the background context in which they are attempting to communicate.³¹ What is common throughout the literature is that the attempt to communicate is thwarted, either because the person to whom the communication is aimed fails to do their part (either intentionally or unintentionally), or because the background context is such that communication itself is difficult or impossible. Consider again Case 4: in firing the employee the company communicates to others that the background conditions within which they might express themselves are such that, should they express certain types of views that are inconsistent with the company's values, they will lose their jobs. Though these background conditions are not as covert as those detailed by Hornsby and Langton and by Kukla, they help set the terms within which communication

29 Things are a bit tricky here, because in such a case stereotypes would not have their meaning without a sexist ideological backdrop; in that way the case seems to be more like covert institutional silencing. But, because one particular person prevents another from communicating by telling a joke that relies on that backdrop, the other is silenced. Though I take the distinction between the four methods of silencing to be helpful, I don't mean to suggest that the boundaries between them are always sharp.

30 Hornsby and Langton, "Free Speech and Illocution."

31 Rebecca Kukla, "Performative Force, Convention, and Discursive Injustice," *Hypatia* 29, no. 2 (2014): 454.

can take place (and so also create the circumstances in which silencing can occur).

For both of these reasons, then, I contend that we should accept a broad definition of “silencing.”³² Like violence, we should adopt an outcome-based account of silencing, in which we determine whether someone was silenced in light of whether they were prevented from communicating. It then makes sense to reach the judgment that people were silenced in all four of the cases I named at the outset. The question I now want to engage is whether such silencing should ever be considered violence.

3 Is Silencing an Act of Violence?

Miranda Fricker argues that essential to one’s identity as a *person* is one’s identity as a *knower* and that to suffer from epistemic injustice is to be “wronged in one’s capacity as a knower.”³³ But what does it mean to be wronged in that way? On Fricker’s view, there are two types of epistemic injustice: testimonial and hermeneutical injustice. Someone suffers testimonial injustice when their testimony is not assigned the degree of credibility that it warrants or when they are not recognized as a credible source of knowledge in virtue of their social location (owing to what she calls “identity prejudice”).³⁴ So, if women are taken to be unreliable or to lack credibility with regard to certain types of knowledge claims, when a particular woman attempts to provide that type of knowledge, her efforts will likely fail to secure uptake. And, such lower levels of credibility need not only be assigned in virtue of particular types of knowledge; if women as a social group are seen to be unreliable or unknowledgeable, then women’s testimony will tend to fail to secure uptake across the board. Silencing, then, can be one form of testimonial injustice, in that the person who is silenced is prevented from communicating on the grounds that they are not credible sources of knowledge.

The harm here is not merely the offense of not being heard, of not being recognized as someone whose testimony is (or even could be) veridical, but the cumulative, developmental effects that such failure of recognition can

32 One might still worry, however, that other actions might count as silencing according to the account I have given. For instance, if you hang up the phone on a telemarketer, you prevent them from communicating. Although you have silenced them, on my view, you have not done so wrongfully (nor did you commit an act of violence, as will become clear in the next section).

33 Miranda Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 44.

34 *Ibid.*, 28.

have over time. In being effectively excluded from the community of knowers, one is prevented from “steadying the mind.”³⁵ As essentially social beings, we constantly check our beliefs against the beliefs of others, confirming or disconfirming them in light of those of others whom we encounter.³⁶ As Lisa Guenther argues in her work on the phenomenology of solitary confinement, we constantly rely on others to help us to solidify our beliefs that the world is the way that we understand it to be.³⁷ Over time, when prevented from engaging in such confirmation, our faith in our own understanding of the world can erode, leaving us less sure of ourselves, our sensory perceptions, methods of reasoning, and memory, and so less able to go about making knowledge claims in the first place. In other words, each of those capacities can atrophy without use or can become distorted with misuse, and so epistemic isolation can leave one diminished in their capacity as a knower.³⁸

Testimonial injustice’s effects can be magnified when it leads to or is accompanied by hermeneutical injustice, which occurs when “some significant area of one’s social experience [is] obscured from collective understanding.”³⁹ This is born from having been hermeneutically marginalized, which is the exclusion of a social group from participating in and contributing to the collective understanding.⁴⁰ If you and others who share your social location are prevented systematically from contributing to the collective understanding, you’re likely to encounter many instances of mismatch between your perception of the world and the majority (or at least epistemically dominant) group’s

35 Ibid., 53.

36 Kristie Dotson, “Conceptualizing Epistemic Oppression,” *Social Epistemology* 28, no. 2 (2014): 120–1.

37 Lisa Guenther, “The Living Death of Solitary Confinement,” *New York Times*, August 26, 2012, <https://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/08/26/the-living-death-of-solitary-confinement/?hp>, and Lisa Guenther, “Epistemic Injustice and Phenomenology,” in *The Routledge Handbook of Epistemic Injustice*, ed. Ian James Kidd, José Medina, and Gaile Pohlhaus, Jr. (New York: Routledge, 2017), 198–200. See also Gaile Pohlhaus Jr., “Discerning the Primary Epistemic Harm in Cases of Testimonial Injustice,” *Social Epistemology: A Journal of Knowledge, Culture, and Policy* (2013): 8, doi: 10.1080/02691728.2013.782581.

38 Kristie Dotson refers to this as “epistemic exclusion,” which is “an infringement on the epistemic agency of knowers that reduces her or his ability to participate in a given epistemic community.” She understands “epistemic agency” to be “the ability to utilize persuasively shared epistemic resources within a given epistemic community in order to participate in knowledge production and, if required, the revision of those same resources.” Kristie Dotson, “A Cautionary Tale: On Limiting Epistemic Oppression,” *Frontiers* 13, no. 1 (2012): 24.

39 Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice*, 158.

40 Ibid., 153.

perception of the world.⁴¹ Silencing can contribute to or cause hermeneutical injustice, in that the person who is silenced is prevented from communicating their own experience and interpretation of the world. Their hermeneutical marginalization then is likely to compound, making it more and more difficult for them to be able to contribute to the collective understanding.

Again, as with testimonial injustice, the harm is not merely offense at marginalization and exclusion (which is both appropriate and considerable) but the way in which, cumulatively and over time, suffering from hermeneutical injustice would cause you to lose trust in your own epistemic capacities. Someone who consistently experiences hermeneutical injustice might begin to feel “crazy,” to doubt their own perceptive and cognitive capacities, and to wonder whether they are able to form beliefs in a way that syncs up with the world as it actually is.⁴²

In short, suffering from epistemic injustice can make you less able to exercise your epistemic capacities across the board, including your imaginative and interpretive capacities, sensory capacities, and capacity to reason. Since those capacities are constitutive of your being a knower, and being a knower is essential to being a person, being subjected to epistemic injustice can have the effect of diminishing you as a person. Applying the account of violence I adopted earlier, it then makes sense to recognize that epistemic injustice is a form of violence when it has such effects. Since violence is the violation of the integrity of persons, and epistemic harms can violate an essential part of someone’s personhood, when someone is subjected to epistemic injustice (and it has the effect over time of violating their integrity) then they have been subjected to *epistemic violence*.⁴³ And, when silencing is the method by which epistemic injustice is enacted or perpetuated, silencing becomes an act of violence.

41 Dotson, “A Cautionary Tale,” 40.

42 See Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice*, Chapter 7. Note that hermeneutical injustice is different from the practice of “gaslighting,” (though both hermeneutical injustice and gaslighting might well resemble each other in outcome) in which “[T]he gaslighter tries (consciously or not) to induce in someone the sense that her reactions, perceptions, memories, and/or beliefs are not just mistaken, but utterly without grounds – paradigmatically, so unfounded as to qualify as crazy.” Kate Abramson, “Turning Up the Lights on Gaslighting,” *Philosophical Perspectives* 28, no. 1 (2014): 2. See also Rachel McKinnon, “Allies Behaving Badly: Gaslighting as Epistemic Injustice,” in *The Routledge Handbook of Epistemic Injustice*, ed. Ian James Kidd, José Medina, and Gaile Pohlhaus, Jr. (New York: Routledge, 2017).

43 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak is widely credited with coining the term “epistemic violence,” which centers on the way in which colonized subjects are constituted as the Other, thereby causing them not to be perceived as having epistemic agency at all. My account of epistemic violence is more inclusive and though it recognizes such an outcome as a form of potential epistemic violence (and certainly as testimonial injustice) it also includes other

Though epistemic injustice is a form of violence – specifically epistemic violence – when it results in the violation of the integrity of persons, since not all instances of epistemic injustice have the effect of violating the integrity of persons, not all epistemic injustice is a form of violence. Whether epistemic injustice is a form of violence is determined by whether any person’s integrity is violated as a result, which depends on the context, the way epistemic injustice plays out within that context, and the personal constitution of those who are affected by it.

Dotson has developed a different account of epistemic violence. She argues that successful communication relies on both the speaker and the hearer doing their parts, and that “to communicate *we all need an audience willing and capable of hearing us.*” (Emphasis in original).⁴⁴ She then goes on to define epistemic violence as: “a failure of an audience to communicatively reciprocate, either intentionally or unintentionally, in linguistic exchanges owing to pernicious ignorance. Pernicious ignorance is a reliable ignorance or a counterfactual incompetence that, in a given context, is harmful.”⁴⁵ Note that my view is more inclusive than Dotson’s in two ways. First, my view does not require that the audience suffer from pernicious ignorance. Second, and more important, my view is not focused in particular on some failure of the audience to hear, but instead allows that someone might be silenced in various ways that do not depend on the intended audience’s actions at all. Though I agree completely with Dotson that both ignorance and a failure to communicatively reciprocate will often cause epistemic violence, neither are necessary on my view. Instead, in adopting an outcome-based account of violence we determine whether violence has been done by asking whether a person’s integrity has been violated, which can occur independently of prejudice on the part of the hearer or on the hearer’s failure to reciprocate.

Just as Dotson’s view of epistemic violence is too restrictive (since it requires that epistemic violence be grounded in pernicious ignorance), so too is Fricker’s account of epistemic injustice too restrictive (since it requires that epistemic injustice be grounded in identity prejudice).⁴⁶ As I have argued elsewhere, it

types of outcomes that Spivak’s account would likely not accommodate. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?,” in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1988).

44 Dotson, “Tracking Epistemic Violence,” 238.

45 *Ibid.*, 242.

46 Fricker notes that not all hermeneutical injustice must be grounded in identity prejudice, as when focused on what she calls “incidental hermeneutical injustice,” whereas “systematic hermeneutical injustice” *is* grounded in identity prejudice. That’s all the better for my view, since when focused on incidental hermeneutical injustice we are then directed

is possible to cause the negative effects of epistemic injustice absent any identity prejudice.⁴⁷ So, I contend that just as we should adopt an outcome-based account of violence and silencing, so too should we adopt an outcome-based account of epistemic injustice. Or, barring that revision to Fricker's account, we should at least recognize that acts of silencing that are not grounded in identity prejudice can cause the same effects for those who are silenced as epistemic injustice has on its victims. Since those effects violate the epistemic integrity of those who are subjected to them, silencing can sometimes do epistemic violence to someone, regardless of whether it adheres to a strict definition of epistemic injustice.

Epistemic violence can be just as damaging as many forms of physical or psychological violence. It need not be inflicted intentionally (and indeed often is not). And, it can happen independently of any particular actor, but can instead be born from the everyday processes of normal life in an otherwise well-meaning society.⁴⁸ Return to Case 2: if the professor does nothing to prevent women in their class from being excluded from the community of knowers, then even though the professor doesn't believe that women ought to be attributed less credibility than men, women in the class might still suffer testimonial injustice as a result. In the same way hermeneutical injustice is also possible. In a case of an extremely powerful hegemonic ideology, it might be literally unimaginable for someone to conceive of the world in some other way. They might manage to endorse and recommend that ideology to others through countless actions and thereby perpetuate it without intending to.⁴⁹ If that ideology is harmful and leaves those whose experience of the world fails to sync up with it worse off in a way that undermines their capacity as knowers, they do violence to others even though they not only don't intend to, but cannot even imagine that their actions might do so.

Note that, according to the outcome-based account of violence I have been developing, in a situation where someone is silenced but they do not suffer deleterious effects to their epistemic capacities, the silencing they experience is not an act of violence. This implication is one that some might find troubling. If someone is very confident and secure in their epistemic capacities and is not undermined by being silenced, then even if they are silenced, since their

to the outcome of the injustice, as I am arguing we should be for all types of epistemic injustice. Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice*, 158.

47 Barrett Emerick, "Empathy and a Life of Moral Endeavor," *Hypatia* 31, no. 1 (2016): 171–86.

48 I here borrow from Iris Marion Young's analysis of oppression. Iris Marion Young, "Five Faces of Oppression," *The Philosophical Forum* 16, no. 4 (1988): 271–2.

49 José Medina, *The Epistemology of Resistance: Gender and Racial Oppression, Epistemic Injustice, and Resistant Imaginations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 96–109.

integrity has not been violated, violence has not been done to them. Return to Case 1, in which a speaker is prevented from giving a public talk at a college campus. The speaker might be very confident and sure of their epistemic capacities; though they might feel frustrated that they were prevented from speaking (either because their invitation was rescinded or because protests made their talk difficult to hear) they do not suffer a loss of faith in themselves. In that case they have not suffered violation, and so though they were silenced, that silencing was not an act of violence. That does not mean that the silencing to which they were subjected was not wrongful or in other ways harmful – it might very well be. Furthermore, it's also important to recognize that, even though the speaker might not suffer epistemic violence in such a case, others who witness the silencing might not be so confident and secure in their epistemic capacities. If those capacities are diminished as a result of the speaker being silenced, those audience members might suffer collateral epistemic violence. Regardless of whether such collateral violence occurs, even though (on my view) some actions that we might commonly call violence turn out not to be (in so far as no actual violation of integrity occurs) that doesn't mean that *attempted* violence should not be blamed, nor does it mean that acts that are unintentionally or accidentally acts of violence require blame: those remain open questions that require additional argumentation and context. Similarly, consider a case in which one person attempts, but fails, to silence another. That they have neither silenced the other nor done epistemic violence to them does not mean that they have not acted wrongly; that also remains an open question. My point here is that for silencing to be an act of violence, it must result in a violation of integrity. The question of whether silencing someone in a way that *causes* epistemic violence is wrongful is the one to which I will now turn.

4 **When to Silence Others**

There are many good reasons to silence someone. Consider, for instance, standard examples of what are commonly taken to be acceptable legal limitations of free speech, like the fact that it is illegal to disingenuously shout “fire” in a crowded place, or for someone who knows classified information to share it with the press, or for doctors to disclose sensitive information about their patients. Teachers and professors also silence their students in various ways. They prevent their students from communicating many things in class discussion by helping them stay on topic if they start to wander and by telling some talkative students they need to be quiet to create space for less talkative students to

contribute. Finally, parents and guardians limit their children's time on social media or their phones, thereby preventing them from communicating freely.

All three sets of examples illustrate that it is uncontroversial to think that it can be morally appropriate for someone to be silenced, either because doing so promotes the greater good (preventing someone from shouting "fire," sharing classified information), because doing so prevents the violation of others' rights (patients' rights to privacy, quiet students' rights to take part in class discussion, and all students' rights to have that discussion be a productive and effective learning environment), or because it is in the best interests of the person who is silenced (limiting a child's access to social media). So, though silencing sounds bad (and often *is* bad) it is often positively good (as well as totally mundane).

I suggest instead that it is not silencing simpliciter to which we should object, but silencing that does epistemic violence to others. There are additional, instrumental reasons to object to silencing, like concerns about an overly interventionist state or the ways in which social and scientific knowledge might be hindered as a result, but I won't explore them here. Instead, my purpose is to focus just on the claim that silencing can be an act of epistemic violence. Why worry about that silencing in particular? For the same reason that we should worry about violence in all its forms. If violence is the violation of a person's integrity, and persons are intrinsically valuable, then all violence is *prima facie* bad; if we lived in an entirely just and morally perfect world then there would be, at the least, no nonconsensual violence.⁵⁰ But, we do not live in such a world and the *prima facie* reason not to commit violence is trumped by other sometimes stronger factors, like the right to defend yourself from violence and the obligation to protect others from violence.⁵¹

In appealing to both the right of self-defense and the obligation to defend another, I am assuming that, in such cases, the only way to protect yourself and others is by committing acts of violence. But, in those cases, though violence is bad, it is still permissible or obligatory. Since silencing can, in some circumstances, violate a person's integrity (undermining their epistemic capacities in a way that undermines their personhood), and since some types of speech have the effect of silencing others, in those circumstances where you must silence someone in order to protect yourself or others, you ought to even if doing so will be an act of epistemic violence.

50 For instance, one might believe that contact sports like boxing are permissible, so long as they are consensual.

51 In making such assumptions I am rejecting pacifism, which says that violence is never justified.

Consider again Case 2: given background sexist ideologies, it is all too easy for women to feel as if they don't belong in a college environment in general, or in a specific class or discipline in particular. Imagine that, as a result of systematic exposure to such ideologies (and the jokes and comments in Case 2 that help to perpetuate them), a student comes to doubt herself deeply and to lose trust in her epistemic capacities, such that her epistemic integrity is diminished and rendered unstable.⁵² In short, she becomes less of a knower, and since being a knower is an essential part of being a person, her integrity as a person is undermined. That student suffers, in short, from epistemic violence by way of testimonial injustice as a result of having been silenced by those who use such language. The professor has an obligation to try to prevent such violence; is it permissible for them to do so by silencing others who would use such language in class, even if doing so would constitute epistemic violence for those silenced in the long run?

Things become more complicated when we recognize that it's not just particular terms (like sexist language) that can have such an effect; some *views*, even when expressed in ways that appear to be polite or follow norms of decorum, are themselves likely to be silencing. Consider, for instance, the sexist stereotype that women are bad at math; even if a particular math teacher is not sexist and conducts class in a gender-neutral way, it's likely that at least some women in the class will still be silenced by stereotype threat and the norm that says that "people like them" don't have anything to contribute to conversations like those held in class.⁵³ If others in the class make jokes that tread on that stereotype, or circulate news articles that claim to have discovered why women are bad at math, should the professor prevent the expression or discussion of the view?

I hope to have demonstrated that while a great deal of silencing is unobjectionable, one primary reason why silencing becomes problematic is when it is an act of epistemic violence. But, I have also taken for granted that it is sometimes permissible to use violence to prevent other violence, either directed at yourself or another, at least when there are no other options available. At the same time, as I have argued in defending an outcome-based account of violence, we often don't know in advance when an action will do violence to another. And, when we recognize that silencing can sometimes be an act of violence (even if unintentionally so) how does someone know when they

52 I want to be clear that many students who experience that type of environment do not come to doubt themselves in this way and so do not suffer this type of violence. But, at least one reason why we should be concerned about creating an inclusive learning community is to avoid this type of epistemic atrophy.

53 Spencer, Steven J., Steele, Claude M., and Quinn, Diane M., "Stereotype Threat and Women's Math Performance," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 35, no. 1 (1999): 4–28.

ought to silence another? I don't intend here to offer a one-size fits all answer. Instead, what follows is a list of general factors that ought to be considered when trying to decide whether silencing that does violence to another would be justified in a particular case:

- Someone's speech would likely cause epistemic violence or be otherwise harmful to others;
- The speaker would be culpable for the epistemic violence or harm they cause (because they should know better);
- Silencing would be beneficial to the speaker (in that you prevent them from committing culpable epistemic violence against another);
- Silencing someone better serves an underlying commitment to communication, better promotes the flourishing of the epistemic community, or enhances (rather than undermines) speech in general;
- Silencing prevents the communication of speech that would promote injustice by contributing to unjust ideologies that are likely to do violence to subordinated social groups;
- Silencing promotes hermeneutical justice by allowing those who might otherwise be hermeneutically marginalized to contribute to the collective understanding, thereby promoting a more complete, less partial and distorted collective understanding of the world;⁵⁴
- Silencing would do the least amount of harm or violate the fewest duties and rights of all those affected.

I do not claim that this list is exhaustive, nor do I claim that each one of these factors would always outweigh all other considerations in all contexts. Furthermore, I do not claim that whether any of these factors will obtain is always knowable; indeed, as is very often the case in trying to act rightly, you run a moral risk in which your efforts might end up doing more harm than good. But, since it is the case that refraining from action is itself action, opting out altogether is not an option. In light of that fact, it is my hope that in trying to answer the thorny and painful questions exemplified by the four cases with which I began, these desiderata are morally and politically useful.

The advocate for the unfettered right to free speech might reply that we could easily avoid the difficulty of such questions by being willing to risk causing epistemic violence and pursuing truth wherever it goes, independent of such moral or political consequences. This is the wrong approach to take, in part because as feminist epistemologists have spent decades demonstrating, there is no neutral place to stand in choosing which questions to ask or which

54 Alison Jaggar, *Feminist Politics and Human Nature* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1983), Chapter 11; Dotson, "A Cautionary Tale," 40; Dotson, "Conceptualizing Epistemic Oppression," 127.

lines of discussion to pursue. What that means is that in choosing to throw open the door and allow all conversations to take place while recognizing that some conversations will do epistemic violence to members of particular social groups, you in fact take not a neutral position, but one that perpetuates existing injustice. In short, if you grant that silencing can be an act of violence but you claim that we should ignore moral and political considerations like those I named above, then you do take a side, despite claiming to adopt a position of neutrality in which all positions should be free to see the light of day.

5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have defended the claim that silencing can be an act of epistemic violence. Though I believe that it can and that it is one that is very common, we should not despair. In adopting an outcome-based account of violence we saw that silencing becomes an act of violence when someone's epistemic agency is violated. Since such violation often (though not always) occurs as a result of systematic and repetitive instances of epistemic harm *over time*, I remain hopeful about the ways in which we can shore up each other's epistemic capacities and help each other to become less vulnerable to violation. Indeed, in the long run it should be the goal of those working to promote social justice to bring about a world in which everyone is deeply confident in their own epistemic abilities and where no ideologies would tread on anyone's social location in a way that would leave anyone vulnerable to epistemic violence. That is not to say that we ought to aim for the type of individualistic imperviousness that my critic might claim everyone ought to pull themselves up by their epistemic bootstraps to achieve. It is instead to note that it is precisely because we are fundamentally social beings who are susceptible to the influence of others that we should work to create the conditions where everyone is able to trust themselves in a way that would render all disagreement free of violence. Whether we could ever achieve such a world remains an open question. In "the unjust meantime,"⁵⁵ some views ought to be silenced in order to avoid foreclosing that possibility.

55 I here borrow Alison Jaggar's apt phrase to note that what actions and policies we ought to pursue in a perfectly just world are often different from those we ought to pursue in a world like ours, which is shot through with injustice. Alison Jaggar, *Abortion: Three Perspectives*, Coauthored with Michael Tooley, Philip E. Devine, and Celia Wolf-Devine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 145.

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“White people, we need to stop being so damn *fragile!*”: White and Male Fragility as Epistemic Arrogance

Megan Mitchell

In a 2013 Twitter battle, women of color used the term “white fragility” to call out the extreme reactions of white women to intersectional critiques of their feminist practice.¹ In the years since, it has been used to help explain police brutality towards unarmed black people, our national anxiety around supposed attacks on free speech, and any number of other cases of whites acting with anger and hostility towards people of color.² Along with “male fragility,” white fragility may have contributed to the rise of Donald Trump.³ One blogger argued that fragility is itself racial violence.⁴

Since Robin DiAngelo first identified white fragility in a 2011 essay, its uptake in popular discourse to illuminate this array of phenomena hints at its potentially broad explanatory power.⁵ Moreover, assuming these are instances of white and male fragility, it is profoundly destructive. But what exactly is “white fragility”? Is it a single thing or does it describe a collection of, perhaps closely related, phenomena? What is its connection to “male fragility”? What makes fragility “white” or “male”—is it simply a matter of the identities of the

1 Thanks to Jeanine Weekes Schroer for bringing this case to my attention.

2 See Monique Judge, “White Fragility Leads to White Violence: Why Conversations About Race with White People Fall Apart,” *The Root*, January 15, 2017, <https://www.theroot.com/white-fragility-leads-to-white-violence-why-conversations-1791233086>; Bennett Carpenter, “Free Speech, Black Lives and White Fragility,” *The Chronicle*, January 19, 2016, <https://www.dukechronicle.com/article/2016/01/free-speech-black-lives-and-white-fragility>; and Jenn M. Jackson, “How White Male Fragility Disrupts Daily Life,” *WaterCoolerConvos*, January 7, 2016, <http://watercoolerconvos.com/2016/01/07/how-white-male-fragility-disrupts-daily-life/>.

3 See, for example, Christopher Keely, “Racism Didn’t Elect Donald Trump. White Fragility Did,” *Huffington Post*, November 13, 2016, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/racism-didnt-elect-donald-trump-white-fragility-did_us_58288320e4b02b1f5257a463; and Charles M. Blow, “Trump Reflects White Male Fragility,” *New York Times*, August 4, 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/04/opinion/trump-reflects-white-male-fragility.html?mcubz=3>.

4 Amelia Schroyer, “White Fragility is Racial Violence,” *Huffington Post*, September 9, 2015, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/amelia-shroyer/white-fragility-is-racial_b_8151054.html.

5 Robin DiAngelo, “White Fragility,” *The International Journal of Critical Pedagogy* 3, no. 3 (2011): 54–70.

people who harbor it, or something else? Is fragility itself objectionable or is it a usually benign mechanism that has become, intentionally or unintentionally, a tool of oppression? Is it violence?

In this chapter, I answer these questions by giving a unified analysis of fragility (white and/or male) as a kind of failure of intellectual humility. Drawing on DiAngelo's initial articulation of white fragility and Whitcomb, et al.'s conception of intellectual humility, I argue that whites in the grip of racist ideology and males in the grip of sexist ideologies may develop a disposition to epistemic arrogance with regards to the domains of racist and sexist oppression, respectively.⁶ Whites and/or males (hereafter, "whites and males") with fragility will view their own perspectives as more reliable because they are white and male. Consciously or unconsciously, the fragile agent mistakenly believes that whites and males enjoy an epistemic advantage when discussing or critically analyzing these domains.⁷ When that status is challenged, or their limitations are exposed, they respond inappropriately. As failures of intellectual humility, white and male fragility are epistemic vices in the individual. As instances of epistemic violence that contribute to physical violence against the oppressed, white and male fragility are also objectionable in their function and impact.

1 Fragility Unpacked

In a central case from her essay, DiAngelo describes a white man in an employer-mandated diversity training session, angry, red-faced and pounding the table, yelling that white people, not people of color, are the primary targets of employment discrimination. In a room in which all of the employees are white, he is infuriated by the trainers' assertion that racism is a system in which whites hold social and institutional power.⁸ In another instance, a white woman is unable to return to a training session because of criticism she received from her coworkers of color. Their feedback so upset her that she feels she might literally die.⁹

Connecting these cases, DiAngelo identifies the underlying problem as a lack of psychological stamina when confronting challenges to white supremacy. She

6 Dennis Whitcomb, Heather Battaly, Jason Baehr, and Daniel Howard-Snyder, "Intellectual humility: Owning our limitations," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 94, no. 3 (2017): 509–39.

7 Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for urging me to clarify this point.

8 DiAngelo, "White Fragility," 54–5.

9 *Ibid.*, 65.

writes, “White fragility is a state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves,” where racial stress is anything that disrupts the racial status quo.¹⁰ These defensive moves include emotional responses of fear, anger, guilt and behaviors like arguing, silence, and leaving the conversation. All of these reactions, intentionally or unintentionally, fulfill a similar function: they end productive conversation and, by doing so, maintain the white racial hierarchy.¹¹

DiAngelo’s initial identification and analysis of fragility is a helpful starting point, but it also contains some ambiguity. To begin, there are a number of ways in which one can lack psychological stamina in situations of racial stress. One could, for example, quickly abandon her core beliefs when confronted with even meagre counter-evidence. Or, one could become easily distracted in situations where it would be greatly in her interest to pay close attention. Neither of these appear to be the sort of failures that mark out white fragility. And, in a different context, some of the same emotions or behaviors, such as anger or silence, could be evidence of extreme psychological stamina. Imagine a black person, in a situation of racial stress, who dares to manifest anger or stoic silence. What makes it the case that in the scenarios DiAngelo presents their behavior is properly read as defensive? The answer cannot merely be that, unlike the anger or silence of a black individual, these defend white supremacy. Other behaviors could do that just as well. Rather, it appears that these acts are defensive relative to the white individual. What is it about her that they protect?

1.1 *Racism and Sexism as Ideology*

To fully understand what is occurring in cases of white and male fragility, assume racism and sexism consist, at least in part, in ideologies. Articulating one influential account of this sort, Tommie Shelby writes, “Racism is a set of misleading beliefs and implicit attitudes about ‘races’ or race relations whose wide currency serves a hegemonic social function.”¹² These widespread

¹⁰ Ibid., 57.

¹¹ Ibid., 65–6.

¹² Tommie Shelby, “Racism, moralism, and social criticism,” *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race* 11, no. 1 (2014): 66. According to Sally Haslanger, Shelby’s view, as I present it here, is an example of a cognitivist account of ideology, consisting of propositional attitudes that are subject to critique on the basis of “whether the propositions believed are justified, and whether the inferences drawn on their basis are sound.” Sally Haslanger, “Racism, Ideology, and Social Movements,” *Res Philosophica* 94, no. 1 (2017): 3. However, Haslanger argues that ideologies are not only propositional, but also include non-cognitive components, such as those sub-doxastic mechanisms that give rise to beliefs or

beliefs, which structure how we understand and interpret the social world and so maintain unjust social relations, are absorbed through schools, media, etc. Whatever its particular form or origin, ideology is subject to epistemic critique on two fronts: first, the beliefs themselves are false or there are large gaps in the ideologue's knowledge. Second, the processes of belief formation are defective. They are characterized by what Shelby calls, broadly, cognitive defects. These can include, Shelby writes, "inconsistency, oversimplification, exaggeration, half-truth, equivocation, circularity, neglect of pertinent facts, false dichotomy, obfuscation, misuse of "authoritative" sources, hasty generalization, and so forth."¹³

Still, ideologies are difficult to dislodge. For one, they may be self-reinforcing. Unlike an isolated false belief, ideologies tend to have multiple layers of justification, each of which may have to be separated and attacked individually in order to begin to break them down. That these beliefs are widespread may add to their apparent legitimacy and further insulate them from attack.¹⁴ Second, they can change and morph in ways that render them resistant to critique. For example, the thoroughly disproven notion of a natural racial hierarchy has evolved over time into a belief that some non-whites, perhaps for reasons that are culturally contingent, tend to be less hardworking or intelligent.¹⁵ Finally, they may be largely unconscious or implicit, based on or consisting of common assumptions that justify patterns of behavior or practices without critical reflection.¹⁶

These features are compounded by the fact that those in the grip of an ideology are likely to hold these beliefs in an irrational way. For some theorists, this feature of racist or sexist ideology is central—it marks the difference between

constitute our tools of reasoning. Our collective cultural and linguistic resources and practices may also be part of a racist or sexist ideology. By relying on a cognitivist ideological account, I am not denying that the ideological picture may be more complex, including cognitive and non-cognitive components. Instead, I intend merely to isolate some troubling cognitive features of ideologies and their relationship to the development of epistemic virtue or vice. I remain open to the possibility that these beliefs and the disposition to epistemic arrogance they invite may be the consequence of sub-doxastic mechanisms also shaped by ideology, and may require a change in culture to overcome.

13 Tommie Shelby, "Ideology, racism, and critical social theory," *The Philosophical Forum* 34, no. 2 (2003): 166.

14 Shelby, "Racism, moralism, and social criticism," 67.

15 *Ibid.*, 66–67.

16 Shelby, "Ideology, racism, and critical social theory," 161, and "Racism, moralism, and social criticism," 67.

an individual who is racially ignorant and one who is genuinely racist.¹⁷ Paradigmatically, this irrationality is a false consciousness, in that individuals are blind to the real, self-interested motives or affective attitudes that push them towards endorsing ideology.¹⁸ Regardless of whether false consciousness is necessary for racist or sexist ideologies, it is helpful in making sense of their persistence. Humans not only often adopt beliefs for reasons that have little to do with their truth or principles of rationality, but also they are loath to abandon beliefs in which they have a non-cognitive investment.

Beyond issues with the structure and content of ideologies and how they are formed and held, it seems ideology can also give rise to epistemic vices or create conditions in which it is difficult to cultivate epistemic virtues. These deficiencies in our epistemic character are perhaps responsible for the development of ideology in the first place, but they may also be maintained by ideology. For example, Miranda Fricker argues that we ought to cultivate a virtue of testimonial justice, to rectify a pervasive disposition to downgrade credibility on the basis of identity prejudice, an apparent epistemic vice born of ideologies.¹⁹

Perhaps, as I suggest is the case with white and male fragility, ideology can also interfere with our ability to cultivate or practice more familiar epistemic virtues. Consider two possible interactions in which a white person, in the grip of racist ideology, believes that Muslims are more violent than Christians. In both cases, the white person's beliefs are based on a small selection of news reports, misunderstandings and misinterpretations of the Koran, and a failure to attribute instances of Christian extremism to religious belief. But, after a similar initial pronouncement, the conversations diverge sharply. In the first scenario, when someone calls her belief “racist,” she engages. When challenged, she admits to gaps in her knowledge, and brings additional evidence to bear. She is interested in issues of interpretation, and is inclined to defer to experts. She worries about inconsistency, and works to specify her claims to avoid it. In the second, she is offended by the accusation that her claim is racist. She

17 See, for example, Kwame Anthony Appiah, “Racisms,” in *Anatomy of Racism*, ed. David Theo Goldberg (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), 3–17.

18 Shelby, “Ideology, racism, and critical social theory,” 170–172.

19 Miranda Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), chs. 3–5. Fricker does not herself characterize testimonial injustice as a vice, though she suggests that the virtue of testimonial justice is needed to combat this tendency towards credibility deficiency. See Heather Battaly, “Testimonial Injustice, Epistemic Vice, and Virtue Epistemology,” in *The Routledge Handbook of Epistemic Injustice*, ed. Ian James Kidd, José Medina, and Gaile Pohlhaus, Jr. (New York: Routledge, 2017), 223–31, for an argument that testimonial injustice constitutes an epistemic vice.

initially refuses to admit that her knowledge may be incomplete, and when confronted with evidence to that effect, she withdraws. She blames her recalcitrant attitude on her interlocutor's tone and refuses to engage further.

What marks the difference between these two cases? For one, the first probably seems unbelievable. It is what we might hope for, but rarely find, when confronting someone about their racist or sexist beliefs. We might think we prefer it because she is less racist than the second interlocutor. But, at the end of this conversation, she may be no closer than the second to abandoning her racist belief. As noted above, racist beliefs are difficult to dislodge for a number of reasons. The mere fact that she is willing to entertain challenges or critiques and admit to gaps in her knowledge does not necessarily indicate that she will give up her racist beliefs or that they are less deep or deeply ingrained. She may have many layers of racist justification to overcome. On the basis of this conversation, her belief might even transform into an iteration that is more difficult to counter. She might now assert a mere tendency on the part of practicing Muslims to violence, which admits of many exceptions. Meanwhile, our second interlocutor may have far fewer racist beliefs or assumptions underlying her views about Muslims and if she can be engaged, her perspective is more easily changed. It is an aberration in her fairly egalitarian outlook.

If our preference for the first interlocutor over the second is not that she is less racist, we might have high hopes she can become so. This is because she, unlike the second interlocutor, practices epistemic humility. If she appears to be an unbelievable hypothetical it is because, I argue in the next section, racist and sexist ideology tends to cultivate a disposition towards intellectual arrogance on the part of whites and males in the domains of race and sex oppression, respectively. Thus, we would not typically expect to find someone with racist and sexist ideological commitments who lacks that arrogance. It is this disposition that is the essence of white and male fragility.

1.2 *Intellectual Humility and White/Male Fragility*

In this section, I briefly contrast the vice of intellectual arrogance with the virtue of intellectual humility. Doing so should give the reader a sense of what it is that I claim those with white and male fragility characteristically lack.²⁰ Next,

20 Though for simplicity's sake, I contrast intellectual arrogance with humility, I acknowledge that there are probably degrees of intellectual humility and arrogance or that individuals might instead manifest the vice of intellectual servility. I leave servility aside because I argue that the particular way in which whites and males tend to lack intellectual humility is characteristic of arrogance rather than servility—they tend to be unaware, rather than too aware, of their limitations. Nevertheless, whites and males should also take care to avoid falling into that other extreme, and failing to do so might also be

drawing on DiAngelo, I suggest some reasons for thinking that those in the grip of a racist or sexist ideology will be especially likely to manifest intellectual arrogance. Finally, I return to some cases from DiAngelo’s work and those with which I began this chapter to show how the account helps to make sense of them as instances of fragility.

Following Whitcomb, et al., I propose that we think of intellectual humility, generally, as “having the right stance towards one’s intellectual limitations,” where “the right stance is to be appropriately attentive to them and to own them.”²¹ Manifesting appropriate attentiveness is “a disposition to be aware (even just implicitly) of one’s limitations, for them to come to mind when the occasion calls for it.”²² Owning one’s limitations is a more complex set of dispositions that “includes cognitive, behavioral, motivational and affective responses to an awareness of one’s limitations.”²³ The appropriateness of any particular response (whether it qualifies as an instance of limitations-owning) will depend on the context, but the authors provide a set of characteristic dispositions to guide our understanding. They are: “(1) [to] believe that one has them; and to believe that their negative outcomes are due to them; (2) to admit or acknowledge them; (3) to care about them and take them seriously; and (4) to feel regret or dismay, but not hostility, about them.”²⁴ Both the dispositions of appropriate attentiveness and limitations-owning are necessary (and dually sufficient) for intellectual humility in an individual.

When considering applying concepts of humility and arrogance to the U.S. racial context, we might be tempted to think that as a consequence of growing up in positions of privilege, whites and males tend to lack humility in general, or that they are less likely to have humility than men and women of color or white women. If ideologies can nurture or hinder the development of certain dispositions, then perhaps whites and males will be less likely to be appropriately aware of their limitations, intellectual or otherwise, and less likely to own those limitations. Certain features of DiAngelo’s account of white fragility support this interpretation. She claims that whites possess racial arrogance

indicative of white fragility. It seems some whites and males, upon learning that they suffer from limitations in the domain of race and sex oppression, refuse to engage at all for fear of saying something wrong or making a mistake. If that refusal to engage is born of a genuine awareness of their limitations, rather than (as I assume is usually the case) the worry that they will be “unfairly” critiqued, then it is likely an example of intellectual servility, and also opposed to the virtue of intellectual humility.

21 Whitcomb, et al., “Intellectual humility,” 8.

22 Ibid., 8.

23 Ibid., 10.

24 Ibid., 11.

because of a constant bombardment of positive self-images and negative images of people of color.²⁵ This is reinforced through the centering of the white experience in media, which sends an implicit message that whites are better or more important than people of color.²⁶ And, she argues, whites are taught that their achievements are the result of their own efforts and not unearned privilege.²⁷ Extending this analysis, we see parallels in the centering of male experiences, and the availability of positive self-images that represent males as valuable beyond the limited scope of physical attractiveness or emotional support. Narratives around male success emphasize hard work and intelligence, while powerful female figures are often presented as manipulative and/or parasitic on male achievements.

If intellectual humility is simply a lack of humility with respect to our cognitive abilities and range of knowledge, then an extensive lack of humility could include a disposition in this arena as well. But, I argue that because of their content, racist and sexist ideologies are especially likely to inculcate a lack of intellectual humility for whites and males, whether or not they also give rise to arrogance in other domains. Racist and sexist ideologies include beliefs and assumptions, explicit or implicit, about the relative cognitive abilities of those who occupy different social identities, which are biased towards whites and males. For example, men are precise while women are prone to exaggeration. Whites are smart, while blacks are not. And, in precisely the sort of twist we might expect from racist ideology, even members of non-white racial groups who are stereotyped as smart are not smart in the “right” way—for instance, East Asians and Indians are perhaps calculating and logical, but not creative or novel thinkers.

Furthermore, racist and sexist ideology does not just perpetuate a set of (perhaps implicit or unconscious) beliefs that whites and males suffer from fewer cognitive defects and gaps in knowledge, generally. More central to our purposes, it cultivates the view in whites and males that because they are white and male, they are, in particular, less prone to irrational thinking and ignorance *in the domains of race and sex oppression*, respectively.²⁸ In other words, whites and males with fragility do not just take themselves to have an equally authoritative perspective, subject to the same sorts of potential limitations as

25 DiAngelo, “White Fragility,” 61.

26 *Ibid.*, 62.

27 *Ibid.*, 60.

28 Hereafter, I drop “respectively,” but in each case I mean to indicate that whites with fragility take themselves to have a special epistemic advantage in the domain of racial oppression because they are white and fragile males take themselves to have an epistemic advantage in the domain of sex oppression because they are male.

non-whites and non-males, but to enjoy privileged insight into race and sex oppression *precisely because they are white and male*.

Of course, this is odd in part because whites and males are especially unlikely to have critically explored these phenomena. After all, whites and males are not subject to these respective oppressive circumstances and so their perspectives may be somewhat limited by that lack of experience or personal engagement. However, the crucial point for analyzing and tracking white and male fragility is not that white and male perspectives may be comparatively limited with respect to some oppression and that they fail to grasp this limitation. Rather, racist and sexist ideology teaches them to view their position as white and male not as merely equal to those who are oppressed but as an epistemic benefit in these domains. In contrast to women and men of color and white women, racist and sexist ideology casts whites and males as disinterested or neutral parties, who can occupy a position of objectivity in these respective domains because they are white and male.

That this assumed epistemic benefit is linked to their social identity as white and male makes it distinct from a mere tendency to assume one's own reasons for belief are pure, while others' are suspect. Linked to pervasive and persistent ideologies, it is poised to cultivate a disposition of epistemic arrogance in whites and males that leads them to lash out, shut down, or walk away when their authority is challenged. Often, these perceived challenges come in the form of the testimony of women and men of color and white women. Sometimes they are issued by white and male allies espousing views that are usually attributed to, or take seriously the perspectives of, women and men of color and white women on issues of racist and sexist oppression. In either case, those whites and males who are speaking from or to their perspective as whites and males perceive themselves as epistemically advantaged.²⁹

To illustrate this phenomenon, take one causal mechanism from DiAngelo's work. She argues that segregation gives rise to a limited perspective for whites. In a racially segregated society, DiAngelo writes, “[whites] receive little or no

29 One of the upshots of this view of white and male fragility is that non-whites and non-males do not experience white and male fragility directly. Since they do not identify as white and male, they will not develop a disposition to epistemic arrogance in the domains of race and sex oppression on that basis. However, they may still be susceptible to it indirectly. Living in a society in which racist and sexist ideology is pervasive, they may adopt, perhaps unconsciously, an assumption that whites and males are less biased on issues of racial and sex oppression. Consequently, some men and women of color and white women may be inclined to defer to whites and males with respect to those domains or feel a greater degree of confidence in their beliefs when they are shared by many whites and males.

authentic information about racism and are thus unprepared to think about it critically or with complexity.”³⁰ They are rarely exposed to non-white perspectives, which, according to DiAngelo, results in an “[a]n inability to see or consider significance in the perspectives of people of color.”³¹ These, on their own, are worrisome knowledge gaps and cognitive limitations, the nature of which might begin to cultivate a disposition towards epistemic arrogance. But, the problem is even more acute as, DiAngelo continues, “white people are taught not to feel any loss over the absence of people of color in their lives and, in fact, this absence is what defines their schools and neighborhoods as good.”³² This extends to the epistemic context where, because the absence of non-white perspectives is coded as a positive, whites begin to view their own experiences as indicative of the universal.³³ The white experience becomes de-racialized and so neutral and objective, while the perspectives of people of color are always racialized and therefore, viewed as expressing the interests of a particular population. For example, consider how blacks who protest police shootings are thought to be motivated, at least in part, by racial anger. Meanwhile, whites who defend police are rarely portrayed as motivated by a competing racial interest in the current system. White fragility thus helps to preserve the false consciousness of racist ideology. The belief that whiteness grants one an objective perspective in evaluating racist oppression cultivates a disposition that blinds whites to their self-interested motives for believing in a racist ideology, which includes that belief in their own objectivity.

Similarly, men are taught to dismiss women’s beliefs about sex oppression as, at least partially, inappropriately motivated by certain affective attitudes and self-interest, and to see their own perspective as free of such cognitive defects. They are unlikely to attend to the ways in which their own perspective may be limited by their position or interest in maintaining sex oppression. The dynamic of male fragility is highlighted in the exchange featured at the end of an episode of the Netflix series, *Master of None*. The main male character, Dev, is skeptical of girlfriend Rachel’s assertion that another character’s behavior was sexist. Dev continues to search for other interpretations of the situation even after Rachel’s reading is endorsed by one of Dev’s close female friends. In defending his reaction, Dev attempts to stake out a position of epistemic neutrality. He claims that he prefers not to think of people as being “awful,” and argues that unless he is a “sexist monster” his motivation in defending the third

30 DiAngelo, “White Fragility,” 58.

31 Ibid., 58.

32 Ibid., 58.

33 Ibid., 59.

party cannot be ascribed to his being male.³⁴ Though Dev is quick to subject the women’s perspectives to scrutiny on the basis of their identity, he is hurt and angered by the suggestion that his own analysis might be affected by any self-interested motives or inappropriate emotions. Through an ideology which teaches men that, unlike women, they can act as neutral arbiters of sexism, he has developed the disposition to epistemic arrogance.

Let’s return to DiAngelo’s paradigm cases. First, consider the white man who is angry at the diversity trainers. We now have a framework through which we can conceptualize his lack of psychological stamina and his aggressive behavior. Epistemic arrogance in this domain is consistent with lashing out, particularly when his conscious belief that “white men are the primary targets of employment discrimination” is challenged by interlocutors who claim, or appear to him to claim, a position of epistemic authority over him. Second, understanding white fragility in terms of a failure of epistemic humility gives us two ways of interpreting DiAngelo’s anecdote about the woman who left a diversity training because she was unable to handle feedback from her coworkers of color. On one, as with the angry man, she spoke from a disposition of arrogance and she is insulted by her coworkers’ feedback because she judges it to be an illegitimate or inappropriate challenge to her epistemic authority. It is this insult that gives rise to the feeling that she might literally die. On a second interpretation, she has become aware of her limitations thanks to her coworkers’ comments but, because she lacks humility, she is not disposed to respond to those limitations in the right way. She does not own them. Instead, she reacts by both wallowing in them (removing herself from the group) and attributing the negative consequences of the shame or hurt at being corrected to her coworkers’ critiques rather than to her own limitations.

This latter interpretation may also help illustrate the way in which white feminists’ reactions on Twitter to critiques from women of color feminists were an expression of white fragility. Even if white feminists sometimes acknowledged their limitations when responding to these critiques (and so, arguably met one condition of epistemic humility), they reacted by calling their critics “bullies.” They ascribed the hostile tone of the conversation entirely to the women of color’s manner of critique, and not to their own limitations. This is not to say that critics can never be too harsh or that intellectual humility requires that we accept ill-treatment when we display ignorance or are in error. But, given the impact that those limitations had on women of color, both in that instance and historically, owning those limitations (and so, meeting

34 Andy Blitz, (writer), and Lynn Shelton, (director), “Ladies and Gentlemen,” *Master of None*, November 6, 2015, Netflix.

the second condition of epistemic humility) would require that white feminists at least partially (and perhaps fully) attribute negative outcomes to them. Though a failure of this second sort may be a less common disposition in a society marked by the overlapping oppressions of white supremacy and male dominance, it is equally an instance of fragility. Both dispositions are manifestations of an epistemic vice in the individual who harbors them and so, subject to criticism.

2 Why Fragility Is Wrong: from Epistemic Vice to Epistemic Violence

In the preceding section, I argued that white and male fragility commonly manifest as intellectual arrogance. Fragile whites and males do not merely deny that they likely have some deficiencies in understanding racial and sex oppression because of their social position, they take that position to give them special insight into those phenomena. Placing fragility in the context of epistemic virtue and vice provides tools for explaining why fragility is objectionable in the individual. However, a normative analysis that focuses entirely on the psyche of the fragile person risks downplaying the impact of fragility and how it functions to maintain white and male supremacy. In this final section, I briefly explore this additional normative dimension. Specifically, I argue that white and male fragility is epistemic violence that silences the testimony of marginalized people about the nature and existence of their oppressive circumstances.

In examining impact, it is crucial to acknowledge that white and male fragility aids and perpetuates physical violence against the oppressed. For example, when white police officers and their defenders dismiss community outrage because they assume that they, unlike their detractors, can objectively assess whether a decision to shoot, to arrest, to choke, and to beat was justified, their epistemic arrogance threatens the lives of black citizens. Or, when whites and males dismiss a Presidential candidate's statements as "not really racist" and "not really sexist" over the loud protests of their fellow citizens and vote him into office, marginalized people are put at greater risk. And, when white and male liberals harbor an epistemic disposition that prevents them from acknowledging or taking seriously their complicity in a system of patriarchal white supremacy then that system, with its attendant assaults on the bodies of the oppressed, will continue to thrive.

In each case, these physical impacts of fragility are predicated on its function in a communicative exchange—fragility ensures that, when challenging their oppression, members of marginalized groups will fail to receive uptake

by their audience. Drawing on work by Omi and Winant, DiAngelo argues that in the U.S. we live in an unstable racial equilibrium, “which is kept equilibrated by the State, but is still unstable due to continual conflicts of interests and challenges to the racial order.”³⁵ When such conflicts or challenges arise, white fragility is an unconscious disposition that “functions to restore equilibrium... [through] resistance towards the trigger, shutting down and/or tuning out, indulgence in emotional incapacitation such as guilt or hurt feeling, exiting or a combination of these responses.”³⁶

Focusing on the function of fragility not only reveals its connection to physical violence but to epistemic violence as well. In her article, “Tracking Epistemic Violence, Tracking Practices of Silencing,” Kristie Dotson defines epistemic violence as “a refusal, intentional or unintentional, of an audience to communicatively reciprocate a linguistic exchange owed to pernicious ignorance.”³⁷ Pernicious ignorance is “ignorance that is consistent or follows from a predictable epistemic gap in cognitive resources” and harms another individual or group.³⁸ Using the concept of epistemic violence, Dotson isolates two forms of testimonial silencing that affect oppressed groups. The first, which she terms “testimonial quieting,” “occurs when an audience fails to identify a speaker as a knower.”³⁹ Active identity prejudices that the audience holds about the speaker in virtue of her group membership can produce a reliable ignorance on the part of the audience and, depending on the context, may harm the speaker in her intellectual courage or agency or harm a group by suppressing their collective knowledge. Testimonial smothering, meanwhile, includes cases where a speaker refrains from giving testimony either because she judges it too risky in that context, or because the audience exhibits testimonial incompetence.⁴⁰ In the latter case, Dotson explains, the speaker judges that the audience cannot “clearly comprehend the testimony and, if required, would be [un]able to detect possible inaccuracies in her/his comprehension.”⁴¹

As Dotson notes, there is a widespread agreement that, on account of their group membership, oppressed groups can be silenced. Indeed, this notion of silencing as a distinctive wrong—a type of epistemic violence—against members of a group has received some uptake in U.S. popular culture, though with

35 DiAngelo, “White Fragility,” 58.

36 *Ibid.*, 57.

37 Kristie Dotson, “Tracking Epistemic Violence, Tracking Practices of Silencing,” *Hypatia* 26, no. 2 (2011): 238.

38 *Ibid.*, 238.

39 *Ibid.*, 242.

40 *Ibid.*, 245.

41 *Ibid.*, 245.

wide disagreement over who precisely are its victims. It is an accusation leveled against those across the political spectrum. For example, some contend that there is a practice of silencing those who hold politically unpopular views on college campuses by left-leaning intellectuals and activists.⁴² Their opponents argue that marginalized groups are already silenced on those campuses and specious claims that free speech is under attack are a means of further silencing their concerns.⁴³

Whether or not these are, in fact, practices of silencing will depend on their connection to epistemic violence. They must be failures of communicative exchange due to pernicious ignorance of the audience which result in harm to the speaker. Practices of silencing, as opposed to instances of silencing, are reliable—the audience as an epistemic agent “will consistently fail to track certain truths.”⁴⁴ A controversial speaker may be quieted on college campuses if, owing to social stereotypes about, say, the intellectual capacities of his group, the audience refuses to hear him and in doing so, harms him as an epistemic agent. Such speakers are not silenced if the audience rejects the content of their ideas rather than the speaker as a potential knower. When that rejection issues from considered disagreement rather than pernicious ignorance, the speaker is not a victim of epistemic violence. If, knowing that their largely white audience and peers will misunderstand, students of color remain silent about the many instances of racist aggression they experience on campus, they are smothered. They are not smothered if they choose not to speak to an administration that is prepared to hear their concerns.

Using this framework, it appears that white and male fragility are practices of silencing. Fragile whites and males are not disposed to appropriately attend to their limitations in judgment with respect to race and sex oppression. This reliable ignorance or cognitive gap, instilled through a racist and sexist ideology that conflates whiteness and maleness with objectivity and neutrality, means that whites and males will consistently fail to judge non-whites and non-males as their epistemic equals in these domains. As Dotson notes, the

42 See, for example, Kirsten Powers, *The Silencing: How the Left is Killing Free Speech* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery Publishing, 2015).

43 See Shaun R. Harper, “No, protestors who point out campus racism aren’t silencing anyone,” *Washington Post*, March 10, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2016/03/10/protests-against-campus-racism-dont-threaten-free-speech-they-embrace-it/?utm_term=.b3fdd10d08b0; Kate Manne and Jason Stanley, “When Free Speech Becomes a Political Weapon,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, November 13, 2015, <http://www.chronicle.com/article/When-Free-Speech-Becomes-a/234207>; and Jason Stanley, “The Free-Speech Fallacy,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, February 26, 2016, <http://www.chronicle.com/article/The-Free-Speech-Fallacy/235520>.

44 Dotson, “Tracking Epistemic Violence,” 241.

specific harms caused by such practices of quieting are context dependent.⁴⁵ But, it is fair to say that insofar as fragility is an unjustifiable heightening of the epistemic status of whites and males, and so routinely devalues the testimony of others, it is poised to cause harm to both the individual interlocutor and to suppress the knowledge of the marginalized group.

Through white and male fragility oppressed groups may also be smothered. The disposition not to attend to or own one's limitations is accompanied by a range of emotional responses and behaviors. Fragile whites and males may become angry, upset or withdrawn. The range of reactions characteristic of those in the grip of this epistemic arrogance can make contradictory testimony on the part of men and women of color and white women risky. Even when not explosive or violent, their reactions make clear that whites and males are unable to acknowledge or own the limits of their perspective. Conversations on such topics may feel like an exercise in futility and so stifle the testimony of oppressed people before they even begin to speak.

This risk may be heightened for those non-whites and non-males who possess expertise in these domains. Non-whites or non-males who claim epistemic privilege directly challenge the belief that only whites and males can be neutral arbiters of race and sex oppression, which underlies the disposition to epistemic arrogance. By assuming the space of objectivity and neutrality for themselves, they remove whites and males from their familiar positions. Consequently, whites and males may feel challenged or triggered before the content of their beliefs is ever discussed. They may employ a number of strategies to regain their privileged epistemic status, including adopting the views of the expert without any real critical engagement. DiAngelo describes white progressives in diversity training sessions who “insulate themselves via claims that they are beyond the need for engaging with the content because they already had a class on this or already know this.”⁴⁶ Another option is to engage in aggressive strategies of “tone-policing,” where those with expertise are subject to scrutiny of their ability to mimic white and male norms of “neutrality.” Any hint of emotion or deviation from “civil” discourse is taken as evidence that one is not the expert one professes to be. Similarly, a group of non-whites or non-males confirming each other's experience and lending credibility to one another in a linguistic exchange with a white or male audience can result in whites and males feeling “ganged up on.” This is an implicit accusation that the group has failed to engage with civility and so, is not entitled to the attention of

45 Ibid., 243.

46 DiAngelo, “White Fragility,” 55.

the audience.⁴⁷ All such strategies serve to discredit the experts, undermining their epistemic agency and potentially smothering future testimony.

In this section, I argued that attention to the individual is not sufficient for a full normative evaluation of white and male fragility. We must attend to its violent impact, both physical and epistemic, on marginalized groups. Mitigating that impact and rectifying fragility is apt to involve leveraging institutional resources. However, on this analysis, individuals also have a role to play. In thinking about and discussing issues of race and sex oppression, those of us who are white and male must be careful to heed DiAngelo's advice: "Let go of your racial [and sex] certitude and reach for humility."⁴⁸

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47 Thanks to the editor for pushing me to expand on this point.

48 Robin DiAngelo, "White Fragility: Why It's So Hard to Talk to White People About Racism," *The Good Men Project*, April 9, 2015, <https://goodmenproject.com/featured-content/white-fragility-why-its-so-hard-to-talk-to-white-people-about-racism-twlm/>.

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Eight Dimensions of Resistance

Tamara Fakhoury

In our increasingly politically-conscious world, “Resist!” has become a motto for many who oppose systemic oppression. What does this motto enjoin us to do? Resistance is commonly associated with activism. Activists use blatantly political acts, like protests, boycotts, and door-to-door canvassing, to send loud and clear messages of resistance to oppressors and public audiences. They work to create large-scale social changes, often through planned collective action. Indeed, activism for a good cause is an excellent tool for promoting human welfare and honoring the rights of persons. But people can resist oppression without engaging in activism. You can advance in a male-dominated field to get your dream job against pressures to settle for a less ambitious career. You can teach your daughter to be independent because you want her life to go well against norms that tell you to reward her acquiescence. You can stop obsessing over your bodyweight to focus on more important things in spite of the figure-obsessed media. In each of these cases, you resist oppression. And you do so admirably, even morally so. But you do not work to advance any political or humanitarian causes, act collectively with others, or make any public expressions of resistance. You do not engage in any activism.

Normative theories of resistance should be sensitive to the diversity of ways people can resist oppression, as well as the diversity of ways resistance can be valuable. Different acts of resistance can be valuable for different reasons. Marching in protest, for instance, might be good as a means of producing positive changes in legislation that will promote the welfare of society as a whole. Resolving not to give in to sexist pressures to give up on your beloved career, on the other hand, might be good for its own sake, for reasons having to do with your own personal values and commitments. In this chapter, I present a taxonomy of features that differentiate acts of resistance and bear relevantly on their value. My aim is not to provide a comprehensive theory of resistance or the ways in which it can be valuable here. Instead, my aim is to supplement existing theories by highlighting some differentiating features that are easy to overlook when we assume that all resistance is like activism.

The chapter proceeds in three parts. Part 1 lays the ground for discussion by briefly introducing the concepts of oppression and resistance. Part 2 argues that acts of resistance can be differentiated by: (1) their subject: *who is resisting*,

a collective or individual? (2) their target: *what is being resisted, a private circumstance or an aspect of public administration?* (3) the scope of interests advanced by the act: *does the resistance aim to benefit select individuals or an entire social group?* and (4) their communicative tone: *does the resistor aim to send loud and clear messages of resistance, or do they act without aiming to communicate their resistance to others?* I argue that there are multiple distinguishing features that can belong to an act of resistance to oppression. Resistance can be an *individual* or *collective* effort (subject) against a *private* or *public* affair (target). It can attempt to advance *global* or *local* interests (scope of interests), and it can constitute a *loud* attention-soliciting expression of resistance, or a *quiet* act, not intended to communicate anything to others (communicative tone). In Part 3, I argue that the features of resistance that I outline in Part 2 are not rigid categories, permitting of no overlap or grey area. I draw connections between them and show how they can interact in real-world situations.

1 Oppression and Resistance

1.1 *Oppression*

Let's start by briefly introducing the concepts of oppression and resistance. As Marilyn Frye puts it, oppression is "an enclosing structure of forces and barriers which tends to the immobilization and reduction of a group or category of people."¹ In its historical usage, oppression referred to legally codified systems of injustice, especially tyrannical rule. Today, the term also refers to systems of injustice that are perpetuated independently of top-down rule, like sexism and racism. Sexism and racism are examples of what Jean Harvey terms "civilized oppressions."² Such oppressions persist because they are so deeply rooted in culture. Instead of resulting exclusively from the top-down decisions of corrupt political authorities, they are sustained by the ordinary customs, habits and informal practices of well-meaning people. Civilized oppressions employ mechanisms that cannot be codified by any law or official document. And, although they also inflict physical and economic harms, much of the harm

1 As a consequence, Iris Marion Young adds, "of often unconscious assumptions and reactions of well-meaning people in ordinary interactions, media and cultural stereotypes, and structural features of bureaucratic hierarchies and market mechanisms—in short the normal processes of everyday life." Marilyn Frye, "Oppression," in *The Politics of Reality* (New York: Crossing Press, 1983), 10–11; Iris Marion Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 41.

2 Jean Harvey, "Victims, Resistance, and Civilized Oppression," *Journal of Social Philosophy* 41, no. 1 (2010): 13.

inflicted by civilized oppressions is psychological. They create false images of certain social groups as inferior. Through repeated exposure and control, these images shape the psychologies of oppressed and non-oppressed alike, who in turn will often perpetuate civilized oppressions by reproducing the oppressive images and cultural mores that sustain them.³

Oppression can be extremely difficult to recognize, even by its victims. This is because its effects tend to be perceived as natural or mundane. Those who participate in its mechanisms, victims and non-victims alike, usually do not think of themselves as participating in a system of oppression at all. To understand why certain practices are oppressive, we must zoom out and study them at the macro level, and draw connections between them and other practices within an oppressive structure.⁴

1.2 *Resistance*

What constitutes an act of *resistance* to oppression? Since not all resistance is like activism, it would be wrong to disqualify an act on the basis of its lacking activism's characteristic features. It would be wrong to say that a given act is not one of resistance if it, for instance, does not aim to effectively reduce or eliminate the aggregate harms of oppression, or it does not make a public expression of resistance, or it does not involve collective action towards a political or humanitarian cause. Otherwise, we would have to deny that examples like the ones discussed earlier (e.g., refusing to give up your dream job against sexist pressures) are acts of resistance.

Leading theories of resistance call a few important considerations to our attention when determining whether an act constitutes one of resistance to oppression: (1) Is the agent aware of the oppressive force and do they take some action against it? (2) Does the agent at some level see the limitation as wrong or unacceptable? And (3) is the act likely to reduce or symbolically oppose the oppressive force?

Theories put different amounts of weight on each of these considerations, even making some of them necessary conditions. Harm-based theories like Ann Cudd's, for instance, insist that for an act to count as resistance, it must constitute an attempt to reduce or protest the aggregate harms of oppression and it must be likely to succeed in doing so.⁵ Volitional accounts of resistance

3 Ibid., 14.

4 Marilyn Frye, "Oppression," 4–5.

5 Ann Cudd, "Strikes, Housework, and the Moral Obligation to Resist," *Journal of Social Philosophy* 29, no. 1 (1998): 28. "A person or group resists only when they act in a way that could result in lessening oppression or sending a message of revolt or outrage to someone... [this]

like Roger Gottlieb's focus on the agent's intentions such that regardless of whether she is likely to succeed in reducing oppressive harms or communicating outrage over them, an agent can be said to be resisting oppression as long as she has the intention to do so.^{6,7}

If an act is to qualify as genuine resistance to oppression, a few minimal conditions should be met. First, for an act to be considered one of resistance to *oppression*, there must be not just any kind of social force prohibiting doing the act, but a social force of a certain kind: one that is oppressive. Oppressive forces include cultural, legal, and institutional injustices that inhibit the rights and wellbeing of entire social groups to the advantage of others.⁸

For a person to be resisting oppression, they must also have a basic perception of the oppressive force as bad or unacceptable. The perception must inform her motivation for acting. An agent cannot be said to be resisting if she has no idea that society discourages or forbids her behavior. A woman who resolves never to put on make-up, for example, but who is completely unaware of the social forces pressuring women to wear it and punishing women who don't, could hardly be said to be resisting oppression by resolving not to put it on. When a person resists oppression, she pushes back against an oppressive force that she at some level perceives as bad and that she knows would be risky to defy. She needn't take the wrongness of the oppressive force as *the reason* for challenging it. She might act against it because she wants to pursue a personal project or relationship. In a culture that considers same-sex love a sin, for example, having a same-sex relationship defies oppressive norms. The fact that those norms are oppressive provides one kind of reason to defy them, and to defy them through particular kinds of acts, perhaps through protest. But someone might defy those norms by pursuing a same-sex relationship, not out of protest of those norms, but simply because they are in love with someone. Such a person is resisting oppression if they know that same-sex relationships are forbidden in their culture and that choosing to have one anyway is risky. But with an attitude that says "*to heck with that! I'm going to do this anyway!*"

does not count as cases of resistance cases where the only ones witnessing the action are incapable of receiving a message of revolt and there is no lessening of oppression."

6 Roger Gottlieb, "The Concept of Resistance: Jewish Resistance During the Holocaust," *Social Theory and Practice* 9, no. 1 (1983): 31–49.

7 Both approaches face problems, which I discuss elsewhere. I am just flagging these views without endorsing them here.

8 I disagree with Gottlieb that the concept of resistance implies a context of oppression such that resistance is always resistance to oppression, because I think we can resist practices that are not oppressive.

they are motivated to discount or dismiss those risks and act instead on reasons that favor pursuing their same-sex relationship, oppression notwithstanding.

Resistance to oppression involves, at the very least, pushing back against oppressive forces in the face of known risk. Resistors needn't have any sophisticated theoretical knowledge of oppression, like good activists typically do. But, they do need to know that there are social forces banning or discouraging their behavior. Choosing to violate those social forces is risky and this is a reason for them not to do it, but resistors are motivated to discount or dismiss that reason and act instead on other reasons that favor doing what oppression bans or discourages. These are the minimal requirements for an act of resistance. Not, as some have argued, that the agent acts with the intention of reducing or protesting oppression or that their action is likely to be effective in producing good consequences.⁹

2 Eight Dimensions of Resistance

In this section, I differentiate acts of resistance along four axes: the resisting subject: *who is resisting?* The resisted target: *what kind of effect of oppression is being resisted?* Its scope of interests: *who's interests does the resistance aim to protect, affirm, or advance against oppression?* And the communicative tone of the resistance: *does the act aim to communicate resistance to others?*

2.1 *The Subjects of Resistance: Individuals and Collectives*

While oppression is a large-scale system of injustice that harms entire social groups, persons experience its effects as individuals. People can resist either alone or with others through collective action. The first distinction I want to highlight is made according to the subject of resistance: is the resistor a collective or an individual? A woman who insists on keeping her name when she gets married or who decides to stop obsessively removing her body hair is engaged in a kind of *individual resistance*. While she could have the support of her friends, her resistance is individual in the sense that she acts on her own and not as a member of a collective of resistors. A man who joins the Black Panthers and patrols the streets in black neighborhoods to protect residents from police brutality is engaged in a kind of *collective resistance*. He doesn't do

9 These views are too narrowly focused on paradigms of activism, and as such, tend to overlook or leave out other kinds of resistance. I have argued for this in more detail elsewhere. See my unpublished paper, "Quiet Resistance."

it as an individual, but together with others as a member of the Black Panthers. Unlike resistance performed as an individual, which one undertakes independently from others, collective acts of resistance are collaborative; they depend on strategic joint action to achieve their goal.

2.2 *The Targets of Resistance: Public and Private*

The next pair of categories I wish to introduce is distinguished according to the target of the act of resistance. Activists like MLK and Malcom X not only acted collectively with others to oppose racism and segregation in America (i.e., they resisted collectively), but they also sought to change specific laws in the country's administration. As such, they and others like them were engaged in *publicly targeted* acts of resistance. By "public" I mean to single out a particular kind of target that these acts of resistance aim to push back against. The target of public resistance is to change or oppose oppressive aspects of public administration. Public resistance focuses on issues that can be addressed by changing the law and its enforcement.

Resistance can also target oppressive forces that exist independently of law and public administration. When a woman seeks to reduce the pressures on her children to be attracted to certain gendered forms of play, for instance, she is engaged in a *privately targeted* act of resistance. By privately targeted, I do not mean that the resistance is secret or concealed from view, although it can be. The mother resists privately in the sense that she aims to reduce a specific effect of oppression on her children's private lives. In this case, she aims to reduce the social pressures on them to play house and dress up as opposed to sports or videogames. She may not even care about reducing similar effects on other children. What makes her resistance private is that she targets a specific informal effect of oppression on her and her daughters' private lives.

2.3 *The Scope of Resistance: Global and Local Interests*

A third distinction can be made according to the scope of interests that the act of resistance aims to advance or validate. Individuals can resist the effects of oppression on particular individuals (e.g., themselves or their children) or on an entire social group, which they may or may not belong to (e.g., all women or blacks or people with disabilities). For instance, Martin Luther King Jr. sought to resist racial oppression for the benefit of all blacks in America, and not just for himself. But he could have chosen not to lead a life of public advocacy, instead resisting only the racist limitations that affected him and his close associates. Since he aimed to benefit all blacks in America, MLK was engaged in

resistance with *global* interests. That is, resistance that advances and affirms the interests of an entire social group, and not merely select individuals within that social group.¹⁰

Alternatively, the mother from our earlier example seeks to reduce the effects of oppression on her daughters in particular. She might do so by buying them gender-neutral toys or encouraging them when they take an interest in traditionally male-dominated activities. When she does this, the scope of her resistance is much more restricted than that of activists like MLK. She does not aspire to advance the global interests of the entire social group of female children. Her resistance has *local* interests; it is focused on bolstering the confidence of and reducing the effects of stereotypes on a couple select individuals, her children.¹¹

2.4 *The Tone of Resistance: Quiet and Loud*

There is one more distinction to be made. It seems to me that in addition to whether resistance is undertaken individually or collectively and whether it opposes public or private aspects of oppression, there are also distinct “tones” in which people resist oppression. Resistance that is undertaken individually or collectively, against public or private affairs can all be performed in a “loud” or “quiet” manner. Quiet and loud here should not be taken literally, as there are forms of loud resistance that are literally silent to the ears and there are forms of quiet resistance that are not. Activism is typically “loud” because it depends on making expressions of resistance to oppressor groups or other public audiences. Loud resistance always constitutes an attempt to communicate something to others. It might aim to surprise, offend, confuse, persuade, or send another powerful message.

In contrast to resisting in a “loud” manner, people can also resist quietly. By “quiet” I don’t mean resistance that literally cannot be heard by anyone. Rather, I mean to mark a different contrast between certain forms of resistance and activism. Activism is intended to send loud and clear messages of resistance to the oppressor group or another public audience. In contrast, quiet resistance needn’t involve any communication or expression to any audience. Indeed, some quiet resisters may not care about politics. They might not care if anyone else gets the message that they are resisting. What matters to them is that they

10 Ann Cudd calls this kind of resistance “distributive.” Cudd, “Strikes, Housework, and the Moral Obligation to Resist,” 27.

11 Ann Cudd calls what I am calling local resistance “personal” resistance. *Ibid.*, 27.

get to uphold or pursue a personal project, commitment, relationship, or ideal, oppression notwithstanding.¹²

Quiet resistors might even intentionally keep their resistance under wraps, so as to escape the oppressive situation or avoid serious backlash for resisting. This is what African slaves did when they broke their tools and played dumb in order to conspire against the slave masters. Surely, they would have been killed if their masters knew what they were up to. They kept their resistance under wraps in order to achieve personal goals that they were forbidden from pursuing. Other quiet resistors might want *some* people to get the message that they are rebelling—for instance, African slaves sometimes used songs to communicate with one another in code—but their resistance is still quiet in the sense that it was communicated to particular people in their vicinity without attempting to draw the attention of a public audience. So, resistance is quiet insofar as it does not constitute an attempt to make a blatant public expression of resistance or to engage the attention of public audiences. This differentiates quiet forms of resistance from activism, and especially paradigms of public protest, which involve sending blatant messages of resistance to entire groups of people.

The following table illustrates the differentiating features, or “dimensions,” of acts of resistance:

<i>Subject of resistance</i>	<i>Target of resistance</i>	<i>Scope of resistance</i>	<i>Tone of resistance</i>
Individual: undertaken by individuals as individuals	Private: opposes unlegislated effects of oppression in the private sphere	Local: undertaken in the interest of particular individuals	Loud: aims to communicate resistance to oppressors or other public audiences
Collective: undertaken collaboratively with other resistors as a collective	Public: opposes oppression in public law and administration	Global: undertaken in the interest of an entire social group	Quiet: resistance that does not aim to make any public expression

¹² I have written in more detail about the nature and value of quiet resistance elsewhere. See my unpublished paper, “Quiet Resistance.”

3 Putting the Dimensions Together

Let's consider some connections between the dimensions of resistance. The categories should not be taken as rigid divisions permitting of no overlap or grey area. First consider the division between public and private. It is widely accepted among social theorists that the line between the private and public spheres is flexible. Recall the feminist slogan "the personal *is* political!" Reducing oppression in the public sphere will often mean alleviating some of its effects in private life, and sometimes changes in private life are necessary for making changes in the public sphere. Protesting discriminatory laws, HB2 for example, can also be a way in which people attempt to push back against the private effects of oppression on their private lives. When Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on the bus to a white man, she was both asserting her own self-respect as well as attempting to trigger large-scale political change. Amina Tyler's resistance, too, seems neither merely publicly targeted, nor merely privately targeted, but a bit of both. Amina Tyler was a Tunisian woman who posted a nude photograph of herself online with the phrase "my body is mine and not the source of anybody's honor" painted across her skin in Arabic, provoking outrage in her Muslim community. She may not have been aiming to change any particular laws. But, she opposed a system of honor that is codified in the laws of many Muslim majority countries, in addition to having pervasive unlegislated effects on women's private lives, including her own. Her resistance targeted both public and private aspects of oppression at once.

Although public and private targets may overlap, the distinction is still illuminating. The target of the resistance—whether it is a public or private affair—will bear relevantly on its value. Moreover, there are cases where the two targets come cleanly apart. That is, where the resistor is really *only* aiming to liberate themselves or a select few individuals (recall the mother who encourages gender-neutral forms of play but has no interest in taking political action or helping other children), and cases where the resistor aims only to change the law (corrupt immigration laws might never harm you personally, but you might still resist them by lobbying or writing a letter to your governor about it). Indeed, there are effects of oppression that we *have* to resist by focusing on changing private affairs—internalized body shaming, for instance, can't be eliminated if we don't work to change our attitudes. And there are aspects of oppression that we *have* to resist by focusing on public affairs—corrupt legislation, for instance, can't be changed if we only ever focus on changing our attitudes.

Privately targeted resistance can be taken up individually (by oneself) or collectively (with others). The same goes for publicly targeted resistance. One can

individually resist public administration, by breaking a law (publicly targeted resistance).¹³ One can individually resist oppression in the private sphere (privately targeted resistance) by opting out of disempowering lifestyles, distancing oneself from certain members of the oppressor group, educating oneself about theories of oppression, or creating subversive artwork. One can engage in collective and privately targeted resistance—that is, resistance undertaken collaboratively with others against effects of oppression on one’s private life—by attending feminist support groups or putting on the *Vagina Monologues*. One can engage in collectively undertaken and publicly targeted resistance—that is, resistance undertaken collaboratively with others against public administration—by attending a Women’s March or participating in a worker’s strike.

Collective resistance need not always be aimed at a public administration. For instance, in the Underground Railroad, Harriet Tubman sought to liberate willing slaves by giving them an escape route. She worked collaboratively with a network of antislavery activists and safe houses to reduce the effects of oppression on others. Although her resistance was performed in collaboration with allies, it was not a direct attempt to change the law. Rather, it aimed to enhance the private lives of those African Americans who were willing to try to escape slavery. Moreover, it was crucial that she keep the project “underground” and out of sight of officials so it could not be sabotaged.

Now consider the relationships between the “loud” and “quiet” features of resistance and its other dimensions. Loud resistance is frequently publicly targeted and collectively undertaken. But resistance that is individually undertaken and aimed at private effects of oppression can also be loud. Political protests are a kind of loud and collective resistance. If they aim to change the law or political administration (“Repeal HB2!,” “Dump Trump!”) they are publicly aimed. If they aim to empower and promote solidarity, like Pride marches do, they are loud, collective, and targeted at unlegislated effects of oppression in the private sphere. Going into a fit of anger and screaming at one’s family over having always to do all the housework is a kind of loud resistance that is both individually undertaken and privately targeted. Wearing clothing with provocative political statements (“Pussy Grabs Back!” or “Bad Hombre”) can be a way of loudly resisting a public effect of oppression, but it can also be a way of loudly resisting the private effects of injustices in public administration, for instance, by loudly expressing one’s self-respect. Exhibiting one’s provocative artwork can be a way of loudly and individually resisting oppression’s effects on one’s private life. It can even be a way of protesting oppressive laws and administration, depending on the content of the artwork. Amina Tyler’s

13 I’m assuming that one does this without strategizing or acting collectively with others.

resistance was loud, individually undertaken, and targeted both public and private aspects of oppression.

Quiet resistance is often privately targeted and individually undertaken, but it need not always be. Women in Saudi Arabia resist quietly and individually by wearing bright colored nail polish to the mall in spite of the risk that the morality police will reprimand them for it. A person can quietly resist public administration by breaking the law in a manner that doesn't aim to draw attention. The women on Obama's staff quietly resisted workplace sexism through collective action by using the "amplification" strategy of repeating each other's ideas and crediting the women who came up with them during staff meetings.¹⁴

Resistance that aims to advance or uphold the global interests of an entire social group need not always be aimed at a public target. A martial arts instructor who uploads instructional videos on YouTube designed to teach women to evade sexual assault is engaged in resistance of a global scope—she aims to advance the interests of all women. But her resistance does not aim to change public laws and administration; her goal is instead to arm women with self-defense techniques.

Quiet, individually undertaken, privately targeted resistance that aims to uphold local interests is the most difficult to identify in the real world. On the other hand, many cases of resistance that we have clear intuitions about are examples of loud, collective, publicly targeted resistance that aim to advance global interests. These features are characteristic of activism.

4 Conclusion

An adequate theory of resistance to oppression should account for not only the clear and explicit cases of resistance to oppression, like political activism, but also for resistance in its less obvious yet everyday forms. Here I have described a series of neglected features that can be used to differentiate acts of resistance to oppression. This work can serve as a starting point for developing inclusive philosophical theories of resistance to oppression that are grounded in examples from ordinary life.

¹⁴ Jenavieve Hatch, "How the Women on Obama's Staff Made Sure their Voices Were Heard," *Huffington Post*, September 15, 2016, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/how-the-women-on-obamas-staff-made-sure-their-voices-were-heard_us_57d94d9fe4b0aa4b722d79fe.

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Of Course, God is a Man! Masculinist Justifications of Violence and Feminist Perspectives

Jane Hall Fitz-Gibbon

I heard the shouting before he arrived in the doorway of my office. Red-faced, angry, tears streaming down his face; something minor had rocked his small world. The young boy, about ten years old, came in and sat down, we chatted about his day and he calmed. Then he suddenly pointed upwards and said, “I hate him upstairs.”

He continued the refrain by adding a couple of questions, “Why does he do this to me?,” “Why does he not like me?”

I asked him, mainly as a distraction from his woes, “Why do you think God is a he?”

He looked at me, as if I was completely stupid, and said, “Well, of course God is a man. Obviously, God couldn’t really be a woman.”

The Pew Research Center’s 2014 *Religious Landscape Study* showed that the number of people who believe in a supreme being has been in a slight decline.¹ The two-part question asked was “Do you believe in God or a universal spirit? How certain are you in this belief?” In 2014, 89 percent believed in God or a universal spirit, while 63 percent believed with absolute certainty. Although this was a reduction from the 2007 figures (92 percent and 71 percent) it is still a significant percentage. Since so many people say that they believe in a supreme being, and if that belief is sincere and means something, the way that being is perceived, and is portrayed linguistically, is important.

Language matters because language conveys image, and the images we mentally live by are important in shaping the people we are. In the collective thinking of our culture—perhaps, represented by the little boy in my office—God is a “he”; God is male, and it did not occur to the boy that God could be any other.

In this chapter I suggest that the image of God as male, with the traditional masculinist characteristics of strength, power, and superiority, has contributed to, and given legitimacy to, the use of violence. Further, that unless the image

1 Michael Lipka, “Americans’ Faith in God May be Eroding,” *Pew Research Center*, November 4, 2015, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/11/04/americans-faith-in-god-may-be-eroding/>.

of God within the majority religious position changes significantly, religion will continue its implicit cultural support for a more, rather than less, violent society. Feminist theology has helped greatly in the task in the academic community, and I rehearse that approach in this chapter. However, such a re-imagining of the divine has as yet had little effect on popular religion in the United States. Finally, and more hopefully, if the image of God in popular religion can be freed from its masculinist presentation, then religion might become a positive factor in a more peaceful and less violent world.

1 The Image of God as Male

It is likely that the divine is viewed largely in male terms because patriarchal society has created God in its own image. British theologian Daphne Hampson takes this view. She notes:

We should be clear that it is men who have been the creators of that cultural reality which is western theology. It has been they who have shaped its basic framework. A patriarchal society has given rise to the concept that God is to be conceived as peculiarly male.²

Even so, some evidence suggests that in earliest societies, the deity was not always portrayed in male images. Historian Bettany Hughes discusses the finding of an image of a woman at the world's earliest known religious site, Gobekli Tepe, in Turkey,³ first discovered in 1963, and further excavated in 1994.⁴ Artifacts on the site date it as early as the tenth Millennium BCE. Hughes suggests that this image of the female deity, together with similar findings at other sites, shows that the earliest deities were probably female. Reviewing the documentary, John Crace comments, "It was only when the Greeks decided they needed someone a little more violent to justify their militaristic Realpolitik that Gaia had to make way for Zeus."⁵

Despite this early evidence of the feminine in religion, and contrary to images of the divine in, for example, Hindu religiosity, for most of religious history in the West, and certainly in contemporary times, the popular view is still

² Daphne Hampson, *Theology and Feminism* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1990), 97.

³ Bettany Hughes, "Divine Women: When God is a Girl," Director Ruairi Fallon, 2012.

⁴ Andrew Curry, "Gobekli Tepe: The World's First Temple," *The Smithsonian*, November 2008, <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/gobekli-tepe-the-worlds-first-temple-83613665/>.

⁵ John Crace, "TV: Review: Divine Women: When God Was a Girl," *The Guardian*, April 11, 2012, <https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2012/apr/11/when-god-was-a-girl>.

that God is masculine, consistently reinforced with the use of male pronouns. In Roman Catholicism, the Marian cult elevates Mary to the almost divine—but always as subservient in the Holy Family, and the only role affirmed for women is as virgins and mothers. The masculine is perceived as superior to the feminine, and the hierarchical order of God–man–woman is affirmed.

Most images and analogies of God are masculine. Elizabeth Johnson, C.S.J. observes that, in the Judeo-Christian tradition, imagery for God is derived from the roles and relations of males—God being considered lord, king, father, son, and warrior. Arising from the patriarchal cultures in which the scriptural texts were written, she says, “the predominant biblical metaphors for God are taken from male experience, with God being depicted as father, warrior, jealous husband, king.”⁶

Ann Loades affirms this view:

It can be argued that the dominant gender construction of Christian culture for men has been active, independent, intelligent, brave, strong, good and, needless to say, godlike. God in turn is male-like.⁷

Loades acknowledges that even when females try to approximate males, they are still considered inferior as females are always less godlike than males. She is not surprised by this finding as the female gender construction, which is religiously sanctioned, portrays women as responsible for evil and sin, emotional, dependent, weak, and passive.

The image of a male supreme being is not exclusive to the Christian tradition. It is found in most major religions. In *Fields of Blood*, religious historian Karen Armstrong explores the history of violence and religion. She examines Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. Her initial claim is that religion has become somewhat a scapegoat for violence.

In a balanced treatment, Armstrong refutes the popular refrain that “Religion has been the cause of all major wars in history,”⁸ citing wars that were not fought for religious causes, her primary examples being the World Wars. Nevertheless, the focus of her book is on tracing the history of violence in religion. Armstrong looks at the development and progression of humankind from early civilization to the present day, discussing the advancement of religion and

6 Elisabeth Johnson, C.S.J., “The Incomprehensibility of God and the Image of God Male and Female,” *Theological Studies* 45, no. 3 (1984): 441–65. Accessed October 10 2016, <http://www.womenpriests.org/classic/johnson3.asp>.

7 Ann Loades, *Feminist Theology: A Reader* (London: SPCK, 1990), 6.

8 Karen Armstrong, *Fields of Blood: Religion and the History of Violence* (New York: Anchor Books, 2015), 3.

its concomitant, and inherent, violence. While it is unclear whether the causes of violence are political or religious in origin, Armstrong acknowledges that religion has been a major factor in violence.

Peace educator Betty A. Reardon links war and sexism. Her contention is that both are rooted in violence. She explains, “I attempt to make the case that sexism and the war system are two interdependent manifestations of a common problem: social violence.”⁹

Reardon makes a compelling argument. She engages the question, “Is peace possible in a patriarchal society?” Her answer is a resounding no. She explains, “Patriarchy has also legitimated the use of force to assist those in authority to impose their wills on those subject to them.”¹⁰

The common patriarchal images of God as lord, king, and warrior all support and legitimize violence, superiority, and dominance. Alice L. Laffey comments:

Men are stronger than women, more intelligent, more competent, more responsible, braver, more adapted to the marketplace, more aggressive, more rational, better suited for positions of management and leadership—the list goes on.¹¹

This has far-reaching effects. Even when not expressed as blatantly as Laffey does, this thinking can often be perceived in the way women are treated in society. Women remain lowest in the god-man-woman order, and this is reflected in contemporary culture. There are inequalities in opportunities and the workplace for women. The feminine is denigrated.

Violence accompanies the acceptance that women are inferior. Nothing highlighted this more than in 2016, when the media released a recorded interview in which presidential candidate Donald Trump joked about sexual assault, as if it was the norm for women to be treated as playthings for men.¹² Violence against women is never a joke. In the book they edited together, Carol J. Adams and Marie M. Fortune state:

Physical and sexual violence against women, usually committed by men, is pandemic in our culture and the high rates of violence against women

9 Betty A. Reardon, *Sexism and the War System* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1996), 5.

10 *Ibid.*, 38.

11 Alice L. Laffey, *Wives, Harlots and Concubines: The Old Testament in Feminist Perspective* (London: SPCK, 1990), 3.

12 “Transcript: Donald Trump’s Taped Comments About Women,” *New York Times*, October 8, 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/08/us/donald-trump-tape-transcript.html>.

and girl children make it clear that we who are female are particularly vulnerable to violence simply due to our gender.¹³

According to the *National Coalition Against Domestic Violence*,¹⁴ every nine seconds in the U.S. a woman is assaulted or beaten. Every day the nationwide domestic violence hotline receives on average 20,800 calls. Seventy-six percent of all victims of domestic violence are women. Gun violence against women is also high—every fourteen hours a woman is fatally shot by her partner or ex-partner.

Jeremy Young links the violence against women and the portrayal of God, commenting:

God is normatively imaged as male in the Judeo-Christian tradition, and Israel, the Church and individual souls are often described as ‘female’ in relation to the ‘male’ God ... God is the controlling and dominant partner who uses threats and violence as the means of imposing his will on his partner when she does not do what he requires and is sometimes violent for no particular reason ... when the relationship between God and his people appears to be peaceful and loving it is only because they are doing what they were told.¹⁵

In the socially constructed image of the masculine, warrior virtues are highly ranked. The warrior God legitimizes wars and violence. Millard Lind comments, “The study of warfare in the Old Testament reveals that Yahweh is a God of War.”¹⁶

Lind highlights a progression in ancient Israel from perceiving God as warrior on behalf of God’s people, to male Israelis becoming warriors on God’s behalf. In other words, imaging God as warrior lends legitimacy to violence enacted in God’s name. Lind compares the story of the deliverance of the Jewish people from Egyptian slavery and the story of Joshua leading the conquest of surrounding nations. He explains:

13 Carol J. Adams and Marie Fortune, eds, *Violence Against Women and Children: A Christian Theological Sourcebook* (New York: Continuum, 1995), 12.

14 Domestic Violence National Statistics. Accessed October 11, 2016, <http://ncadv.org/files/National%20Statistics%20Domestic%20Violence%20NCADV.pdf>.

15 Jeremy Young, *The Violence of God and the War on Terror* (New York: Seabury Books, 2008), 12.

16 Millard C. Lind, *Yahweh is a Warrior: The Theology of Warfare in Ancient Israel* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1980), 23.

In the exodus, Israel is saved from slavery by Yahweh, who alone does the fighting, aided by an aggressive prophetic personality. The conquest involves aggressive warfare in which Israel also fights, led by the warrior, Joshua. While the exodus presents the theological problem of the righteousness of Yahweh's judgment, the conquest poses in addition an ethical problem as Yahweh commands Israel to fight.¹⁷

A Christian Mennonite, Lind tried to find a way to be honest to the warrior God image, yet remain with his personal commitment to pacifism. He understood the Old Testament as a book primarily about relationship and trust. The people were to trust Yahweh as their protector and deliverer—a hopeful image. Yet in protecting Israel Yahweh is portrayed as ineluctably violent, as violence becomes the means of Yahweh's protection and deliverance.

Walter Wink confirms this understanding of God as violent, citing Swiss Theologian Raymund Schwager, concluding that violence is a central theme of the Bible and is the activity which is mentioned most often. Schwager noted, "There are six hundred passages of explicit violence in the Hebrew Bible, one thousand verses where God's own violent actions of punishment are described, a hundred passages where Yahweh expressly commands others to kill people, and several stories where God kills or tries to kill for no apparent reason."¹⁸

The image of God who is violent is consistent throughout the whole scripture. Wink first coined the, now popular, term the *Myth of Redemptive Violence* to expose the popular view of violence as being salvific. He traces forms of this myth existing throughout history from the early Babylonian civilization. In contemporary times, versions of the myth are constantly seen in popular movies, video games, and stories. The story is played out with the introduction of a hero, who often is defending another person or society in general. At a certain point the hero is in danger of suffering great violence. Then in a sudden last dramatic show the hero, himself, uses violence, wins, and the evil is defeated.

Writing about the *Myth of Redemptive Violence*, Wink comments:

It enshrines the belief that violence saves, that war brings peace, that might makes right. It is one of the oldest continuously repeated stories in the world ... It, and not Judaism or Christianity or Islam, is the dominant religion in our society today.¹⁹

17 Ibid., 65.

18 Walter Wink, *Engaging the Powers: Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 146.

19 Walter Wink, *The Powers That Be: Theology for a New Millennium* (New York: Augsburg Fortress, 1989), 42.

Wink expresses great concern about the violence shown in some of the popular comics and video games at the time he was writing. He noted that the comics were read almost exclusively by boys. The godlike characters quickly became the heroes for a generation of young men.

Wink comments about the brutality in, what he terms, *video nasties* and how inventive they are at finding new ways to expose violence with the purpose of causing harm. He is concerned how young children are exposed to them:

“Adult Only” home videos such as these have been viewed by one quarter of British children aged seven to eight; by age ten half have seen them. If not in their own homes, then at a friend’s. Many children receive their first introduction to sex in these movies by watching a woman be raped, decapitated, dismembered or cannibalized ... Redemptive violence gives way to violence as an end in itself.²⁰

Wink penned this in 1989. In the more than a quarter of a century that has ensued the situation has not improved. In contemporary times the easy access to the internet and online games has compounded and increased the problem.

In 2016, a research study was conducted partially to investigate if empathy for women who were the victims of violence was decreased after exposure to sexist video games. In the games the women are often secondary figures, prostitutes or strippers, who are used for sex, or aggression, to earn the player extra points. In the study the participants played three categories of games, those that were sexist and violent, those that were violent but with no sexism and those that had no sexism or violence. The researchers concluded:

One of the best predictors of aggression against girls and women is lack of empathy. The present research shows that violent-sexist video games such as GTA [Grand Theft Auto] reduce empathy for female violence victims ... because video games such as GTA increase masculine beliefs that “real men” are tough, dominant, and aggressive.²¹

These findings are disturbing. Not only do they show an acceptance of violence towards women. The god-like heroes of the video games also use women in terrible ways.

20 Ibid., 55–6.

21 Alessandro Gabbadini, Pablo Riva, Luca Andrighetto, Chiara Volpato and Brad J. Bushman, “Acting Like a Tough Guy: Violent-Sexist Video Games, Identification with Game Characters, Masculine Beliefs and Empathy for Female Violence Victims,” *PLoS ONE* 11, no. 4 (2016): doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0152121.

2 Feminine Perspectives

Feminist theologians and philosophers have challenged the masculinist hegemony of Western religion. Laffey comments, "Patriarchy, closely associated with hierarchy, is a way of ordering reality whereby one group, in this case the male sex, is understood to be superior to the other, the female sex."²² A feminist perspective offers a much-needed challenge both to the image of God as male and to patriarchal/kyriarchal society. Feminist scholar and theologian, Rosemary Radford Ruether similarly states:

Feminism is a critical stance that challenges the patriarchal gender paradigm that associates males with human characteristics defined as superior and dominant (rationality, power) and females with those defined as inferior and auxiliary (intuition, passivity).²³

In 1992, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza coined the term *kyriarchy* "to redefine the analytic category of patriarchy in terms of multiplicative intersecting structures of domination." She argued that it is not just women who are subordinate, but certain men also, often determined by race, wealth or education. She clarifies:

Kyriarchy is a socio-political system of domination in which elite educated propertied men hold power over wo/men and other men. Kyriarchy is best theorized as a complex pyramidal system of intersecting multiplicative social structures of superordination and subordination, of ruling and oppression.²⁴

Despite the overwhelmingly patriarchal imaging of God as male, and hence violent, within all the major religions is a strand of nonviolence which can be traced in the sacred writings. Nonetheless, in contemporary culture religion is often perceived as violent heralding the masculinist traits of superiority and dominance. Since the early eighties, feminist theologians have tried to rescue the image of God from patriarchy and the warrior persona. Texts that

22 Laffey, *Wives, Harlots and Concubines*, 3.

23 Rosemary Radford Ruether, "The Emergence of Christian Feminist Theology," in *The Cambridge Companion to Feminist Theology*, ed. Susan Frank Parsons (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 3.

24 Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Wisdom Ways: Introducing Feminist Biblical Hermeneutics* (Maryknoll NY: Orbis, 2001), 211.

use feminine metaphor have been highlighted and lifted from obscurity in religious writings to counterbalance the popular masculine image of God.

Several places in the scriptures have God imaged as a mother. For example, the book of Deuteronomy talks about “the God who gave you birth” (32:18). In the book of the prophet Isaiah God likens Godself to a mother, “As a mother comforts her child so I will comfort you” (66:13). In the book of Hosea God is depicted as the one who taught Ephraim to walk, who took Ephraim in God’s arms, who lifted the infant to God’s cheek and who fed the infant (11:3–4), all pictures of mothering. Later in the same book God is imaged as a mother bear robbed of her cubs (13:8). While in the book of Deuteronomy, God is depicted as an eagle hovering over its young (32:11–12). One of the names for God in the Old Testament, El Shaddai, can be translated as the breasted one, a name which evokes feminine images, although, until the work of feminist theologians, the meaning was often obscured in translations. An example of its usage is in Genesis, “by the Almighty [El Shaddai] who will bless you with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lies beneath, blessings of the breasts and of the womb” (49:25).

Sallie McFague was one of the earlier feminist writers proposing naming God as mother. She writes about the “ethic of God the mother-creator.” She suggests that the mother-creator is the paradigm through which the world should be viewed:

We would no longer see a world we named or ruled or, like the artist God, made ... Our positive role in the creation is as preservers, those who pass life along and who care for all forms of life so they may prosper. Our role as preservers is a very high calling, our peculiar calling as human beings, the calling implied in the model of God as mother.²⁵

Carol Gilligan’s observations on violence and aggression in her ground-breaking book, *In a Different Voice*, are pertinent to the issue. She writes, “If aggression is tied, as women perceive, to the fracture of human connection, then the activities of care, as their fantasies suggest, are the activities that make the social world safe, by avoiding isolation and preventing aggression rather than by seeking rules to limit its extent.”²⁶

25 Sallie McFague, “The Ethic of God as Mother, Lover, Friend,” in *Feminist Theology: A Reader*, ed. Ann Loades (London: SPCK, 1990), 261.

26 Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women’s Development* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 43.

Gilligan suggests that violence is often a response to perceived danger. However, the male and female perception of danger are often very different. Gilligan reckons that women will see danger in being isolated, set apart and standing out—all relationship-based—while men fear being trapped, betrayed or humiliated.

In the latter quarter of the twentieth century Gilligan, and others, highlighted the term *ethics of care*. In an interview in 2011, Gilligan defines the ethics of care as:

An ethic grounded in voice and relationships, in the importance of everyone having a voice, being listened to carefully (in their own right and on their own terms) and heard with respect. An ethics of care directs our attention to the need for responsiveness in relationships (paying attention, listening, responding) and to the costs of losing connection with oneself or with others. Its logic is inductive, contextual, psychological, rather than deductive or mathematical.²⁷

She clarifies her definition by explaining that our relationship to others reflects the way oneself is experienced. It is within these human relationships that morality originates as concerns arise about injustice, oppression, carelessness, and abandonment. Gilligan expresses also the differences of power and ability between adults and children. In that unequal relationship care is essential to the survival of humanity. An ethic of care addresses all these concerns.

Nel Noddings speaks to the importance of an ethic of care in resisting violence. “Today, in a world shaken by the violence of nations and groups whose actions are “justified” by the principles they espouse, an ethic of care is even more important and ultimately reasonable.”²⁸ An ethic of care would seek to eliminate the conditions which contribute to violence: “This means working to eliminate poverty and exploitation, protecting the earth as the home of all living things and rejecting violence as a means of defense ...”²⁹

Gilligan concurs with the importance of an ethic of care in contemporary society:

27 Carol Gilligan, “Interview on June 21, 2011,” *Ethicsofcare.org*, <http://ethicsofcare.org/carol-gilligan/>.

28 Nel Noddings, *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), xiv.

29 *Ibid.*, xiv.

A feminist ethic of care is an ethic of resistance to the injustices inherent in patriarchy (the association of care and caring with women rather than with humans, the feminization of care work, the rendering of care as subsidiary to justice—a matter of special obligations or interpersonal relationships). A feminist ethic of care guides the historic struggle to free democracy from patriarchy; it is the ethic of a democratic society, it transcends the gender binaries and hierarchies that structure patriarchal institutions and cultures. An ethics of care is key to human survival and also to the realization of a global society.³⁰

Although the ethics of care was developed and established by feminist philosophers and theologians it is, however, necessary to note that the ethics of care is not just an ethic for women. It is much more far-reaching. Virginia Held notes:

Feminists do not seek to simply replace men with women in the existing positions of power determining how society will develop, they seek to change the way these positions are thought about and structured. The ethics of care seeks to change dominant normative evaluations and recommendations.³¹

Held discounts the idea that care is only for children, the sick, and those with disabilities. She terms it the myth of self-sufficiency which is pervasive in Western culture.³² In all social interactions care for each other is an essential part, whether by friends or strangers. It is care that enables society to function in an effective way. Although people like to talk about, and even dream of, self-sufficiency, it is rarely possible to achieve. Even those who consider themselves as having no need of others, in actuality, depend on a network of personal relationships which care for them, tending to their well-being. However, Held acknowledges that the sick, disabled and children often need special care to enable their survival.

Embracing an ethic of care for both men and women, together with re-imagining God in feminine ways, might contribute toward a decline in patriarchy with an ensuing reduction in violence.

³⁰ Carol Gilligan, "Interview on June 21, 2011."

³¹ Virginia Held, *The Ethics of Care: Personal, Political, and Global* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 152.

³² Virginia Held, *How Terrorism is Wrong: Morality and Political Violence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 159.

3 Prospects for Re-imagining God

Sara Ruddick, in *Maternal Thinking: Toward a Politics of Peace*, examines the concept of mothering. She makes it clear that mothering is not just a female occupation: “Briefly, a mother is a person who takes on responsibility for children’s lives and for who providing childcare is a significant part of her or his working life.”³³ She emphasizes her point, “Nor is there any reason why mothering work should be distinctly female.”³⁴

Ruddick expounds the details of mothering with an emphasis on peace. Peacekeeping is a maternal practice. Ruddick offers a definition of peacekeeping that mirrors a definition of mothering: “Peacemakers create a communal suspicion of violence, a climate in which peace is desired, a way of living in which it is possible to learn and to practice nonviolent resistance and strategies of reconciliation.”³⁵

That the concepts of peacekeeping and mothering ought to have the same aims is a worthy one. Ruddick’s definition is worthy of serious consideration when pondering the metaphor of a mothering God. In the myth of Christ, the incarnate God, each of the clauses of this definition is applicable. The final act of the gospels, the death and resurrection of the Christ, is the ultimate story of practicing nonviolent resistance and bringing about reconciliation. A picture of Christ reflecting a mothering God is a powerful image.

The use of male metaphors and pronouns to image God has been persistent in history and largely remains so in contemporary culture. Elizabeth Johnson was correct when, in 1984, she remarked, “Calling into question the exclusively male idea of God does not spell the end of male imagery used for God.”³⁶

My young friend, whose story opened this chapter, is not from a religious background. His family are not churchgoers, he has never attended Sunday School. I doubt he has ever had a book about God read to him. Yet, somehow in his short ten years he has absorbed an image of God as male; an impression that is pervasive in the culture into which he was born. The image of a male was not a kindly one, but a male who would seek to punish him; a male who would seek retribution on those he does not like or who have done wrong, evoking the question, “Why does he do this to me?”

33 Sara Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking: Toward a Politics of Peace* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989), 40.

34 *Ibid.*, xii.

35 *Ibid.*, 176.

36 Elizabeth Johnson, C.S.J., “The Incomprehensibility of God and the Image of God Male and Female.”

It is clear then, that although the work of feminist theologians in questioning the male image of God has yielded some fruit, there is still much work to be done. It has not been an easy task. As Fiorenza comments:

We struggled for a feminist theological voice in a field that throughout the centuries has excluded wo/men by law and custom from becoming theologians. We understood that the historical legacy of oppression was the reason why so very few white wo/men and almost no wo/men of other races could be found in theology and biblical studies in the 1960s and 1970s, and those few were often not interested in torpedoing their careers by doing feminist work.³⁷

Approximately forty years after this was penned the popular cultural image of God remains. It is still one which glorifies the masculinist traits of superiority, strength, and warrior-likeness. This image of the male God is often portrayed as a violent God, a God who chastises the people, a God who caused my young student to say, "Why does he not like me?"

Gilligan recognizes the need to continue to work toward the goal of eliminating patriarchy. She says:

Looking forward then we can expect a struggle. As long as the different voice sounds different, the tensions between democracy and patriarchy continue. Once the ethic of care is released from its subsidiary position within a justice framework, it can guide us by framing the struggle in a way that clarifies what is at stake and by illuminating a path of resistance grounded not in ideology but in humanity.³⁸

It is impossible to tell if the multiple violences of history would have been less if the supreme being, the cosmic role-model, had been portrayed as feminine rather than masculine; if the feminine traits of care, nurture, and protection had been the most highly valued ones and had become the norm for society. It is not possible to go backward. However, the need to find language that does not portray the prominent and dominant image of the divine being as masculine is imperative. Contemporary culture is permeated with ideas, laws, and traditions that hail from religious writings and beliefs. Therefore, as seen above, the perception of God will even affect those who have no religious beliefs.

37 Fiorenza, *Wisdom Ways*, 85.

38 Carol Gilligan, *Joining the Resistance* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011), 43.

Finding an image that does not idealize the constructed masculine is both a challenge and a possibility for the future.

4 Conclusion

However, and somewhat hopefully, the perception of God in popular Western Christianity has changed, and is likely to continue to change. In my 2017 book, *Corporal Punishment, Religion and United States Public Schools*, I demonstrate that God is no longer seen as the strict and punishing warrior god of the late seventeenth and eighteenth century. Rather, the image of God has softened to become a more loving and caring father figure.³⁹ Though God remains male, the parental role of God resembles a more mothering persona—loving, nurturing, and caring, with less emphasis on judgment and punishment. This is all to the good, and likely reflects the slow, but steady, progress that feminism has made in general culture.

In contemporary times much discussion is had about the parental task together with the need for nonviolent parenting. As the consciousness of what constitutes a good parent continues to modify and develop over the next several decades (if not centuries), it will be reflected in the perceived image of God. I have shown that culture creates God in its own image. As the parental task changes in general culture, if the image of God persists as loving parent, then religion will no longer be available to legitimize violence. It is this changing perception of God that brings a small hope that there is a possibility of moving toward a less violent future.

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39 Jane Hall Fitz-Gibbon, *Corporal Punishment, Religion and United States Public Schools* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave MacMillan, 2017), 70–3.

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Engaging in a Cover-Up: the “Deep Morality” of War

Jennifer Kling

Many political theorists and statesmen argue that the U.S. Government’s military involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq is wrong. They also argue that we ought to support our troops who are fighting in those areas. This apparently contradictory position is made tenable by the underlying claim that combatants are not responsible for their country’s decision to go to war; they are only responsible for acting in accordance with the rules of warfare. For example, Private Johnson cannot influence U.S. policy. All he can do is follow the orders passed down by his superiors, refrain from targeting noncombatants, and refrain from breaking other widely accepted rules of *jus in bello* (justice in warfare). So long as Johnson follows his orders, does not target noncombatants, and does not break the other statutes of *jus in bello*—such as proportionality, necessity, etc.—he has acted justly; the fact that he is persecuting an arguably unjust war does not change the moral status of his wartime actions.

At least, so say traditional just war theorists; as Michael Walzer argues in his canonical *Just and Unjust Wars*, the justice of going to war and acting justly in war are both conceptually and practically distinct.¹ We can, and in fact do, distinguish between holding a country’s military and political leaders accountable for persecuting unjust wars, and holding ordinary soldiers accountable for their actions in such wars. As Jeff McMahan puts it, “most people in virtually all cultures at all times believed that a person does not act wrongly by fighting in an unjust war, provided that he obeys the principles governing the conduct of war.”²

McMahan, having summarized the traditional view thusly, goes on in his *Killing in War* to argue against that claim. Combatants, he claims, only act justly when they fight on the right, or just, side of a war. Combatants fighting on the wrong, or unjust, side of a war do not act justly even if they follow their orders, do not target noncombatants, and do not break any of the other *jus in bello* statutes. In today’s information-saturated world, these combatants have the resources to know that the war they are persecuting is unjust. Because they either do know better or should have known better, they act wrongly

1 Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars* (New York: Basic Books, 1977), 21–2.

2 Jeff McMahan, *Killing in War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 104.

when they choose to fight; their actions are neither just nor excused. So, if it is true that the U.S. Government's involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq is wrong, then Private Johnson's wartime actions are wrong, and he ought to be held responsible (and perhaps blamed) for them, not celebrated.³

While this conclusion is in itself intriguing and worth further discussion, McMahan does not stop there; rather, he goes on to argue that, although it is true that combatants who fight unjust wars act wrongly, *we should not seek to publicize or legalize this fact*. He claims to have uncovered the "deep morality" of war, but concludes that we should not integrate this deep morality into our military and international public policies and laws, because of the possible negative consequences of doing so. In effect, McMahan is arguing that just war theory ought to be entirely divorced from military and international public policy and law. Considering that the just war tradition historically has had quite a large impact on both military and international public policy and law, this is a very unique move, and one that has significant implications for normative political philosophy more generally. I first question—on the basis of feminist epistemology—whether McMahan is right to think that publicizing and legalizing the deep morality of war will have the negative consequences that he claims, and then I argue that he is wrong to think that we ought to decouple the theory of just war from the practice of military and international public policy and law. To do so, after all, would be to give up entirely on one of the just war tradition's stated projects: that of preventing morally unnecessary wars.⁴

1 McMahan's Argument for Engaging in a Cover-Up

The suggestion that the received just war tradition is incorrect about the distinction between *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello* is an intriguing one, and has been taken up by a number of theorists. Such theorists, known as revisionists, argue for a massive shift in how war is understood at the moral level; they argue, roughly, that there is no moral difference between everyday life and war,

3 Ibid., 182–8.

4 While this is not the only project of the just war tradition, it is oft-cited as a reason for engaging in just war theory. Such theorists argue that it is only by drawing moral lines around war that humanity can restrain warfare as a whole. Just war theorists, while not pacifists, often tend towards pacifism rather than political realism. See, among others, Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, especially the Afterword; Larry May, *Contingent Pacifism: Revisiting Just War Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); and Cecile Fabre, *Cosmopolitan Peace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

and so we should approach war in the same way that we approach ordinary interpersonal morality.⁵ I do not wish to adjudicate this debate here. For the purposes of this chapter, I remain neutral on the question of whether the revisionists or the traditionalists are correct. Rather, I want to focus on the argument that comes on the heels of McMahan's revisionist understanding of just war theory, namely, his claim that we ought not seek to publicize, nor change military policy and law in response to, the revisionist conclusion that combatants on the unjust side of a war act wrongly, and so are no different than criminals firing on police (or on other criminals, in cases where both sides are in the wrong).⁶

McMahan's argument for this claim is that publicizing this fact, and changing military policy and law in response to it, would have widespread negative consequences. He argues that combatants have a tendency to believe that their side is the just one—a belief that military commanders and political leaders, among others, foster—and that this belief, in conjunction with the belief that combatants on the unjust side of a war act wrongly by engaging in fighting at all, would lead combatants to treat enemy combatants more like rogue criminals or terrorists than like fellow combatants to whom certain rules and restrictions apply. In particular, McMahan worries that, if the laws of war were to come to reflect his conclusions regarding the morality of war, then the torture of enemy combatants would become more acceptable, the protections traditionally offered to POWs would be eroded, and the use of cruel and unusual weapons of war, such as biological and chemical weaponry, and perhaps nuclear weapons themselves, would gradually become allowed, if not commonplace.⁷ In short, McMahan worries that codifying his moral view in military policy and domestic and international law would lead to the in-practice relaxation of current restrictions that keep wartime fighting from being even worse, and more vicious, than it currently is.

In addition, McMahan's moral view entails that non-combatants, or civilians, on the unjust side of the war are also, in some cases, liable to defensive attack by just combatants, because they are sometimes at least partially morally responsible for the objectively unjustified harms that are suffered by both the

5 See, among others, Jeff McMahan, *Killing in War*; Helen Frowe, *Defensive Killing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); and Seth Lazar, "Just War Theory: Revisionists versus Traditionalists," *Annual Review of Political Science* 20 (2017): 37–54.

6 This is the analogy that McMahan uses throughout *Killing in War*, and especially in Chapter 1.

7 Jeff McMahan, "The Morality of War and the Law of War," in *Just and Unjust Warriors: The Moral and Legal Status of Soldiers*, ed. David Rodin and Henry Shue (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 30.

just combatants and the just civilians in the war.⁸ Thus, on McMahan's view, the principle of non-combatant immunity, familiar from the *jus in bello* aspect of the just war tradition, is false. However, McMahan argues that to publicize and legalize this aspect of his view would be a disaster as well, given his earlier point about the usual belief of combatants that their side is the just one.⁹ Much like combatants would treat enemy combatants more like rogue criminals or terrorists, McMahan argues that implementing his view at a policy and legal level would lead combatants on all sides to attack and harm enemy civilians, many of whom are *not* liable to attack, because combatants would believe that enemy civilians are on the unjust side, and thus *are* liable to defensive attack. Given the fog of war, McMahan suggests that combatants will not be able—either because they do not have the time, or the willpower, or the intellectual freedom, or the inclination—to make the sort of fine-grained moral distinctions required by his moral view, and so will simply assume, given their prior beliefs about the justice of their side, that all enemy civilians are liable to defensive attack. And having made such an assumption, McMahan concludes that combatants will act in accordance with that assumption, and, rather than work to protect both friendly and enemy civilians, will attack, or at the very least will not deliberately avoid attacking and harming, enemy civilians.

Put broadly, McMahan worries that publicizing and legalizing the truth about the moral asymmetry of warfare will lead combatants on both sides to cast off the constraints of the *jus in bello* tradition, which currently operate both policy-wise and legally to limit the harming and killing of enemy combatants and enemy civilians. From a straightforwardly consequentialist point of view, this would be extremely bad, because it would make it more likely that a much higher number of people, including many who are not liable to be harmed or killed, would be harmed and killed in war. As McMahan puts it, it “would be worse [to have] an *in bello* law that would be *as asymmetric* as *in bello* morality. ... [such a law] would be exploited by the unjust and inevitably abused by the just, leading to greater violence, and in particular to more and worse violations of the rights of the innocent, than a [symmetric] law that prohibits these forms of actions to all.”¹⁰ So, given the present epistemic circumstances of combatants (that is, that their knowledge of the relevant facts is limited, that they are likely to be biased towards believing their commanders, and that they are usually disinclined to seek out the truth of the matter), when considering what

8 McMahan, *Killing in War*, 221–4.

9 *Ibid.*, 234–5.

10 *Ibid.*, 108–9, emphasis in original.

the laws should be that regulate military actions in war, the dictates of morality must be ignored, lest truly horrific consequences come to be.¹¹

In addition to the direct effect that it would have on combatants and their wartime actions, McMahan also worries about the effect that publicizing and legalizing his revisionist conclusions would have on the already-difficult transition from war to peace. Traditionally, enemy combatants—except in cases where they have broken standard, traditional rules of *jus in bello*—are not put on trial after wars, because they are not regarded either by international law or by enemy militaries or political leaders as having acted unjustly merely by fighting. This legal policy, in addition to being morally correct according to the traditionalist view of war, has a number of good consequences according to McMahan: combatants are more willing to fight, and more importantly, are more willing to surrender, because they believe that they will not be penalized or punished merely for the act of fighting, and that they will be allowed to return to civilian life without censure after the war is over. Revising the laws of war to reflect the moral asymmetry of combatants would almost demand that those combatants who are determined (perhaps by an independent tribunal, such as the International Criminal Court (ICC)) to have been unjust combatants be censured, penalized, or punished for the act of fighting.¹² McMahan worries that this will lead combatants to be both less willing to fight in all cases—for fear of fighting on the wrong side and so being punished afterwards—and less willing to surrender—for fear that surrender will simply lead to a humiliating punishment, censure, or penalization, regardless of the actual morality of their actions. Again, the worry is that the negative consequences of changing the laws of war to match the morality of war will vastly outweigh the positive consequences of doing so. As McMahan concludes, “In current conditions, the law of war cannot aspire to congruence with the morality of war. It must be formulated with a pragmatic concern for the consequences of its implementation.”¹³

2 Dire Predictions: a Feminist History and Explanation

Of course, consequences do matter; so, McMahan is right to consider the consequences of codifying his moral conclusions in military policy and law.

11 So much for *fiat justitia ruat caelum*, then.

12 At the very least, McMahan argues that objectively unjust combatants are liable to such censure, punishment, or penalization. McMahan, *Killing in War*, 190.

13 *Ibid.*, 234.

However, I question whether he is correct that changing the laws of war to match the “deep morality” of war will have the extremely negative consequences that he claims. First, and perhaps most straightforwardly, it is important to note that McMahan is neither a social psychologist, nor a sociologist, nor a legal scholar. Thus, he does not have the relevant expertise necessary to make such large claims about the social and legal consequences of codifying in law and military policy the main moral conclusions of his book. In addition, he does not rely on any empirical scholarship from these fields to help bolster his claims; rather, he relies on intuitive considerations and hypothetical examples to support his sweeping consequentialist arguments.¹⁴ This is not to denigrate McMahan; he is clearly one of the giants of contemporary western just war theory and applied ethics more generally. It is simply to note that philosophers love to speculate about fields not their own, but in general they, like other lay persons, should be wary of doing so. Often, intuitions about such matters are incorrect, as we will see by first considering a brief episode from history. And more importantly, they are often incorrect not randomly, but for predictable epistemic reasons, as we will see by considering an influential argument from feminist epistemology.

Consider first the passage of the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution. The 19th amendment states that “The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.”¹⁵ The initial proposal, and the lead-up to the passage, of the 19th amendment is a good test case for our purposes, because it shares three relevant similarities with the case from the just war tradition described above: first, it is about bringing the law into line with morality,¹⁶ and second, it is about giving formal power and discretion to a large group of people who previously lacked such power and discretion. And third, although most, if not all, people would agree now, if asked, that the good consequences of the 19th amendment far outweigh the negative ones, when the amendment was first proposed, it was widely denigrated and opposed for fear of its bad consequences.

Critics worried that the amendment, if passed, would destroy society in a number of ways. In particular, they argued that it would be bad for women, men, and children, would destroy the institution of the family, and would destroy the overall American social order. The National Association Opposed to

14 Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for pressing me on this point.

15 19th Amendment, U.S. Constitution.

16 I take it as uncontroversial that the 19th Amendment brought U.S. law more in line with morality.

Women's Suffrage (NAOWS), founded in 1911, argued against women's suffrage "because it is unwise to risk the good we already have for the evil which may occur."¹⁷ Such potential evils included women competing with men rather than cooperating with them, the harm to women's reputations that could come from being involved in bitter political campaigns, women wasting time and energy learning about political candidates when that time and energy could be better used caring for their homes and families, men feeling offended and bitter that their wives did not trust them to vote well, the expense of doubling the electorate, and the possibility that some states would come under "petticoat rule" (that is, rule by women).¹⁸ In addition, many anti-suffrage groups argued that giving women the vote would increase the number of socialist voters.¹⁹

Much like McMahan's argument above, the formal arguments against legalizing and implementing women's suffrage from anti-suffrage groups claimed that it would harm women and men (the combatants, in our analogy), children, the institution of the family, and the economy (all innocent civilians, or bystanders, in our analogy), and that the resultant political structure would lead to worse outcomes for all citizens (in much the same way that legalizing asymmetric *jus in bello* laws would lead combatants to make worse choices overall). Less systematically but still importantly, prominent individuals spoke out against women's suffrage, as well. William Taft argued that the "enfranchisement of women would increase the proportion of the hysterical element of the electorate to such a degree as to be injurious to the public welfare."²⁰ Other anti-suffragists, also drawing on biological views of women and womanhood, argued that "female enfranchisement would sexualize politics and unsex women, confusing the proper boundaries of masculine and feminine, public and private, domestic and political, by which the natural complementarity of a harmonious social order was maintained."²¹ In other words, because of what women are like, letting them get a chance at the polls would harm, or even destroy, society. Again, this mirrors McMahan's argument above that, because of

17 Pamphlet distributed by the National Association Opposed to Women's Suffrage, Library of Congress.

18 Ibid.

19 Lynda G. Dodd, "The Rhetoric of Gender Upheaval During the Campaign for the Nineteenth Amendment," *Boston University Law Review* 93, no. 3 (2013): 718–20.

20 *Saturday Evening Post*, Vol. 188, No. 11, p. 3, Sept. 11, 1915. *New York Times*, Sept. 9, 1915. Cited in Wallace McClure, *State Constitution-making, with Especial Reference to Tennessee: A Review of the More Important Provisions of the State Constitutions and of Current Thought Upon Constitutional Development and Problems in Tennessee* (Nashville: Marshall and Bruce Company, 1916), 109.

21 Lisa Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women: The Suffrage Campaign 1907–14* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 154.

what combatants are like, the laws of war should not be changed, lest horrific consequences occur.

Of course, these dire predictions did not come to pass; women have had the vote for nearly a hundred years in the United States, and nuclear families, the economy, and society as a whole are still present and operating. While there have been a number of cultural and political changes in the intervening years, women and men still manage to cooperate socially, politically, and professionally, and have loving relationships (of all kinds) interpersonally. The anti-suffragists' fears of societal and political collapse, to put it simply, were unfounded. Still, this is not to say that those fears are inexplicable; people often fear and thus vilify change, especially large-scale political and legal change. However, I contend that there is more behind the anti-suffragists' arguments than a simple fear of change. Following Alison Jaggar, Lorraine Code, and others, I argue that anti-suffragists, or at least their arguments, were epistemically biased in particular ways, and so it is not surprising that they had negative intuitions, and thus made particular knowledge claims, about the likely consequences of the passage of the nineteenth amendment.

Feminist epistemology seeks to acknowledge and understand "the ways knowledge is embodied, emotional, socially situated, and informed by specific experiences and goals. ...[F]eminist epistemologies focus on the social and historical circumstances that determine knowledge in particular contexts, and on the relationships between knowledge production and forms of power."²² The overall point is that often what passes for objective knowledge and reasoning is in fact subjective and biased in various ways, in that it is at the very least influenced, and at the very most determined, by the personal, social, and political position and circumstances of the knower/reasoner. It is possible to read feminist epistemology in a more or less radical tone: there are important debates about whether objective knowledge is impossible because no one can completely overcome their own standpoint,²³ or whether such knowledge is possible, albeit very difficult,²⁴ or whether such knowledge is plausible, if a bit

22 Alison Bailey and Chris Cuomo, "Feminist Epistemologies," in *The Feminist Philosophy Reader*, ed. Alison Bailey and Chris Cuomo (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2008), 669.

23 Linda Martin Alcoff seems, at times, to take up this view, as does Sandra Harding. Linda Martin Alcoff, "The Problem of Speaking for Others," in *Theorizing Feminisms: A Reader*, ed. Elizabeth Hackett and Sally Haslanger (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 78–92; Sandra Harding, "Rethinking Standpoint Epistemology: What Is "Strong Objectivity"?", in *The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader: Intellectual and Political Controversies*, ed. Sandra Harding (New York: Routledge, 2004), 127–40.

24 Patricia Hill Collins seems to have this view, as does Alison Jaggar. Patricia Hill Collins, "The Politics of Black Feminist Thought," in *Theorizing Feminisms: A Reader*, ed. Elizabeth

of care is taken to screen out obvious biases and the like.²⁵ However, regardless of which of these general positions within feminist epistemology is correct, all agree that knowledge claims about women in general, and subsequent reasoning and conclusions drawn on the basis of those knowledge claims, are strongly influenced by the oppressive social and political relations that have long held between men and women. It is this point that I want to focus on going forward.

As Alison Jaggar persuasively argues, western philosophy, and western society more generally, understands reason in opposition to emotion. Reason is associated with men and male competence, while emotion is linked to women and feminine appetites. As Jaggar puts it,

Although there is no reason to suppose that the thoughts and actions of women are any more influenced by emotion than the thoughts and actions of men, the stereotypes of cool men and emotional women continue to flourish...[this myth] functions to bolster the epistemic authority of the currently dominant groups, composed largely of white men, and to discredit the observations and claims of the currently subordinate groups including, of course, the observations and claims of many people of color and women. The more forcefully and vehemently the latter groups express their observations and claims, the more emotional they appear and so the more easily they are discredited.²⁶

Women have been historically, and in many ways still are, viewed as irrational and hysterical, and as constitutionally unable to make reasonable, rational, informed decisions. (This is true to the extent that, when women are seen to be making reasonable, rational, informed decisions, they are often either praised as an “honorary man,” as “a member of the boy’s club,” or are denigrated as “cold,” “unfeeling,” or as “not a real woman.”) Given this epistemic bias against women—women-as-irrational-and-hysterical—it is unsurprising that

Hackett and Sally Haslanger (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 51–65; Alison Jaggar, “Feminist Politics and Epistemology: The Standpoint of Women,” in *The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader: Intellectual and Political Controversies*, ed. Sandra Harding (New York: Routledge, 2004), 55–66.

25 Elizabeth Anderson seems to have something close to this view. See her “Feminist Epistemology: An Interpretation and a Defense,” *Hypatia* 10, no. 3 (1995): 50–84.

26 Alison Jaggar, “Love and Knowledge: Emotion in Feminist Epistemology,” in *The Feminist Philosophy Reader*, ed. Alison Bailey and Chris Cuomo (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2008), 696.

anti-suffragists²⁷ concluded that women should not be allowed to vote, for fear that they would vote irrationally or unreasonably.

Following in this vein, Lorraine Code argues that women, as a group, are often viewed as objects of study rather than knowers in their own right. As she puts it, “women—and other ‘others’—are *produced* as objects of knowledge by S-knows-that-*p* epistemologies and the philosophies of science/social science that they inform.”²⁸ Rather than being regarded as subjects who acquire knowledge, women have been viewed, both in western philosophy and in western science and social science, as objects to be known *about*. And as objects, women’s subjectivity is erased and they are assumed to have “interchangeable, observable features.”²⁹ In light of this epistemological view of women—women-as-interchangeable-non-knowers—the anti-suffragist claims that women would simply double their husband’s vote, and that women having the vote would be both offensive to men’s sensibilities and straightforwardly harmful to men and children, make sense. It is important to note again that these claims about women are both false and pernicious; but given prominent sexist epistemic biases, they are perfectly understandable. As Alison Bailey and Chris Cuomo point out, “oppressive power relations are often reinforced by epistemological theories and methods.”³⁰ Taking it for granted that early 20th century America was a culture of male dominance and female subordination (among many other relations of dominance and subordination),³¹ it is not surprising, and in fact is to be expected, that there were strong epistemic biases against women, and that these biases influenced social and political thought and action.

Ultimately, the dire political and social predictions of anti-suffragists, (to the extent that they believed what they were saying and writing), were the direct result of their epistemic biases against women. Because women were viewed as emotional, hysterical, non-knowers, the conclusion drawn was that

27 Anti-suffrage groups included both men and women. However, this should not cast doubt on my analysis of anti-suffragists as epistemically biased against women, because as we learn from W.E.B. DuBois and others, one of the results of oppression is that members of the oppressed group tend to internalize and then propagate (as a survival mechanism) the viewpoint and stance of the privileged/oppressive group vis-à-vis the subjugated/oppressed group. W.E.B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Chicago: A.C. McClurg & Co., 1903), 10–5.

28 Lorraine Code, “Taking Subjectivity into Account,” in *The Feminist Philosophy Reader*, ed. Alison Bailey and Chris Cuomo (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2008), 730. Emphasis in original.

29 *Ibid.*, 730.

30 Alison Bailey and Chris Cuomo, “Feminist Epistemologies,” 670.

31 Linda Martin Alcoff, “How Is Epistemology Political?,” in *The Feminist Philosophy Reader*, ed. Alison Bailey and Chris Cuomo (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2008), 705–718.

they ought not have a formal political role in the state. Jaggar sums up this view nicely: she writes that “the alleged epistemic authority of the dominant groups [was and still is used to] justify their political authority.”³² The flip side of this view, of course, is that any threat to the dominant group’s political authority—by suffragists or other disenfranchised groups—was (and still is) responded to on epistemological grounds as well as political grounds. Anti-suffragists did not simply fear change; they feared that people whom they viewed as fundamentally intellectually incapable—women—would take over and/or destroy the electoral process, and in doing so, would destroy the country.

3 McMahan and Epistemic Bias

As we have seen, the anti-suffragists’ fears and predictions were not founded on sociological or psychological or historical data, but on a strong set of sexist epistemic biases. Analogously, McMahan’s dire predictions about the consequences of legalizing his moral conclusions regarding *jus in bello* can be traced to classist epistemic biases. Combatants are, after all, by-and-large members of the lower classes.³³ This is not to say that McMahan consciously has such biases; but it is to suggest that, absent any other firm data-driven foundation for his consequentialist conclusions, epistemic bias may well be playing a (conscious or unconscious) role in his argument. I thus follow the general feminist strategy of being suspicious whenever theorists make large claims about what groups of people, in general, are likely to do.³⁴

Recall that McMahan argues that combatants, absent existing symmetric laws of war that keep them in check, will turn into murderers; they will “exploit” or “inevitably abuse” asymmetric laws of war (that is, laws that match what McMahan considers to be the correct moral view of war), leading to greater, and unjustified, violence against both enemy combatants and enemy

32 Jaggar, “Love and Knowledge,” 696.

33 While the bulk of combatants are from the lower classes, some in the officer corps and military high command are not. And perhaps not surprisingly, McMahan in places suggests that it is the officer corps and high command who will be doing the propagandizing to the rest of the troops—the implication being that they are “in” on the true morality of war, but are choosing to ignore morality for their own purposes. While this is a negative moral view of the officer corps and military high command, it is not the same as the negative epistemic view that McMahan’s argument seems to display towards those everyday combatants who are at the lower ends of the chains of command, who are, for the most part, on the receiving end of military orders.

34 Miranda Fricker, “Introduction,” *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

civilians. Importantly, McMahan reaches this conclusion based on his view of combatants' epistemic position. Combatants, he writes, have a strong tendency to believe their side's propaganda about the justice of their cause and the injustice of their enemies, because they lack the sort of intellectual curiosity and acumen necessary to interrogate that propaganda.³⁵ As McMahan puts it, "combatants are quite generally negligent about their epistemic responsibilities," and "very seldom even try" to consider the moral character of the war they are fighting.³⁶ This belief in the justice of their side, combined with the fog of war, would lead combatants to not be able to make the important moral distinctions that would be demanded by asymmetric laws of war. And absent the ability to make such moral judgments, war under asymmetric laws would be even more hellish than it currently is under symmetric laws. At least, so McMahan contends.

But we should be wary of these claims about the epistemic position of combatants. At first glance, it reads as a strongly paternalistic argument: combatants don't have the intellectual capacities to question what they are told (they cannot, or are highly unlikely to be able to, distinguish between propaganda and the truth), and so we must lie to them via the law and public policies (we must maintain the currently-existing symmetric laws of war), for their own good (so that combatants on both sides do not cast off the practical restraints that the "moral equality of combatants" legal doctrine places on them). This matches closely with well-known epistemic biases against members of the lower classes, that they are "too stupid" to grasp the truth, and so elites ought to lie to them, for their own good. Such a bias can be seen as far back as Plato's infamous myth of the metals.³⁷ Plato claims that this myth protects the lower classes from having to grapple with philosophical matters that would only confuse them. Because the lower classes are not ruled by reason, they ought not be told the truth, because they are likely to misunderstand and mis-apply it.³⁸ More recently, Joanna Kadi persuasively argues that our entire society

35 McMahan, "The Morality of War and the Law of War," 28. McMahan, *Killing in War*, 151.

36 McMahan, *Killing in War*, 185–6.

37 This is also sometimes called Plato's "noble lie." Plato, *The Republic*, trans. C.D.C. Reeve (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc, 2004), 414c.

38 Many philosophers have written critically about Plato's "noble lie," but only some have rejected his epistemic premises. Notably, John Stuart Mill argues against paternalism on utilitarian grounds, not epistemic ones; he allows that some people might be too stupid to reach the truth or make good decisions, but argues that they will be happier if they are allowed to make their own choices, and so defends anti-paternalism (for the most part). John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* (Indiana: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc. 1978), Chapter 4, Section 4.

reinforces the social myth that poor people are stupid, because it is a handy explanation for why the poor are poor and the rich are rich. As she puts it, “so much energy goes into the social lie that poor people are stupid; capitalism needs a basic rationalization to explain why things happen the way they do. So we hear, over and over, that our lousy jobs and living situations result from our lack of smarts.”³⁹ But of course, this is not true; it is simply a lie told by the rich to justify their treatment of the poor.⁴⁰ To assume that all, or even most, members of the lower classes are stupid is to accept capitalist ideology, and its associated epistemic bias, uncritically. Combatants, although they are—for the most part—from the lower classes, are not stupid; to theorize about them as though they are is to make Plato’s, and capitalism’s, epistemic mistake.⁴¹

McMahan is undoubtedly correct that the fog of war makes it difficult for combatants to determine the right course of action. However, as we saw above, he moves from this claim to the conclusion that, given asymmetric laws of war, combatants will simply assume that all enemy combatants and civilians are liable to defensive attack, and will act accordingly. But it is not clear that combatants are never able to make fine-grained moral distinctions in war: there is both historical and contemporary evidence that combatants can, and often do, make complex moral judgments during military campaigns.⁴² To suggest otherwise sounds similar to another epistemic bias commonly employed against

39 Joanna Kadi, “Stupidity ‘Deconstructed,’” in *Theorizing Feminisms: A Reader*, ed. Elizabeth Hackett and Sally Haslanger (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 41.

40 And like Plato, the rich often justify this lie as being for the lower classes’ own good; better to be poor in a capitalist society, they say, than to live in a socialist or communist society. (That is, “Better dead than red!”)

41 And furthermore, it is to ignore military history. There are several historical cases of everyday combatants recognizing that the war that they were fighting was unjust. Famously, southern Confederate soldiers were the first to call the U.S. Civil War “a rich man’s war and a poor man’s fight.” Op-ed in the *Raleigh Standard*, as quoted in the *New York Times*, January 22, 1864, <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/nchist-civilwar/4685>. In addition, one of the reasons that Germany signed the WWI armistice was because the ordinary sailors of the German Navy, against their commanders’ orders, refused to continue fighting. This mutiny spread to other military and industrial bases across Germany, and was closely followed by the Kaiser’s abdication and the end of the war. Daniel Horn, *German Naval Mutinies of World War I* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1969).

42 Michael Walzer hammers this point home in *Just and Unjust Wars*, especially Chapters 3, 8, 9, and 19. In addition, the CAPE (Center for the Army Profession and Ethic) website, run by the U.S. Army, has over 200 case studies regarding combat behavior alone, and hundreds more regarding non-combat wartime combatant behavior. This suggests that, contrary to the popular view of combatants as “lugheads” or “grunts,” complex ethical thinking and decision-making is very much a feature of the combatant experience. CAPE, <http://cape.army.mil>, accessed November 5, 2017.

the lower classes, that they lack the moral sensibilities necessary to appreciate art and culture, to act well, and to be anything other than “brutes.” (Not surprisingly, this epistemic bias is also leveled against black and brown Americans.) Lacking such moral reasoning skills, the poor must first be controlled and then instructed (if possible—often the poor are regarded as unteachable) regarding how to act appropriately, lest they proceed to ignore all moral dictates and act very badly indeed. As Kadi writes, describing this bias, “I grew up learning that workers...are dumb, brutish, boring, close to animals. ...I internalized the lie and lived with it for years.”⁴³ But again, this epistemic bias is not borne out by the world; complex moral reasoning and judgment is not, it turns out, the provenance of wealthy or academic elites. It is a skill, and like any other skill, it is both fairly evenly distributed among the human population, and can be taught. So there is no reason to accept McMahan’s conclusion that combatants will, even given the fog of war, abandon all moral judgment and attack enemy combatants and civilians indiscriminately. That is what unteachable brutes would do; but combatants are neither unteachable, nor are they brutes.⁴⁴

McMahan also contends that asymmetric *jus in bello* laws would have negative consequences on the transition from war to peace. Combatants will either refuse to fight or, more importantly, refuse to surrender, for fear of being punished after the war for fighting in it. Interestingly, this worry of McMahan’s is in tension with his overall view; he should, we might think, *want* combatants to be more unwilling to fight, given both the likelihood that their side is unjust, and the general trend of just war theorists to want to eliminate most, if not all, wars.⁴⁵ So why does he worry about the unwillingness of combatants here? Presumably, because he worries that they will refuse to fight and surrender in all wars because of their fear of punishment, not simply the unjust ones, and thus will fail to do what they morally ought to do. But why think combatants’ fears will stop them from surrendering? This strand of argumentation closely matches an often-invoked classist epistemic bias, that the poor are “bullheaded,” that they are stubborn and unable to give up particular ideas, propositions, projects, or battles. (To see this bias, consider the many op-eds claiming that there is no point in trying to convince poor white voters to change their minds, because they have picked their position, and will stick to it forever,

43 Kadi, “Stupidity ‘Deconstructed,’” 43.

44 This is not to say that no combatants are brutes, or that no combatants act brutishly; rather, it is to make the point that we cannot simply assume that combatants, *en masse*, are all brutes.

45 More on this general goal of the just war tradition below; although this is not the only project of just war theory, it is one of the oft-recognized and oft-repeated overall goals of the theory. In this way, just war theory is sympathetic to pacifism.

come what may.⁴⁶) But again, this bias is belied by military history: there are numerous cases of combatants either surrendering or attempting to surrender long before their high command or political leadership were willing to do so, on the basis of claims that the war was no longer worth fighting, even when they knew they would be punished for their surrender.⁴⁷ Given such history, McMahan's conclusion that, if the laws of war are changed to be asymmetric, then combatants will refuse to surrender, seems to demonstrate that he has something of a blind spot where the epistemic position of combatants is concerned. And furthermore, this blind spot is not surprising—it matches general classist epistemic biases in a predictable manner.

As we have seen, epistemic biases tend to discourage giving groups of people formal power and discretion who previously lacked such power and discretion, even when morality supports doing so. Such epistemic biases do this by operating as hidden premises in arguments that conclude that the consequences of providing such power and discretion would be disastrous for all concerned. And this is precisely what we see in McMahan's argument; he concludes that we ought not legally provide combatants with formal power and discretion by passing and implementing asymmetric laws of war, even though he argues that the morality of war is asymmetric, for fear of the dire consequences of such a legal change. Whether McMahan himself is consciously epistemically biased or not, there are predictable classist epistemic biases embedded as hidden premises in his argument, ones that lead it partially, if not fully, astray.

46 See, among others, Amanda Marcotte, "No regrets for Trump voters: The media needs to stop looking for buyer's remorse," *Salon*, June 21, 2017, <https://www.salon.com/2017/06/21/no-regrets-for-trump-voters-the-media-needs-to-stop-looking-for-buyers-remorse/>, and Michael Kruse, "Johnstown Never Believed Trump Would Help. They Still Love Him Anyway," *Politico*, November 8, 2017, <https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2017/11/08/donald-trump-johnstown-pennsylvania-supporters-215800>.

47 German troops rebelled and refused to continue fighting in October and November 1918, precipitating the end of WWI, despite threats of treason charges from the Kaiser and other members of the German high command. (See note 41.) In addition, once the circumstances of the Vietnam War became apparent, several American combatants and draftees refused to fight in that war, despite threats of death, court-martialing, jail time, deportation, and/or massive fines. At some points, whole units of the U.S. Army in Vietnam refused to continue fighting, attempted to surrender, and even attacked and killed (fraggged) their commanding officers. Richard Boyle, *GI Revolts: The Breakdown of the U.S. Army in Vietnam* (San Francisco: United Front Press, 1973); David Cortright, *Soldiers in Revolt: GI Resistance During the Vietnam War* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2005), esp. 127–33.

4 Morality and the Law

But perhaps this line of reasoning is mistaken, and McMahan's argument for de-coupling the morality of war from the law of war is not infected with (conscious or unconscious) epistemic biases. However, even if he is correct that changing the laws of war will have the negative effects that he claims, I contend that we still should be wary of accepting his conclusion that we ought not incorporate the morality of war into our military and international public policies and laws. One of the stated goals of the western just war tradition is to prevent morally unnecessary wars. While just war theorists differ from pacifists in that they argue that it is possible for wars to be morally justified, they align with pacifists in that they argue that morality does apply to war, and that morally unjustified wars should be prevented and avoided. Because of this, the moral theory of war always has been, and in general has sought to be, closely linked to actual policies and laws surrounding war. Consider the Geneva Conventions; they are strongly based on the western just war tradition that was elucidated partially as a legal theory and partially as a moral theory by Thomas Aquinas, Grotius, and Vitoria (among others), and have been ably defended by many theorists as both a legally correct and a morally correct doctrine in the modern era.⁴⁸ Speaking generally, traditionalist arguments about the morality of war standardly reference the actual laws and policies surrounding war for support, and arguments about the actual laws and policies surrounding war standardly reference traditionalist just war theory for support. To put it another way, the common presumption is that the laws of war do—or, if they don't, they should seek to—match the morality of war.^{49,50}

48 The tenets of the Geneva Conventions are perhaps most famously defended as a moral code by Michael Walzer, in his canonical *Just and Unjust Wars*. But he is not alone here; other contemporary defenders include Yitzhak Benbaji, "Culpable Bystanders, Innocent Threats and the Ethics of Self-Defense," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 35, no. 4 (2005): 585–622; Brian Orend, *The Morality of War* (Ontario: Broadview Press, 2006); David Rodin, *War and Self-Defense* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); and Seth Lazar, "Just War Theory: Revisionists versus Traditionalists," among others.

49 Although this is the common presumption, it is certainly not unchallenged. For a good survey of this newly emerging debate, see *Just and Unjust Warriors: The Moral and Legal Status of Soldiers*, ed. David Rodin and Henry Shue (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

50 Of course, morality and the law can, in general, come apart, and in many domains, it is important that they be clearly separated. What is interesting about the western just war tradition, though, is that it has explicitly sought to link the morality of war to the laws of war, in order to help prevent and avoid morally unnecessary wars. Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for pressing me on this point.

This puts just war theorists in the important position of being relevant to real-world political, legal, and military debates about what the laws and policies surrounding war should be. Military practitioners, advisors, and lawyers read and reference just war theorists' research, as do international jurists and political scientists. But if McMahan is correct that we ought not publicize or legalize the "deep morality" of war, then this means that just war theorists—insofar as they accept McMahan's revisionist moral conclusions—are no longer in a position to advocate honestly for particular international laws and military policies as morally apt. Just war theorists could advocate in bad faith, of course, but this would necessitate going against where the moral theory has led, and any reasonably adept public policy maker would be able to quickly ferret out the difference between their public and private stances. This could (and we have some evidence that it does⁵¹) lead to a widespread loss of trust in just war theorists, which might make it even less likely that public policy makers, international legal theorists, and military decision-makers will listen to just war theorists. And this is bad for the stated goal of just war theory. If those involved in the creation and implementation of military policy and international law no longer listen to just war theorists, then those theorists will be unable to advocate successfully for the prevention of morally unnecessary wars. At the risk of being myopic, war is one real-world arena where philosophers have a say, and are listened to; it is not clear that we should engage in practices that are likely to reduce that influence, especially given the amount of good that we could do.⁵² Ultimately, to be a moral revisionist without being a legal revisionist is to give up the (admittedly limited, but real) practical influence that just

51 Often, this is labeled as hypocrisy, and it has led to the downfall of many politicians and other public figures, as well as to a general loss of trust in government institutions as a whole. This is not to say that hypocrisy is the only reason for the rising mistrust of government; however, it does seem to have played a contributory role.

52 This is perhaps too optimistic of a view of the relationship between just war theorists and those involved in the creation and implementation of international law and military policy; however, I do not think that it is wholly impossible, given that cadets in all U.S. military academies read and study Walzer's work, and that just war theorists have, in recent years, been invited to address the U.N. and its related bodies. In addition, consider the newly-accepted view of the U.S. Department of Defense that war rape is a form of ethnic cleansing and genocide (a position advocated tirelessly for by just war theorist Sally Scholz, among others), as well as the escalation of force cards carried by members of the U.S. military on deployment, which were designed based on just war theorists' work on the nature of threats. Sally J. Scholz, "War Rape's Challenge to Just War Theory," in *Intervention, Terrorism, and Torture: Contemporary Challenges to Just War Theory*, ed. S.P. Lee (New York: Springer, 2007), 273–88; United Nations, *Implementing the responsibility to protect: Report of the Secretary-General [A/63/677]* (Geneva: United Nations, 2009),

war theorists have. This, in turn, is to give up on one of the just war tradition's key goals, that of preventing morally unnecessary wars.

5 Coda: on Lying (Even by Omission)

Thus far, I have presented two arguments, one theoretical, one pragmatic, against McMahan's view that we ought neither publicize nor (more importantly) legalize what he terms the "deep morality" of war. In this section, I would like to discuss, much more tentatively, a third consideration. McMahan's conclusion that we should lie, or at the very least remain publicly and legally silent—i.e., lie by omission—about the revisionist morality of war (i.e., about his conclusions that combatants are morally unequal, that some civilians are liable to defensive attack, that some unjust combatants are liable to punishment after war, etc.) should give us some reason to question the success of his argument. Much like the infamous theory of government house utilitarianism, if you have to lie about it, that is some reason—although not decisive—to think that perhaps the theory is not correct. In much the way that Plato's "noble lie" casts suspicion on his entire theory of justice, McMahan's contention that we ought not change international law and military policy casts suspicion on his entire revisionist theory of war.

Of course, suspicion is not an argument. And sometimes, lying is necessary, as we learn from the many responses to Kant's "murderer at the door" case. But there does seem to be a difference between lying in particular cases, and lying about an entire domain of human endeavor. Specific, one-off lies can be easily and straightforwardly justified; but it is not clear that the same is true of lies about an entire sub-domain of morality. Ultimately, it reads as somewhat hypocritical to argue for a moral position and then contend that the world should not strive to be moral. But perhaps, in the end, such large-scale mismatches between the law and morality are justified; I have certainly not put forward a positive argument against this view here. I have merely suggested that such mismatches ought to draw increased attention and interrogation, if not general suspicion. McMahan advocates for a combination of moral revisionism and legal traditionalism on purely pragmatic grounds; but, as I have shown, there are at least two, and possibly three, reasons to reject his pragmatic argument for covering up the so-called "deep morality" of war.

<http://responsibilitytoprotect.org/implementing%20the%20top.pdf>; David Rodin, *War and Self-Defense*.

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Climate Change Mitigation and the U.N. Security Council: a Just War Analysis

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1

Prior to the agreement on climate change adopted in December 2015 in Paris during the twenty-first session of the Conference of Parties (COP 21), under the auspices of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), quite a few scholars had discussed and favored a robust role of the U.N. Security Council (UNSC) in bringing about effective global greenhouse gas (GHG) mitigation. More hesitantly, some have supported the UNSC authorizing military action against countries failing to mitigate in an adequate manner.¹ I will argue here that the shortcomings of the Paris Agreement are such that providing the UNSC with the authority to enforce climate change mitigation through military coercion remains a significant option. To be sure, the recent decision of the Trump administration to seek withdrawal from the Paris Agreement means that the United States, for the time being at least, will likely veto any UNSC authorization of military action aimed at climate change mitigation, but a vetoed decision would still put moral and political pressure on countries with poor mitigation records, including the United States, to improve their record. Also, a vetoed decision would be significant in providing moral support for similarly motivated military action toward climate change mitigation outside the UNSC framework. I will argue, however, that the option of the UNSC coercing GHG mitigation is morally flawed and ultimately

1 Lango, “Global Ethics and Global Climate Change,” supports UNSC authorization of military action as a last resort measure, especially if the UNSC would become more representative; Scott, “The Securitization of Climate Change in World Politics,” views it as potentially beneficial and focuses on the likelihood of it happening (which she views as low); Ng, “Safeguarding Peace and Security in our Warming World,” briefly notes some problems with a military response but she does not want to exclude it; and Christiansen, *Climate Conflicts*, argues generally that future UNSC military authorization might be justified. Cousins, “UN Security Council,” maintains that UNSC coercive climate action is legally feasible but politically unrealistic, leading her to favor the UNSC playing a peaceful conflict resolution role between states with opposed adaptation and mitigation goals. Finally, Gilley and Kinsella, “Coercing Climate Action,” think UNSC authorization is unlikely but hold that limited military force might be justified by countries as an act of individual or collective self-defense.

antithetical to effectively addressing climate change. My assessment will be based significantly on *jus ad bellum* principles of the just war tradition, taking into account some feminist critiques of this tradition. Relatedly, I will briefly contest Bill McKibben's proposal that we should view climate change as a third world war, requiring a mobilization similar to the one undertaken to defeat fascism in World War II. More broadly, I will argue in conclusion that "war is not the answer" with regard to avoiding disastrous climate change; rather, hope is to be found in massive nonviolent resistance to non-mitigating countries and increased local efforts of adopting green technologies.

2

Understandably, after more than two decades of failed global climate change negotiations, the Paris Agreement was widely praised and even celebrated in the public media. Yet the Agreement failed to live up to its proclaimed aim [stated in Article 2 (a)] of "holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2° C above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5° C above pre-industrial levels." The problem is that the promised GHG mitigation goals, including both reduced GHG emissions and larger GHG sinks, as voluntarily set by most states participating in COP 21 fall far short of ensuring this aim and are expected to lead to as much as 3° C rise in global average temperature by the end of the century.² The Paris Agreement seeks to deal with this problem by committing states to adjust and improve every five years, beginning in 2020, their mitigation goals, which are called "Nationally Determined Contributions" (NDCs), and this process is supposed to continue until the aim of global average temperature increase well below 2° C is met. Will this process be effective?

On a positive note, the ratification of the Paris Agreement required that at least 55 countries accounting for at least 55% of global GHG emissions signed the Agreement, and this requirement was met in early October 2016. Thus the Agreement went into force on November 4, 2016. A crucial step toward ratification was that China and the United States at the G20 summit in China (September 2016) provided notice of ratification. A worry was that (former) President Obama sidestepped the treaty confirmation role of the Senate in the ratification process, reflecting that the Senate might not have ratified the Paris Agreement due to general Republican hostility to GHG mitigation. This hostility was again on display in broad Republican support in Congress for President Trump's decision on June 1, 2017, to withdraw from the Paris Agreement.

2 See Climate Action Tracker, "Global Temperatures."

In his withdrawal announcement, Trump defended his decision primarily by arguing that “the Paris Climate Accord is simply the latest example of Washington entering into an agreement that disadvantages the United States to the exclusive benefit of other countries.” Trump specifically mentioned that the Paris Agreement allows China “to increase [its] emission by a staggering number of years – 13,” while “India makes its participation contingent on receiving billions and billions and billions of dollars in foreign aid from developed countries.” He continued: “There are many other examples. But the bottom line is that the Paris Accord is very unfair, at the highest level, to the United States.” Trump echoed here a complaint of unfairness launched by the United States since the earliest attempts to negotiate a climate change agreement centered on the notion that different demands should be placed on developed and developing countries since the developing countries have shorter histories of significant GHG emissions than most developed countries and so are lesser contributors to climate change, have much lower per capita emissions than most developed countries, and seek rapid growth, if necessary with cheap fossil fuels (as did once the developed countries). The problem with the Paris Agreement is not lack of fairness, but that the peak emissions of most developed nations are not reduced quickly enough and that those of China are delayed until 2030 and those of India have an open-ended date, making projected global mitigation fall short of the goal of keeping the global temperature increase well below 2° C.³ What adds to the problem is that the Green Climate Fund, established in 2010 (at COP 16) to enable developing countries such as India to adopt green technologies more rapidly (and also assist in the adaptation to climate change), might not be large enough to sufficiently reduce their peak emissions at an early enough date. Surely, the Trump administration has added to this problem by refusing to fulfill the initial American pledge, grossly overstated by Trump, of 3 billion, 1 billion of which was paid by the Obama administration.

The long-term impact of the American withdrawal from the Paris Agreement is uncertain. The withdrawal will not be completed until close to the next presidential election and new leadership might re-engage with the Agreement. The negative impact of the withdrawal and the support of the Trump

3 See Climate Action Tracker, “Rating countries.” Ironically, Trump in his withdrawal speech also notes the inadequacy of the Paris Agreement. He overstates the issue, claiming that the agreement will reduce global temperatures only by 0.2° C, and then argues that the economic costs for the United States are not worth it. Trump’s argument does not mean that he takes anthropogenic climate change seriously now (after having called it a “hoax” on earlier occasions); after all, no mention is made in his speech of how to address climate change other than a vague and unrealistic claim that he is prepared to renegotiate the Paris Agreement.

administration for weakening EPA regulations affecting GHG emissions and expanding fossil-fuel extraction, including coal, within the United States will to some extent be offset by the fact that a large number of state governments, such as California and New York, and numerous cities have declared to uphold the Paris mitigation target of the United States or go beyond it. China and the EU might also in response to the withdrawal accelerate the implementation of their mitigation goals.⁴ Still, the withdrawal of the United States as the world's second largest GHG emitter is a clear setback and might lead other countries to weaken their renewable energy endeavors. More generally, the rise of nationalism and rightwing populism does not bode well for the articulation of NDCs focused on the interest of future generations rather than on short-term national interests. In short, the Paris Agreement might not only fail to meet its ultimate temperature reduction aim, but it also might fail to realize even its current NDC promises. Once the Agreement unravels, the world might be on its way, in a manner that could be largely irreversible, from severe climate change (occurring with a 3° C increase in global average temperature) to catastrophic climate change (occurring with an increase in global average temperature above 5° C).⁵ The Paris Agreement offers little to prevent its unraveling since it lacks any enforcement mechanism other than the public naming and "shaming" of countries that fail to meet or improve their NDCs.⁶

3

In light of the weaknesses of the Paris Agreement, the uncertainty created by American withdrawal, and the extreme urgency of effectively addressing climate change in the coming decades, it is important to consider recent proposals to the effect that the UNSC should address climate change, including the most far-reaching suggestion that the UNSC take coercive political, economic, and military measures (Chapter 7 measures) against individual states failing to

4 See Boffey and Neslen, "China and EU respond to Trump with a new climate alliance."

5 See Campbell and Parthemore, "National Security and Climate Change in Perspective."

6 The Paris Agreement does not cover aviation and international shipping, each accounting for as much as 3% of human-caused climate change. It is unclear at this moment whether the Trump administration will disregard various international arrangements (partly in progress) to reduce the climate change impact of these sources. In October 2016, the signatories of the 1987 Montreal Protocol eliminating the ozone-depleting CFC refrigerants agreed to gradually phase out most of the current use of HFC refrigerants by 2045. HFCs are also extremely harmful GHGs. It seems that the Trump administration will uphold this amendment.

mitigate. Certainly, we should expect that the voices for more UNSC involvement will become stronger if the Paris Agreement would begin to fall apart.

Placing the authority to respond to countries with poor mitigation records in the hands of the UNSC seems a logical and final step of the so-called “securitization of climate change.” In the words of international relations scholar Shirley V. Scott, “securitization [in general] involves referring to an issue that has hitherto been conceptualized ‘only’ in political, economic, environmental or other terms as a security threat so as to heighten awareness of the issue and the urgency of taking effective action.”⁷ Examples other than climate change are the securitization of pandemic diseases and environmental degradation (such as loss of bio-diversity). The process of the securitization of climate change has been under way for some time. The UNSC debated climate change for the first time on April 17, 2007, and subsequently in 2011, 2013, and 2015. Overall, it seems that most countries from the Global South (G77) participating in these debates opposed making climate change an UNSC issue in any form, presumably being wary of “Western interventionism,” while many supporting countries of the North typically favored some non-coercive UNSC role.⁸ Still, there has also been a growing recognition among UNSC members (as well as within the UN at large) that global warming is a “threat multiplier” in that the effects of global warming, such as reduced resources (water, arable land, food), economic damage and land loss due to rising sea levels, and migration caused by environmental degradation, may deepen existing tensions and conflicts, both within and between states.⁹ And at a March 2015 UNSC meeting, initiated by New Zealand, a sympathetic hearing was given to the concern of small island states that climate change, by causing rising sea levels and increased tropical storms, goes beyond being a threat multiplier and poses for them a direct existential security threat.¹⁰ In other words, climate change may not only increase sources of conflict, but may also pose a direct threat to state sovereignty and territorial integrity. Furthermore, the U.S. government and the Department of Defense (DoD) have recognized the security implications of climate change, addressing the issue in the *National Security Strategy of 2015* and the DoD’s *Climate Change Adaptation Roadmap* (2014) and its *National Security Implications*

7 Scott, “The Securitization of Climate Change in World Politics,” 221.

8 See Cousins, “UN Security Council,” 201–5. The notable exceptions among the G77 countries are the small island states, such as the Republic of Maldives.

9 See Scott, “The Securitization of Climate Change in World Politics,” 225–6. See also Gilley and Kinsella, “Coercing Climate Action,” 13.

10 See Climate Home, “UN Security council hears climate fears of small island states.”

of *Climate-Related Risks and a Changing Climate* (2015).¹¹ More specifically, it is widely acknowledged that the current conflict in Syria that began in 2011 has been partly caused by social and political unrest rooted in its climate change-related extreme drought between 2007 and 2010.

Since climate change has undeniable security consequences, the UNSC, if it has not already done so, will sooner or later adopt Chapter 7 measures in response to conflict caused or worsened by climate change.¹² Such UNSC measures would fall basically within the sphere of adaptation to climate change since the focus is on addressing the negative consequences of this change.¹³ Full securitization of climate change, however, would go beyond this type of action toward the enforcement of mitigation standards necessary to prevent irreversible severe or catastrophic climate change. In other words, the shift is from addressing only the consequences of climate change toward also addressing its causes.¹⁴ One way to envision this full securitization is that the UNSC would take Chapter 7 measures with regard to states that fail to meet their NDCs or fail to make necessary adjustments to their NDCs at future COP meetings. Alternatively, the UNSC could set a global standard concerning the allowable per capita GHG emissions (with the aim of limiting global warming to well below 2° C) and adopt coercive measures against countries failing to meet this standard (even after they have acquired tradable GHG emissions permits from low-emitting countries). No doubt, this latter approach would be in theory more effective in curtailing climate change, but it would also be less feasible (both in terms of arriving at standards and enforcing them), and so let me focus on the first approach.¹⁵ Let me call a state that fails to meet or improve its NDC a “non-mitigator.” The non-mitigator may be a free-rider or blindly hope that future technology will solve the problem; or the failure to mitigate adequately may be rooted in a denial of climate change or in the conviction that climate change is not significantly caused by human conduct. So, on this account, the United States is becoming a non-mitigator under the Trump administration,

11 The DoD reports are also concerned with how the U.S. military can reduce its GHG footprint and how it should anticipate changes in its operations due to climate change, such as rising sea levels.

12 Scott suggests that the UNSC already passed a Chapter 7 measure with Operation Restore Hope in response to the crisis in Somalia partly caused by climate change-induced drought. See “The Securitization of Climate Change in World Politics,” 223.

13 See Scott, “Implications of climate change for the UN Security Council,” 1321, 1326.

14 *Ibid.*, 1326.

15 Cf. Ng, “Safeguarding Peace and Security in our Warming World,” 292, who argues that instead of the UNSC setting its own standards, it would be better for the UNSC to enforce the mitigation standards of the Kyoto Protocol or any future climate agreement.

and India continuing on a course of economic nationalism and/or receiving inadequate international support for green technologies might become a non-mitigator. A full securitization of climate change would mean that the UNSC would consider Chapter 7 measures against non-mitigators. Conceivably, the UNSC could also play a role in the enforcement of creating climate funds for mitigation and adaptation in developing countries, and it could create a tribunal for political leaders committing the crime of non-mitigation. Moreover, the UNSC also could take Chapter 6 (“Pacific Settlement of Disputes”) measures when disputes rooted in climate change would emerge. However, I will focus here on the following question: In the case that the Paris accord would begin to unravel, should we support the UNSC taking military measures (after political and economic coercion has failed) to discourage and modify non-mitigators?

4

A clear cost of this kind of full securitization of climate change is reduced participation by states in deciding an effective climate change regime and coercive measures taking the place of voluntary cooperation.¹⁶ The Paris Agreement involved the participation and cooperation of the community of states with most states articulating national mitigation goals to get the process going, and its ratification also required the explicit voluntary commitment of many states. The full securitization of climate change, to the contrary, places the responsibility of states to avoid severe or catastrophic climate change significantly in the hands of a small group of countries, the five permanent members of the UNSC and its additional ten rotating members, and this more limited participation of states will lead to coercive UNSC resolutions. What would offset the costs of reduced participation is that the UN General Assembly would initiate or encourage action against non-mitigators on the basis of article 11 (3) of the U.N. Charter, allowing it to “call the attention of the Security Council to situations which are likely to endanger international peace and security.”¹⁷ At any rate, the costs would not constitute a decisive objection to the full securitization of climate change if we were to conclude that UNSC climate action

16 Cf. Scott, “The Securitization of Climate Change in World Politics,” 222–3.

17 Cf. Lango, “Global Ethics and Global Climate Change.” The General Assembly adopted a much weaker resolution in 2009 (GA Res. 63/281), maintaining that the UNFCCC is the “key instrument” addressing climate change but also calling on all relevant UN bodies to consider the security implications of climate change. Cousins, “UN Security Council,” 202, cites this resolution but neglects to note that the GA reaffirmed the central role of the UNFCCC.

would be both effective and necessary in order to prevent the ravages of severe or catastrophic climate change. On the precipice, it might be justified to replace the persuasion of words by the persuasion of (threat of) weapons.

However, does the UNSC, on the basis of the U.N. Charter, have the *legal* authority to adopt a resolution to resort to force, or to use the threat of force, in order to coerce non-mitigators to mend their ways? In addressing this question, it is instructive to examine how Silke Marie Christiansen justifies a GHG mitigation role for the UNSC in her *Climate Conflicts*. On her account, the UNSC may authorize military measures when article 2 (4) of the U.N. charter – prohibiting all members from “the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state” – is violated. Controversially, Christiansen argues that we should interpret the “use of force” not just as involving the use of military force, but more broadly as collective human behavior that threatens or leads to the violation of state sovereignty. Most dramatically, states responsible for climate change cause this kind of violation when rising sea levels lead to loss of territory or even threaten statehood as in the case of such small island states as the Republic of Maldives. Christiansen notes that a problem with this analysis of the “use of force” is that damaging operations of nature caused by climate change, unlike military attacks, “are not necessarily humanly intended.”¹⁸ She responds that, in the future at least, large GHG emitters may be construed as hostile once green technologies become more readily available, affordable, and are not used by them on a wide scale. Thus Christiansen concludes that the UNSC should at least have a future role in responding coercively and militarily to such major hostile emitters.¹⁹

A difficulty of Christiansen’s analysis is that it does not seem to offer a convincing guideline concerning which countries should possibly be subjected to UNSC actions. Unlike a military attack, climate change as “use of force” is foremost an emerging threat that will not fully materialize for many decades. To be sure, serious environmental damages are already occurring, as well as numerous human casualties, but they are small as compared to anticipated future harms if GHG emissions continue on their current trajectory. Looking to past GHG emissions, it would be hard to single out particular states as responsible for climate change since most states have contributed to the unfolding threat of rising sea levels for, say, the Republic of Maldives, and no specific

18 Christiansen, *Climate Conflicts*, 183.

19 *Ibid.*, 184, 244. Christiansen argues against the idea that climate change is a threat that might trigger the right to self-defense against “armed attack” articulated in article (51) of the U.N. Charter because, among other reasons, “defining the emission of GHGs as armed attack will definitely overstretch the meaning of article 51” (*ibid.*, 185).

state by itself made the difference so that it alone could be held responsible for the environmental threat. Of course, all major historical emitters could be collectively held responsible, but then who would authorize and execute UNSC resolutions against this collective? Looking forward to future GHG emissions, the main historical emitters are not necessarily the ones who will satisfy the requirement of hostile intention because they may adopt green technologies on a broad scale, while large future emitters with hostile intention might be overall less responsible for climate change than the main historical emitters because they might have limited GHG emission histories. And what further complicates the issue is that GHG emissions in one country (e.g., China) might be significantly caused by its production for export, placing the responsibility for the emissions partly in the hands of the importing countries.

UNSC action against states failing to adhere to, or improve, their NDCs seems largely to avoid these difficulties of determining which countries should be liable to UNSC action. The UNSC has the legal authority to respond to “any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression” (article 39). To view climate change as an act of aggression or a breach of the peace is questionable, but it is clearly a threat to the peace. We need not establish differential responsibility for causing this threat on the basis of the GHG emission records of individual states. Instead, it suffices to note that the Paris Agreement seeks to reduce and prevent the threat. Non-mitigators risk the unraveling of the Paris Agreement and so they pose a threat to the peace and are subject to UNSC action. The shift here is significantly from backward-looking responsibility and blame for climate harm to forward-looking responsibility for contributing to preventing climate harm, a shift that facilitates and encourages cooperation.²⁰ However, blame becomes appropriate again with regard to non-mitigators, and the scale of GHG emissions remains morally relevant because the risk of the unraveling of the Paris Agreement will increase the greater role a non-mitigator has to play in reducing global GHG emissions. The UNSC in seeking to uphold the Paris Agreement should first implore non-mitigators to solve their dispute about their NDCs with other parties to the accord in a peaceful manner (Chapter 6 measures), and if this would fail, Chapter 7 measures culminating in military action would be appropriate.

A serious problem with the UNSC authorizing military measures with regard to climate change is that three (China, the United States, and Russia) of

20 See Young, *Responsibility for Justice*. Following Young, climate change is a structural injustice and she argues that such injustices are best solved by switching from a backward-looking discourse of blame for the injustice toward a forward-looking discourse of taking on responsibility for eliminating the injustice.

the current top five GHG emitters (also including the E.U. and India) have veto power as permanent members of the UNSC (and France may veto on behalf of the E.U.). Thus, even if the non-permanent members would have a strong green agenda, the military measures would inevitably be selective and exclude some potential large non-mitigators. Generally, one would expect military actions are more likely to be authorized against militarily weaker non-mitigating countries, which also tend to be smaller GHG emitters. Accordingly, it is not surprising that, overall, countries from the Global South, even though they are likely to be the greatest victims of severe or catastrophic climate change because these countries will have fewer resources to deal with its negative impacts, have been least sympathetic to putting climate change on the UNSC agenda, fearing Western interventionism and neo-colonialism. Most immediately, UNSC military action against non-mitigators is not to be expected since the United States as non-mitigator will not only veto any resolution against itself but also will likely veto any UNSC military action against other countries in order to avoid appearing blatantly hypocritical.

Still, the option of considering UNSC military action against non-mitigators remains relevant for several reasons. First, the United States may rejoin the Paris Agreement and, so, military coercion against countries that willfully ignore their NDCs may become feasible. To be sure, this coercion would likely be selective and aimed at smaller military powers, but a case could be made that non-mitigating small countries set a bad precedent and the extreme urgency of addressing climate change outweighs the selectivity problem. Second, even if the United States were to veto all UNSC resolutions concerning military coercion against non-mitigators, a vetoed decision would still put moral and political pressure on non-mitigators to improve their record. Third, a vetoed resolution would offer moral support for mitigating countries to engage in military coercion against non-mitigators outside the UNSC framework. Certainly, repeated vetoed decisions would gradually create a norm of when military action against non-mitigators would be justified. We may then anticipate that this norm would come to guide military action executed and approved by a large majority of mitigating countries against non-mitigators.

5

This brings us to the crux of the matter: Can military force authorized by the UNSC against non-mitigators be *morally* justified? This question, unlike the issues of whether the UNSC in fact will increasingly be concerned with climate change and has the legal authority do so, has not yet received much

attention.²¹ Let me address this question on the basis of just (resort to) war (*jus ad bellum*) principles, keeping in mind that the analysis bears more broadly on how we view the idea of (military) violence for the sake of combating climate change. I have already addressed to some extent the *jus ad bellum* requirement that resort to military force must be decided by a *legitimate authority* – that is, an authority with moral competency and legitimacy. The UNSC has the legal authority to initiate military action against non-mitigators, but the veto system weakens its moral authority in that a more representative UNSC without the veto system is more likely to arrive at impartial decisions, taking into account a broader range of voices and interests.

Another problem with the moral authority of the UNSC is that this body lacks any articulated standards for deciding whether in a particular case resort to force is morally warranted. Notably, the UNSC did not adopt in 2005 “five criteria of legitimacy” recommended in *A More Secure World*, Report of the UN Secretary General’s High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change. These criteria are similar to common *jus ad bellum* principles, and in the absence of such criteria UNSC resolutions might be decided by power politics rather than by seeking justice. Accordingly, UNSC resort to force against non-mitigators will inevitably raise the doubt that the decision might not accord with the *jus ad bellum* principle of *right intention*, requiring that both the decision to resort to military action and its execution are guided by justice, not extraneous political interests.

A third *jus ad bellum* principle is that military action should have a *reasonable chance of success*. Success in the present context would mean that as a result of UNSC-initiated military action a non-mitigator would come to adopt adequate GHG mitigation measures, such as the widespread introduction of green technology and/or the adoption of consumption patterns with greatly reduced GHG footprints. What also seems to be necessary is that military action would affect the elimination of climate change ignorance and apathy within non-mitigating countries. How can military force affect these changes? Air campaigns as the current dominant mode of military coercion, say against coal energy plants, do not guarantee that greener technologies will be chosen; instead, dirtier coal burning might result. An extensive air campaign would also be inadequate because it does not create green “hearts and minds.” In short, regime change seems essential, and this requires troops on the ground as well as long-term political and cultural investments. The recent record of bringing about successful regime change through military force and aid is abysmal. It

21 An exception is Lango, “Global Ethics and Global Climate Change.”

also raises the question: Which countries would deliver the military force and aid and would they be up to the task of changing “hearts and minds”?

Admittedly, it might be the case that the use of military force, or the threat thereof, as well as coercive economic and political measures, may motivate a country to make some changes in its environmental policies. Perhaps such actions, for example, may stop the burning of tropical forests, especially when neighboring countries would be directly affected, but the issue here is not whether coercion can make some difference on some occasions. Rather, I am contesting that military force is a convincing coercive instrument that may lead a country to transform from a non-mitigator to an important supporter of, and contributor to, a global mitigation program such as the Paris Agreement.

The difficulties of a successful climate change mitigation war suggest that the *proportionality principle* might not be satisfied. A protracted war would be counter to the expected good of the war – greatly reduced GHG emissions – since war itself creates huge GHG emissions due to the fact that most mobile instruments of war are fuel-driven. An irony of the securitization of climate change is that the military is a major GHG emitter, in times of peace and especially when at war.²² Moreover, war is antithetical to reducing GHG emissions because refineries may be bombed, deforestation may occur, and, as previously noted, people may revert to cheaper and dirtier forms of energy, such as coal and dung, when energy grids are disrupted. It should also be noted that the production of the instruments of war involves high GHG emissions and the same is true of rebuilding the devastation that war typically leaves behind. So even if we would not incorporate other bad outcomes of war, such as the loss of human lives, the wounded, and the psychological casualties, and we would focus on GHG emissions alone, the bad results of war might outweigh its anticipated (but questionable) good results, and so a climate-change war might violate the principle of proportionality.

More specifically, some of the Gulf States, such as Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates, have the highest per capita emissions in the world. Now assume that these states continue with excessive fuel-driven consumption patterns and try to keep their market share by selling their oil cheaply. This would make them good candidates for military coercion. But then consider what happened during the Gulf War. The Iraqi troops withdrawing from Kuwait sought to destroy its resources, setting fire to hundreds of oil wells, which led to burning gas and oil for up to nine months, as well as to huge oil leaks on land and in the sea. A thousand people died because of smoke inhalation and the equivalent

²² The Pentagon is the largest single consumer of petroleum in the world and contributes as much as 5% of GHG emissions in the United States. See Sanders, *The Green Zone*, 51–3, 68.

of several months of US GHG emissions went up in the air.²³ It is not farfetched to assume that similar events might repeat themselves in protest against an UNSC-sanctioned military attack and occupation.

The two final just war principles for assessing resort to force with regard to non-mitigators are the *just cause* and *last resort* principles. I will briefly address the issue of last resort within the context of examining the just cause of UNSC-initiated war against non-mitigators. Two questions seem essential. First, is climate-change war the type of war that we recognize as conceivably having a just cause? Second, can we justify war against GHG non-mitigators in the sense that those individuals who enable their country to fall short in mitigation efforts are proper targets of force? In other words, is there something about these individuals who fail to address their GHG emissions or enable others to do so that justifies that violence is used against them or that their right to life is negated?

We have previously noted that the threat posed by climate change, although presently unfolding, is foremost an emerging threat, i.e., a threat that will increasingly materialize if very significant mitigation does not take place. Accordingly, it seems most plausible to view military force authorized by the UNSC against non-mitigators as a preventive war (rather than as a war of self-defense): non-mitigators may cause the collapse of the Paris Agreement and once this accord falls apart it will be much harder and costlier to avert severe or catastrophic climate change in the future, and success might be uncertain and, at best, partial. One problem with this argument for preventive war is that it is more convincing with regard to very large GHG emitters than small emitters and war is least feasible against them. Furthermore, there are two familiar objections to preventive war, say, as it has been defended in the context of preventing “rogue states” from acquiring nuclear weapons (and other WMD): Just war theory traditionally has defined a just cause as involving a wrong done and in the case of preventive war there is only a suspicion of a future wrong; the principle of last resort is hard to satisfy since the anticipated wrong is a future wrong allowing for nonviolent measures to avert it. In the case of climate change preventive war, the problem that no wrong has been committed is less convincing since non-mitigation is an unfolding wrong and antithetical to climate change governance. Still, non-mitigating countries might promise to do much more at a later date, or they may engage in developing GHG absorption technologies, as well as new types of green energy, such as fusion, arguing that

23 See *ibid.*, 110.

this is their contribution to the Paris Agreement.²⁴ Such responses would make resort to force against these countries especially hard to justify. Relatedly, it is somewhat doubtful that the wrong done by small non-mitigators is really a threat to the Paris Agreement and could unravel it. After all, could other countries not compensate for the non-mitigators, increasing their mitigation efforts rather than opt for resort to force? Finally, the time frame of the dissolution of the Paris Agreement and the emergence of severe or catastrophic climate change is such that it becomes hard to stipulate that military force would be a last resort measure. There is enough time first to try diplomatic and non-military coercive measures and there is no clear point of when this endeavor should stop before the gathering dangers at the horizon allow no further delay of a military response.

Even if we grant that non-mitigation in some scenarios might constitute a definite threat to the Paris Agreement (or any other global climate accord) of a magnitude such that resort to force would be a just cause, the just cause principle also requires that the threat is of a kind (type) that warrants killing. Typically, millions of civilians of a non-mitigating state participate in creating its unacceptable GHG emissions, and it seems indefensible to claim that their conduct makes them liable to military attack. To be liable to attack one must be instrumental in the infliction of immediate life-threatening violence, making counter-violence necessary to protect lives. Similarly, it seems an error to argue that those who would protect the civilians from attack and seek to preserve the political self-determination of their community would in this way become morally liable to attack. In other words, the soldiers of a non-mitigating state are not morally liable to attack for defending their state. To be sure, this self-defense might be wrong in some cases, as when soldiers protect their own civilians engaged in acts of genocide, but in the case of civilian non-mitigators the wrong done by the civilians, unlike the wrong done by genocidaires, is not of a nature that makes their protectors liable to attack. This leaves us with political and civilian leaders and their role in non-mitigation. If their support of non-mitigation expresses the popular will, then their shared responsibility does not make them liable to military attack. If the leaders act contrary to the popular will, then the appropriate response seems that the people should be encouraged to seek their replacement or overthrow. In my view, the only instances in which violence against non-mitigators might be appropriate is that the non-mitigating countries would respond violently against nonmilitary

24 For a criticism of technocratic approaches to climate change mitigation, see Klein, *This Changes Everything*, Part Two. Still, uncertainty about future technological possibilities may make it harder to justify military force against non-mitigators.

UNSC measures aimed at promoting mitigation or would brutally repress non-violent individual actions in support of mitigation. The actions may be local or originate from other countries. Since GHG emissions have no borders and affect humanity as such, foreign protestors of the emissions of non-mitigating countries should be allowed to cross the borders of these countries and nonviolently express their opposition. The human rights of green nonviolent resisters, no matter their country of origin, should be protected by the global community, and harm against them should trigger coercive sanctions. By the same logic, non-mitigators have no right to refuse entry to climate refugees and the refugees should be protected from violence. In all these cases, the justificatory standards of defensive military force should be similar to those of traditional humanitarian intervention.

6

Feminists have criticized the just war tradition and also articulated pacifist and non-pacifist alternatives.²⁵ Let me briefly discuss how the feminist critique applies to the proposal of full securitization of climate change, focusing on two common criticisms of just war thinking in general. The first criticism is that just war thinkers tend to use abstraction in ways that turn us away from the particular horrors of wars. The focus in just war theory is on principles and abstract causes, not on violence against the body. Most glaringly, talk about “precision strikes,” “strategic strikes,” “collateral damage,” and the like, move the mind away from burning flesh, exploding brains, and the like.²⁶ Now in the case of the proposal of the full securitization of climate change, it seems that abstract talk about “force” and “threat” may lead us astray. A military threat is rather different from a climate threat, and military force is rather different from the force resulting from climate change. Hostility is one feature of this difference, making war violence in various degrees personal. A storm is not

25 I hold that the feminist critique of just war theory should be used to improve just war theory. This is also the view of Peach, “An Alternative to Pacifism?,” 154, 164–7. More specifically, I have used this critique to support the view that just war theory needs to be supplemented by *jus ante bellum* (or just military preparedness) principles. See, for example, my “From Hiroshima to Baghdad.” For additional articles on this topic, see http://works.bepress.com/harry_vanderlinden.

26 See Peach, “An Alternative to Pacifism?,” 158. See also Hun, “An Evaluation of Feminist Critiques of Just War Theory.”

a “wind of hate.”²⁷ There is also a difference in suddenness and immediacy, leaving victims physically and emotionally paralyzed. Interpersonal violence especially cuts off all options and terrorizes. It is, of course, this psychological feature of violence that makes people fear terrorism beyond any proportion of its actual harm. Focusing on the nature of military violence should lead us to become more constrained about when counter-violence might be justified. It is only when violence is physical violence that the defining features of violence come to the foreground, making counter-violence necessary and just, while when violence is only a metaphor or a resemblance of violence we should reject counter-violence. In other words, we should reject physical (subjective) violence as a response to “climate force,” “climate threat,” “ecological violence,” and even “structural or systemic violence.”²⁸

A striking example of viewing climate change as violence is to be found in Bill McKibben’s recent essay “A World at War.” He writes: “We’re under attack from climate change.... World War III is well and truly underway. And we are losing.... Carbon and methane are seizing physical territory, sowing havoc and panic, racking up casualties, and even destabilizing governments.... It’s not that global warming is *like* a world war. It *is* a world war.” He adds: “The question is not, are we in a world war? The question is, will we fight back? And if we do, can we actually defeat an enemy as powerful and inexorable as the laws of physics?”²⁹ For McKibben, we will only win the climate-change world war if the people would mobilize in a way similar to the total mobilization of the American people in response to the threat of fascism after Pearl Harbor during the Second World War. Then we responded with rapid and massive development of weapons industries; now we should respond similarly by immediately creating on a massive scale solar panels and wind turbines. Then the people swept aside the isolationist “America Firsters”; now we must sweep aside the lack of cooperation and obstructionist policies of fossil-fuel industries. And, finally, we should not think that the Paris Agreement is victory and will take care of the unfolding threat of a world at war, replicating Chamberlain’s misguided hope after Munich.

What is misleading about this analysis is that the anthropogenic character of climate change disappears: the enemy is “carbon and methane,” not, say, the fossil-fuel industries and factory farming. It is easy to see why McKibben argues this way: he has no place for soldiers killing those causally responsible

27 Cf. Grossman, *On Killing*, 76–82, who uses this expression to refer to the deep trauma of being confronted with hostility, as distinct from threats lacking hostile intent.

28 See in more detail in my “On the Violence of Systemic Violence.”

29 McKibben, “A World at War.”

for climate change. This is fair enough, but then the notion of climate change as war should be set aside. This notion also obfuscates the different character of military attacks and its harms and the operations of climate change and its negative impacts. Indeed, McKibben seems to indirectly acknowledge this latter point when he notes that one problem with the war of climate change is that there is no Pearl Harbor moment, mobilizing the people to fight against this war. McKibben appeals to a familiar idea that only war can push people to unite and concentrate their efforts on a common goal. There is some sad truth in this, but the idea neglects that war also creates hatred, virulent nationalism, etc. At any rate, the reference to World War II mobilization is flawed in that it is unlikely that the US government will direct and coordinate the fight against the “enemy”, as happened in World War II.³⁰ Instead, it seems that organizing from below by environmental groups needs to (continue to) play a pivotal role, including obstruction of governmental policies and business practices counter to GHG mitigation. Another problem is that the portrayal of climate change as war suggests that optimal weapons (solar, wind, electric cars, etc.) are crucial to winning the “war,” neglecting that the broader issue is how capitalist society focused on growth and profit maximization is continuously undermining the natural environment conducive to human flourishing. In other words, we need not only a technological transformation but also a value transformation.³¹

This points to a second feminist critique of the just war tradition. In the words of Carol Cohn and Sara Ruddick, the critique is that “just war theorists tend to abstract particular wars from the war system on which they rely and which they strengthen.” This “war system” involves: “arming, training, and organizing for possible wars; allocating the resources these preparations require; creating a culture in which wars are seen as morally legitimate, even alluring; and shaping and fostering the masculinities and femininities that undergird men’s and women’s acquiescence to war.”³² In terms of the securitization of climate change, the problem is that the neglect of the war system involves a

30 Accordingly, calls for a World War II mobilization without describing climate change as a war are also flawed. In *Unprecedented Climate Mobilization*, Woodworth and Griffin make such a call (26–53) and also discuss prior similar calls made during the past decade (39–41). More promising are their suggestions for nonviolent citizen strategies to transform the status quo (91–108).

31 Cf. Godoy and Jaffe, “We Don’t Need a ‘War’ on Climate Change.” I am sympathetic to their view that what is needed instead of war is revolution, but it goes beyond the scope of this chapter to argue for this claim. Of course, my criticism of McKibben here is only directed against his essay “A World at War,” and not against his broader work and activism.

32 Cohn and Ruddick, “A Feminist Ethical Perspective on Weapons of Mass Destruction,” 406.

neglect of how the preparation for war, materially and culturally, is antithetical to realizing strong GHG mitigation goals. We have already touched upon the material opposition between weapons production and testing, and fighting, on the one hand, and GHG mitigation on the other hand. The cultural opposition is that the dominant morality of war as an ethics of control, domination, hierarchy, and expansion seems rather opposed to the type of individual and social green ethics required to turn around climate change, that is, an ethics of simplicity, limitation, and humility concerning our place in nature.³³ It also must be an ethics of resistance, but one that seeks, with an eye on future reconciliation, nonviolent action (protest, noncooperation, civil disobedience, and nonviolent intervention) toward opposing forces rather than their destruction.

7

In conclusion, the U.N. Charter aimed “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war,” and it is certainly the case that climate change is a “threat multiplier” and may play a significant role in bringing about future conflicts. Still, the view of climate change as a threat to peace warranting UNSC authorization of military force to reduce the threat is mistaken. The harms of climate change and the violence of humans should not be equated, and mitigation wars will be counterproductive and in violation of just war norms. The idea that the UN Security Council can rescue us from severe or catastrophic climate change by enforcing a global mitigation schema is implausible and strengthens both materially and culturally the existing war system. War will indeed result when global mitigation fails, but it is likely to be war to maintain access to resources and arable land as well as to keep climate refugees out of the affluent countries. The best safeguard against a future of military eco-apartheid is a mass movement of nonviolent resistance, solidarity, and green virtues and values.³⁴ This movement should also materialize and strengthen its commitment

33 Cf. Jamieson, *Reason in a Dark Time*, 186–7. More bellicose and realist understandings of just war theory seem to adhere to this morality of war, while Peach’s feminist reconceptualization of just war theory seems closer to embracing the values of a green ethics.

34 For the notion of “eco-apartheid,” see Malleon, “A Community-Based Good Life or Eco-Apartheid.” Again, in the final instance, it must be moral strength rather than military might that must save us from severe or catastrophic climate change, but those with the huge arsenals have an interest in convincing us otherwise. Cf. Pogge, “Poverty and Violence,” 109–10, who argues against military violence against wealthy countries for the sake of reducing the global poverty in which they are implicated.

to a future livable world by creating now the world we need, a world of socialized renewable energy networks.³⁵

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35 See Mann, "On the Precipice with Naomi Klein, Karl Marx, and the Pope."

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Pacifism, Feminism, and Nonkilling Philosophy: a New Approach to Connecting Peace Studies and Gender Studies

William C. Gay

For over a century, theorists and activists have made connections between pacifism and feminism. For example, during the late 1800s and early 1900s pacifist feminism emerged in Great Britain, and Jane Addams was advocating for women's suffrage and world peace in the United States.¹ Less well known is the new approach of nonkilling philosophy and its benefits for strengthening such an alliance through its efforts to unite peace studies and gender studies or at least making available to them augmented and strengthened terminology and methodology.

I am a pacifist. I am a feminist. Of course, this list goes on. For example, I am also an advocate for LGBTQ rights and for prison reform. However, when asked to give such a list, I usually begin by saying I am a pacifist and I am a feminist. In this chapter, however, while I will address aspects of pacifism and feminism, I am going to place them in the background to a discussion of the nonkilling perspective initiated by Glenn Paige and its reliance on the violentology perspective initiated by Francisco Muñoz. I will also address the initiation of nonkilling philosophy by Irene Comins Mingol and Sonia París Albert. I am doing so to present how these perspectives can provide practical and even more radical ways to advance and possibly even unite peace studies and gender studies than do pacifism and feminism. At the same time, I will contend that while nonkilling philosophy is not hampered by stereotypes that often thwart acceptance of pacifism and feminism, it relies on important aspects of both of feminism and pacifism.

1 Heloise Brown, *"The Truest Form of Patriotism": Pacifist Feminism in Britain, 1870–1902* (Manchester, UK and New York: Manchester University Press, 2003); Jane Addams, *The Jane Addams Reader*, ed. Jean Bethke Elshtain (New York: Basic Books, 2002).

1 Pacifism in Peace Studies and Feminism in Gender Studies: Current Partial Connection

Pacifism has long been a frequent, though not the paradigmatic, orientation in Peace Studies. Likewise, feminism is closely associated with Gender Studies, though it is not the sole perspective informing Gender Studies. For purposes of this chapter, I will note briefly important expressions of nonviolence and pacifism developed by Robert Holmes and Duane Cady and of feminism developed by Betty Reardon and Karen Warren and related developments in care ethics.

1.1 *Nonviolence and Pacifism of Holmes and Cady*

While the traditions of nonviolence and pacifism can be traced back to antiquity, in modern times they are often associated Gandhi and King.² Within recent philosophy, two of the most careful treatments can be found in the work of Robert Holmes and Duane Cady. I want to note how Holmes distinguishes violentist and nonviolentist approaches and how this distinction differs from the violentology perspective in nonkilling philosophy. I also want to note how Cady lays out a continuum of pacifism that highlights types that allow for some lesser levels of violence and show how most of these types are consistent with nonkilling philosophy.

Holmes distinguishes violentists (ones who accept use of violence) and nonviolentists (advocates of nonviolence). For Holmes, the nonviolent perspective can be based on principled or pragmatic grounds, and he gives strong arguments in favor of the principled version over the pragmatic one. Moreover, given these definitions, he can distinguish nonviolentists from pacifists. He states:

Pacifism is opposition to war, nonviolence [is] opposition to violence. While one cannot be a nonviolentist without being a pacifist, one can be a pacifist without being a nonviolentist. One can, that is, oppose warfare without necessarily opposing other modes of violence.³

For my purposes, the point I want to stress is that the violentism that Holmes criticizes is distinct from the violentology perspective criticized within the

2 Gerardo Zampaglione, *The Idea of Peace in Antiquity*, trans. Richard Dunn (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1973); Mohandas K. Gandhi, *The Moral and Political Writing of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 1–3, ed. Raghavan Iyer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986); Martin Luther King, Jr., *Strength to Love* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963).

3 Robert Holmes, "The Morality of Nonviolence," in *The Ethics of Nonviolence: Essays by Robert L. Holmes*, ed. Predrag Cicovacki (New York and London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 170, n. 1.

nonkilling philosophy that I will be presenting. The difference may be subtle, but it is important because even pacifists and nonviolentists can unwittingly lapse into the cognitive dissonance of the violentology perspective.

Spanish peace researcher Francisco Muñoz coined the term “violentology perspective” (*perspectiva violentológica*) to refer to the problem that research focused on violence, even when undertaken by advocates of nonviolence, makes violence appear to be more pervasive than it is.⁴ Pacifists and feminists can fall victim to the cognitive dissonance that Muñoz describes. In their cases, while they desire peace and gender equality, they often give more attention to conceptualizing and criticizing the large-scale violence of war and the widespread occurrence of violence against women. While the violentology perspective is descriptive of how we take for granted the practicality of and the justification for violence—what some would call violentism—it also calls for greater emphasis on the diverse and extensive occurrences of nonviolence and for their expansion. Even advocates of nonviolence need to move to the next level. Prescriptively, while we need to expose the various types of physical violence and killing and the structural and cultural forms that support them, we also need to develop alternative discourses and practices that advance nonkilling and nonviolence. Like some other orientations toward peacemaking, the nonkilling perspective helps us move forward with a focus on ways in which so much in the lives of individuals and societies takes place apart from violence.

Beyond confusing the violentist and the violentology perspectives, many people also incorrectly equate pacifism and passivism. In his highly influential book *Between Warism and Pacifism*, originally published in 1989, Cady clarifies how pacifists are activists, not passivists, and also makes a distinction between deontological and consequentialist pacifists.⁵ As far as I can tell, his distinction relies on the same philosophical distinction that Holmes makes between principled and pragmatic nonviolentists. The difference is that Cady refers only to grounds for the moral opposition to war and includes versions that Holmes likely would say are violentist. In brief, Cady distinguishes three types of deontological pacifists and three types of consequentialist pacifists. In my interpretation, only the absolute type of deontological pacifist would qualify as a nonviolentist, since Cady presents all other pacifists as allowing for the moral use of some levels of violence—not only nonlethal violence, but also, in some cases, lethal violence. However, for Cady, all pacifists are united in a moral opposition to war. Cady’s distinctions are important for at least two reasons. First,

4 Francisco A. Muñoz, *La Paz Imperfecta* (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 2001), par. 10.

5 Duane Cady, *From Warism to Pacifism: A Moral Continuum*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2014).

they show that non-lethal force pacifism is very close to nonkilling philosophy. Second, they also show the more radical stance of the absolute pacifist and the less radical stance of the lethal force pacifist. So, without terming itself as pacifism, nonkilling philosophy is really only one step beneath the absolute pacifism of Cady's continuum.

1.2 *Care Ethics and the Feminism of Reardon and Warren*

Like the traditions of nonviolence and pacifism, feminism also has a long history. Much of the history of the contribution of women is largely unknown to us, though within philosophy Karen Warren has helped recover some of these contributions.⁶ To compound recognition of the contribution of women is the fact that the term "feminism" came into use only fairly recently. The French word "feminisme," coined by Charles Fourier, was taken over into English during the 1890s within the movement for equal rights for women, though I would be remiss if I failed to note the earlier contributions of Mary Wollstonecraft in the late 18th century who, while not having available the term feminism, made important arguments for the rights of women well before those of John Stuart Mill in the late 19th century.⁷ For purposes of this chapter, however, I will simply comment on care ethics and the work of Betty Reardon since both are important influences on nonkilling philosophy. Also, I will discuss briefly how Karen Warren links concerns about women and peace to ones about the environment, which is also a concern within nonkilling philosophy.

Carol Gilligan initiated care ethics in 1982 with her groundbreaking book *In a Different Voice*.⁸ She termed as "Justice Ethics" the abstract and retributive approach traditionally favored in philosophy. Alternatively, she termed as "Care Ethics" a relational approach to morality that avoids generalization in favor of particularity and connection. Gilligan describes and affirms how individuals are entangled in a web of dynamic relationships, not all of which are freely chosen. Among the feminist philosophers who have influenced nonkilling philosophy, Sara Ruddick made an important application of care ethics in her 1995 *Maternal Thinking: Toward a Politics of Peace*.⁹ Nevertheless, Ruddick does not understand that pacifists can advocate non-lethal force and even lethal force and still oppose war and other large-scale military action. She says,

6 Karen J. Warren, ed., *An Unconventional History of Western Philosophy: Conversations between Men and Women Philosophers* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2009).

7 Mary Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (London: Penguin Books, 1992), first published in 1792.

8 Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1982).

9 Sara Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking: Toward a Politics of Peace* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995).

“it is unnecessary and divisive to require of all peacemakers an absolute commitment not to kill.”¹⁰ However, as Cady has made clear, only absolute pacifism and nonlethal force pacifism reject categorically all intentional killing.¹¹ Elsewhere, I have discussed these and other contributions to care ethics; so, I will not elaborate further on them here.¹²

Nonkilling philosophy correctly credits Betty Reardon as the feminist who challenged gender studies to address the structural relation between sexism and the war system and who also argued for the centrality of issues of gender within peace studies. Among her most important works are *Sexism and the War System* (1985), *Women and Peace* (1993), *Education for a Culture of Peace in Gender Perspective* (2001), and the collection *Betty A. Reardon: Key Texts in Gender and Peace* (2015).¹³ Dale Snauwaert, in summarizing the importance of her work, says:

Reardon’s groundbreaking work argues that a feminist, holistic, and gendered perspective can serve as the conceptual core of a transformation of our present global system of patriarchy, and its culture of violence and war. Her comprehensive work in this area has uncovered the profound symbiotic relationship between patriarchy and the war system, and she calls for a global inquiry into alternatives to the patriarchal paradigm. She argues for a gender-equal and socially just society based on a cosmopolitan ethic of human rights. For Reardon, this vision of a positive human and planetary future is realized through achieving a transformational, fundamental shift in worldview towards a paradigm of peace informed by a gender perspective.¹⁴

Nonkilling philosophy stresses Reardon’s view that “above all a culture of peace would be a culture of caring.”¹⁵

10 Ibid., 138.

11 Cady, *From Warism to Pacifism*, esp. 64–8.

12 William C. Gay, “Restorative Justice and Care Ethics: An Integrated Approach to Forgiveness and Reconciliation,” in *Explorations of Forgiveness: Personal, Relational, and Religious*, ed. Court Lewis (Wilmington, DE: Vernon Press, 2016), esp. 49–59.

13 Betty A. Reardon, *Sexism and the War System* (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1985); *Women and Peace: Feminist Visions of Global Security* (Albany: SUNY, 1993); *Education for a Culture of Peace in Gender Perspective* (Paris: UNESCO, 2001); and Dale T. Snauwaert, *Betty A. Reardon: Key Texts in Gender and Peace* (Cham, Switzerland; also, Heidelberg, New York, Dordrecht, and London: Springer, 2015).

14 Dale T. Snauwaert, “Preface,” *Betty A. Reardon*, ix.

15 Reardon, *Education for a Culture of Peace in Gender Perspective*, 85.

Since nonkilling philosophy aspires to avoid the destruction not only of human beings but also of other species and the environment, I will end this brief survey by noting the relevance of the work of Karen Warren. In several of her books, Warren has introduced ecological feminism.¹⁶ Among other goals, ecological philosophy wants to stop destruction of the environment and feminist philosophy wants to stop violence against women. Militarism also is destructive to the environment and to human beings.¹⁷ So, not surprisingly, Warren applied her views to the war system in *Bringing Peace Home: Feminism, Violence, and Nature*, her 1996 book with Duane Cady.¹⁸ They contend that serious consideration of feminism should lead to philosophical discussions of peace that incorporate feminist insights on relations among women, nature, and war. They make detailed connections across six areas. One of the central connections is with language, which has been of ongoing concern to me.¹⁹ Concerning language, they criticize “sexist-naturist-warist” discourse as “language which inferiorizes women and nonhuman nature by naturalizing women and feminizing nature, and then gets used in discussions of war and nuclear issues.”²⁰ While their collection allows a variety of voices to speak on these issues, I find their contribution to be especially important for bringing together peace studies and gender studies, since, like nonkilling philosophy, it also includes concerns about the environment.

The problem of violence is a common denominator to pacifism, feminism, and environmentalism. I have long maintained that we need an alliance of these movements and have advocated nonviolence on personal through

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- 16 Karen J. Warren, ed., *Ecological Feminism* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994); Karen J. Warren, ed., *Ecological Feminist Philosophies* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996).
- 17 William C. Gay, “Negative Impacts of Militarism on the Environment,” in *The Nature of Peace and the Peace of Nature: Essays on Ecology, Nature, Nonviolence, and Peace*, ed. Andrew Fiala (Leiden, Boston: The Netherlands: Brill Rodopi, 2015): 51–9.
- 18 Karen J. Warren and Duane L. Cady, eds., *Bringing Peace Home: Feminism, Violence, and Nature* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996).
- 19 William C. Gay, “Nonsexist Public Discourse and Negative Peace: The Injustice of Merely Formal Transformation,” *The Acorn: Journal of the Gandhi-King Society* 9, no. 1 (1997): 45–53; “The Reality of Linguistic Violence against Women,” in *Gender Violence: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, ed. Laura O’Toole and Jessica Schiffman (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 467–73; “Exposing and Overcoming Linguistic Alienation and Linguistic Violence,” *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 24, no. 2/3 (1998): 137–56; “The Practice of Linguistic Nonviolence,” *Peace Review* 10, no. 4 (1998): 545–47; “The Language of War and Peace,” in *Encyclopedia of Violence, Peace, and Conflict*, 2nd ed., ed. Lester Kurtz (Oxford: Elsevier, 2008), vol. 2: 1115–27.
- 20 Karen J. Warren and Duane L. Cady, “Feminism and Peace: Seeking Connections,” in Warren and Cady, *Bringing Peace Home*, 8.

international levels.²¹ Now, in this chapter, I will turn to nonkilling philosophy and will present some of the strengths that it adds to such a coalition.

2 The Contribution of the Nonkilling Perspective

The pioneering work of American political scientist Glenn Paige and the multi-disciplinary Center for Global Nonkilling that he founded have largely defined the nonkilling movement. Put briefly, the nonkilling perspective maintains that human beings can live in societies in which they do not kill other human beings and perhaps also not kill members of many other species and do not cause serious harm to the environment. The Center for Global Nonkilling, located in Honolulu, coordinates interdisciplinary research on the goal of nonkilling by demonstrating its feasibility and the achievement of nonkilling by developing methods for its progressive implementation. The work of this center currently spans over two dozen disciplines and has been supported and expanded by the publication of many books that have brought together the research of over 600 scholars in over 70 countries.²²

To someone unfamiliar with the nonkilling perspective, this vision of a “killing-free world” may sound as quixotic as do the aims of pacifism and feminism to persons who are equally unfamiliar with what they really assert. So, just as pacifists and feminists spend a lot of time trying to correct misperceptions of their views and prospects, even so do advocates of the nonkilling perspective face an initial reaction of disbelief and dismissal. Nevertheless, I aim to show that by reducing such misperceptions, pacifists and feminists may find a vocabulary, a perspective, and a method that provide a fresh and beneficial means to advance their aims.

The main work by Glenn Paige is *Nonkilling Global Political Science*.²³ Since the 1990s he has addressed key objections to the nonkilling perspective and has

21 William C. Gay, “The Prospect for a Nonviolent Model of National Security,” in *On the Eve of the 21st Century: Perspectives of Russian and American Philosophers*, ed. William Gay and T.A. Alekseeva (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1994), 119–34; “Diversity and Peace: Negative and Positive Forms,” in *Community, Diversity, and Difference: Implications for Peace*, ed. Alison Bailey and Paula J. Smithka (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2002), esp. 180–83; “Apocalyptic Thinking versus Nonviolent Action: From Instilling Fear to Inspiring Hope,” in *Spiritual and Political Dimensions of Nonviolence and Peace*, ed. David Boersema and Katy Gray Brown (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006), 43–53.

22 Center for Global Nonkilling, www.nonkilling.org, accessed September 29, 2016.

23 Glenn D. Paige, *Nonkilling Global Political Science* (Honolulu: Center for Global Nonkilling, 2009).

provided a rebuttal to each.²⁴ Throughout this period, he has offered evidence that killing is not inherent in human nature, that most humans do not kill, that the spiritual heritages of humanity teach respect for life, and that science does not support the view of humans as inescapably killers. He also points to non-killing views in many public policies and in many social, political, economic, educational, and security institutions. While these accomplishments are indeed impressive, a philosophical treatment of the ethical and moral foundations for the nonkilling perspective was not available until recently.

3 The Work of Comins Mingol and París Albert

3.1 *Initiation of Nonkilling Philosophy*

Beginning in 2009, Spanish philosophers and peace researchers Irene Comins Mingol and Sonia París Albert initiated nonkilling philosophy in a manner that provides a philosophical treatment of the moral and ethical foundations of the nonkilling perspective and one that also has promise for uniting peace studies and gender studies or at least making available to them augmented and strengthened terminology and methodology.²⁵ Recently, I began introducing their work to U.S. philosophers.²⁶ So, in this chapter I will treat only lightly how they ground their support for nonkilling philosophy on works in discourse ethics and care ethics. A philosophical treatment of the moral and ethical foundations of the nonkilling perspective requires a prescriptive model of the need to speak nonviolently and act nonviolently. While I have elsewhere addressed prescriptively these issues in relation to discourse and behavior, here I will simply note the type of philosophical support that discourse ethics and care ethics provide within the nonkilling perspective.

Within discourse ethics, Comins Mingol and París Albert primarily utilize the work of Jürgen Habermas, especially his views that discourse presupposes truth as an ideal and, to a lesser extent, the work of John Austin. For Habermas, the ideal of truth that underlies discourse should be operative in (or can serve for the assessment of) our statements, our intentions, and our actions. Comins Mingol and París Albert reveal their reliance on Habermas when they state that discourse ethics “presupposes the liberty and equality of all speakers” and

24 Glenn D. Paige, “‘To Leap Beyond Yet Nearer Bring’: From War to Peace to Nonviolence to Nonkilling,” *The International Journal of Peace Studies* 2, no. 1 (1997).

25 Irene Comins Mingol and Sonia París Albert, “Nonkilling Philosophy,” in *Toward a Nonkilling Paradigm*, ed. Joám Evans Pim (Honolulu: Center for Global Nonkilling, 2009), 283–84.

26 William C. Gay, “The Role of Language in Justifying and Eliminating Cultural Violence,” in *Cultural Violence*, ed. Fuat Gursozlu (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 175–97.

has “truth in what is being said” as central to the validity claims of speech.²⁷ Habermas developed his theory in the 1980s and 1990s.²⁸ For Habermas moral principles can be founded in the presuppositions of discourse and do not require grounding in a transcendental metaphysics. However, since social actors often fail to follow these presuppositions of discourse, Habermas and others who rely on discourse ethics should concede this point.²⁹ The position of discourse ethics and its value relies on its normative status. When, descriptively, discourse falls short of this ideal, discourse ethics, as a normative position, has a basis for criticism. Moreover, since regimes and languages can and do change over time, discourse ethics can help produce change that is oriented toward these norms. In this regard, Comins Mingol and París Albert supplement their reliance on Habermas with the Speech Act Theory of John Austin.³⁰ For them, proper application of this theory would require that “what is said ends up being what is done.”³¹ This position, as well, is normative. Comins Mingol and París Albert are thus left with a discourse ethics that seeks to identify the ideal conditions of discourse and to reach normative agreement by means of such discourse. Beyond a need to address the ways language can be abused and do hurt and harm, discourse ethics also needs to address issues of diversity and inclusion if it aspires to be even quasi-universal. Critics of discourse ethics, such as Seyla Benhabib, have noted that, as initially stated, the norms formulated by Habermas are ones for a specific discourse community.³² Based on feminist and other similar criticisms, Habermas later added that participants in discourse about norms also need a sense of solidarity.³³ This point is one that leads well into how Comins Mingol and París Albert also make use of care ethics as it developed out of feminism.

Within care ethics, Comins Mingol and París Albert mainly rely on Carol Gilligan, Sara Ruddick, and Betty Reardon and stress how care ethics facilitates

27 Comins Mingol and París Albert, “Nonkilling Philosophy,” 278.

28 Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action* (Cambridge: Polity, 1989); Jürgen Habermas, *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action* (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1993).

29 William C. Gay, “Justification of Legal Authority: Phenomenology vs Critical Theory,” *Journal of Social Philosophy* 11, no. 2 (1980): 3.

30 John Langshaw Austin, *How to do Things with Words* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976).

31 Comins Mingol and París Albert, “Nonkilling Philosophy,” 278.

32 Seyla Benhabib, *Critique, Norm, and Utopia: A Study of the Foundations of Critical Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986).

33 Jürgen Habermas, “Justice and Solidarity: On the Discussion Concerning Stage 6,” in *The Moral Domain: Essays in the Ongoing Discussion Between Philosophy and the Social Sciences*, ed. Thomas Wren (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989), 224–54.

an orientation toward peace and nonviolence. They begin by observing, “Women and the nonwestern countries have had their voices excluded from epistemological paradigms.”³⁴ Based on their use of Gilligan and Ruddick, Comins Mingol and París Albert contend the nonkilling paradigm fosters traits such as empathy, responsibility, and patience. They concur with the statement by Betty Reardon, “above all a culture of peace would be a culture of caring.”³⁵ To facilitate this aim, Comins Mingol has argued elsewhere that care ethics can serve as a means to inject gender issues into peace education and suggests that doing so could begin the needed effort to teach youth that caring is a peaceful value for all human beings and not just for women who assume traditional roles.³⁶ Basically, care ethics provides a philosophical basis for addressing respect, nonviolence, diversity, and inclusion. So, by combining discourse ethics and care ethics Comins Mingol and París Albert provide what they regard as a viable philosophical foundation for the normative components needed in the nonkilling perspective.

I turn now to a summary of the position Comins Mingol and París Albert develop on the basis of the philosophical support provided by discourse ethics and care ethics. In particular, Comins Mingol and París Albert stress that we generally have alternative nonviolent responses available during conflict and after conflict and that we should train for and make use of these alternatives. Traditional academic approaches to conflict resolution and conflict management are negative. These approaches are negative because they aim to either eliminate or administer conflict. Resolution or elimination of conflict is not feasible to the extent that conflict is built into how diverse individuals and cultures approach differences. Management or administration of conflict also has limits to the extent that it operates as an external authority in relation to conflict. Conflict transformation aims to operate within conflict, rather than being imposed upon conflict. Conflict transformation accepts conflict and places in the hands of those involved the responsibility for seeking to implement nonviolent practices. To facilitate conflict transformation, Comins Mingol and París Albert propose that we “*disaccustom* ourselves to violence” and instead cultivate the practice and then the habit of what they term “conflict transformation.”³⁷ In place of efforts to eliminate or administer conflict, conflict transformation prepares the persons involved in conflict to seek “peaceful

34 Comins Mingol and París Albert, “Nonkilling Philosophy,” 279.

35 Betty Reardon, *Education for a Culture of Peace in Gender Perspective*, 85.

36 Irene Comins Mingol, “Coeducation: Teaching Peace from a Gender Perspective,” *Peace & Change* 34, no. 2 (2009): 456–70.

37 Comins Mingol and París Albert, “Nonkilling Philosophy,” 275.

alternatives that avoid the use of violence.”³⁸ *Peace as a habit* becomes possible when we “disaccustom ourselves to violence.”³⁹ Such practices promote the peaceful, nonviolent transformation of conflict.

Comins Mingol and París Albert conclude by asserting “a nonkilling philosophy is necessarily a philosophy committed to the recuperation of and the recognition of human potential for peace.”⁴⁰ In this regard, they stress that human beings have capacities for “harmonious coexistence, for reciprocal care and the peaceful transformation of conflicts.”⁴¹ In my terminology, they aim to move from the language of war and linguistic violence to the language of peace and linguistic nonviolence.⁴² In addressing the needed language and behaviors for such a transition, París Albert elsewhere responds to the problem of indignation that is experienced by so many oppressed peoples.⁴³ Though she draws from Hegel’s famous treatment of recognition in his master-slave dialectic, she also goes beyond the usual stress on how the struggle for recognition can lead to domination—to the risking of life and even the taking of life—and the misguided view that forcing recognition through violence works. To present a different possible outcome, she relies on work of Paulo Friere that addresses how to move from fear to hope.⁴⁴ She contends that the indignation that many people feel in the face of injustice and which can lead to violent responses can be transformed by nonviolent social movements, such as nonkilling philosophy, that incorporate “mutual recognition into the processes of empowerment of the oppressed to transform the oppressive situations they suffer.”⁴⁵ Such mutual recognition, coupled with nonviolent action, may displace fear with hope and through this practice of conflict transformation may elevate the quest for freedom to a higher plane in the quest to overcome oppression and achieve social justice.

3.2 *Nonkilling Philosophy and the Neuroscience of Ethics*

Pacifists and feminists and other advocates of nonviolence and social justice often hear one refrain or another to the effect of “You can’t change human

38 Ibid., 276.

39 Ibid., 275.

40 Ibid., 283.

41 Ibid., 283.

42 Gay, “The Language of War and Peace.”

43 Sonia París Albert, “Philosophy, Recognition, and Indignation,” *Peace Review* 25, no. 3 (2013): 336–42.

44 Paulo Friere, *Pedagogy of Indignation* (New York: Routledge, 2004); *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, trans. Myra Bergman Ramos (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972).

45 París Albert, “Philosophy, Recognition, and Indignation,” 340.

nature.” Over the centuries various religions and philosophies have proclaimed an essentialist doctrine that makes an evil or violent nature part of our being. More recently, some scientific theories have purported to have empirical evidence that our membership in the kingdom of mammals or the structure of our genes makes a propensity to violence an ineradicable component of our heritage. Currently, some work within neuroscience goes even further. While, in general, neuroscience has been making important contributions to the natural sciences, within what is typically termed neurophilosophy or neuroethics some neuroscientists also aim to extend their influence into the social and human sciences. For these neuroscientists, the goal is to find the neural bases of ethics and thereby provide an empirical explanation for free will. Despite the recent attention that this goal has received, it is not new. Such aims can be found in the early advocacy of this approach by Harold S. Burr and more recently in the retrospective and prospective assessment of this approach by Damian Stanley and Ralph Adolphs.⁴⁶

In order to locate the challenges for advocates of nonviolence that are posed in some neurophilosophy or neuroethics, one needs to begin by understanding the distinction typically made between the ethics of neuroscience and the neuroscience of ethics. The difference between these two approaches is significant. The ethics of neuroscience is more commonly done within applied philosophy and examines ethical issues relating to the clinical practice of neuroscience or to experimental research in neuroscience. By contrast, the neuroscience of ethics focuses generally on human behavior but also sometimes focuses more narrowly on what is purported to be human nature. These efforts that go beyond the original narrow confines of neuroscience suggest to some the possible eclipse of philosophy. Patricia Churchland first challenged this overreach in her 1990 book *Neurophilosophy: Toward a Unified Science of the Mind/Brain*.⁴⁷ She situates this overreach of neuroscience within the overly reductionist tendencies in modern science that rely almost exclusively on mathematization and experimentation that thereby lapse into partial accounts that are often naively positivistic.

In their 2013 article “Epistemological and Anthropological Thoughts on Neurophilosophy,”⁴⁸ Paris Albert and Comins Mingol respond to claims in the

46 Harold Saxton Burr, *Neural Basis of Human Behavior* (Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications, 1960); D.A. Stanley and R. Adolphs, “Toward a neural basis for social behavior,” *Neuron* 80, no. 3 (2013): 816–26.

47 Patricia Smith Churchland, *Neurophilosophy: Toward a Unified Science of the Mind/Brain* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990).

48 Sonia Paris Albert and Irene Comins Mingol, “Epistemological and Anthropological Thoughts on Neurophilosophy: An Initial Framework,” *Recerca* 13 (2013): 63–83. DOI: 10.6035/Recerca.2013.13.5.

neuroscience of ethics that tend to dismiss philosophical notions of freedom in human action and that seek instead explanations of human behavior in terms of neurons. Informing their response is their rejection of the orientation toward “objectivity” and “neutrality” associated with logical positivism. In contrast to such positivist views, they stress the relational and intersubjective character of science and other human enterprises and regard such activities as value laden in ways that are more realistic than ones found in supposedly objective and value neutral approaches.

In their response to these developments, especially within the neuroscience of ethics, París Albert and Comins Mingol occasionally rely on insightful humor and regularly employ careful logical analysis. At the outset, they quip “Similarly to how phrenologists were determined to reduce the analysis of human nature to the shape of the skull, neurologists seem determined to reduce it to the functioning of neurons.”⁴⁹ In contradistinction to such mono-causal models, they stress evidence of what they term “the irrepressible plasticity of our brains,” which they regard as the locus of our freedom and as facilitating responses to danger and conflict that are not reductively mono-directional and programmed with inclinations toward violence. Philosophically, they situate these frequently unrecognized assumptions of neuroscience within the violentology perspective that is so widely taken for granted (and which I discussed in the second section of this chapter). Such assumptions mask recognition that inclinations toward nonviolent responses are also present or can be cultivated.

París Albert and Comins Mingol do not claim that human beings are non-violent by nature. To make that claim would be reductive in ways like the opposite position that human beings are violent by nature—as has been postulated often in religion, philosophy, and science. They readily affirm that human beings are “conflictive beings.” However, in relation to the conflicts that we regularly face, they assert our responses “may be either violent or peaceful, i.e., this capacity for ‘fighting with’ can come about violently or peacefully.”⁵⁰ They cite research that typically our “conflicts are linked to indecision,” noting “Conflicts are those moments when the fight is undecided; that is, those situations in which we do not really know what to do...and have different alternatives.”⁵¹ When such moments arise, nonviolent alternatives can be chosen. At this point, the response of París Albert and Comins Mingol moves from criticism of the neuroscience of ethics to support for nonviolent alternatives.

49 París Albert and Comins Mingol, “Epistemological and Anthropological Thoughts on Neurophilosophy,” 71.

50 *Ibid.*, 76.

51 *Ibid.*, 77.

París Albert and Comins Mingol cite research that the alternatives open to individuals in conflicts include not only whatever may be in our genes but also and significantly the influences of our social environment. They say that these factors are ones that are stressed in much Peace and Conflict Research. They conclude, “*People can be violent or peaceful, but our social make-up is probably what will influence directly on our being more violent or more peaceful.*”⁵² Hence, efforts by pacifists and feminists and others concerned with nonviolence and social justice can advance their goals by stressing the development of individual and social behaviors that promote nonviolence. In this way, their argument supports the movement in Peace Studies away from conflict resolution and conflict management toward conflict transformation. In response to neuroscience, especially to aims in the neuroscience of ethics, they conclude, “if we can say there are universal neural bases that explain violence, we can also say there are universal neural bases that explain our ability to act in a peaceful way.”⁵³ Thus, efforts to “study and disseminate the methodologies for peaceful conflict transformation” can contribute to making nonviolent responses even more widely available, appealing, and practical.⁵⁴

4 Conclusion: Pacifism, Feminism, and Nonkilling Philosophy as Mutually Supportive

I have suggested that, in several ways, nonkilling philosophy is more radical in scope than either pacifism or feminism. Also, I have noted that nonkilling philosophy is not hampered by stereotypes that often thwart acceptance of pacifism and feminism. With its reliance on discourse ethics and care ethics, nonkilling philosophy can move peace studies beyond conflict resolution and conflict management to conflict transformation and can move gender studies beyond exposing patriarchalism and achieving gender equality to fostering restorative justice. In addition, I proposed that nonkilling philosophy provides a constructive approach for criticizing militarism and sexism and for unifying efforts to respect, protect, and advance the value and diversity of life and the environment. Finally, I addressed how nonkilling philosophy also responds to challenges for advocates of nonviolence that are posed by works in science that suggest humans are violent by nature or, particularly in the neuroscience of ethics, that seek to dismiss philosophical notions of human freedom.

52 Ibid., 80.

53 Ibid., 81.

54 Ibid., 81.

We still need pacifism for the critique of war and other large-scale violence, and we still need feminism for the critique of gender inequality and other forms of social injustice. We also can profit from the interdisciplinary advances of the nonkilling perspective. We can benefit from this vocabulary, this interdisciplinary solidarity, and this bridge for connecting peace studies and gender studies in a manner that avoids the stereotyping and dismissal of pacifism and feminism and, instead, inspires hope and action that can help realize the acceptability of their shared vision and advance the achievement of their shared goals. In relation to pacifism and feminism, Nonkilling Philosophy is more radical in its advocacy of nonviolence and could even be more feasible in its implementation. Nonkilling Philosophy can provide an initiative for peace studies and gender studies that is mutually supportive for each.

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Letters from the Messiah: Arts and Peace Building

David Boersema

I would like to begin with two anecdotal and seemingly unrelated incidents from my life. The first incident happened in early 2016. I took my Philosophy of Art class to a local wetlands where the master landscape architect talked with us about the meanings behind the design of Japanese gardens, including the one we were visiting. One of the things he noted was that the paths in the garden were not straight lines leading from Point A to Point B. Rather they were winding, meandering paths that were designed intentionally to prompt people to pay attention to their surroundings and be open to what they might discover around the corner.

The second incident happened much earlier in my life. When I was in the second grade I read a short story in class one day. The story, written by Gracye Dodge White, was called, “Muscle Magic.” It was about a young boy named Peter, who wanted big muscles. He asked various adults what he could do in order to get big muscles. Nothing seemed to do the trick and so he ended up asking Old Mr. Zeke, who was “the laziest man in town” but also supposedly “the wisest.” When Peter met with Mr. Zeke and asked him how he could get big muscles, Mr. Zeke said he would have to think about it for a while, but in the meantime, he asked if Peter could cut up and stack a bunch of firewood for him while he came up with an idea. Peter did this not just once, but multiple times over the course of several weeks. After a while the large pile of wood was all cut and stacked, but Peter was frustrated because, over the course of those weeks, Mr. Zeke had not told Peter how to get big muscles. When Peter finally expressed his frustration, Mr. Zeke replied, “Good land! Haven’t you got that muscle yet?” Much to Peter’s surprise and delight, when he flexed his arm, there was a muscle “as big as a hen’s egg.”

When I read this story, I was thunderstruck. I thought to myself that Mr. Zeke knew all along what he was doing and that he was helping Peter get those muscles even if Peter didn’t know it. I was thunderstruck because I realized that what Peter thought he was doing—just cutting and stacking wood—was not all that he was doing; he was also getting muscles and Mr. Zeke knew this all along. So, what might I be doing and yet not realizing that I was really doing something else? Yes, as a second-grade kid I wondered what I might be

learning from my teachers that was not the apparent, obvious surface lesson that I thought I was learning. I couldn't articulate it, but I think I was coming to understand that I was getting more from what I was being taught than I realized. Maybe that spelling lesson was about more than spelling and maybe that arithmetic lesson was about more than adding and subtracting numbers.

1

These two incidents came to mind for me as I pondered a series of letters that I received and that later I came to relate to the issue of peace building. I titled this chapter "Letters from the Messiah" because it so happens that for six years, between 2007–2013, I had the privilege of serving as the CPP Executive Director, and during those years—actually during late 2010 to the end of 2012—I received 140 letters that were signed as "The Messiah." I should amend that: most of them were signed "The Messiah," however, about one third of them were signed "Jesus Christ" and a few were signed "Jesus Christ II." These letters came at a rate of slightly more than one per week. They were addressed not to me personally, but to "Concerned Philosophers for Peace," and sent to my university mailing address. While one per week might seem like a lot, if what The Messiah said in those letters is true, then this was a drop in the bucket, because The Messiah claimed to have sent out more than 100,000 such letters since 1979. These were sent to multiple newspapers, academic organizations, and prominent individuals. (As an aside, each of the letters I received bore a postage stamp, so sending out 100,000 of these would have cost The Messiah about \$40,000. Apparently, money and time were not a concern.) For what it's worth, all of the letters were postmarked from Tampa/St. Petersburg, so, although I cannot say for sure that The Messiah actually lives in Florida, at least that's where the letters were mailed from.

What did The Messiah have to say? On the one hand, quite a bit, but on the other hand, what was said was repeated over and over and over. Sometimes the remarks were general in nature, such as "World peace will become reality when humanity adopts the Golden Rule as its sole religion" or "All nuclear weapons are to be destroyed." Sometimes the remarks were quite specific in nature, such as "Second-hand smoke must be outlawed," or "The governors of Wisconsin, Ohio, Maine, Florida, South Dakota, and Indiana shall be recalled," or "The nation must adopt single payer health care, with Dr. Andrew Weil as the medical czar." When I say that some of what was said was repeated over and over and over, an example is that the "no nukes" remark

was stated in 125 of the 140 letters (while the recommendation of Andrew Weil as medical czar was stated in only sixteen of the 140 letters). Generally speaking, there were more than a dozen or so basic—and repeated—remarks. These were:

- World peace will become reality when humanity adopts the Golden Rule as its sole religion
- The Dalai Lama is the Prince of Peace
- To better the human condition: defense budgets alleviate hunger, poverty, and disease
- Global warming is addressed without regard for commercial interests
- Recreational violence that is now lawful is prohibited globally (except for theater and opera)
- Non-medicinal drugs, tobacco, gambling, and prostitution are illegal worldwide
- Liquor is rationed to prevent unnecessary injuries and death
- Unlimited access to contraceptives and abortion (this enables couples to generate wanted progeny)
- Nuclear weapons, armaments, and firearms are destroyed
- Personal income that exceeds \$500,000 (USD) per annum is donated to education, social services, and the arts
- Avowed proponents of violence shall be excluded from peace talks
- Healthy adults who receive welfare or unemployment benefits shall clean and beautify public property
- Non-lethal tasers shall replace firearms
- The use of cell phones by noncommercial drivers of moving vehicles is prohibited
- Live voices answer government, commercial, and physician telephones during business hours
- Congress enacts single payer health care (with Dr. Andrew Weil as its medical czar)
- All students K-12 wear uniforms in school

(As an aside, I'm not sure quite how to characterize remarks by The Messiah: Are they suggestions, recommendations, edicts, commandments, or what?)

Besides this list of remarks that were repeated in many of the letters, there were other remarks that came up in a number of the letters, such as:

- There should be a graduated national sales tax offering refunds according to annual net income (below \$50,000: 100% refund; \$50,000-60,000: 90% refund; \$60,000-70,000: 80% refund; and so on down to no refund for incomes greater than \$150,000)

- Mozart shall be the only music projected by loudspeakers in malls, hospitals, elevators, and other public places; as a corollary, rock, hip-hop, and other mindless sound is prohibited worldwide
- Second-hand smoke is to be outlawed
- God has caused unprecedented natural destruction as a warning
- The simultaneous deaths of John Adams and Thomas Jefferson exactly (to the day) fifty years after they signed the Declaration of Independence is evidence as to Divine participation in the affairs of humankind
- Broadcast program content is to be approved by nationally recognized experts in education, psychology, etc. appointed by a professional committee
- Political parties are to be disbanded; voters select primary winners after reading ideas publicized anonymously, with qualified candidates submitting 100 word essays for endorsement by the U.S. League of Women's Voters in each locality
- God is Nature; Joplin is Armageddon

(I confess I am totally bewildered by this last one.)

Remember at the start of this chapter, I related two anecdotal incidents: lessons from a walk through a Japanese garden and lessons from a short story I read when I was in second grade. I commented that these incidents came to mind for me as I thought about this chapter, or perhaps more accurately, as I thought about these letters. Was there something profound, insightful, challenging, or informative from them? Do they—would they—lead me to some point of discovery? Well, I'm not sure, but let's see.

First, although there are obviously a lot of eccentric remarks in these letters, they also—in their own peculiar, perhaps eccentric way—point to a number of important issues and concerns, such as:

- Rational political reform
- Reduction/elimination of lethal weapons (including nukes)
- Questions concerning the relationships between what is good for people and what they have a right to do (or, perhaps in different terms: what is in people's interests and what they are interested in)
- Social and economic inequalities
- The interrelationships between rights and responsibilities
- Specific means to advance peace
- The importance of education
- The importance of the arts

Needless to say, every one of these issues is immense and has been addressed by many thinkers. What I would like to focus on, then, is one of those issues and hope to say why and how I think it speaks to the theme of peace building. The focus I will take here is perhaps the surprising one of the importance of the arts.

2

First, a short disclaimer. Although I will be making the case that the arts can be an important component toward peace building, I recognize that the arts have been and are—and, sadly, will continue to be—used to promote and glorify violence. We can all identify many examples of art in the service of violence (e.g., pornography, stereotyping of groups, war propaganda, etc.). Nevertheless, the arts also have been and are and can be used in the service of peace building, and that is what I want to focus on here.

I will begin with two seemingly trivial examples of the power of the arts as a force for peace building. Both are taken from the course I taught on the Middle East at Pacific University. For that class, I recently used as the core textbook, Jillian Schwedler and Deborah J. Gerner's *Understanding the Contemporary Middle East*. The first edition of the book had a wonderful picture on its cover: a Qatari woman bowling. I also showed them photos of Iranian families engaged in downhill skiing in the Alborz Mountains in northern Iran. My students were gobsmacked; it never occurred to them that Middle Easterners (or Muslims) went bowling or skiing. But they responded even more when I played samples of Arab hip hop and rock music for them. They loved it. When—via some simple pictures and some music—they came to see that their peers in the Middle East were in many ways (but certainly not all) like they themselves, they were much more open to listening seriously to the views and concerns of those others and to seeing them more positively.¹

So, what can be said about the arts and peace building? Well, there are two components here: (1) the arts and (2) peace building. Starting with the arts, there are various dimensions of them that should be highlighted in order to show their value in peace building. One dimension is that of art as product and art as process. Quite understandably, when we think of art, we often (perhaps usually) think of the product, that is, artworks: paintings, sculptures,

1 While it is beyond the scope of this chapter, there are aspects of this example that speak to feminist issues and concerns. One of the aspects is that the response to these pictures was one of empathy, both from the male students in the class and the female students (even though, for many people, empathy is seen as a “female” trait or response). These photos also led to a brief discussion, which was dealt with later in the course in much greater detail and depth, of the status and treatment of women in the Middle East and with respect to Islam. One point that was raised at the time was that there have been a number of women heads of government in predominantly Muslim countries, while there has never been a woman president of the United States. Among the women heads of government in those countries were Benazir Bhutto (Pakistan) in the 1980s, Khaleda Zia (Bangladesh) in the 1990s, and Tansu Çiller (Turkey) in the 1990s. Of course, this fact does not address the complexities of feminist issues or concerns that are relevant here, but, again, a full treatment of those complexities is beyond the present scope of this chapter.

novels, etc. Besides being objects (such as paintings), artworks can be events or performances, such as dance, theatre, music, etc. Still, a dance performance or music recital is a product. By art as process, I mean the creative production of those products. (The Mona Lisa didn't just pop into existence.) As anyone who has attempted to create a painting or song or poem knows, the process is a matter of lots of blood, sweat, and tears. Of course, the distinction between art as product and art as process is not a sharp line; there are impromptu and spontaneous acts of artistic creation. So, if it is better to think of product and process as points on a spectrum rather than as separate categories or components, that is fine. The point here is that when thinking of art and its relationship to peace building, the focus can be and often is on artworks as products but also on them as process. I will return to this later.

A second dimension of the arts that is relevant to peace building is a focus on art as it relates to (1) the artist and (2) for lack of a better word, the audience. There are aspects of art that are particularly salient in terms of the artist. For instance, we often think of the artistic creative process as a matter of the artist expressing herself and the artistic product (say, a painting or play or musical performance) as the expression of the artist. However, many artists claim that this is an oversimplification and sometimes simply not the case. For one thing, the simple fact of self-expression does not necessarily constitute art. A young child in the midst of throwing a temper tantrum is engaged in self-expression, but that ain't art! In addition, an artist might be given specific instructions or guidelines for creating a particular artwork and this might involve little self-expression (for instance, being commissioned to paint someone's portrait in such-and-such a manner). The simple fact that actors can express emotions or thoughts in the context of a dramatic scene does not imply that they feel those emotions or have those thoughts. Rather than thinking of art as simply a matter of self-expression, then, many artists claim that "real" art is a matter of communication with others. Self-expression can be a one-way street; what really matters is the two-way street of connecting with others. For many artists, if that person's artwork is intended, say, to portray sorrow, but the result is that everyone who encounters the artwork laughs or is bored, then she (the artist) has failed. In particular, for many artists, the real significance of art is to evoke a response in others and, ultimately, to create change. For them, art is a form of activism, and, again, not merely self-expression.

Besides a focus on aspects that are salient from the perspective of the artist, there are aspects of art that are especially salient from the perspective of the audience, or those who encounter artworks. Encountering art is—one hopes—an aesthetic experience. The nature of that experience can well be quite independent of what the artist was attempting to convey or portray or

evoke. It might well be that I laugh at a song that is intended to communicate sorrow or vice versa. The film that I find to be stirring and sad, you might find to be maudlin and sappy. In addition to the nature of an aesthetic experience, an aspect of art that is particularly salient for the audience is the issue of interpretation. What I get out of an artwork, and what it means to me—that is, how I interpret it—is dependent upon many factors, including my emotional and cognitive states, my identity contexts (e.g., gender, class, race, age, etc.), moral values and others. There is much more that could be covered about this, but the point here, again, is when thinking of art and its relationship to peace building, the focus can be and often is on the artist and on the audience. And I will return to this later.

Just as there are multiple dimensions to art, there are multiple dimensions to peace building, for example, the notions of negative and positive peace. I will mention those, but here I want to focus on the dimension of *intrapersonal* peace and *interpersonal* peace. Intrapersonal peace is, of course, the notion of peace within a person, that notion of being at peace with oneself, or, for lack of a better term, the notion of spiritual peace. Interpersonal peace is, of course, the notion of peace between persons, being at peace with others. These two notions are obviously intimately intertwined; it is difficult to be at peace with others if one is at war within oneself, and likewise it is difficult to find internal peace if one is suffering violence from others. As we know, violence can be in many forms, not merely open warfare, but racism, sexism, intolerance, disrespect, poverty, etc. Violence can be in the form of acts that are committed (such as open hostility) or by “acts” not just of commission, but also of omission (such as not having access to food or shelter or opportunities to live meaningfully). So, again, there are multiple dimensions of peace, but here I will touch on how I see the arts as peace building with respect to intrapersonal peace and interpersonal peace. I focus on this dimension for two reasons. The first is simply the space limitations for what can be said in a single chapter. The second is that by focusing on this dimension, salient issues and concerns from the artist’s perspective and the audience’s perspective can be highlighted. By starting “at home,” so to speak—that is, from the perspective of individuals creating or experiencing art—we can, I think, get a good and accessible grasp of how arts and peace interrelate.

First, with respect to intrapersonal peace, what is it about the arts that can be peace building from the perspective of the artist? There is actually a lot of literature on the power of the arts for personal growth and empowerment (e.g., the work of Maxine Greene). The process of creating art can be an act of reflection and understanding and even transformation. Having spoken with numerous artists, I can attest to many of them claiming that the process of

creating a work of art led them to have a better sense of what they believed, felt, and valued. They repeatedly remarked on learning about themselves via the process of writing a story or creating a painting or photographing aspects of the world (both social and natural). They genuinely felt better about themselves and felt more empowered to engage with others because of having gone through that creative process. One person noted that “theatre made it possible for me to liberate myself from the pain” of having lived in a war zone. She felt that she no longer merely reacted or responded to events, but could now initiate them. Having created one thing, she felt empowered that she could create even more and felt much more at peace with herself because of this new-found strength and freedom. As noted earlier, this was not merely a matter of being able to express herself via theatre, but being able to communicate with others via theatre.

Along this line of the empowering aspect of art for intrapersonal peace, there are also aspects, again from the perspective of the artist, of interpersonal peace. Despite the stereotype of the lone artist, say, painting pictures in a garret, much art is collective and collaborative. When it comes to most of the arts, there are multiple artists involved in the creation of an artwork. The performing arts especially—theatre, music, dance, film, etc.—all involve the creative collaboration and cooperation of many artists. Theatre involves actors, script writers, stage managers, costume designers, lighting designers, sound technicians, and others. A dance performance involves dancers, choreographers, regisseurs (i.e., stage directors), musicians, costume designers, lighting designers, and so on. The point is that for the creative process to work, this involves collective collaboration, working well with others. To that extent, it is the practice of interpersonal peace.

From the perspective of the audience, that is again, the perspective not of the creative artist but of those who encounter artworks and have an aesthetic experience, there are also aspects that relate to both intrapersonal peace and interpersonal peace. Above I mentioned that my students responded immediately and unhesitatingly to Arab hip hop and rock music. It spoke to them. By experiencing an artwork, they felt a connection that they did not feel nearly as much given my lectures on the history and geography and politics of the region. For lack of a better term, I will say that there was a response of empathy. From the perspective of the receiver of art, because of the nature of aesthetic response, there was a direct emotional connection. Suddenly, Middle Easterners and Muslims (at least some of them) did not seem so foreign or “Other” as they had before. There was, I want to claim, personal growth and transformation for these students, not as artists/creators of artworks, but as receivers and experiencers at the level of aesthetics.

It is perhaps because art is an engagement with the world that is largely, although certainly not completely, non-cognitive, that it has the transformative power that it has. Art certainly is not “merely emotional.” We all know the phrase that artists themselves say: it is one percent inspiration and ninety-nine percent perspiration. Creating art is hard work and usually involves going over and over one’s efforts: revising, altering, editing until a product emerges from that creative process. Nonetheless, for the receivers of art, the aesthetic connection with the product is largely non-cognitive. A song or photograph or painting or dance performance just hits you. And it is universal, in the sense that aesthetic experience is something that crosses time and place and culture. It is inborn; from early childhood, children just naturally want to draw, sing, dance, pretend (i.e., act), etc. As humans we engage in artistic activities. In addition, we respond to it. Of course, we do not all have the same aesthetic response—again, the film that I find to be sad and moving you might find to be maudlin and sappy—but humans everywhere engage in and respond to art. It is this universality that is one feature of art that makes it capable of being a tool for peace building. Because the arts are so basic to us as humans and because it touches us at such a deep, non-cognitive level, it has the potential to allow us to connect as humans, regardless of whether or not we are Israeli or Arab, Hindu or Christian, Democrat or Republican, Coloradan or New Yorker.

As a quick addendum, I would like to note that there are several existing programs that explicitly make connections between peace building and the arts. One in particular is at Brandeis University, where students can minor in Creativity, the Arts, and Social Transformation. That program has a two-volume publication entitled, *Acting Together: Performance and the Creative Transformation of Conflict*, edited by Cynthia E. Cohen, Roberto Gutiérrez Varea, and Polly O. Walker. There are also programs at the United States Institute of Peace and York St. John University (in York, England).

3

So, as one form of pacifist action, I think, we can and should speak up for a greater respect for the arts and be stronger advocates for funding them. (As we all know, when the time comes for education budget cuts, the arts are usually first on the chopping block because they are seen as less important than other areas.) Let us turn our swords not only into plowshares, but also into paintings and dances and music. Make love, not war? You bet! But let’s also make movies about love, not war. This notion—art as a means of social and political activism—is certainly not new. It is as old as Aristophanes, writing

in the 5th century BCE, with his comedic play *Lysistrata* and as current as the public artist Banksy. The novels of Charles Dickens have long been recognized not simply as illustrations of the difficult and harsh conditions of life for many in 19th century England, but also as a form of protest intending to instigate change. Other well-known examples include Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*, Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*, and Dalton Trumbo's *Johnny Got His Gun*, and recently Margot Lee Shetterly's book *Hidden Figures* (later adapted as a film), about several African-American women mathematicians who worked for NASA in the early years of America's space program. Examples expand beyond the literary arts, of course, such as Pablo Picasso's renowned painting *Guernica*, Godfrey Reggio's film *Koyaanisqatsi* (meaning "life out of balance"), which included collaboration with the music composer Philip Glass, as well as much of the popular music of the 1960s that was consciously intended to promote social justice and end war. This extends to much of today's hip hop and rap music. While most of these examples point to art as a means of protest against forms of violence, there are also many examples of art that portray and extol peaceful conditions and virtues, such as Cynthia Scott's independent film *The Company of Strangers* (released in the U.S. as *Strangers in Good Company*), about a tour bus of senior women that breaks down in rural Quebec, leaving the passengers in a state of reflecting on their lives, and also Jane Rosemont's documentary *Pie Lady of Pie Town*, a story of a business woman's decision to renew her life by baking pies in a small New Mexico town.

In the end, then, although I am not thrilled with The Messiah's edict that "Mozart shall be the only music projected by loudspeakers in malls, hospitals, elevators, and other public places; as a corollary, rock, hip-hop, and other mindless sound is prohibited worldwide," I do share The Messiah's concern that the arts are a significant component for the advancement of peace. Perhaps, having read through dozens of letters from The Messiah—a metaphoric Japanese garden—I have been led not from Point A to Point B, but to paying more attention to the journey and my surroundings. Perhaps, The Messiah, like Mr. Zeke, was helping me (us?) to develop pacifist muscles even though I didn't recognize it at the time.

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