

VIOLENCE

PHILOSOPHY OR POLITICAL SCIENCE, GENETIC OR CULTURED

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There is only one text regarding Philosophy of Violence written by a Japanese General after World War One. There is no English translation, and one library in the world has this text – in Japan.

According to Robert Paul Wolff, the definition of “violence is the illegitimate or unauthorized use of force to affect decisions against the will or desire of others. Likewise every case of violence in doing injury or damage is one of injustice, but every case of injustice is not violent”.

There is significant controversy about whether or not violence can be approached philosophically. Literally, in order for violence to be found in philosophy it must be an idea rather than phenomena. There is no phenomenology of violence in philosophy, therefore can philosophy take violence as an object of study and know itself? Violence in philosophy is discussed beginning with Plato in the Republic – in respect to violence – philosophy and political science share the same stage. Plato’s theory of ideas captures a need to be saved from violence through the fascination of ideas. Plato wished to master violence through ideas. Plato idealizes violence as he does everything – violence is rational because it has an end and object in view. His ideal republic arises from his idea that warfare arises because individuals compete for possessions and take other people’s concerns, and he proposes a solution by establishing the same type of hierarchal arrangement found in the realm of idea in the realm of politics – “one man can do no more than one job or profession well”. He said each individual represents the type of character that dictates his/her talents, activities, or purpose. As long as individuals obey their nature and do not diverge from it harmony will continue to exist in the city.

It is argued that Plato fails to account for the irrational nature of violence. Violence grows according to a mimetic pattern in which individuals want to possess objects not because they desire them but because they are imitating other people around them. Sade – amazingly – idealizes violence in a manner very reminiscent of Plato. He is most cognizant of violence in his philosophical ideas. As horrible as Sade’s bedroom may seem to most – those on the inside defines a domain of ideal census in cooperation achieved in universal pursuit of pleasure and through education that is through the imposition of ideas. The right ideas about sex bring happiness and harmony. Sade proposes to produce an ideal form of violence i.e. if there has to be cruelty and violence, enjoy it.

Hegel explains that cause and effect occur in an anthropological context in which individuals struggle for recognition and to dominate others. Although he believes humans are communal beings first and foremost – they rise to a level of being for self only by denying their communal nature – violence is only and always a form of human

conflict. Lacan discusses aggressivity as an effect of self image. Self aggressiveness is a form of autonomy strictly because it is a cognitive development. Self aggressivity is a form of autonomy because aggressiveness towards others is only a symptom of an essential self aggression defining our own individual formation. Lacan contains violence in a metaphorical concept of being.

I ended with Girard, who is a philosopher but is also strongly accused of being phenomenologist of violence and more like a political scientist, psychologist, anthropologists, and sociologist. He says it exists between individuals as a function of mimesis, rather than a property of metaphysical being. The consciousness is social – self aggressivity is a byproduct of interpersonal violence. It is a political creation brought on by the violent exclusion of individuals in their inner naturalization of exclusionary language.

One can argue that violence must be defined by personal or structural and potential or actual. However all overlap and have the same negative value. Galtung's theory on violence states that violence must not overlook ideologies on violence. Violence must not be studied only from the point of view of objective needs, but must also take into account the goals people have in their perception of violence. This perception is dependant upon two main factors. Violence is often identified with what people fear and what is illegitimate behavior.

Religion came up quite often as a significant factor. Mostly from Sam Harris and his book *The End of Faith: Religion Pare in the Future of Reason*. In his book he states that most violent crimes and the most theft are in the red states i.e. those states which are also of highest religiousity. Likewise three of the five of the most dangerous cities in the Unites States are in Texas. Although we cannot say that religion causes violence, but is unconsciouble that religions in the service of state not only accept war but praise for victory and kills in the name of God. Orion Magazine had a fascinating article about non violence. Mostly quoting political theorist Hannah Arendt from a 1969 study that she performed in violence. She point out that historians and social scientist rarely studied the subject of violence. She suggested that it is a mainstay of human activity that is taken for granted and therefore neglected. Violence is a fundamental human condition where as nonviolence is merely a rarified response to that reality. There is no other word for war other than non peace. It would not be a world without war but it would be a world that regarded war an abhorrent insignificant activity. What kind of world would that be?

Joan Bondurant – *Conquest of Violence – the Gandhi Philosophy of Conflict*. He developed a movement intended to replace methods of violence based entirely upon Truth (Truth Force) – manifestations of honesty and integrity. Said God is Truth, Truth is God (he seemed fantastically spiritual, not as in organized religions). Also, Truth and Love are inseparable – Truth is the end, Love is a means thereto.

His weapon in battle – self suffering in ones' own person is of the essence of non-violence and is the chosen substitute for violence to others. Goodas (Ruffians – violent people) do not drop from the sky nor do they spring from the Earth like evil spirits. They

are a product of social disorganization, and society is responsible. It/they are a symptom of corruption in politics.

Eckhart Tolle in his book *A New Earth*, made several comment about the philosophy of violence. He relayed that if we look deeply into the humanities, ancient religions, and spiritual traditions we would find some core insights that most of them would agree on. The words they use may be different but they all point to a twofold fundamental truth. The first part of this truth is the realization that the “normal” state of mind in most human beings contains a strong element of what we might call disfunction or even madness. Hinduism perhaps comes closest to seeing this disfunction as a form of collective mental illness. They call it Maya – the veil of delusion.

Buddhism uses different terms, according to the Buddha demon mind in its normal states generates Dukkha, which can be translated as a suffering, unsatisfactoriness or just plain misery and it will manifest in every situation sooner or later. Incorporating the Christian religions or teachings, the normal collective state of humanity is one of “original sin”. Sin is word that has been greatly misunderstood and misinterpreted. Literally, translated from the ancient Greek in which the New Testament was written to sin means to miss the mark as an archer who misses the target. So to sin means to miss the point of human existence, it means to live unskillfully, blindly, and less suffer and cause suffer. Again, the term stripped of its cultural baggage and misinterpretations points to the disfunction inherent in the human condition. The achievements in humanity are impressive and undeniable; we have created sublime works of music, literature, painting, architecture, and sculpture. More recently science and technology have brought about radical changes in the way we live and have enabled us to do and create things that would have been considered miraculous even two hundred years ago. No doubt: the human mind is highly intelligent. And its very intelligence is tainted by madness. Science and technology have magnified the destructive impact of the disfunction the human mind has upon the planet, other life forms, and upon humans themselves. That is why the history of twentieth century is where that disfunction, collective insanity, can be most clearly recognized.

The First World War that broke out in 1914 was an extremely destructive and cruel war motivated by the fear, greed and the desire for power as in all the wars that have followed. We only need to watch the daily news on television to realize that the madness has not abated. Fear, greed, and the desire for power are the psychological motivating forces not only behind the warfare in violence between nations, tribes, religions, and ideologies but also the cause of incessant conflict in personal relationships. They bring about a distortion in ones perception of other people and in ones self.

This concept is from *Zygon Magazine the Journal of Religion and Science*, the Institute on Religion in an age of Science Inc. In an article in *Zygon* the statement reads “Chances are that the Quantum states that are actualized in DNA already existed a time when real DNA molecules did not exhibit actual material lumps on this planet. Since in the quantum reality everything that can happen must happen given sufficient time the

actualization of states that express themselves in life forms was inevitable. We have to assume that in the virtual state space extends through cosmic wholeness as though it existed beyond space as there is no reason to believe that emergence of life was restricted to a single point in time or to a single locality like our planet.”

Tom Regan – Journal of Sociology April '07 – philosophy can lead a mind to water but only emotion can make it drink. If compassion and empathy is stripped away by culture – violence has a high propensity to occur.

There was a program on NPR, three or four months ago, as a story that discussed a researcher who had accumulated hundreds of thousands of DNA samples to determine what structure exists in the correlation between mankind as an evolutionary species and what patterns exist. Within the research a significant pattern has emerged that relates to our core being as racist and noxious. One such pattern that has come to light is the number of humans who exist today who carry the nucleus of DNA from Genghis Khan. As most of us know he perfected the ideology of ethnic cleansing. When overtaking a tribe he would kill the males and personally impregnate the women. His sons followed this pattern of proliferation through their tenure as warlords and therefore perpetuated even greater numbers of progeny.

Specifically today, in the areas that Genghis Khan had formally conquered there is as much as seven percent of the population that have his DNA. What amazed me more is that these individuals when shown on the program were exceedingly proud that they had his DNA.

The question though extremely abstract and as previously mentioned, crude at best, is one of the conscious nature of our race (that being the human race) can be related to the simple concept to the historic violence carried in our DNA. Another question that comes to mind is if this pattern has a part in the intended evolutionary process, why would great healers and masters in the world appear to have been without progeny, and I am not sure about Buddha (certainly our cultural icons such as Jesus, Gandhi, and others of their ilk appear to have been celibate)? Or is this yet another myth? If they were aware of the fatality of our being would they not have produced in order to propagate their genetic impact in our world to come?