A Theory of War and Violence
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Abstract: It is possible that war in modern societies is largely driven by emotions, but in a way that is almost completely hidden. Modernity individualizes the self and tends to ignore emotions. As a result, conflict can be caused by sequences in which the total hiding of humiliation leads to vengeance. This essay outlines a theory of the social-emotional world implied in the work of C. H. Cooley and others. Cooley's concept of the "looking-glass self" can be used as antidote to the assumptions of modernity: the basic self is social and emotional: selves are based on "living in the mind" of others, with a result of feeling either pride of shame. Cooley discusses shame at some length, unlike most approaches, which tend to hide it. This essay proposes that the complete hiding of shame can lead to feedback loops (spirals) with no natural limit: shame about shame and anger is only the first step. Emotion backlogs can feed back when emotional experiences are completely hidden: avoiding all pain can lead to limitless spirals. These ideas may help explain the role of France in causing WWI, and Hitler's rise to power in Germany. To the extent that these propositions are true, the part played by emotions and especially shame in causing wars need to be further studied.

"...if a whole nation were to feel ashamed it would be like a lion recoiling in order to spring."
Karl Marx (1975, p. 200)

Marx was in his twenties when he wrote that sentence in a letter to Ruge (1843) about the tension between France and Prussia. Later he became a historical materialist: he believed a war could be caused only by material goals, like land and resources. As he grew older, he seemed to join the trend in modern societies toward ignoring emotions, regarding them as not as real or important as material things. Bertrand Russell (1915) proposed an idea like Marx's, but also like Marx, abandoned it in his later life:

> Men desire the sense of triumph, and fear the sense of humiliation which they would have in yielding to the demands of another nation. Rather than praised; it is called high-spirited, worthy of a great nation, showing fidelity to ancestral traditions. The slightest sign of reasonableness is attributed to fear, forego the triumph, rather than endure the humiliation, they are willing to inflict upon the world all those disasters which it is now (in 1915) suffering and all that exhaustion and impoverishment which it must long continue to suffer. The willingness to inflict and endure such evils is almost universally and received with shame on the one side and with derision on the other (1915). (Underlining added)

There are by now many, many studies of war and violence. Some, however, do not propose a theory of causation, but merely record the facts. Those that do propose a cause usually offer a material one, even though most do not name Marx or historical materialism. For example, theft, as in colonialism, is an example of material things causing violence: one nation steals the land of another nation by brute force.

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The spreading of a religion is a non-material cause that has also been proposed. The Crusades to conquer Palestine are one example. In addition to material causes and beliefs, there is also a miscellany of causes that have been suggested. Marx's and Russell's early idea of shame as a cause of war is one of that miscellany.

Cooley's Concept of the Self

In our present society, it is not an easy task to expand upon the brief statements by Marx and by Russell that war may be caused by shame, an emotion that arises out of social relationships. But the work of Cooley and others can help us begin. Sociologist Charles H. Cooley (1902) laid the groundwork for a conceptualization of human beings that is both social and emotional:

[The self] seems to have three principal elements:

1. The imagination of our appearance to the other person.

2. The imagination of his [or her] judgment of that appearance.

3. Some sort of self-feeling, such as pride or mortification [shame]. (p.184)

This idea, "the looking-glass self," is an abstract theoretical statement, but Cooley gave only a few brief examples of how it works. Consequently, his definition has been largely ignored. Yet it is still useful for building a theory of violence. His theory of the makeup of the self proposes that it is both social and emotional, contrary to most current thinking. The idea presented here, that the looking-glass self posits the emotions of pride and shame in all humans would be a great surprise to most sociologists.

Cooley's model of the self is useful not only because it posits a social and emotional self, but also because he goes ahead to write openly and directly about one of the two emotions in the model – shame. He suggests the possibility that this emotion is present in all human beings and plays a central role both in internal and external experience. Cooley (1902) proposed that we "live in the minds of others, without knowing it" (p. 207).

The comparison with a looking-glass hardly suggests the second element, the imagined judgment, which is quite essential. The thing that moves us to *pride or shame is* not the mere mechanical reflection of ourselves, but an imputed sentiment, the imagined effect of this reflection upon another's mind. This is evident from the fact that the character and weight of that other, in whose mind we see ourselves, makes all the difference with our feeling. We are *ashamed* to seem evasive in the presence of a straightforward man, cowardly in the presence of a brave one, gross in the eyes of a refined one and so on. We always imagine, and in imagining share, the judgments of the other mind. A man will boast to one person of an action—say some sharp transaction in trade—which he would be *ashamed* to own to another.

Cooley seems to have had a great interest in shame, but little for any other emotions: anger, grief, and fear, for example, are hardly ever mentioned, even in passing. One part of his definition of self, pride, is little discussed, as already mentioned. It makes sense that pride and shame would be the central emotion for humans, just as it is for all other mammals. The very life of every young mammal depends upon being accepted by his or her tribe. Adult mammals also still need acceptance, but in more subtle ways. Cooley's act of linking the self to shame may help to outline a new theory of peace and violence.

As already indicated, modern societies tend to ignore emotions as unimportant. The process of ignoring is particularly strong with shame. The psychologist Gershen Kaufman is one of the writers who has proposed that it is usually taboo to mention this emotion, just as direct reference to sex was forbidden in the 19th century. Indeed, he wrote: "American society is a

shame-based culture, but …shame remains hidden. Since there is shame about shame, it remains under taboo" (Kaufman, 1989, 46).

The first studies of sexual behavior published by Kinsey (1948) and by Masters and Johnson (1966) met condemnation because they discussed subjects that had previously been taboo. Yet they quickly became known both to the research world and to the public at large. Suppose, however, that they had used inoffensive but ambiguous words like *love* or *intimacy* instead of the word *sex*, which at that time was more taboo than it is now. They would have caused little offense, but their work would have become less well known. If that were the case, there might have been less effect on the public.

The phrase "I feel rejected" implies that an emotion is like a behavior (reject). That keeping the emotion hidden, as sex would have been had Kinsey used ambiguous words like love or intimacy. Sexuality is less secret today than in Kinsey's time, but it appears that one is still not to talk about shame in polite society. But when shame is unacknowledged, a social and emotional process may be generated that is dangerous both to individuals and to nations.

Some useful steps toward a general theory of the causes of violence were suggested by Gilligan (1997), based on his experiences with violent men as a prison psychiatrist. For many years, he made a habit of asking the prisoners who had murdered a simple question: Why did you do it? Most of the answers took the same form: "because he dissed (disrespected) me." This answer implied to Gilligan that they had used anger and violence to avoid shame. From this background, Gilligan proposed:

> The emotion of shame is the primary or ultimate cause of all violence... Anger is a necessary but not a sufficient cause of violence, just as the tubercle bacillus is necessary but not sufficient for the development of tuberculosis. The different forms of violence, whether toward individuals or entire populations, are motivated (caused) by shame. (pp. 110–111)
>
> [There are three preconditions under which shame leads to violence.] The first precondition is that the shame is a secret**,** probably the most carefully guarded secret held by violent men…The degree of shame that a man needs to be experiencing in order to become homicidal is so intense and painful that it threatens to overwhelm him and bring about the death of self, cause him to lose his mind, his soul, or his sacred honor. (p. 112)

The idea that *secret* shame is the prime cause of violence is very important, but needs to be elaborated. Normal emotions are hardly overwhelming because they are brief and instructive. Fear is a signal of imminent danger, but usually comes and goes in a few seconds, like other normal emotions. Similarly, normal shame and embarrassment are brief signals of actual or potential rejection by other(s). What kind of dynamic can result in feeling overwhelmed by painful emotions to the point of losing all inhibition? We will return to this question below, after considering Gilligan's other two conditions.

> …The second precondition for violence is met when these men perceive themselves as having **no nonviolent means** of warding off or diminishing their feelings of shame, …such as socially rewarded economic or cultural achievement, or high social status, position, and prestige. (p. 112)
>
> The third precondition …is that the person lacks **feelings that inhibit** the violent impulses that are stimulated by shame. The most important are love and guilt toward others, and fear for the self. … (p. 113).
>
> Finally, there is a fourth issue implied: Since Gilligan worked only in male

prisons, his perpetrators are all men. As discussed below, the majority of multiple killers are men, but there is only a small minority of women.

Gilligan's examples of insults leading to violence can be understood more concretely than his explanation above. The insulted person can **avoid feeling any shame** at all (such as realizing that he or she was at fault, or from being called a coward for not fighting immediately), simply by killing the person insulting him.

How Much Shame?

The question of conditions under which secret shame leads to violence turns out to be important, because it seems reasonable to assume that shame, or the anticipation of shame, is virtually omnipresent in most people, especially secret shame. The idea that people spend much of their time and energy involved in or avoiding shame or embarrassment was central to much of the writing of Erving Goffman (1959); one example: "…there is <u>no</u> interaction in which participants do not take an appreciable chance of being slightly embarrassed or a slight chance of being deeply humiliated. (p. 243, emphasis added). If this sentence is taken literally, it means that shame and/or the anticipation of shame haunts *all* social interaction (assuming that embarrassment is a light version of shame, humiliation a heavy one). Avoidance of shame/embarrassment/humiliation is the driving force behind Goffman's central idea of impression management. Two studies that suggest a very high frequency of shame-related episodes in ordinary life will be discussed below.

The idea that shame issues are a virtually continuous presence in human affairs seems odd in modern societies because they foster the doctrine of individualism. We are taught that each person is a sovereign entity, self-reliant, standing alone. This emphasis is just a pipedream, since flourishing and even, to a large extent, surviving is dependent upon acceptance by others.

Finally, there is an issue of secret shame that makes trouble, but no violence. Many years ago, Cressey's (1953) study of persons jailed for embezzlement shows that every case involved what he called a "non-shareable financial problem," in Gilligan's terminology, a secret (see also Braithwaite, 1989). Similarly, many studies have suggested that bullying, which usually involves only threats of violence, are linked to secret shame (Ahmed, et al., 2001). This essay will propose that it is not just secret shame, but endlessly *recursive* shame that leads to violence of all kinds.

Case Studies

In the US, at least, many multiple killers have been loners who were harassed and ostracized. Yet most people treated that way do not shoot anyone or even make trouble. What could be special about the killers? It may be that destructive management of shame might be a major part of the problem. Although they use the word rejection, rather than shame, Leary et al.'s (2003) review of school shootings comes to a similar conclusion. Again, they do not use the term shame, but it is implied in their analysis of the shooters who "felt rejected."

Before developing the theory further, first some examples. Tyler Peterson was a 19-year-old who killed six in Crandon, Wisconsin (<u>Milwaukee Journal Sentinel</u>, Oct. 8, 2007). He had gone to his on-again, off-again girlfriend's house in the middle of the night and instead of patching up their relationship, argued with her. One of the persons gathered at her home for a party called him a "worthless pig." He went home, got his AR-17 machine gun, and returned to kill all of the gathering but one. According to one of his friends, Peterson had been picked on in high school because he was not originally from Crandon, and not an athlete.

Cho Seung-Hui was the 23-year old killer in the spree at Virginia Tech in 2007. Like Peterson and all of the other school killers, he was an isolated male loner who felt rejected. Many

of his written complaints imply that he was rejecting those that he felt had rejected him, a strong indication of shame. There are also plentiful indications of isolation. One of his teachers reported, "He was the loneliest person I have ever known." (<u>Washington Post</u>, August 29, 2007).

His roommate commented that often he did not respond at all when spoken to, or would respond with only one word. In Cho's writings, there are many indications of shame and humiliation. He often mentioned others' disrespect for him and those like him. In one instance, he referred directly to humiliation: "Kill yourselves or you will never know how the dorky kid that [you] publicly humiliated and spat on will come behind you and slash your throats." (<u>Washington Post</u>, 2007). In another posting, he stated:

> I have friends, but I'm basically a loner in a group of loners. I've never shared my past with anyone, and I've never talked about it with anyone. I'm excluded from anything and everything they do, I'm never invited, I don't even know why they consider me a friend or I them….

Cho seems to have been without a single bond, rejected continually and relentlessly by everyone around him, including his so-called friends. It is little wonder that his writing contains many clear indications of shame; for example, "I really must be fucking worthless…."

His claim to being publicly humiliated could be either true or imagined, since there is at this writing no outside support for it. However, there is such support in the case of Jennifer San Marcos. She was the 44-year-old killer in the Goleta, California post office spree in 2006, killing 7 persons and herself. (Santa Barbara News-Press, 2006). An investigator who requested anonymity spoke with many of Jennifer's co-workers for several weeks after the spree.

The investigator was surprised to find that with only one exception, the 18 co-workers interviewed expressed deep sympathy not only for the victims, but also for Jennifer. They all told roughly the same story. She was fired because of her mental illness, which had led to periodic misbehavior on the job. On the night, she was fired after her latest outburst, she was handcuffed to a mail cart by the management, awaiting the arrival of the police. During the extended period of waiting, she was in full view of her co-workers, as if she were in stocks. Because this part of the story shows management in a bad light, it has not been mentioned in the media. Perhaps anyone, mentally ill, or not, would feel intense humiliation under these circumstances.

In May 2014, Elliott Rodger, a student at Santa Barbara City College, killed seven people, including himself, and injured fourteen more. Rodger left behind a manifesto and nine videos, both detailing the experiences and feelings that motivated his killings. In each, the role of shame is evident, especially as it intersected with race and sex. Indeed, Rodger wrote frequently about instances of (perceived) sexual rejection by women in the Isla Vista community where large numbers of Santa Barbara City College and University of California, Santa Barbara students reside; for example, he wrote: "Humanity has rejected me. The females of the human species have never wanted to mate with me…" (Rodger, 2014, p. 135; see also pp. 25, 88, 110, 112). Rodger understood this perceived rejection as shaking the foundations of his identity. Of the effect of this rejection on his relationships with other men, he wrote: "I had to suffer the shame of other boys respecting me less because I didn't get any girls" (Rodger 2014, p. 135). It even extended to feeling that members of his family would feel ashamed of him for not having a girlfriend.

All of this, however, was heightened by his perceptions of race. Rodger's white supremacist beliefs intersected with his obsession with sex in a way that increased his feelings of shame given that the women he desired but who rejected him were white. Describing an incident in which he was at lunch with his father, Rodger wrote:

> I saw a young couple sitting a few tables down the row…. I regarded it as a great insult to my dignity. How could an inferior Mexican guy be able to date a white blonde girl, while I was still suffering as a lonely virgin? (Rodger, 2014, p. 87)

His belief in his own racial superiority, albeit mitigated by being "half Asian," caused him to anger at the sight of men-of-color out on dates with white women, who he perceived as rejecting him. Another incident makes clear the shame he felt for being mixed-race, for being sexually rejected, and, more specifically, for being rejected in favor of men he perceived as racially inferior:

> I came across this Asian guy who was talking to a white girl. The sight of that filled me with rage. I always felt as if white girls thought less of me because I was half-Asian, but then I see this white girl at the party talking to a full-blooded Asian… *How could an ugly Asian attract the attention of a white girl, while a beautiful Eurasian like myself never had any attention from them?* (Rodger, 2014, p. 121)

Shame and Violence

The role of humiliation in multiple killing was suggested by Gaylin (2003) in his analysis of hatred: "The rampage of an ex-employee at the workplace is often the product of …a perceived public humiliation, where the "public" may be only his fellow employees at the post office" (p. 60). Gaylin's statement, made several years before the event, is nevertheless a telling comment particularly on the Goleta multiple killing. In an earlier study, Diamond (1997) also emphasized shame and humiliation, stating clearly that workplace violence seems to be based equally on management mistreatment and the killers' shame dynamics.

I have located three empirical studies that support the shame/violence hypothesis, and a review of a large literature of empirical studies (Leary, et al., 2006). The review does not use the word shame, but an expression that is its cognate ("feeling rejected"). Of the three studies that employ the word shame, two of them are on a fairly small scale, by Brown (2004), and by Thomas (1995).

A second series of studies has been made by Evelin Lindner (2000, 2006, 2006, and 2010) and her associates. The studies are of interest in themselves, and also in the way they were begun. For many years, she avoided the s-word, referring to it (and pride) indirectly in the phrase "dignity and humiliation." It was for this reason, I believe, that she was able to assemble an international organization that studies shame and violence (www.humiliationstudies.org).

The third study, Websdale (2010), however, is the largest, most detailed, and most systematic study of individual killers so far. He found evidence of intense shame in almost all of 211 cases of multiple killings within families: one partner kills the other partner, and one or more children. This type of murder is a multiple killing, but usually enclosed within a single family. In a few of the cases, however, bystanders were also killed.

All of Websdale's cases except the very early ones contained many, many details about each case, obtained not only from media reports, but also police records and in some cases actual interviews with persons who knew the family. Most of these sources were available to Websdale through the Domestic Violence Fatality Review movement, a sizable group judging from the many persons acknowledged by the author. The author patiently sifted through these materials in order to understand each case separately. Judging from my own reactions, this part of his study must have required considerable emotional fortitude on his part: a review of highly detailed material from some 150 tragedies, one after another.

Websdale's findings strongly support Gilligan's idea that violence is caused by shame. However, in addition, Websdale discovered that that most of the killings took one of two seemingly different forms: the <u>livid coercive</u> hearts, and the <u>civil reputable</u> hearts. The first type of violence, a majority of the cases, is clearly parallel to the commonsense idea of violence exploding out of rage. The second type is quite different, involving killings with no history of violence whatever, and clearly and quietly premeditated, sometimes during lengthy periods of time. The idea of a type of premeditated violence turns out to be quite important in several ways, but particularly in understanding collective violence. The theory outlined here, like Gilligan's, Lindner's, and Websdale's, proposes shame as a causal agent.

Recursion of Emotions and Alienation in Killers

It has been suggested that recursive <u>thinking</u> is unique to human beings, differentiating their mental processes decisively from other species (Corballis, 2007). The theory presented here proposes that recursion of <u>feelings</u>, feeling about feeling, would also differentiate humans from other species, and explain episodes of depression or rage of extraordinary intensity and/or duration.

Gilligan's (1997) explanation of the way in which secret shame leads to violence is largely metaphorical, as already indicated:

> The degree of shame that a man needs to be experiencing in order to become homicidal is so intense and so painful that it threatens to overwhelm him and bring about the death of the self, cause him to lose his mind, his soul, or his sacred honor. (pp. 110–111)

The model of recursive loops proposed here explains how laminations and spirals of shame could lead to pain so unbearable as to feel like one is dying, or losing mind or soul.

The idea of isolation and shame/anger spirals seems to fit most of the recorded cases of multiple killing: the killers were not only isolated but also may have been in unacknowledged shame states. In her book *Rampage*, the social scientist Katherine Newman (2004) analyzed 25 school killings that took place in the U.S. between 1974 and 2002. The 27 killers all had been marginalized in their schools. That is, they had been harassed and ostracized to the point that they were completely alienated. Although Newman did not often mention shame or shaming, her descriptions suggest that the killers may have been in a state of unacknowledged shame prior to their rampages.

In another study of school killings, Fast (2008) considered 13 cases, and also suggests isolation as a cause (he calls it lack of integration into the school social milieu). Like Newman, some of his terminology (e.g., self-hatred) implies shame without naming it explicitly. The Columbine multiple killing has evoked the largest amount of research. Larkin (2007), already mentioned, has described in detail the circumstances that led up to the killings. It is quite clear from his investigation that the killers, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, were quite isolated from others, but engulfed with each other. In the writing they did in secret, it is also clear that they both felt humiliated by the treatment they received from the high school cliques that rejected them.

Collective Violence

Multiple killings occur at the collective level also, in the form of gratuitous assaults, genocides and wars. The individual and interpersonal emotion spirals would be the same, but there would also be a recursive process between media and people, as suggested below.

The origins of World War I can serve as an example. The differences that divided the countries that fought this extraordinarily destructive war might have been negotiated, had there

been last-minute negotiations to avoid war. But there were not. There was merely an exchange of single letters from the rulers, a formality. Historians have so far been unable to satisfactorily explain the causes of this war.

My book on the politics of revenge (1994) proposed that social scientists have been looking in the wrong places. The basic cause of the war, I argued, was not economic or *real politic*, but social/emotional. The German and French people seem to have been caught up in alienation and shame spirals. The French defeat by the Germans in 1871 led to national desire for vengeance. The French leaders plotted a war for over 40 years, including a secret understanding with Russia for the purpose of defeating the Germans (For a more recent and broader discussion of emotions, revenge, and conflict, see Frijda 2007, Ch. 7).

Media and Masses

During this period, the role of mass media in both generating and reflecting collective humiliation and anger is quite blatant. The French public and its leaders experienced their defeat in the Franco-Prussian War (l870-71), and the Treaty of Frankfurt, which ended the war, as humiliating (Kennan, l984, Sontag, l933, Weber, l954). Going against Bismarck's warnings (he feared revenge), the Germans had annexed two French provinces (Alsace and Lorraine). Revenge brought about through the return of the two lost provinces, *revanchisme*, became the central issue in French media and politics of the whole era.

Leading political figures such as Gambetta and General Boulanger talked about revenge openly in their campaigns (Boulanger was known in the popular press as "General Revenge.") Vengeance against Germany was a popular theme in newspapers, magazines, poetry and fiction. Revenge themes were common in the popular literature of the time. The poetry and novels of that era serve as examples. The war poems of Deroulede, *Chants du Soldat* (Songs of a Soldier, l872) were wildly popular. Here is a sample stanza (quoted in Rutkoff, l981, p. l61):

Revenge will come, perhaps slowly
Perhaps with fragility, yet a strength that is sure
For bitterness is already born and force will follow
And cowards only the battle will ignore.

Note that this poem not only appeals to the French to seek revenge, but also contains a coercive element. In the last line, anyone who might disagree with the poet's sentiments is labeled a coward. There are many other instances of appeals to vengeance, honor, and glory in the other poems: these are the main themes. By l890 this little book had gone through an unprecedented **83** editions, which suggests that it had a vast audience.

The extraordinary acclaim that greeted *Chants du Soldat* (Soldiers' Songs) prompted Déroulède to publish further books of similar thrust, most of them devoted to military glory, triumph and revenge. For example, in l896 his *Poesies Militaires* (Military Poetry) continued in the same vein. The following is a representative stanza:

French blood! — a treasure so august
And hoarded with such jealous care,
To crush oppression's strength unjust,
With all the force of right robust,
And buy us back our honor fair... (Déroulède, 1896, p. 172)

Although revenge is not mentioned explicitly, the last line implies what might be called the honor-insult-revenge cycle (Scheff & Retzinger, l991).

Also indicative of open *revanchism* was the rash of novels about the plight of Alsace and Lorraine under German occupation, which became popular in the l5 years preceding WWI. The

best-known author of this genre, Maurice Barres, published two: *In the Service of Germany* (l905) and *Collette Baudoche* (l909). These books, like many others of their ilk, were not works of art, but "works of war," to use the phrase of Barres' biographer (Boisdeffre, 1962).

Websdale's idea of a type of multiple killer who, not acting in a fit of rage, but carefully and with considerable planning, seems to be applicable to wars like WWI. The ruling emotional spiral is not shame-anger, but shame-shame. A person or a nation can become so lost in a spiral of being ashamed of being ashamed that it becomes the dominant force in their existence, as it seems to have been in the French nation 1871-1914. The violence that results is not because of a loss of control, but submerging the inhibitions that prevent killing.

Hitler's Rise to Power in Germany

With only a few exceptions, the idea of emotional origins of war not been well received by most experts in history and political science. It seems that they are caught up in the denial of the importance of the social-emotional world, assuming that causes lie in the material world, like the grown-up Marx, and/or in thoughts and beliefs. They share this denial with most of the members of modern societies, lay and expert alike, as discussed above (see also Scheff, 1990; 1994; 1997; 2006; Scheff & Retzinger, 1991).

It might be that hiding shame was the basic underlying reason that Hitler took power in 1934 and was able to steer Germany on his murderous course. It is possible that although the Germans' contempt for the Weimar Republic arose for many reasons, the most powerful one might have been because it had signed a treaty that affirmed the accusation that Germany had not only lost WWI, but was also solely responsible for starting it. If it was actually France that started the war, as the Germans correctly thought, the crucial reason that Hitler was able to take and keep power in Germany was because he promised to remove that stain from their honor by revenge not only against France, but the whole world.

Another factor that should be taken into consideration in this discussion of shame is Hitler's evolving anti-Semitism and the prevailing obsession with an international Jewish conspiracy. Before Hitler came to power, there had been a long history of anti-Semitism in Germany and elsewhere propagated by prominent thinkers, including Adolf Stöcker, Heinrich von Treitschke, Count de Gobineau, etc., and even further back to Martin Luther and medieval Christianity (Richards, 2013). Moreover, there was a developing belief in a Jewish conspiracy aimed at global domination. The growing respectability of this paranoiac line of reasoning can be attributed in part to *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (1905), a document which purported to represent the ideas of a secret society of Jewish elders about a Jewish plot to take over the world. The dissemination of this document depended on already existing belief that made it almost invulnerable to evidence indicating it was a fabrication and forgery (McMillan, 2014; Mosse, 1978).

Yet this thinking enjoyed a new surge in acceptance in Germany after World War I, in part because of Germany's surrender. Indeed, Hitler and many others did not believe that Germany had ever lost the war. Rather, many Germans harbored feelings of shame that were rooted in anger at the so-called November criminals—those who had signed the Armistice and were involved in the negotiations over the Treaty of Versailles. These criminals had allegedly betrayed Germany by unjustly abandoning the war effort, a shameful action that Hitler believed had been engineered by inimical Jewish forces (Aviram, 2008; Hitler, 1925; Hyland, Boduszek & Kielkiewicz, 2011; Mosse, 1978).

During the 1920s, the *Treaty of Versailles* was regarded by Germans of all political persuasions as a "treaty of shame" (Krumeich, 2006, p. 162; Scheff, 2000, p. 108) or "dictate of

shame" (Mommsen, 1998, p. 535), and the blame for the war as unjust. On June 28, 1919, one nationalist newspaper *Deutsche Zeitung* railed, "Today German honour is dragged to the grave. Never forget it! The German people will advance again to regain their pride. We will have our revenge for the shame of 1919!" (Trueland, 2004, p. 88). Similarly, in *Mein Kampf*, Hitler states:

> …[E]very one of these points [in the Treaty] could have been burned into the brain and feeling of this nation until, finally, in the heads of sixty million men and women the same sense of shame and the same hate would have become a single fiery sea of flames, out of whose glow a steely will would have risen and a cry forced itself: 'We want arms once more!' (Hitler 1925/1941, p. 920).

Hitler thus found his ready-made political platform of revenge and vindication for Germany's shame: the denunciation of the Treaty of Versailles, the annihilation of international Jewry, the rebuilding of German military power, the recapturing of the lost eastern territories, and most important, the restoration of Germany's lost sense of community, as well as national pride. In essence, Hitler was motivated by his individual-level shame, and was able to deploy shame to enlist the German people into supporting his plan (Kershaw, 1998; 2010; Scheff 1990; Scheff, 2000; Scheff & Retzinger, 1991).

Many studies attribute Germany's motives during World War II primarily to conventional notions of war objectives based on territorial conquest, wealth, and power acquisition. Notwithstanding the importance of those factors, the shame, as well as loss of a sense of national pride Germany incurred for accepting full responsibility for World War I was a significant contributing factor (Scheff, 2000). These emotions were carried forward, intensified, and became the centerpiece of Hitler's and the Nazi Party's anti-Semitic logics leading to the Holocaust wherein the Jewish "race" had to be removed from Germany (Herf, 2006).

Of course, there was no scientific basis to identify Jewish people as a race in terms of biology or genetics. Yet in the early part of the 20th century, and especially in the 1930s and 1940s, particularly in Germany, anti-Semitism was buttressed by Social Darwinian thought, mainly those influenced by British thinker Herbert Spencer, including the phrase "survival of the fittest." Social Darwinists further developed Darwinian ideas surrounding race and argued aggressively that certain "inferior races" were less evolved than "superior races" (Mosse, 1978; Richards, 2013; Snyder, 2015; Weikart, 1993).

According to this line of reasoning some races or nations had progressed further than others, who were less fortunate in the genetic endowments for intellectual accomplishments. The writers of popularized science, as well as many biologists and anthropologists, carefully ranked races and nationalities from lowest to highest in value. Whites of European descent, particularly the Nordic (or Aryan) races, were always at the top of the hierarchy, and Blacks always at the bottom, with numerous gradations among various people who we now consider White. Many Social Darwinists extended this belief to include the idea that superior peoples had every right to conquer, exploit, and even exterminate inferior ones. All of these notions were declared to be proven scientific fact (McMillan, 2014; Richards, 2013; Snyder, 2015; Weikart, 1993).

Hitler's obsession with and belief in these ideas was spelled out in no uncertain terms in *Mein Kampf* (1925). Yet, they had been germinating in his consciousness since his time in Vienna, where he lived between 1906 and 1913. While there, he developed his deepening ant-Semitism. His various political ideas were influenced by Vienna's politicians, its journalists, its many racist cranks, and even by socio-economic factors such as inflation, the chronic housing shortage, and its soaring unemployment rate. Yet anti-Semitism was the key contemporary social and political issue. Indeed, anti-Semitism was debated at length in Parliament, in Vienna's many

cafés, as well as in its wide variety of daily and weekly newspapers (Hamann, 1999; Jones, 2002; Victor, 2007).

When Hitler first arrived in Vienna, the Austrian capital was a vibrant metropolis that served as something of a magnet for artists, composers, writers, and other "Modernist" intellectuals. There Hitler developed his passion for drama, theatre design, and the operas of Richard Wagner. But it was also in Vienna where Hitler's childhood ambition of becoming an artist was dashed. He was twice denied admission to the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts, once in 1907 and again in 1908 (Kershaw, 2010; McMillan, 2014) because his sketches and paintings were considered "unsatisfactory" (Kershaw, 1998, p. 24). The issue appears to be that Hitler's drawings did not display much interest in or consideration of the human form. Landscapes, and particularly drawings of buildings, appeared to be of greater interest to him (Spotts, 2003). Given that Hitler considered himself to be exceptionally talented, rejection by the academy was therefore the source of considerable shame (Brenner, 2016).

Vienna was also awash with Modern Art (meaning abstract and non-representative art), which was an avant-garde trend counter to the academy's conventional style and genre of nineteenth-century representational painting (e.g., neoclassical, realist, impressionistic, etc.) (Colotti & Mariani, 1984; Hamann, 1999; Kershaw, 1998). As someone whose paintings were still stylistically wedded to the latter (Kershaw, 1998), Hitler disdained Modern Art. He came to view it not only as "degenerate art" but also part of the great Jewish Bolshevik cultural conspiracy (Hamann, 1999; Lauder, 2014; Peters, 2014; Price, 2014; Victor, 2007).

Also in Vienna, Hitler, a provincial from Linz, developed the mindset of an uncertain, frustrated, sexually insecure, socially awkward, emotionally volatile outsider who felt alienated and rejected. By Christmas 1909, Hitler was without even enough money to feed himself, and ended up living on the streets. This obliged him to seek shelter in a privately-run men's home before eventually finding a more permanent dwelling in a new, ultra-modern men's hostel. During his stay in the hostel Hitler began selling his watercolor and postcard paintings to tourists and picture frame manufacturers to try to earn a living (Hamann, 1999).

Hitler left Vienna for Munich in May 1913 just prior to World War I. His subsequent experiences as a soldier in World War I and its disastrous aftermath—the Treaty of Versailles, the Depression, and the economic hardships these events would impose upon Germany, Hitler's newly adopted homeland—would help transform him into the confirmed anti-Semite and political opportunist whose emerging gifts as a public speaker would help catapult him and the Nazi Party to power in 1933 (Kershaw, 1998). And the quickest path to power was to exploit Germany's already existing anti-Semitic prejudices (Hamann, 1999; Herf, 2006; Victor, 2007).

Supported by a biologistic and pseudoscientific notion of Jewish inferiority, Nazi legislators institutionalized what have been referred to as the Nuremburg Laws, which used birth and ancestry (blood) as criteria. Consequently, anyone who had three or four Jewish grandparents, regardless of whether they identified as Jewish or belonged to the Jewish religious community, was defined as Jewish. Tens of thousands of Germans who would not consider themselves to be Jewish were suddenly without citizenship and, thereby, without political rights. To further complicate matters, individuals who had only one or two Jewish grandparents were labeled *Mischlinge*. This "mixed-race" class was not initially stripped of their rights, but eventually were to have them curtailed (Ludwig, 2015; Whitman, 2017).

However, it is important to remember that Nazi Germany's anti-Semitism was a combination of racial ideology and paranoiac conspiracy theory. Notions of racial defilement, contamination, and impurity combined with tales of an international Jewry striving for global

domination by undermining Germany from within its national borders and body politic (McMillan, 2014). The shame Germany experienced as a result of its surrender during World War I—and therefore the loss of territory, resources, and people—was displaced primarily onto Jewish people (Brenner, 2016). This culminated in policies of extermination legitimated by racial pseudoscience (shame via contamination or miscegenation) and the belief in a Jewish international conspiracy (shame about the engineered surrender). Accordingly, Jewish people were conceived of as all-powerful puppeteers who pulled the strings of both the democratic capitalist West and the totalitarian Communist East (McMillan, 2014; Mosse, 1978). They were the masterminds behind Germany's shameful surrender and thereby caused World War II. Consequently, the war against international Jewry and World War II were one and the same. As such, the Jewish populations in Germany and abroad were the primary enemy; all Jews were considered enemy combatants (Herf, 2006; McMillan, 2014).

By 1941, Hitler and Goebbels were announcing publicly that the threatened extermination of Jewish people was now part of ongoing official Nazi policy. The regime broadcasted these intentions to its own citizens even if it did not go into detail about the death camps and specifics of the actual genocide. Anti-Semitic propaganda newspapers and wall posters flooded into every public space throughout the Reich—from subway stations to kiosks to hotel lobbies. Yet the fact that the Nazi regime was able to keep the empirical facts and gruesome details about the mass exterminations hidden from the German people and the world to the extent they did, was perhaps the greatest propaganda achievement of the Nazi propaganda war against Jewry (Herf, 2006; Johnson & Reuband, 2005).

Vanity Wars

Wars that might have been avoided are now being called "vanity wars" (Harbaugh, 2013). The author applied this idea to three US wars: Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan. This phrase seems also to fit WWI. There was only a brief and shallow attempt to settle differences peacefully before World War I. The term *vanity war* seems to have been coined by the philosopher Bertrand Russell (1915) when he explained why he refused to fight in that war.

Bertrand Russell was one of the few people who noticed and acted upon this idea. He refused to fight because, as he actually stated, it was a "vanity war." He did not go into detail about the nature of vanity, but he did propose the idea of hidden humiliation and shame:

> Men desire the sense of triumph, and fear the sense of <u>humiliation</u> which they would have in yielding to the demands of another nation. Rather than forego the triumph, rather than endure the <u>humiliation</u>, they are willing to inflict upon the world all those disasters which it is now (in 1915) suffering and all that exhaustion and impoverishment which it must long continue to suffer. The willingness to inflict and endure such evils is almost universally praised; it is called high-spirited, worthy of a great nation, showing fidelity to ancestral traditions. The slightest sign of reasonableness is attributed to fear, and received with <u>shame</u> on the one side and with derision on the other. (Russell 1915, 133-134; Russell 1916, 88-99)

Russell received no reward for actively opposing the war. Indeed, he spent 8 months in prison for it.

The Iraq war might also be understood as a mass killing occasioned, at least in part, by humiliation. The motivation of the leaders who launched the war is more complex than that, but even for them the war can be seen as partly motivated by revenge, and the use of revenge to placate the public. Rather than acknowledge the shame caused by 9/11 happening on their watch,

and apologizing, they masked it with an attack on a nation that played no part. Like other spree killers, most of their victims were innocent bystanders.

Perhaps the crucial question is not about the leaders, but the public. Why have they been so passive about a war that is obviously fraudulent, and for which they must pay with their earnings, and some with their lives? It is possible that the only thing they have to gain is continuing to mask their fear, grief, and humiliation with anger and violent aggression committed in their name. Needless to say, this is only a hypothesis, like all the others proposed here. Given the current world situation, further exploration and study is urgently needed.

The need for public understanding of the part the social-emotional world might play in generating violence can be illustrated by studies of the motivation of terrorists. Several studies strongly suggest that massive experiences of humiliation could be the main motivation of terrorists, such as Palestinian suicide-bombers (Jones, 2008; Strozier, et al., 2010, pp. 143-147. See also Stern, 2003; Smith, 2006). Smith (2006), particularly, provides detailed analysis of the humiliation/vengeance model at the level of massive violence.

A remark by the then prime minister of Israel, Ariel Sharon, frames our dilemma. When asked by a reporter why Palestinians crossing the border are kept waiting so long, he replied: "We want to humiliate them" (Reported in a talk by Jones, 2010). Both Helmick (2003) and Michalczyk (2003) suggest that humiliation was an intentional Israeli policy. If this was true, it would be fair to say that Israeli policy was manufacturing terrorism against Israel.

According to the theory, the humiliation–revenge–counter revenge cycle is the most dangerous thing in human existence, even more than plutonium. We are jeopardized because emotional motives are virtually invisible to politicians and the public as well. Our job as social scientists and as citizens is to try to make the social-emotional world visible and as important as the political-economic one.

Conclusion

If the idea of interacting isolation/rejection and shame/anger and shame/shame spirals turns out to be a step in the right direction, what kinds of remedies might be possible? For the sake of brevity, I will mention only one: the present educational system is usually shaming to all but the A students. A remedy would be to offer classes to children and young adults that encourage them to notice and acknowledge their emotions.

The movement called Cooperative Learning proposes that both grammar and high school teach about the social-emotional world, in addition to traditional education topics. Although promising in many ways, it is weak with respect to the emotion part. So far there has been only the mere mention, if that, of the names of some of the common emotions, such as anger, grief or fear. That is to say it follows the practice of modern societies of dismissing emotions as unimportant, not referring to them at all, or so briefly as to amount to dismissal. The most effective location for emotion education would probably be high schools, a vale of low grades, cliques and rejection for a substantial part of the student body.

In the long run, the study of emotional causes of war and peace, and especially the part played by revenge, should at least be admitted to the existing approaches in history, political science and the other social and psychological studies. This change needs to be done carefully since the systematic study of emotions is still in its infancy. But in the long run, this change might change the world in a positive way.

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