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VIOLENCE AS VIOLATION:

An Inquiry into the Normative Significance of Violence

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MA by Thesis

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1.

Introduction

Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people.

Preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948

I.

What do we mean when we call something “violent”? Better: what makes some instance or state of affairs *violent*?

No consensus has been reached on the answer, and answers may be disparate in the extreme, not only those given directly on the subject but also those theoretically implied elsewhere. How one takes violence to be properly employed as a concept will depend on other views one has about it, and these views will imply wider philosophical views: is violence purely a physical thing? If so, is it only directly instigated? Does it take place only between persons? If I answer all these in the affirmative then probably I will not accept claims of violence made against, say, fiscal organisations, societal ordering or not accept claims of psychological violence, latent violence, or violence enacted through societal or economic structures. And what of these “opposing views”? what do they look like? Such questions represent the territory that this paper will occupy. These questions matter because how one understands a violence claim will entail a very great deal about how they view many very fundamental moral questions, most notably those regarding justice, rights and rights violation, and liberty.

After this introductory Section, *Section 2* will look at the view of violence inherent in Steven Pinker's *The Better Angels of our Nature*, looking at how Pinker views violence and the apparatus of his claim that it has exponentially declined over the course of human history. *Section 3* will compare a narrow physical view of violence, such as that intrinsic to Pinker's claim, and a more nuanced view of violence understood broadly as harm infliction, including *latent* and *psychological* violence. Following that discussion, *Section 4* will pause from the discussion of differing conceptions of violence to consider the relationship between views of violence broadly as *infliction* and liberty. This will go some way to situate elements of violence discussed up to then in some wider philosophical context and solidify certain more challenging elements of a broad view of violence. It will also set some of the ground for *Section 5*, which will discuss *structural violence*. Given that this section will highlight what makes structural violence a deeply powerful and intuitive idea as well as what makes it something of a "non-starter", *Section 6* will then attempt to refine structural violence by demonstrating its parallels with discourses on justice, most particularly Thomas Pogge's discussion of a core criterion of basic justice. It will then try to adopt much of the same conceptual framework of Pogge's criterion of justice into a rounded understanding of structural violence.

The paper will then conclude with *Section 7*, in which I shall argue that the views of violence discussed share among them certain continuities. Specifically, they all concern in some way the *inward domain of consciousness* and what Pogge terms *basic elementary goods*; as a more general fundamental concern encompassing these, they shared among them concern for the *means to human flourishing*.

As a starting point I am going to suppose that understandings of violence generally fall in to one of the following categories: 1) *conflict-based* theories, in which violence is understood as *violent infraction*, 2) *harm-infliction* based theories in which violence is understood as the infliction of harm between persons, and 3) *structural violence*. Understandings broadly conforming to each of these three basic types contain very interesting and significant claims, however they fail to fully capture violence in its truest sense; they fail to capture the full normative significance of violence. Views conforming to each basic type undoubtedly articulate distinct permutations of violence, yet do not capture it in full or, in

what they do capture, are overly inclusive thereby ‘catching the small fry and letting the big fish loose’ (Galtung, 1969, p.172).

Following discussion of (1), (2) and (3) I will make the case that while understandings in line with each all contain deeply informative and useful perspectives on violence, taken alone they do not fully convey the normative reality of the term. This is because they do not recognise – or do not explicitly acknowledge recognition of – any link between violence and *violation*, and in turn do not fully acknowledge any link between violence and means to human flourishing, as broadly proximate here to *rights*. To preface this point in brief, a ‘right’ as I mean to understand it here is something the content of which one ought justly to have or have access to. When we accord something the status of a ‘right’ – free speech, for example – we do so because we think that free speech has a value such that rightsholders ought justly to have that right preserved; and therefore that their right to free speech ought justly to be regarded as inviolable.

When thinking about rights in this very broad way, I mean simply to engage with the notion of human flourishing originally sketched by Aristotle and taken up by Kant, Pogge and Mill amongst many others. As Pogge frames it, rights (most specifically Human Rights) are proxies for those requisite core means to end of human flourishing. For example, when Mill famously proclaims that ‘[i]f all mankind minus one, were of one opinion [...] mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person, than he, if he had the power, would be justified in silencing mankind’ (1901, p.30) he is talking of the liberty of the minus-one,¹ but this liberty ought so justly to be preserved that it surely implies what we term a right,² on the basis that it is a requisite means directed towards the ends of human flourishing. This is all I shall mean by ‘rights’ when said generally, and when it is meant more specifically I will try to make it clear. For the main however, I will refer to flourishing rather than rights on the basis that justly upheld rights and liberties are articulations of, and proxies for, those inviolable requisite means to

¹ When stating his first condition of liberty (liberty of ‘the inward domain of consciousness [...] liberty of thought and feeling’) he notes that liberty of expression ‘being almost of as much importance as the liberty of thought itself, and resting in great part on the same reasons, is practically inseparable from it’ (p.23).

² Doubtless he would have been happy to read Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that: ‘[e]veryone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers’ had he not been dead for seventy-five years.

human flourishing. In this respect my thesis is that violence is best seen as the violation of such things which ought to be regarded as inviolable.

I will refer back to the link between violation and violence throughout discussion of the three basic categories, highlighting where a conceptual interdependence is in evidence with the aim of illustrating its significance and inseparability to a rounded view of violence.

II. *Preliminaries*

Before fully embarking on the enquiry outlined above, it is worth taking a moment to situate the discussion in some broader context. Steven Pinker has offered perhaps the most famous discussion of violence in recent times and one seemingly typical of what we can regard as the most common, *de facto* understanding of violence. His claim is that aggregate violence the world over is presently at its lowest level in the history of human civilisation; that ‘we may be living in the most peaceable era in our species’ existence’ such that ‘no aspect of life is untouched by [this] retreat from violence’ (Pinker, p.xix, preface to *The Better Angels of Our Nature*. 2012). His claim is based on the view that, as he regards as statistically demonstrable, levels of violence compared with those in other periods of human history are vastly reduced in the present day. While this claim may, as Pinker freely acknowledges³, garner ‘skepticism, incredulity, and sometimes anger’ (p.xx) there is nonetheless some quite considerable historical validity to the idea. However the claim, and therefore its merits, beholden to a distinct conceptual narrowness. For while Pinker does not actually offer an explicit definition of the term ‘violence’ as he means to understand it, it is evident he understands violence most primarily as something rooted in the physical, most specifically (as shall be discussed in the Sc.2) in violent infraction.

³ On the first page of his book he makes the admission that ‘[i]n a century that began with 9/11, Iraq, and Darfur, the claim that we are living in an unusually peaceful time may strike you as somewhere between hallucinatory and obscene’ (p.1)

For example, while mapping the apparent decline of violence, he points to historical data showing the striking decline of murders amongst the male aristocracy in England between the years 1300 and 1800, noting that '[t]he European decline of violence was spearheaded by a decline in *elite* violence' (p.98) drawing the conclusion that '[t]he historical Civilising Process, in other words, did not eliminate violence, but it did relegate it to the socioeconomic margins' (p.102). Yet while this claim is supposed to form part of a picture of aggregate decline of violence, it rests entirely on an implicit assumption about what "*violence*" really means. While reflecting on the fact that, as he sees it, violence still persists amongst "lower-status people" never does it seem to factor into Pinker's reasoning that in fact this may *itself* be a kind of violence. Never does it appear to occur to him that rather than exponentially declining, violence may in fact simply be shifting shape, being embodied instead by more insidious and complex states of affairs that mere beatings, murders, wars and so on.

This alights on a central philosophical oversight, namely that while often discussed as an entity no clear answer to the question "what is violence?" has ever really been put forward or a generally accepted answer agreed upon. So much so that any definition – as in the case of Pinker and even, as we shall see later, Hannah Arendt – is largely assumed rather than qualified as a precept.

If the suggestion that this should be otherwise seems outlandish, we need only look as far as a dictionary to see a little of the diversity contained within the term. In the *Oxford English Dictionary* violence is defined as 'behaviour involving physical force intended to hurt, damage or kill someone or something' and in law as being 'the unlawful exercise of physical force or intimidation by the exhibition of such force', it equally lists among the definitions: 'Do violence to. Damage or adversely affect'. Elsewhere we find the definition 'a. to inflict harm upon. b. to distort the meaning of' (*Collins English Dictionary*, 1990, p.967). Here there is also listed with an interesting ambiguity⁴, violence as the 'unjust or unlawful display of force'. Here violence as harm infliction, as conflict and, though less obviously, violence as the absence of peace may all be said to be accounted for in some way.

⁴ Nowhere does it state, and nor indeed does it follow, that force necessitates physicality

There are three elements of the above that should be paid particular attention. a) violence by intimidation via the exhibition of force, b) violence as doing violence to and c) violence as unjust or unlawful. (a) and (c) give room to violence as not merely physical, but present too in intimidation and, strikingly, injustice. And so presumably there is scope for violence to exist latently since intimidation is not a specific violence actuated but the threat (coupled with knowledge of the capacity) that it may be, and because it may be manifest in unjust displays of force it can presumably be manifest in societal structures rendered unjust by the force exerted over constituent members. (b) allows that violence be thought of as something roughly approximate to *doing violence to*.

The significance of (a), (b) and (c) is twofold; firstly, each relates in part to categories (1), (2) and (3). (a) and (b) are sympathetic to a conflict or infraction-based understanding: the entire object of conflict is to do damage or *greater* damage to your opponent which may (although not necessarily) in turn be intended to exhibit enough force to dissuade them from some further course of action. All three are compatible with violence as harm infliction: intimidation, doing violence to and impositions of unjust states of affairs may all be said to be deeply harmful. Equally, the presence of any of the three may be said to constitute violence as the absence of peace: intimidation, doing violence to and meaningful injustice all go some way to contravene a state of true peace.

Secondly, the diverse character of each makes an understanding of violence such as Pinker's or that of anyone else conceiving of violence along the same lines – the textbook or *de facto* understanding – seem less stable, or at very least less rounded. This becomes more apparent with a little more etymological investigation.

We find in *Harper's Latin Dictionary* (1891) *violentia*, which translates as 'violence, vehemence, impetuosity, ferocity', and further down the page also *violare*: 'to treat with violence (corporeally and more frequently) to injure, dishonor, outrage, violate' (p.2009). The closeness between to treat with violence and to *dishonour* and most saliently of all *violation* is particularly significant. With regards to the latter, the presence of *impetuosity* is also striking. When you go in search of that term, you find *impetere*: 'to rush upon, assail, attack' (p.902). From this modern English derives the adjective *impetuous*: 'acting without consideration; rash; impulsive' (CED. 1990. P.418).

The point I am attempting to stress at this stage is not that a narrow understanding of violence is incorrect, but that it only captures a segment of the true significance of violence. Equally, that this is not because of some new or emergent demand we have of the term, but because it does not articulate central conceptual elements *already present* in the definition. The most significant omission being the inseparability of violence and violation.

This being the case, a further distinction will be worthwhile for the sake of clarity. As apart from the categories (1), (2) and (3) we should also proceed with a more general, secondary distinction borrowed from Johan Galtung, between *somatic* and *non-somatic* understandings should be retained. The distinction is basic and intended to aid concision. A *somatic*⁵ understanding I will take to be the kind of narrow view put forward by Pinker and the one that seems most generally assumed when violence is discussed in general language. Here violence is rooted in the physical; when I hit you, wage war on you or physically attack you in any way I am committing violence but not when I verbally abuse, socially, economically or culturally suppress, bully or threaten you. In contrast non-somatic views of violence will be those that account for more than mere *actuated* physical instances or inflictions, but also more complex or insidious forms of violence. Here *both* physical and non-physical forms of violence will be considered, thus I will be violent not only when I attack or wage war on you, but also when I verbally abuse, bully or economically, socially or culturally suppress you. Non-somatic views do not see violence as a purely non-physical entity, rather they see both physical and non-physical manifestations as part of a wider conceptual remit of the term.

This distinction does not supervene that suggested between the basic categories (1), (2) and (3). Understandings based on harm-infliction, for example, may be either somatic or non-somatic, depending on the given view. However, in Sc.3 I will suggest that only those based on a non-somatic understanding can be plausible.

⁵ Somatic meaning ‘of or related to the body as distinct from the mind’ (CED, 1990. P.823), from Greek “soma” meaning simply: “body”.

2.

Violence as Infraction

I.

Compared with violence as the infliction of harm or structural violence, conflict-based understandings of violence are the most straightforward. Here conflict does not denote just the kind of national, subnational or tribal wars that might generally come to mind, but merely *violent infractions*. So a war, an individual murder and a brawl may all fall within the understanding, but in all cases under this heading violence will be somatically conceived. Conflicts and infractions of a non-somatic nature will fit more readily with harm-infliction based theories.

In the initial part of the discussion I will largely use Pinker's characterisation as an example given that it is both prominent and archetypal, before moving on to discuss the Hobbesian view which, while falling under the same category as Pinker's, diverges quite radically in much of its content and carries far greater implications regarding the relation between violence, violation and justification.

II. *A Somatic Understanding: Pinker's View of Violence in Decline*

Pinker's view of violence itself is straightforward. He sees violence more as a facet of environmental and societal development rather than something linked ultimately to concepts like morality, innate human nature or good and evil. In his understanding, violence is simply the result of aggregate emotional, neurological, environmental and societal causal factors culminating ultimately in acts of aggression. He remarks:

one of the symptoms of the myth of pure evil is to identify violence as an animalistic impulse, as we see in words like *beastly, bestial, brutish, inhuman* and *wild*, and in depictions of the devil with horns and a tail. But while violence is certainly common in the animal kingdom, to think of it as arising from a single impulse is to see the world through a victim's eyes. (2012, p.599)

His thesis is that while

[m]any people implicitly believe in the Hydraulic Theory of Violence: that humans harbour an inner drive towards aggression (a death instinct or thirst for blood), which builds up inside us and must periodically be discharged, [n]othing could be further from a contemporary scientific understanding of the psychology of violence. Aggression is not a single motive, let alone a mounting urge. It is the output of several psychological systems that differ in their environmental triggers, their internal logic, their neurological basis and their social distribution. (2012, preface xxiii, xxiv)

Such factors, or “systems”, as they play out in human action, he groups into his five “inner demons” which juxtapose with the four “better angels of our nature” – i.e. ‘motives that can orientate [humans] away from violence and toward cooperation and altruism’ (continuing xxiv). While violence arises from the psychological systems of *Predatory* or *instrumental violence* (‘violence deployed as a means to an end’), *Dominance* (‘the urge for authority, prestige, glory and power’), *Revenge* (‘the moralistic urge towards retribution, punishment, and [perceived] justice’), *Sadism* (‘pleasure taken in another’s suffering’) and *Ideology* (‘a shared belief system, usually involving a vision of utopia, that justifies unlimited violence in pursuit of unlimited good’) (all p.xxiv) these contrast with, and under the right circumstances are counteracted by, the human capacities (the better angels) of *empathy*, *self-control*, *moral sense* and *reason*.

Such *demons* and *angels* arise as motivating forces in humans; as a species we are ‘not innately good, just as [we] are not innately evil’ (p.xxiv). However the balance between them has, in Pinker’s view, been tipped as visible in six major “trends” – which are perhaps easiest understood as *shifts* or *transitions* – in human history that have prompted ‘our species retreat from violence’ (p.xxii) meaning that humanity has become more inclined to obey the dispositions of its angels rather than its demons.

These trends Pinker lists as 1) *The Pacification Process*, marked by ‘the transition from the anarchy of the hunting, gathering, and horticultural societies in which our species spent most of its evolutionary history to the first agricultural civilisations with cities and governments’ (p.xxii). 2) *The Civilising Process*, marked by ‘the consolidation of a patchwork of feudal territories into large kingdoms with centralized authority and an infrastructure of commerce’ (p.xxiii). 3) *The Humanitarian Revolution*,

which, coinciding with the Age of Reason, ‘saw the first organised movements to abolish socially sanctioned forms of violence like despotism, slavery, duelling, judicial torture, superstitious killing, sadistic punishment, and cruelty to animals, together with the first stirrings of systemic pacifism’ (p.xxiii). 4) *The Long Peace*, beginning at the close of World War II, after which point ‘the great powers, and developed states in general, [...] stopped waging war on one another’ (p.xxiii). 5) *The New Peace*, signified by the end of The Cold War, after which ‘organized conflicts of all kinds – civil wars, genocides, repression by autocratic governments, and terrorist attacks – have declined throughout the world’ (p.xxiii). 6) *The Rights Revolutions*, which ‘in symbolically inaugurated by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, has seen a growing revulsion against aggression on smaller scales, including violence against ethnic minorities, women, children, homosexuals and animals’ (p.xxiii).

Naturally such trends or shifts must themselves have some causal genealogy. It would otherwise be unclear as to why, irrespective of whether they succeed as general categories, our better angels would prove to be the stronger side of human nature and lead us to the transitions detailed above. As catalysts for changes in human behaviour – for our better angels winning out over our inner demons – Pinker finally identifies five ‘exogenous [historical] forces that favour our peaceable motives and that have driven the multiple declines in violence’ (p.xxiv). These are i) the *Leviathan*; ‘a state and judiciary with a monopoly on the legitimate use of force, [able to] defuse the temptation of exploitative attack, inhibit the impulse for revenge, and circumvent the self-serving biases that make all parties believe they are on the side of the angels’ (p.xxiv, xxv). As the name suggests this is simply a broadly Hobbesian understanding of the state, which serves to curb the otherwise barbarous behaviours of man in the state of nature. Secondly iii) *Commerce*, which, in Pinker’s view, represents ‘a positive-sum game in which everybody can win’ meaning that, in what Pinker casts as the cost-benefit-analysis of human relations, ‘other people become more valuable alive than dead, and [...] less likely to become targets of demonization and dehumanisation’ (p.xxv). Thirdly, iii) *Feminisation*: ‘[s]ince violence is largely a male pastime, cultures that empower women tend to move away from the glorification of violence and

are less likely to breed subcultures of rootless young men'⁶ (p.xxv). iii) *Cosmopolitanism* which, in a similar fashion to *commerce* though with less material gain entailed, consists in 'literacy, mobility, and mass media [prompting] people to take the perspective of people unlike themselves and to expand their circle of sympathy to embrace them' (p.xxv). Lastly, though seemingly chief among the five, iiiii) the *escalator of reason*: namely 'an intensifying application of knowledge and rationality to human affairs [forcing] people to recognise the futility of cycles of violence [and therefore] reframe violence as a problem to be solved rather than a contest to be won' (p.xxv).

Given that Pinker's augmentation contains many moving parts, it is worth briefly illustrating how each of the pieces is supposed to fit together. For example, in something roughly approximate to a Hobbesian state of nature, people are ruled predominantly by their *inner demons* – let us suppose they are most particularly inclined towards *predatory or instrumental violence*. Juxtapose this predatory instinct with its starkest opposites – *empathy* and *self-control*, let's say. While in the state of nature, prior to organised society in the sense of governance, judiciary or significantly advanced commerce, in a cost-benefit-analysis it is more convenient in a time of scarcity to kill your neighbours for what they have than it is to be peaceably disposed towards them. Conversely, it is more in their interest to let you starve and be willing to fight back in cases of attack than it is to share their resources with you – in fact it may be better still for them to kill you in your weakened state than risk the possibility that you may attack them unawares.⁷ Thus both you and your neighbour are motivated primarily by your inner demon of predation. But then the *Leviathan* (one of the five "historical forces") comes into existence, and the cost-benefit-analysis plays out differently. Now it no longer makes the most sense to your neighbour, because while you will gain their resources (albeit briefly) if you do, the state or something proximate to it will come and kill you in punishment. As Pinker puts it neatly: '[b]y inflicting penalties on aggressors, the Leviathan can eliminate incentive for aggression, in turn defusing general anxieties

⁶ Much later in the text Pinker points to the fascinating (though perhaps hardly surprising) statistic that 'countries with more women in government and the professions have less domestic violence against women' than those where this is not the case (p.574).

⁷ Elsewhere Pinker refers to the notion of *forward panic* as identified by Randall Collins:

[w]hen an aggressive coalition has stalked or faced off against an opponent in a prolonged state of apprehension and fear, then catches the opponent in a moment of vulnerability, fear turns to rage, and the men will explode in a savage frenzy. A seemingly unstoppable fury drives them to beat the enemy senseless, torture and mutilate the men, rape the women, and destroy the property. Forward panic is violence at its ugliest. It is the state of mind that causes genocides, massacres, deadly ethnic riots, and battles in which no prisoners are taken. (p.587)

about pre-emptive attack and obviating everyone's need to maintain a hair trigger for retaliation' (p.42). Equally, if it is a more advanced state, it may even induce commerce as another historical force, meaning that your neighbours may even be inclined to give-over some of their resources provided you have something to trade in return. Now, instead of instrumental violence, instrumental *non-violence* becomes the preferable course of action. The "better angel" of *self-control* – the ability to 'anticipate the consequences of acting on our impulses and to inhibit them accordingly' (p.xxiv) – now becomes the primary motivation in place of *predatory violence*. What takes place is that the *historical force* of the Leviathan prompts – in a curiously Nietzschean fashion – a shift in dominant drives or motivations, meaning that *angels* win out over *demons*, in turn leading to a wider shift towards (in this case) the *major trends* of *The Pacification Process* and (depending on how sophisticated the leviathan is) the *Civilising Process*.

It would be longwinded to set up further cases here, but whatever the *demons* and *angels*, *historical forces* or *major trends* the essential mechanism remains the same. Historical forces render given motives better than others in a cost-benefit-analysis leading to a shift in individual and societal behaviours, leading in turn to major societal trends which themselves perpetuate further disinclination towards, and de-escalation of, violence. The final key to the idea being that one such process will give rise to another based on previous historical shifts, behavioural changes and the related major trends or transitions in human relations: greater *commerce* will lead to the *civilising process* via its incentivising of *self-control*, in turn *commerce* will engender *cosmopolitanism* which will engender a promotion of *empathy* and *human reason*, leading to a wider shift towards *The Humanitarian Revolution* as a by product of the Age of Reason and so on. The system Pinker paints is, in other words, a near perfect virtuous circle.

As he remarks at the start of Ch.2, '[w]hen a tendency towards violence evolves, it is always *strategic*. Organisms are selected to deploy violence only in circumstances where the expected benefits outweigh the expected costs [...] [a] discernment especially true of intelligent species' (p.39). In turn it follows by the same token that all decisions towards *non-violence* must result from the same strategic analysis.

III. *Conceptual Limits of Pinker's Analysis*

Yet as carefully arranged as it may be, the process Pinker details interests itself only with violence as *somatic* infraction; as conflicts, beatings, pillages, murders and so on. It is in this way an entirely somatic understanding of violence. It is made both implicit throughout and made explicitly that this is the case. Throughout *Chapter.1* of his book, Pinker charts a history of violence that exclusively concerns violence of a physical kind, from Homeric Greece in which ‘tales of massacre and rape are disturbing even by the standards of modern war documentaries [and while] Homer and his characters, to be sure, deplored the waste of war, they accepted it as an inescapable fact of life’ (p.6, 7), to The 20th Century in which ‘within recent memory, many schoolchildren were disciplined in ways that today would be classified as ‘torture’ and that would put their teachers in jail’ (p.33). Despite his detailed historical accounts and source material, nowhere – including somewhat shockingly in his discussion of domestic violence – does Pinker make mention of any type of violence that consists in more than mere *physical* infractions. Even in his discussion of slavery, while he acknowledges that ‘violence is inherent to the definition of slavery’ (p.184), it is clear that this is on account of the sheer scale of commonplace (and often astonishingly cruel) violence within the slave trade, rather than amounting to a claim (which will be examined shortly) that the very condition of slavery *is itself* violent.

Elsewhere in the text Pinker refers to his *inner demons* instead as ‘categories of violence’ (p.612), however it may be more expedient to understand these more precisely as *root causes* rather than ‘‘categories’’ given that they function, here, to help us understand ‘the *reasons* people engage in violence’ (p.612). The clear point – and an essential demarcation between the view of violence as infraction and more nuanced perspectives – is that rather than being violences in themselves, such things (such motivations) as dominance, sadism and so on are rather *causes of violence*.

So, taking dominance as an example, violence occurs when the neighbouring tribe attacks my village in order to make it a dominion of theirs but *is not* present thereafter when I dare not keep a higher share of my own crop yields than they permit for fear of violent reprisal or punishment. In the same way, violence occurs when they come to beat me and my fellow villagers as an arbitrary reinforcement of their dominance, or even just to let off steam, but is not present in the mere fact *that they may do so* at

any time of their choosing. Nor, it follows, will violence occur when they verbally threaten further beatings, verbally abuse members of my village as a show of dominance and so on. As will be expounded in later sections, that threats, attempts to gain dominance and so on are not counted as violent is the central point of difference between views that are too narrow – as Pinker’s is – and those that are more complex.

Not only is this narrow view evident in the argument, it is also requisite. It is hard to imagine how, if violence were thought of differently, the logic of cost-benefit-analysis that is so essential to Pinker’s thesis would function. In this sense his position not only maintains a solely somatic understanding of violence as violent infraction, but it *relies* on it. This point is highly significant and so requires discussing in some detail.

Return to the historical force of the leviathan as an example. The Leviathan is a key driving force behind the *pacification process* and is therefore supposed to be a negating force in face of violence⁸. In a section of *Ch.2* entitled *The Logic of Violence*, Pinker sets it up like this:

[t]he logic of the Leviathan can be summed up in a triangle. In every act of violence, there are three interested parties: the aggressor, the victim, and a bystander. Each has a motive for violence: the aggressor to prey upon the victim, the victim to retaliate, the bystander to minimize collateral damage from their fight. Violence between combatants may be called war; violence by the bystander against the combatants may be called law. The Leviathan theory, in a nutshell, is that law is better than war. (p.42)

If it is accepted that the Leviathan does bring about a decline in rates of violence,⁹ then it is reasonable to suppose that the cost-benefit analysis is working in the way Pinker invites: there is simply no point

⁸ Pinker does go on to note certain issues with the Leviathan and the Hobbesian theory of governance in general, but this is only in so far as it is a comparatively unsophisticated, more basic stage of the departure from violence; one that informs the *pacification process* but alone could not drive the more advanced states of peacefulness, such as *The Humanitarian Revolution*. Invoking Max Weber he notes that a government is:

an institution that holds a monopoly on the legitimate use of violence. Governments, then, are institutions that by their very nature are designed to carry out violence. Ideally this violence is held in reserve as a deterrent to criminals and invaders, but for millennia most governments showed no such restraint and indulged in violence exuberantly. (p.190)

He continues that ‘Hobbes himself didn’t think through the problem deeply enough [and] imagined that somehow people would vest authority in a sovereign or committee [...] and thereafter it would embody their interests [...] perfectly’ (p.193). The essential point, however, is not that these tyrannical governments weren’t violent, but only that they were *less* violent.

⁹ For the sake of analysis we will assume here that it does, and equally that the Leviathan does not itself indulge in so much indiscriminate physical violence that while violence amongst the populace has gone down, aggregate levels more broadly have remained the same or even gone up.

in attacking my neighbour if doing so ensures that I will myself be killed. Thus the claim that aggregate violence has declined still stands.

However now suppose that a non-somatic understanding of violence is adopted. At this stage such a conception need only be understood broadly; assume here that as well as physical violence, psychological violence is also accounted for. If the threat of punishment posed by the Leviathan – which is what is supposed to render non-violence the more appealing option – is so severe that the very knowledge of living at its mercy itself embodies a kind of violence, then the claim that its presence indicates a decrease in violence no longer seems accurate. Instead the claim would only be that one type of violence has been supplanted with another, at which point the feasible defence would be that while this is true, a move from physical to merely psychological violence is still an improvement. For such a claim to function one would be required to start ranking violences of one kind against those of another; to say, for example, that being arbitrarily beaten or tortured by the state is worse than living in the knowledge that they may come at any moment and at whim to arbitrarily beat and torture¹⁰. In so doing, one would be moving further from the claim that violence has exponentially declined – which is exactly what Pinker is claiming – and towards one that physical violence has merely been supplanted by some more acceptable incarnation.

Given that this is simply not the claim Pinker is making, the counter response that follows is to simply reject a non-somatic understanding of violence outright. In the next section I am going to make the case that such a view is deeply myopic, and that in adopting it one fails to acknowledge the full significance of what violence really entails. In so doing I am going to discuss a second, broader understanding of violence, namely *violence as harm infliction*. While doing so I will also try to demonstrate the serious shortcomings of the purely somatic understanding of violence as infraction, given that such shortcomings are made most apparent when set against more complex perspectives.

¹⁰ In Sc.4 and Sc.4 I make the case that such a claim would be as confused as it is troubling.

3.

Infraction Versus Infliction

I.

In stark contrast to the somatic view of violence as infraction, the following definition of violence given by *The World Health* organisation is striking. Here violence is:

The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation. (WHO, WRVH, as of spring 2017, first 2002)

There are three clauses in the above that are especially significant. 1) The inclusion of non-somatic forms of violence: violence may be manifest not just in injury or death, but also psychological harm, maldevelopment and deprivation. 2) That the use of force resulting in violence will be considered violent *whether threatened or actual*: violence is present not only when one is attacked, but also when one is under a meaningful threat of attack. 3) That violence may be present not only in the actualisation of such states of affairs as mentioned, but also *in the likelihood of their occurring*: if violence can be manifest in *likelihood* of deprivation as well as deprivation itself, then it will not follow that one is subject to violence only when one is being treated violently, but also when one lives in a *context of violence*.¹¹ Such a claim may, from some quarters (such as theorists like Pinker or, as we shall see in Sc.4, thinkers in related branches of thought), be generally rejected out-of-hand as unconvincing, overly inclusive or even implausible. This view should be challenged at the outset, since what it entails is

¹¹ Interestingly, what this may be said to imply when accessed under the lens of rights is some inherent acknowledgment not just of failures in positive duties incurred by positive rights, but also negative duties implied by negative rights. For I violate your rights understood positively when I actively inflict injury, death, deprivation and so on and in so doing satisfy the somatic criterion of violence. But, accepting an element of increased likelihood, I will a) fail in my duties positively understood when I actively impose a suitably high likelihood of such violence but also b) fail in my duties negatively understood by virtue of negative rights when I fail to simply avoid contributing to the likelihood of – understood here as the conditions conducive or causally related to – such outcomes as constitute violence. Not just, in other words, that I deprive you of ‘X’ by taking it from you – that I am violent towards you with respect to ‘X’ – but also that I contribute to your being deprived of ‘X’ by contributing to a wider set of conditions under which ‘X’ is significantly less likely or less achievable.

something both incoherent and morally counterintuitive. It would be useless to claim, for example, that child in a warzone is not deprived of adequate access to medical care by virtue of her being treated by a passing medical aid team at the present moment. It would be equivalent to claiming that the fact of a man stranded in the desert finding a few millilitres of water means that he is not deprived of adequate access to hydration.

All three of these clauses are diametrically opposed to the understanding of violence as infraction. The first because it will allow for the infliction of psychological harm under the term “violence”. Imagine a case of *domestic violence*:¹² whereas one would be committed under a somatic understating to the claim that a spouse is subject to violence when they are *actually* beaten but not when they are subject to prolonged emotional abuse, this will not be true of a definition such as that given by WHO. Equally, while someone subscribing to a view like Pinker’s will accept that violence is present when the state comes to arbitrarily murder its subjects, but not when it keeps them in conditions of extreme poverty, starvation, fear, ill-health and so on, this is accounted for in the above by the inclusion of inflicted maldevelopment and deprivation into the definition.

Following from the first, the second means that while the threats of an abusive partner, a bully, a tyrant and so on would be discounted under violence as infraction, the same will not be true here. This taken in conjunction with (3) touches upon what I suggest is an essential unifying feature of all non-somatic understandings of violence and the single most significant demarcation from somatic ones. While they are partially distinct – the former being a subset of the latter – the notion of a threat and that of *increased likelihood* have a significant conceptual overlap and given their significance here they should be discussed in some detail.

¹² Quite considerable advances towards a generally accepted understanding of violence as something akin to *harm infliction* have been made in this field. The charity *Refuge* defines domestic violence as:

The abuse of one partner within an intimate or family relationship. It is the repeated, random and habitual use of intimidation to control a partner. The abuse can be physical, emotional, psychological, financial or sexual. If you are forced to alter your behaviour because you are frightened of your partner’s reaction, you are being abused. ((www.refuge.org.uk/about-domestic-violence/) as of spring 2018)).

Whilst this last stipulation particularly may be rather problematic – we may perfectly innocently alter our behaviour for fear of our loved one’s reaction without its constituting a manifestation of abuse, and equally domestic violence should not be supposed to occur only between partners – the definition nonetheless represents a clear departure from the kind of narrow understanding discussed in the previous section.

Their full conceptual significance is best understood in the context an additional but inextricable concept: *latent violence*. While latent violence may seem nearly an expression merely of the idea of increased likelihood, it has a very particular bearing on both threats and indeed psychological violence in general. As such I will discuss it some detail now, on the basis that it is from an understanding of latent violence that the notions of violence as harm infliction, and non-somatic violence in general find their greatest coherence.

II. *Latent Violence*

‘No treaty of peace shall be regarded as valid, if made with the secret reservation of material for future war’ (Kant. 1917, p.107). This is how Kant begins his *First Section Containing the Preliminary Articles of Perpetual Peace Between States*.

To begin to understand this, it is helpful to borrow an intuition from Johan Galtung and grant that ‘the statement *peace is the absence of violence* shall be retained as valid’ (1969, p.168). And indeed there may be some plausibility in this, given that

Philosophical discussions of pacifism have clarified the concept by distinguishing the more general commitment to nonviolence from a narrower anti-war position. [And] some have tried to distinguish “pacific-ism” from pacifism, where pacific-ism is a commitment to peace and peacefulness that is not strictly opposed to war while pacifism is a more principled or absolute rejection of violence. (Fiala, 2014)

While this view remains somewhat contentious, for the purposes of enquiry it suffices here to maintain at least that

Peace is easiest to define dialectically as the opposite of war or violence. [And] at any rate, peace scholarship has long emphasized the distinction between negative peace and positive peace: negative peace is the absence of violence or war while positive peace encompasses cooperative, tranquil, and harmonious relations and the broader concerns of human flourishing and integration. (continuing, Fiala, 2014)

Kant holds that peace shrouding intentions of further conflict cannot be a true peace. ‘For then it would be a mere truce, a mere suspension of hostilities, not peace’ (continuing, p.107). This claim signifies, as radically distinct from views discussed so far, is that Kant conceives of peace as some sort of meaningful and *meaningfully upheld* state – as something imbued with some sort of long-term assurance. If peace is negated simply by conflict being pursued, and not only by its being mutually waged at the present moment, then it follows that peace must encompass something more meaningful than mere suspension of actualised violence.

The point is continued, his third preliminary article being that: ‘[s]tanding armies (*miles perpetuus*) shall be abolished in course of time. For they are always threatening other states with war by appearing to be in constant readiness for fight’ (p.110). So very clearly peace may be negated – and thus violence brought about according to our borrowed principle – by the mere intention, expectation or atmosphere of violence: by the *threat* of violence. And to be clear it does not follow that these threats must be mutually imposed, as one might be given to assume when examples such as The Cold War or other great military stand-offs come to mind. There is nothing to imply that peace is only negated when two states not officially in conflict stockpile nuclear arms, say, with the shared intent of each destroying the other. There is nothing to suggest that the “secret reservation” Kant alludes to must be held by both parties.¹³

Of course, it could be objected that one should not conflate the threat of (or *threats of*) violence with latent violence.¹⁴ But this seems a little flimsy, and rather misses the nuance of Kant’s point. For one thing, on a basic level it partly confuses *threat of* with *to threaten*; the latter denoting a means of incentivising some course of action or inaction over another via the imposition of some penalty or

¹³ If anything this would seem counterintuitive, for we do not say that there is peace when two armies stop warring momentarily with the mutual intention of resuming, on the basis that this would merely be a ceasefire, which is distinct.

¹⁴ Galtung, for example, regards them as distinct. Saying of threatened violence: ‘when a person, a group, a nation is displaying the means of physical violence [...] there may not be violence in the sense that anyone is hit or hurt, but there is nevertheless the *threat of physical violence* and indirect threat of mental violence that may even be characterized as some type of psychological violence since it constrains human action’ (1969, p.170). And of latent violence as opposed to manifest violence, that it is ‘something which is not there, yet might easily come about [...] that there is latent violence when the situation is so unstable that the actual realization level ‘easily’ decreases’ (p.172).

reward, whereas the former denotes an overhanging likelihood or prominent possibility. Along such a line of thought, there may be the threat of heavy snow tomorrow but that does not mean that I am *threatened* in the way relevant here. Kant cannot mean “threat” purely in the former sense, since he refers directly to a *secret* intention towards the pursuit of violence, and *to threaten* someone is presumably predicated entirely on their being aware of the threat: to threaten someone without their knowledge is not to make a threat but merely some private utterance or display. More fundamentally, “threat” in either sense denotes something very similar in the way relevant here: the presence of either fundamentally negates peace in its true sense. What I suggest we might call *threats hanging in the air* make for a peace which may be only momentary, and so in turn a violence which while not presently being inflicted is still embedded in the character of the situation: it is a peace defined only as a lapse in a wider and persisting context of violence.

Take an example. Return to the girl in the warzone mentioned earlier. Suppose, if only for a moment, you equate her being free from deprivation with her being free from violence and living in a state of peace: when the ceasefire is called, and she can be treated by a medical aid team for a day, is she therefore no longer meaningfully deprived of access to medical care and living in a state of peace? Of course not. Even on the day of ceasefire she lives primarily under two threats in the air: the ceasefire may be broken at any moment, and even if it isn’t, tomorrow the aid team will be gone and unable to reach her and the bombardment will resume. That she could be said to live not under the thumb of violence requires something far more meaningful – far more consistent and established – than the mere gaps between instances or outbreaks. What I am pointing to, and what I think Kant points to in his way, is that modes of violence and the negation of peace consist not in *instances* but also in *contexts*.¹⁵

So is what Kant articulates some acknowledgment of the latent violence? It seems very probable that it is. Never more so than when he writes:

¹⁵ The converse seems intuitive too: do I live in a state of deprivation by virtue of my being hungry at the present moment because I have been too busy to get lunch? Or, is someone injured meaningfully deprived of access to adequate medical care by virtue of the fact that the paramedics are still in transit, and so he is not being treated at the present instant? I think quite evidently not. We do not say, after all, that a rich man missing his wallet for a day lives in poverty.

A state of peace among men who live side by side is not the natural state (*status naturalis*), which is rather to be described as a state of war: that is to say, although there is not perhaps always actual open hostility, yet there is a constant threatening that an outbreak may occur. Thus the state of peace must be *established*. For the mere cessation of hostilities is no guarantee of continued peaceful relations' (p.117, 118, 119).

The clear commitment appears to be to a notion of peace as a state in which neither actualised conflict nor harboured ill-intent and hostility persists. So it may be thought of as tied to both actualised infliction and the threat of it. Peace, and therefore the absence of violence,¹⁶ might thus be thought of – as I take to be Kant's point – as something much more complex and imbedded than mere momentary calm or the absence of hostility. Peace for Kant is about meaningful resolution – meaningful absence of negating factors – and the absence of violent action or intention.

III. *Psychological Violence*

This is relevant to non-somatic violence in general, and violence as harm-infliction specifically because once we understand the idea of latent violence, we are able to begin to see wherein violence manifest in threats, increased likelihoods, deprivations and so on begins to be befitting of the term. In other words, it becomes clearer as to how we might attribute violence even when no punches are thrown, shots fired and so on. I've suggested above that latent violence be thought in the way I think Kant broadly implies – though he does not do it in these terms – as *violence hanging in the air*, as a *context* of violence. If this is what latent violence refers to, what does it do to inform our understanding of psychological violence and ground the concept in general? Now I will make the case that understanding latent violence does a great deal to inform a rounded understanding of *psychological violence*, and that understanding the two in tandem forms the basis of an understanding of violence as *harm infliction* –

¹⁶ Again, and to be absolutely clear on this, I am not suggesting that this be adopted as the standing singular definition of violence – apart from anything doing so alone would not be in keeping with my stated thesis. But I am suggesting that there is conceptual plausibility in the idea (as Fiala points out, there is certainly credence in the claim that peace is at least broadly opposed to violence – and even so called 'justified violence' is supposedly concerned with neutralising violent forces) and that it may therefore be used as a springboard into further inquiry.

an understanding that conveys far more of the true normative significance of “violence” than violence understood as infraction.

Perhaps it might be best to think about psychological violence in two ways. 1) As the a) direct and b) indirect infliction of psychological harm, and 2) as manipulation in the sense of coercive control. These are fairly fluid, not binary categories. Clearly manipulation can be psychologically harmful and infliction of psychological harm a central part of manipulation. But the value in thinking about each separately comes when you consider the relation between latent and psychological violence.

First, the very presence of latent violence may be deeply psychologically harmful. Take a real-world example. In *Invisible Wounds*, a report for *Save the Children* into the impact of war on the mental health of children in Syria, Dr Marcia Brophy writes: ‘[t]he psychological toll of living through six years of not knowing if this day will be their last is enormous. At least 3 million Syrian children under the age of six know nothing but war, and millions have grown up in fear under the shadow of conflict’ (2017, p.1). Amongst others the report gives the following figures:

84% of adults and almost all children said that ongoing bombing and shelling is the number one cause of psychological stress in children’s daily lives. 89% said children’s behaviour has become more fearful and nervous as the war goes on. [...] 71% said that children increasingly suffer from frequent bedwetting and involuntary urination – both common symptoms of toxic stress and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among children. [...] 48% of adults have seen children who have lost the ability to speak or who have developed speech impediments since the start of the war. 49% said children regularly or always have feelings of grief or extreme sadness and 78% have these feelings at least some of the time. All groups said that loss of education is having a huge psychological impact on children’s lives. 50% of children who are still able to attend school said they never or rarely feel safe there. (p.1, 2)

Of course, much of this could be said to be mere causal outcomes of somatic violence. This, I take it, is the response to which someone of Pinker’s position would be committed. But I find the suggestion inaccurate – what the above refers to is undoubtedly something more complex than that. Much like the girl in the warzone case mentioned before, the children represented in these figures are not victims merely of somatic violence and some knock-on effects. Indisputably they are the victims of appalling

somatic violence, but other very grave violences besides.¹⁷ They live in a persistent *context of violence*; under the threat of violence in the way I suggest broadly implied by Kant.

It is explicit in this particular report that the impact of a context of violence – so according to my argument, latent violence – is the chief concern. In this regard special attention should be given to the words quoted above: “*fear under the shadow of conflict*” – violence is not present only when the children’s neighbourhoods are being bombed, but so too in the persisting threat under which they live. The point being that: “[t]he prolonged exposure to war, stress and uncertainty means that many children are in a state of ‘toxic stress’” (p.1). This “toxic stress” is surely a proxy for deep-seated psychological harm.

Yet this harm is not inflicted directly in the way that it would be, say, if someone were going to the children daily and verbally abusing, bullying and frightening them as their primary intention (this would direct psychological violence). Instead it is inflicted more broadly via the wider context of latent violence. In this sense latent violence and indirect infliction of psychological violence occupy a very similar conceptual space, in that psychological violence here is indicative of, and manifest in, latent violence.

The point is this: psychological violence can take either the form of direct or indirect infliction of psychological harm or in the form of manipulation. Indirect psychological violence is primarily that brought about by states of affairs which inflict psychological harm but were actuated without that harm as their specific motivating intention (a war, for example, is not usually fought purely with the object of making civilian victims profoundly miserable, but rather with wilful disregard for such misery). The form that such violence takes may well be of latent violence: of violence hanging in the air. Thus the presence of latent violence may itself be non-somatically violent in the sense of psychologically violent, and so the one inflicted via the other. This is useful because it allows us to recognise and talk about latent violence in a powerful way, via the recognition that latent violence implies psychological violence

¹⁷ It would be incorrect, not to mention entirely callous, to say that the only violence inflicted on these children is somatic. In doing so one would also be committing to the view a child whose neighbourhood was not bombed, while those containing their school, those of their friends, their relatives and so on were, could not be counted as a victim of violence since no somatic harm has been inflicted or nearly inflicted upon them.

and, often, vice versa. And in so doing, we can observe that violence meaningfully understood cannot be confined to specific binary types but consists instead in more complex interplaying permutations.

But what about psychological harm as manipulation?¹⁸ Framed for the moment purely in the context of latent violence, it is worth considering that (generally speaking) manipulation would seem to rely in some way on latent violence. In a case of serious prolonged emotional abuse for example, we might be inclined to say that victims live in fear under the shadow of abuse in the same sense that civilians in a warzone do under that of conflict. So by the same token as above, here too latent violence could be said to ground notions of non-somatic violence.

It would not do to say, for example, that a child subject to prolonged emotional abuse was subject to non-somatic violence only during instances of such abuse being inflicted, either via words or actions. Instead, I take it, one would say that their abuse consists in an interplay of actuated abuse and the persisting threat that it may at any point be actuated.¹⁹ Equally it should be noted of manipulation in the sense of coercion that it may be embodied not only in things actuated but things omitted. And that one may manipulate not only to force agents to act, but also to keep them from acting in certain ways.²⁰ As Scott Anderson observes:

¹⁸ Questions regarding what constitutes coercion being complicated as they are, for now it suffices just to understand the concept of manipulation in the sense of coercion approximately as persuasion or compulsion via the use of force or threats (OED, CED paraphrased). The concept will be properly addressed in much more detail as part of the discussion of liberty later in this essay.

¹⁹ This intuition seems to tally with conventional understanding. In the U.K. at least, emotional abuse is defined as:

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone. (p.92, 93. *Working Together to Safeguard Children, A Guide to Inter-Agency Working to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children*, HM Government, March 2015)

To describe abuse such as this in terms of actuated instances does not entirely capture it. Such abuse would seem to rely more heavily on a broader context of fear and belittlement, and not only actuating certain harmful infliction, but also omitting to actuate caring or positive ones.

²⁰ To refer back to the discussion of the previous section, this is exactly how Pinker understands the influence of the Leviathan, say. It is supposed to *prevent* a certain type of action being perused; it incentivises the *omission* of violence.

The concept of *coercion* has two different faces, corresponding to the two parties involved in its most ordinary cases. On one face, it picks out a technique agents (coercers) can use to get other agents to do or not do something. On the other face, it picks out a kind of reason for why agents (coercees) sometimes do or refrain from doing something. (Anderson, 2011)

The relevance of this in relation to latent violence is once again that this kind of non-somatic violence can imply a degree of latent violence.

If a coercer wishes the coercee not to do something, we can suppose that they will generally bring about some wider understanding that if the coercee performs the action in question a penalty of some kind will befall them, in the same way that they might be punished for not performing some other action that, in contrast, the coercer wished them to. If I am the coercee and my coercer wishes me not to perform P, then they will bring it about that I am given to understand that the harmful (either somatically or non-somatically) outcome Q will befall me should I perform P. Clearly the violence represented by Q is not inflicted on me all the while that I do not perform P. So I cannot be said that my coercer inflicts that particular violence upon me. Yet I live in fear Q – if I did not I would merely perform P and be done with it – and that fear, in order to be effective, must represent some quite harmful infliction. Given this, and given that the threat is effective, it follows that the fear is itself a psychological harm (for as the Save the Children report makes distressingly clear, fear is not merely dread of some other harm, but also a grave form of harm itself). And so it seems perfectly natural – it seems perfectly to follow – that here too the psychological harm and the latent violence are each in large parts manifest in the other.

This is by no means to collapse one into the other; quite clearly not all psychological violence is latent violence (although I do find myself inclined towards the intuition that latent violence must almost invariably be harmful at least to some degree). Rather the point is that latent violence and psychological violence cannot very easily, or usefully, be understood in isolation from one another. And instead each conception does a good deal to inform the other.

IV. *Violence and the Leviathan*

The above discussion being understood, we can examine how it bears upon the sort of scenario set-up by Pinker. If only for simplicity and continuity, return to the Leviathan. The criticism here is not aimed at Pinker's use or understanding of the Leviathan as such, but rather the broader view of violence it – as archetypal of understanding of violence as infraction – entails. In this sense the Leviathan is emblematic of a conceptual disjunction, and not itself the target of discussion but rather the most straightforward articulation of the position under scrutiny.

The extent of the disparity between violence understood as in infraction and violence understood as harm infliction – becomes most clear with a closer look at what the Leviathan may, in some incarnations, really entail. Prompted by the idea that the state has a monopoly on the use of violence, it may be that one would wish to draw a clear distinction between violence by the state and the mere rule of law. Plausibly most would be inclined to suggest that the state must retain some right of infliction over its citizens. After all this is essentially how the penal system works: if one disobeys the laws severely enough they will be imprisoned. However this enters into some extremely difficult terrain, especially when violence is thought of more broadly as harm infliction and non-somatic violence complicates matters. Demonstrably, in political philosophy and contemporary world affairs, views regarding the point of distinction between the rule of law and state violence differ radically. This disparity stems most principally from the question as to what the ruling body – here the Leviathan – may be *justified* in doing as part of its remit to govern.

In the case of a Hobbesian Leviathan, the answer to this question is emphatic:

One person, of whose acts a great multitude, by mutual covenants one with another, have made themselves every one the author, to the end he may use the strength and means of them all, as he shall think expedient, for their peace and common defence. And he that carrieth this person, is called sovereign, and said to have *sovereign power*; and everyone besides his subject. The attaining of this sovereign power, is by two ways. One, by natural force; as when a man maketh his children, to submit themselves, and their children to his government, *as being able to destroy them*

if they refuse; or by war subdueth his enemies to his will, giving them their lives on that condition. (Hobbes, 2008. p.114, 115. Emphasis added)

These lines might arguably be regarded not only as some of the most definitive embodying Hobbes' view of the question, but also of the most severe end of the spectrum amongst answers to it. Famously contractarian²¹ to the point of authoritarian, Hobbes will clearly not be much troubled by the idea that the state may inflict violent extremes – inflict *destruction* – in executing its warrant. In fact he actively encourages it. There are two things especially deserving of attention in the above: first, that the sovereign power may “destroy”, which is straightforward enough, but also that it may rule subjects “giving them their lives on that condition”.

“Destruction” may be seen to signify the right of the state to directly inflict violence in any way it sees expedient to the ends of its remit. But what of the second point: of lives lived conditionally at the discretion of the sovereign. What does this imply about the right of the state and therefore, the point now becomes, that of the citizen? If we understand Pinker correctly, the civil rights of citizens must have a strong bearing on their deliberative process in the cost-benefit-analysis of acting out or refraining from violent acts. If the population of the neighbouring tribe has the right to bodily integrity and physical safety, say, and therefore warrants state protection to that end, then my fellow villagers and I do not have the right to go and attack them, and will be severely punished accordingly if we do. It is in this way that the Leviathan is supposed to lead to an aggregate decline in violence.

While it is simple enough to understand that the state may be granted the right to inflict direct violence upon its subjects, either via it's right to govern or the remit granted to it by the body politic or some other power, the granting of life on the strict *condition of submission* carries a lot more conceptual baggage. Taking into account the discussion of latent and psychological violence, it seems that on

²¹ ‘A *commonwealth* is said to be *instituted*, when a *multitude* of men do agree, and *covenant, every one, with every one*, that to whatsoever *man, or assembly of men*, shall be given by the major part, the *right to present* the person of them all (that is to say, to be their *representative*;) every one, as well he that *voted for it*, as he that *voted against it*, shall *authorize* all the actions and judgements, of that man, or assembly of men, in the same manner, as if they were his own, to the end, to live peaceably amongst themselves, and be protected against other men. From this institution of a commonwealth are derived all the *rights, and faculties* of him, or them, on whom the sovereign power is conferred by the consent of the people assembled’ (p.115).

inspection the two points are not truly so different. In other words, it follows that the actual infliction of violence by the state and the fact of the subject's existence under the condition of submission both constitute violent states of affairs.

The crucial factor in this is one of *threat*. If the sovereign wishes to destroy me in executing his warrant (ultimately on my behalf since it is part our social covenant) it can be accurately presumed that my life is preserved purely on the condition of my not living contrary to the will of the sovereign, and thereby that of my fellow citizens and indeed, or so the reasoning goes,²² myself. The only apparent variable is that in one instance I am supposed to have entered into a covenant assenting to this, and in the other I have been subdued to the will of the sovereign having come under his rule through conquest. In either case my existence (the longevity of my existence) is purely conditional and takes place entirely in a context of severe persisting threat, and therefore seems at very least proximate to latent violence.

If we imagine for a final time our girl in the warzone, we might ask who the warring parties are. Suppose, like the Syrian children discussed by Dr. Brophy, the body most likely to harm her is the government that regards her as its citizen. Once the sort of suffering Brophy documents alongside the notion of latent and psychological violence is understood, it is hard to understand how the "condition of submission" is supposed to be anything other than merely a more deeply engrained state of total violence, let alone part of a departure from it. If the girl in the warzone is not herself so much as scratched yet loses the ability to speak, to sleep, becomes incontinent, perpetually terrified and unable to find solace in education all on account of some "condition of submission" being transgressed in the view of the sovereign it seems unthinkable first that she should not be said to be treated violently and, second, that she is not subject to violence purely by virtue of the fact that the sovereign *may* do as it

²² As a subject of the sovereign, the will of the sovereign is a proxy for my own. This is Hobbes' thought, and therefore it seems to follow that the will of the sovereign to kill me must be a proxy for my own will too:

because every subject is by this institution author of all the actions, and judgements of the sovereign instituted; it follows, that whatsoever he doth, it can be no injury to any of his subjects; nor ought he to be by any of them accused of injustice. For he that doth anything by authority from another, doth therein no injury to him by whose authority he acteth: (...) every particular man is author of all the sovereign doth: and consequently he that complaineth of injury from his sovereign, complaineth of that whereof he himself is author (p.117)

does. The point is that the very trauma that defines her existence is itself entirely the product the conditionality of her existence.

The Leviathan is so pertinent an example for two reasons 1) because it helps to highlight the full extent of disparities between views of violence as they play-out in conceptual standpoints and 2) because when discussed under the lens of violence it replays the conceptual disjunction with which it is most commonly associated but which itself does not feature violence as a conceptually acknowledged or utilised term. While (2) is deeply significant, it is essential to the argument set-out in Sc.4, and so should be left until then, given that for now the aim is only to demonstrate the full severity of what an infraction-based understanding will entail compared with an understating of violence as harm infliction.

V. Dominion Under Violence

So far the intent of this section has been this: a) to discuss an alternative understanding of violence to that understood purely somatically as violent infraction, b) to contrast the two differing views, and c) show why violence as infraction fails quite significantly to attest to what violence meaningfully entails. The most central point to grasp in this criticism is that what a view of violence such as Pinker's fails to consider is that rather than forces such as the Leviathan, the eventual confinement of physical violence largely to "lower status social groups" and so on being indicative of a decline in violence, they may in reality simply be the trading of one type of violence for another.

If the criticism is accepted, it might at this stage be tempting to conclude that violence should be understood as the infliction of harm and leave it at that. However, while it expresses far more of the normative significance of the term, it is not itself an understanding without some unsatisfactory implications. I've suggested above that the "condition of submission" and lives lived under perpetual threat should be parts of – should both be incorporated into – a rounded understanding of violence. However, while this is to be retained, it does leave open the possibility of a being *over* inclusive if left unqualified.

Return to the distinction noted previously between state violence and the mere rule of law. It would be problematic if our understanding of violence, via its inclusion of living under the thumb of latent violence, committed us to the claim that all government is inherently violent because they reserve the right to uphold certain laws and issue penalties for transgressions.

In this sense the discussion of violence here hits upon the long-standing dichotomy between governance and tyranny, wherein the question is one of finding a balance between suppression via arbitrary domination and the rule of law. While the Hobbesian view already discussed certainly appears to endorse and actively encourage latent violence, reinforced with extreme physical violence – “destruction” – wherever necessary, few theories of government are so extreme.²³ However the point remains that while we should be able to classify the kind of total dominion envisaged by Hobbes as a state of extreme non-somatic violence even if the sovereign rarely carries out his threats, it would seem deeply unsatisfactory to be committed in so doing to the claim that the rule of law is always an embodiment of latent violence: that all legal penalties are violent and all citizens before the law are citizens in a context of violence.

Yet the converse problem remains that, as Thoreau neatly articulated in *Civil Disobedience*, ‘[t]he government itself, which is only the mode which the people have chosen to execute their will, is equally liable to be abused and perverted before the people can act through it’ (1993, p.1). It is on this basis that ‘all men recognise the right of revolution; that is, the right to refuse allegiance to and to resist the government, when the tyrannies of its inefficiency are great and unendurable’ (p.3). Considering the general point, it seems the essential thing to be ironed-out then is at which point mere governance becomes something as inherently violent as suppression under tyranny. Thoreau’s own view – famously that ‘we should be men first, and subjects afterward’ (p.2) – may in fact provide something a starting point in a search for some “golden mean”.

²³ Indeed ‘while [Hobbes’] methodological innovation had a profound constructive impact on subsequent work in political philosophy, his substantive conclusions have served mostly as a foil for the development of more palatable philosophical positions’ (Lloyd & Sreedhar, 2014)

The thought he expresses is a powerful one, namely that one's status as a *subject* should not take precedent over their status as a *person*. The thought parallels that contained within the discussion of the *condition of submission* above. This, I suggest, touches on the single most powerful and significantly intuitive element of latent and psychological violence and therein the most troubling omission of purely somatic conceptions. The thought is not confined to dominance under government, but dominance under the thumb of violence in general.

It has been partly articulated in the language of violence before though, curiously, under what is ultimately a somatic understanding. In *On Violence*, Hannah Arendt states that violence – ‘as distinct from power, force or strength’ – principally refers to a means by which given ends may be attained: ‘[For] the very substance of violent action is ruled by the means-end category, whose chief characteristic, if applied to human affairs, has always been that the end is in danger of being overwhelmed by the means which it justifies’ (1970, p.4). Perhaps the greatest fear we encounter when we consider violence is, as Arendt so forcefully remarks, that it ‘harbours within itself an additional element of arbitrariness; nowhere does fortuna, good or ill luck, play a more fateful role in human affairs than on the battlefield’ (p.4). We lose by it, in other words, some enormous share of control over our own destinies. Violence might in this sense be seen as a principal element in the negation of autonomy and, ultimately, personal sovereignty.

While to Arendt violence – though still integral to wider networks of oppression, totalitarianism and even evil²⁴ – is nonetheless still something somatically conceived,²⁵ the content of the point remains pertinent here. The concern, like that expressed by Thoreau, is ultimately one of domination. In this sense, we will do well to turn to discussion of liberty in which such issues as we encounter here are

²⁴ In Arendt's philosophy, '[p]ower needs to be distinguished from strength, force, and violence. Unlike strength, it is not the property of an individual, but of a plurality of actors joining together for some common political purpose. Unlike force, it is not a natural phenomenon but a human creation, the outcome of collective engagement. And unlike violence, it is based not on coercion but on consent and rational persuasion.' (Passerin d'Entreves, 2018)

²⁵ Arendt admittedly sees violence as being heavily tied up with coercion, for her distinction between power and violence relies in part on the coercive capacity of violence, but it is not clearly articulated – or I suggest even likely – that this is meant to include coercive psychological or systemic control devoid of any physically violent apparatus. She appears to acknowledge as much when she states that violence ‘always needs implements (as Engels pointed out long ago), the revolution of technology, a revolution in tool making, was especially marked in warfare’ (p.4).

paramount and the parallels of thought with non-somatic violence are extraordinary. In doing so, the most pertinent insight on the point of concern comes from Mill.

Writing ten years after the publication of *Civil Disobedience*, Mill takes a view as stark in contrast from that we saw from Hobbes as Thoreau's. In *On Liberty*, he writes:

This, then, is the appropriate region of human liberty. It comprises, first, the inward domain of consciousness; demanding liberty of conscience, in the most comprehensive sense; liberty of thought and feeling; absolute freedom of opinion and sentiment on all subjects, practical or speculative, scientific, moral or theological. [...] Secondly, the principle requires liberty of tastes and pursuits; of framing the plan of our life to suit our own character (1901, p.22).

It is on this basis that he famously asserts: '[t]he only freedom which deserves the name, is that of pursuing our own good in our own way, so long as we do not attempt to deprive others of theirs, or impede their efforts to obtain it' (p.23). What derives from this in relation to the problem of balancing proper governance with tyrannical suppression is illuminating. Mill states:

society is not founded on a contract, and though no good purpose is answered by inventing a contract in order to deduce social obligation from it, every one who receives the protection of society owes a return for the benefit, and the fact of living in society renders it indispensable that each should be bound to observe a certain line of conduct towards the rest (p.141).

Yet while such obligations stand, they cannot be brought as a means by which to violate the principle above. He elaborates: '[t]his conduct consists, first, in not injuring the interests of one another; or rather certain interests, which, either by express legal provision or by tacit understanding, ought to be considered as rights' (p.141). In so doing, what Mill does that is so essential here is not to cast the sovereign as executor of the will of the subject but rather grounds the role of society and the state as one concerned with the protection of the *rights* of the subject.

In so doing he tells us far more besides. The very object of *On Liberty*, Mill states, is:

to assert one very simple principle, as entitled to govern absolutely the dealings of society with the individual in the way of compulsion and control, whether the means be used be physical force in the form of legal penalties, or the moral coercion of public opinion. That principle is, that the sole end for which mankind are warranted, individually

or collectively, in interfering with the liberty of action of any of their number, is self-protection. That the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilised community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others. (p.17)

This assertion, known famously as *The Harm Principle*, gives us a very clear idea of how we might frame a conception of violence that is able to include all that is good about violence as harm infliction, whilst not at the same time being overly inclusive. Applied to the difficulty of separating the rule of law, say, from latent violence the harm principle gives us some guidance for differentiation. If we can demonstrate that the threat of penalty from the law – living under the knowledge that the law may punish you – can be deemed to be *harmful* then a case can be made that one lives subject to some latent violence, whereas if the knowledge that if I kill my neighbour, say, I will be arrested and almost certainly imprisoned is not something that we can reasonably deem “harmful” then it may therefore be concluded that I am not subject to latent violence.

The point benefits from being more explicitly situated. Suppose I live in a genuinely democratic state, which affords all citizens full suffrage, has a rigorous justice system and a morally upstanding law enforcement. This legal system upholds all articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), and as such entirely disavows torture, arbitrary reprisals, punishment without fair trial, cruel and unusual punishment and so on. Imagine also, for the sake of argument, that the state adheres to the model envisaged by Mill. In other words, it allows citizens freedom of pursuits, activities and expressions of their choosing provided they remain within the bounds set by the Harm Principle.

Now, imagine that I consistently and publicly criticise certain practises of the state, both through writing and the organisation of non-violent protest. The state, being as just described, does not imprison or penalise me in any way provided I cause no harm to my fellow citizens or agents of the law or government itself. However, I remain fully aware that should I transgress the bounds of the Harm Principle I will be punished according to the law. In this scenario it makes sense to say that I am not deprived of pursuing my own good in my own way, to paraphrase Mill, given that I am permitted to express my objections as passionately and openly as I like. It also makes sense to suppose that given the character of this particular state, I am neither fearful and nor is it likely that they may change their

attitude towards me suddenly and without warning out of irritation or some underhand motive. Accordingly I do not, realistically speaking, live subject to any undue threat; the state and I may not agree, and may even actively dislike each other, but I am not in their dominion – there are no shrouded intentions, threats hanging in the air and so on – and so while there is still some rule of law of which I am aware, there is no latent violence that could meaningfully be attributed.

Considered like this the Harm Principle provides us with some conceptual parameters to the idea of violence as infliction, latent violence most particularly. In this sense the problem of over-inclusion does not appear to be overly problematic for violence so conceived. More importantly it and the related discussion above alights upon an especially remarkable conceptual parallel which somewhat extraordinarily has not to my knowledge been remarked upon before. In the discussion of *On Liberty*, Mill's emphasis on the "inward domain of conscience" bears in part a striking resemblance to Arendt's emphasis on arbitrariness and coercion as elemental parts of violence (albeit somatically conceived). In each the concern as noted appears to be with forces that in some sense negate some fundamental feature of sovereignty on the party affected; forces that, in essence, contravene the personhood of those concerned. In this sense the present discussion of violence understood as infliction opposed to infraction directly parallels the classical discussion of liberty, wherein the demarcation between Negative and Republican conceptions mirrors nearly exactly that between violence somatically and non-somatically conceived. In examining this we come, I believe, to the crux of what "violence" most fundamentally means.

4.

Violence Qua Liberty

I.

Section 4 pauses momentarily from discussing the three basic categories I have drawn out in turn, but it does so for two reasons. First, because once the conceptual parallel between non-somatic violence

and Republican Liberty is understood we will be better placed to philosophically assess the significance and drawbacks of the third category, namely *Structural Violence*. Second, because understanding the motivating thought behind a Republican conception of liberty, as opposed to a Negative or Positive understanding, and acknowledging its equivalence to that contained within conceptions of latent violence, psychological violence and the condition of living under the dominion of either will hopefully add to the overarching claim that a purely somatic understanding of violence is deeply impoverished. The discussion here will also, in this sense, serve to ground the argument I set out in Sc.6 regarding how violence might most coherently be conceptually encapsulated following from the discussion featured in the previous sections.

To begin, consider the brief etymological discussion that took place in the introduction – most significantly, the inclusion of ‘the unjust or unlawful display of force’ in *Collins English Dictionary* (1990, p.967) and the inclusion in *Harper’s Latin Dictionary* of *violare*: ‘to treat with violence (corporeally and more frequently) to injure, dishonor, outrage, violate’ (1891. p.2009). Consider also Dr. Brophy’s powerful analysis of “*fear under the shadow of conflict*”, in which the sense of threat was such that children who, even if unharmed physically, exhibited symptoms such as speech impediments, arrested educational development and incontinence on account of sheer personal terror and previous trauma. In reminding ourselves of the above at this stage, we might consider too the relevance of Mill’s first condition of liberty noted in the previous section; namely ‘the inward domain of consciousness; demanding liberty of conscience, in the most comprehensive sense; liberty of thought and feeling’ (1901, p.22) which, I think indisputably, is not accorded to the children described by Brophy. These strands of thought held in mind, I would draw attention to the following article excavated by Quentin Skinner from the *Pandects*, or *Digest of Roman Law*, compiled under Justinian in AD.530, where the condition of slavery is defined as ‘an institution [...] by which someone is, contrary to nature, subjected to the dominion of someone else’ (p.248). As Skinner points out, the same thought is expressed earlier in history. The understanding implied in the *Pandects* is that ‘your liberty is, as Livy puts it, not to be subject to the power of anyone else.’ (p.249 2002).

This thought, as Skinner suggests, forms the central underpinning of the Republican conception of Liberty. In its simplest articulation it insists ‘that freedom is restricted not only by actual interference [...] but also by the mere knowledge that we are living in dependence on the goodwill of others’ (p.247). As Philip Petit has elaborated, the kind of affronts to liberty understood here go further than merely *actualised* physical infringement and instead may include:

coercion of the body, as in restraint or obstruction; coercion of the will, as in punishment or the threat of punishment; and, to add a category not salient in earlier centuries, manipulation: this is usually covert and may take the form of agenda-fixing, the deceptive or non-rational shaping of people’s beliefs or desires, or the rigging of the consequences of people’s actions. (1999. P.53)

The similarity between these lines from Petit and those we saw in the WHO definition of violence noted at the start of Sc.3 is extraordinary. Where in the above we include coercion of both the body and the will, most saliently *punishment or the threat of punishment*, the WHO definition of violence includes the use of force or power, both *threatened and actual*. Where the above similarly includes manipulation in the form of agenda-fixing and the rigging of consequences, WHO includes actualisations of states of affairs which result in a *higher likelihood* of death, deprivation, maldevelopment and psychological harm.

The parallel with Kant and latent violence discussed in Sc.3.2 is equally worth remarking upon. In the same way Kant details as a necessary condition of peace the removal of the threat of conflict rather than its mere temporary cessation, and sets as a requisite of peace the absence of “secret reservations”; the Republican requires not only the absence of infringement but also counts the threat of infringement *as itself* a violation of one’s liberty and sets as a requisite for liberty not only that one’s liberty is not violated by another but also that no other *has the arbitrary capacity to so violate*. Where for Kant ‘no treaty of peace shall be regarded as valid, if made with the secret reservation of material for future war’ (p.107), the Republican will make the case that

[t]o maintain that our basic rights and liberties are subject to being taken away with impunity is to declare that they do not have the status of rights; it is to say that they are mere licenses or privileges. [...] If the crown is the bearer

of any such prerogatives, this is as much to say that our property and personal liberties are held not 'of right' but merely 'of grace' (Skinner, 2002. p.250).

This cohabiting of conceptual space is intriguing; where Kant's view of peace appears to conceptually elide with latent violence in so far as it remarks upon not only *actualities* (i.e. open hostility) but also *capacities* (i.e. secret reservations) where latent violence acknowledges both *actualities* and *threats*, and therein the actualization of violence contained within threat itself, the Republican account of liberty is based most fundamentally on the view that liberty consists in more than mere non-interference, but also finds its antithesis in the capacity – the *latent possibility* – of some other agent or body holding dominion over agents themselves. Or, it might be simply reformulated: Kant's analysis of peace, the thought underpinning the notion of latent violence and that central to the republican conception of liberty all highlight the need to acknowledge not just *instances* but also *contexts*; all seem inherently to contain some deep-seated normative understanding of *threats hanging in the air*.

Returning to Mill's first domain of liberty and the kinds of profound emotional trauma noted in Dr. Brophy's paper, we should note above all the full force and significance of the Republican thought. When elucidating just this, Skinner remarks that 'if we return to Sallust, and above all Tacitus, we find them offering an agonised analysis of the psychological impact of slipping into a state of subjection to arbitrary power' (p.257). From which it follows that 'in the first place there are many things you are not free to say or do. [...] [Y]ou will need above all to make sure that you avoid saying or doing anything that might be construed by your ruler as an act of emulation or reproach' (p.258). And by which token:

'when a whole nation is inhibited from exercising its highest talents and virtues, these qualities will begin to atrophy and the people will gradually sink into an abject condition of torpor and sluggishness [...] finding [themselves] constrained to agree with [the ruler and] whatever they say and to endorse whatever policies he already wishes to pursue.' (p.258, p.259).

Such concerns Skinner aptly summarises as those of a 'form of psychological self-constraint' (p.258). Such psychological restraint and distress borne from the state of subjugation is, I submit, as a thought conceptually indistinct from that underlining latent and psychological violence. Both resting ultimately upon an intuition somewhere approximate to Mill's concern for the *inward domain of consciousness* –

the shared central concern being for more than mere actualised infringements or infractions, but for something far more normatively substantial. To ground this claim, it is worth observing the equally striking parallel between the surrounding arguments of conception of liberty and those discussed under the lens of violence.

II. *Violence Under Republican Liberty: Rejecting Preference Neutrality*

Skinner notes the fundamental division relevant here:

when Hobbes announces [...] that our liberty consists of nothing more than absence of external impediments to the exercise of our powers, he is attempting at the same time to discredit and supersede a rival and strongly contrasting understanding of [...] liberty (Skinner, p.246. 2002).

This rival understanding is the republican account. In diametric opposition to republicans, Hobbes declares that one's liberty remains unfringed provided that 'those things, which by his strength and wit he is able to do, [he] is not hindered to do what he has a will to. [It consists in] the absence of opposition' (Hobbes. 2008, Ch.21, p.139). The relationship between Hobbes and *threat* has been noted already but should be revisited now. If we momentarily equate violence with liberty – and while they are not synonymous there is some considerable overlap – we can reply the discussion of Hobbes and threats through this lens.

If it is supposed that expressions of Republican liberty show a conceptual alignment with non-somatic notions of violence, then we might make a similar observation regarding purely somatic understandings of violence and Negative conceptions of liberty. Hobbes himself having been cited frequently throughout, a more contemporary Hobbesian account of liberty may be worth remarking upon as a more clearly articulated proxy. Considering the relation between threats and liberty, Hillel Steiner, for example, has invited us to consider the case of an "offer you can't refuse" as conceptually analogous to threats. He remarks:

[o]ffers and threats are [both] interventions, by others, in individuals' practical deliberations. They are intended by their authors to influence how a recipient individual behaves, by altering the extent to which he actually desires to do a particular action of a kind which he is able to do. (Steiner. 1975, p.36)

If the remarking upon “a particular action of a kind one is able to do” seems familiar it may be deliberate. In unmistakably Hobbesian fashion Steiner subscribes to a view of liberty such that ‘[a]n individual is unfree if, and only if, his doing of any action is rendered impossible by the action of another individual. That is, the unfree individual is so because the particular action in question is prevented by another’ (p.33). Steiner then, like Hobbes, is of the view that liberty is a matter of concrete actualisations; Cinderella is unfree only when the step sisters lock her in her room when she may (has the ability to) otherwise go to the ball. She is not made unfree by virtue of the fact that they may, or even will almost certainly, lock her in her room come the day of the ball; she is not made unfree by their willingness and capacity on account of her general state of subjugation to lock her up. The extrapolation of this view informs that of threats and offers – both, Steiner maintains, are merely attempts to influence the desirability of given courses of action over others. He persists that ‘the way in which both offers and threats affect the practical deliberations of their recipients consists in the reversal of the relative desirability of doing a particular action with that of not doing’ (p.40). On this basis of this view he makes the case that threats cannot meaningfully be distinguished from offers. He notes that:

[i]f the intervener is correct in his assessment of the desires of the recipient, and if he has designed his intervention accordingly, he necessarily succeeds in bringing about the intended alteration in the recipient's desire to do the particular action in behalf of which the intervention is made. However, despite this shared characteristic of interventions which are offers and interventions which are threats, few writers [...] contend that the making of an offer constitutes a diminution of the liberty of its recipient; while many of them would insist that a threat does so constitute. (p.36, 37)

To fully grasp the heart of Steiner's point, it is important to understand the *preference neutrality* of freedom as he understands it – that, in other words, the dispositions one has towards a given option or “action of a kind one is able to do” have no bearing on the extent to which one is free to do it. So, the reasoning goes, how Cinderella feels about being locked in her room has no bearing on how unfree she is made by her incarceration; that she may even actively dislike handsome princes, dancing and pumpkins does not make her liberty to attend the ball any less restricted. On this basis Steiner points to

an apparent discontinuity of logic. Namely that just because a threat may make one negatively disposed towards a given option where an offer renders them positively disposed, it does not follow that one should have any more bearing on one's level of freedom than the other. In fact, the point is, both are merely equally irrelevant given that all either does is affect the dispositions, rather than the real *capabilities* of the agent concerned. As Steiner puts it:

since there appears to be no other way that threats can be said to affect personal liberty-other than through their effect on the deliberations of their recipients -there is no reason to believe that, if they do affect it, these effects are different from those of offers. [...] Whereas in the normal course of events it might be the case that 'X wants to do A' or 'X has no obligation to do not-A', the occurrence of an intervention may cause it to be the case that 'X wants to do not-A' or 'X ought to do not-A'. But neither of these latter two statements, nor the fact that they are true as a consequence of another's intervention, entails that 'X is unfree to do A'. They do not imply that 'X doing A' is rendered impossible. It is, of course, not disputed that the truth of the first of these two statements rules out the possibility of 'X doing A eagerly' and that the truth of the second rules out the possibility of 'X doing A justifiably'. But that is another matter. Hence it would appear that neither the making of threats nor that of offers constitutes a diminution of personal liberty. Intervention does not count as prevention. (p.43)

We need only compare this view to the kind of “torpor and sluggishness” envisaged by Sallust and Tacitus to see the starkness of contrast between the two points of view. We can imagine too what Mill, with his emphasis on one's liberty to pursue their own good in their own way, would make of dispositions and preferences.²⁶ The most fundamental point of divergence here is that, to a commentator like Steiner, the kind of psychological self-restraint that is of such central concern to the Republican is simply not relevant to questions surrounding an agent's level of freedom. To Steiner, imposed psychological self-restraint equates merely to disposition and not to abilities, and therefore not to questions of liberty.

The above discussion taken into account, I would make the case that a republican understating of liberty is to the negative account as non-somatic violence is to purely somatic conceptions. The disjunct between the two in each case is based upon the same divergence in how one side grasps the more

²⁶ Steiner takes a very different track and makes the point:

Perhaps the only freedom that matters to me is the freedom to do what I desire to do or believe I ought to do. But it does not follow from this that I can only be free or unfree with regard to those actions which I want or believe I ought to do. For I can equally be free to do actions which I do not want to do. It is not unintelligible – on the contrary, it makes perfect sense – to assert that 'I am free to do A, i.e., am not prevented from doing A, though I have no desire to do so.' Again, it is perfectly intelligible to say that 'I am unfree to do A, and have no desire to do so.' (p.35)

meaningful normative significance of the relevant term – i.e. “liberty” or “violence” – than their opponents. Where for a negative theorist like Steiner liberty is preference neutral, it seems that the somatic violence theorist will equally regard their topic of concern as one in which “dispositions” are not relevant. After all, if Steiner is right, threats affect dispositions, threats do not themselves constitute violence as this would imply acknowledgment of latent violence and therefore dispositions have no bearing on the extent to which one is subject to violence under a somatic understanding.²⁷

On this basis I would like to make something of a strong claim; namely that preference neutrality applied to both liberty and violence is nonsense. If each is understood in its most meaningful and normatively significant way, the idea that the mental dispositions of agents concerned – and therefore threats placed on them, conditions of psychological dominion, subjugation and so on – do not inform the degree to which an agent is subject to each simply does not cohere under the lens of meaningful understandings of either term.

The republican liberal holds an understating of liberty as comparatively enriched as the non-somatic theorist does about violence. In this sense the parallel alignment of conceptual battle ranks remains deeply pertinent even if, as noted earlier, extraordinarily unremarked upon. Of liberty Steiner makes the following assertion: that ‘[t]o ask whether an individual is free to do A, is not to ask a moral question. It is, rather, to ask a factual question the answer to which is logically prior to any moral question about his doing A’ (p.35). In considering it, the salient question becomes what it is that we should take to be “factual questions” of concern. If I understand him correctly, Steiner is hinting here at the division just noted between actualities (in the sense of abilities) and dispositions. But in asking the question as to what is factive in the sense of abilities, Steiner does not seem to consider the possibility that a mental disposition may itself directly render one unable to perform – and thereby “prevented” in Steiner’s lexicon – a given action.

²⁷ I should remark that there is admittedly in this some scope for grey-area cases in which some may wish to be treated “violently” – masochists, for example – and therefore discussion of disposition becomes a little more fraught even under a purely somatic understanding. However this is not, I think, especially relevant here and as will be evident from Sc.6 and Sc.7, will enter into a discussion of violence that does not especially encapsulate the normative significance of the term.

Where Tacitus and Sallust implore us to the seriousness of what is in essence the abject mental dejection that comes with living in a state of dominion, we may turn back to the cases already discussed. In doing so Steiner will find himself committed to the view that a war child who has lost her ability to speak through the sheer terror induced by threat is not, in fact, prevented from speaking; yet prevention is, by Steiner's own lights, a case of obstructing an agent in performing an action that they otherwise have the ability to perform. The claim would maintain that, since threats merely affect dispositions in a deliberative process, this child is not prevented from speaking but merely disposed not to. This, however, makes little sense when we ask the question as to what exactly it is the child is deliberating over and, graver still, whether or not she can realistically be said to have "dispositions" in this regard at all. In the sense meant by Steiner, a disposition in the context of threats and offers affects how one is disposed – what preferences one has – towards available courses of action. However, the point is that it would be a serious misunderstanding to say that the war child *chooses* not to speak – *choosing* being a case of selection from a range of possibilities. Rather she has been rendered *unable* to speak. The point to grasp is that threats are not – or not solely – mere factors for consideration amongst a series of matters-of-fact in some cost-benefit-analysis of appropriate action.

In this we should refer back to a previously noted conceptual intricacy, wherein *threats of* may at least partially be distinct from *to threaten*. Perhaps the point would be made that the girl is not affected by being *threatened* but rather by living under the *threat of*, and therefore any critique surrounding the disposition is misplaced. However this somewhat misses the point. For one thing, she is presumably bombarded by a combatant of some type for some given reason – or motivation – and this must have some ends in mind; i.e. winning the war, driving out remaining civilians through destruction or terror, and so on. So while it is true that war children live under *threats of*, in this case at least *threats of* are very directly imposed in a way that makes being *threatening* intrinsic to this particular situation. For another – and this point shall be continued in the next section – *threats of* can have just as much of a bearing in terms of their ability to incentivise, deter or render one unable as *being threatened*.

For now the essential point remains that preference neutrality does not cohere in this context. Imagine another more basic scenario. Suppose that, upon being threatened by a bully you become so frightened

and upset that you can no longer get up and go to work. As Steiner's position has it, you are not prevented from going to work but merely disposed not to, but his seems counterintuitive when we consider the reality of the situation. Someone in this situation will of course have other dispositions or incentives to certain actions; they will be disposed, in this sense, to go out to work to financially provide for themselves and their loved ones, they may be disposed to have a self-reliant and fulfilling life, personal autonomy and so on. Such dispositions naturally stand in opposition to those brought on by the threats of the bully, and so presumably should go some way to make you more inclined to get up and go to work regardless. This, however, is simply not how such scenarios play-out in reality. It may be, in fact, that even in full acknowledgment of these competing dispositions or motivations – and even full acknowledgment that they are the stronger dispositions – one is still unable to get up and go to work on account of the bully. Suppose that the bully has, through their actions, brought about a medically recognised anxiety condition of some kind. On Steiner's characterisation of the situation, we would not say that you were prevented from going about your business as normal, but merely disinclined to. This seems unsatisfactory to the point of perverse.

We should consider, for example, that many symptoms of anxiety conditions are involuntary. The NHS lists symptoms of panic-attack amongst those of agoraphobia: 'If someone with agoraphobia finds themselves in a stressful situation, they'll usually experience the symptoms of a panic attack, such as: rapid heartbeat, rapid breathing (hyperventilation), feeling hot and sweaty, feeling sick' (www.nhs.uk/conditions/agoraphobia, as of November, 2018). If the anxiety caused by the threats of the bully are merely dispositions as opposed to preventions, then presumably Steiner must claim that someone in this situation is not prevented from remaining composed, but simply discouraged from it.

What such a view fails to consider however, is a) that threats are brought to bear upon the threatened party in far more insidious ways than mere dispositions incentivising certain actions over others, and may have consequences that persist long after the result desired by the bully, in this case, has been actuated; the essential point being that threats may *themselves* have a preventative quality. And equally b) it is far from self-evident that threats are always meted-out or (in the case of *threats of*) brought to bear merely with the intention of precuring some given course of action or inaction on the part of the

threatened party. In other words, that P threatened Q X-wise with the hope of procuring action or inaction R. This is an overly linear understanding which does not fully recognise what a threat meaningfully entails. The torpor and sluggishness described by Tacitus and Sallust comes from the latent threat posed by the sovereign yet is not necessarily the specific goal he has in mind in the sense of influencing linear deliberations between competing dispositions. Rather than being some specific incentive or deterrence towards some given end, the threat that is entailed by the very existence of the sovereign is in fact something more deeply embedded into the nature of the wider situation. Threats here are, as articulated by the idea of latent violence, something which consist not merely in *instances* but may also exist in embedded *contexts*. Moreover, and in this sense, threats may be preventative – and therefore infringements of liberty – in just the same way that latent violence is itself violent. Thus here, while they may at times be *partially* distinguishable, it is not always possible to adequately set apart *threats of* from *to threaten*.

III. Conclusion

The discussion above now brings us to an interesting point that requires some attention. In this section I have 1) tried to demonstrate a conceptual alignment between republican view of liberty and non-somatic views of violence as they have been discussed so far. That, in other words, republicanism is – and is on the same grounds – to liberty as non-somatic views of violence are to violence. In this I have 2) made the case that the view that liberty is preference neutral is ultimately impoverished and is so on the same account that the purely somatic view of violence finds itself equally inadequate. In making this point I have tried to stress that while there is in some instances something natural in distinguishing between *threats of* and *to threaten*, the two are in no way disjunctive and any clear separation may not always be either possible or, more importantly, conceptually accurate. This is because attempting to separate the two overlooks the serious and insidious nature of the effects of “threat” meaningfully understood. This, however, hints upon an interesting point of concern. The acknowledgment of the idea

of threat and violence embedded in a *context* prompts a questions regarding how exactly we should understand or even identify violent and subjugating forces that may not always be easily singled-out or traceable to specific or uniquely agential forces. Here we reach a certain limitation faced by violence as infliction; namely what we do when no clear-cut or singular inflictor can be clearly identified. In this we must turn to the last of the three basic categories: *Structural Violence*.

5.

Structural Violence

I.

In addition to its conceptual relevance to this paper and the discussion so far, there are two other very striking features of structural violence. First, that despite being a concept that could be extraordinarily useful to moral and political philosophy it has, to my knowledge, never been taken up in earnest within philosophical writing. This is made odder still by the direct historical co-existence of writing on structural violence and writings in philosophy that might benefit most from co-opting the term. The social scientist Johan Galtung makes the biggest grasp for the concept in 1969, just two years before Rawls publishes *A Theory of Justice* concerning the just ordering of society (arguably the biggest structure of them all) in 1971. James Gillian writes *Violence – Our Deadly Epidemic and its Causes* in 1996 and *Violence – Reflections on a Western Epidemic* in 2000, with Paul Farmer writing the moving essay *On Suffering and Structural Violence: A View from Below* in 1996, while Pogge first publishes *World Poverty and Human Rights* in 2002, *Severe Poverty as a Human Right Violation* in 2003 and *Politics as Usual* in 2010, with Amartya Sen's *The Idea of Justice* publishing in 2008 and Martha Nussbaum's *Sex and Social Justice* in 1999.

It is hard to say whether this is deliberate or merely a failure of academic crosspollination.²⁸ However, if it is the former it may be on account of the second most striking feature of structural violence. Namely that in spite of being a profoundly intuitive and powerful thought, it has often been expressed somewhat poorly in theoretical terms. In the case of Galtung, for example, much of the paper with which he effectively coins the use of the terms “structural violence” – as shall be discussed momentarily – is fraught with what are loose and often unclear claims when assessed philosophically. This is deeply frustrating in so far as it goes some way to nullify the otherwise very convincing project that Galtung undertakes. It also leaves open serious issues that face structural violence as it stands, and which must be remedied if it is to be retained as a valid idea.

The aim of this section is 1) to introduce structural violence as a concept and critically evaluate it as put forward by Galtung, who is widely credited as the originator of the term.²⁹ 2) To show how the thought may be better expressed as a conception of violence with a view to its being co-opted into a rounded understanding of violence and in so doing 3) illustrate how remarkably compatible it is with existing philosophical discourse, most notably those regarding Human Rights and social justice.

II. *The Machinery of Oppression*

Structural violence is perhaps best approached via Paul Farmer’s observation that:

[a]lmost all of us would agree that premature and painful illness, torture, and rape constitute extreme suffering. Most of us would also agree that insidious assaults on dignity, such as institutionalized racism and sexism, also cause great and unjust injury. (2009, p.11)

²⁸ Although there does appear to be general acknowledgment of the value of structural violence as a concept by philosophers, though far less so in philosophical writing. Amartya Sen provides the foreword to Paul Farmer’s *Pathologies of Powers* in 2004, four years before his own article *Violence, Indentity and Poverty*. Even in that work, however, violence is not viewed as we are viewing it here. Sen discusses violence as a cause of poverty at length, without appearing to note the existence of avoidable poverty as *itself* violent.

²⁹ Galtung is, to my knowledge, the earliest proponent of the concept. He is also widely regarded as the founder of the academic discipline *Peace Studies*.

This poses the question: “[a]re certain ‘event’ assaults, such as torture or rape, more likely to lead to late sequelae than are sustained and insidious suffering, such as the pain born of deep poverty or of racism?” (continuing, p.11). This question here is not to ask whether inflictions of one kind are worse than the other but is intended as one about the very nature of inflictors of (and therefore inflicted) suffering. This marks the point of divergence between violence understood as *infliction* as we have discussed them so far, and ideas of *structural violence*. As it has been understood so far, violence as infliction does not limit the scope of violence to include purely somatic infractions but *is* limited to considering violence only in cases where some clear inflictor – whether an agent or body of agents – can be identified. Structural violence, however, goes further in its departure from the kind of Pinkerian understanding discussed in Sc.2 to include cases where no apparent – or no *clearly apparent* – agential inflictor can be identified.

As Farmer observes, questions of structural violence are most fundamentally those regarding:

mechanisms through which large-scale social forces crystallize into the sharp, hard surfaces of individual suffering. Such suffering is structured by historically given (and often economically driven) processes and forces that conspire – whether through routine, ritual, or, as is more commonly the case, these hard surfaces – to constrain agency. For many [victims] life choices are structured by racism, sexism, political violence, and grinding poverty. (p.12, 13).

Writing elsewhere he summarises: ‘the concept of structural violence is intended to inform the study of the social machinery of oppression’ and structural violence is best understood, then, simply as ‘violence exerted systemically’ (both 2004, p.307). In this we might recall the point made by Pinker noted in the introduction, namely that the decline of violence has seen the relegation of violence “to the socioeconomic margins”. While for Pinker this demonstrates a decline, from the point of view of structural violence it is exactly the point of greatest concern: that certain social groups should have a strikingly higher likelihood of exposure to actuated violence purely on account of their position in society. This is effectively the same idea noted in the introduction to this paper, namely Pinker does not entertain the possibility that, rather than declining, violence may merely have shifted shape, and become a more insidious and less linear force.

While the likes of Farmer – an anthropologist and, more significantly, a practising doctor – employ the concept at length, it is set-out and expounded in its most theoretically detailed form by Johan Galtung. Rather than merely applying the concept, Galtung provides a technical characterisation of violence under the lens of structure. It is manifest at its most fundamental level in:

the cause of the difference between the potential and the actual, between what could have been and what is. [As] that which increases the difference between the potential and the actual, and that which impedes the decrease of that distance. Thus, if a person died from tuberculosis in the eighteenth century it would be hard to conceive of this as violence since it might have been unavoidable, but if he dies from it today, despite all the medical resources in the world, then violence is present according to our definition. (1969. P.168)

From this it is perhaps best to understand the kind of agential oppression referred to by Farmer in terms of *realizability*; thus structural violence, at least in large part, refers to structural inequalities or injustices which render certain options, courses of actions or experiences simply out of one's reach. This idea of realizability offers a direct conceptual parallel with the discussion of liberty in the previous section. Where in Sc.4 we spoke of the rendering of inabilities through the mere capacities or threats of others – through arbitrary *domination* – the theorist of structural violence will concern themselves with prospects rendered *unrealizable* by structurally engrained forces of oppression. In essence, the concern in both is with forces that ultimately engender some kind of suffering through dominion, and in dominion something approximate *constraint of the will*. Just as a republican will draw attention to the dominion comes with living subject to the will or mercy of another, structural violence concerns itself with those living subject to the mercy of societal and structural mechanisms.

This is straightforward when put like this, but when fully thought out the idea is a complex one in so far as it requires many moving parts to be usefully understood. To fully articulate his formulation of the concept – as a central element of his *typology of violence* – Galtung sets out six distinctions, or “dimensions”, of violence³⁰. While in Galtung's own formulation these are at times deeply problematic – as shall be addressed in part IV of this section – they are pertinent here in so far as they single out

³⁰ For the sake of clarity, I will list these distinction in turn before going on to critique certain features of Galtung's position.

nearly exactly some of the conceptual keystones of the discussion so far, relying explicitly on *latent*, *psychological* and *somatic* violence while employing them to a different end. The discussion as a whole is also significant in that it covers some of the conceptual terrain already discussed as well as some that remains to be discussed.

III. Galtung's Dimensions of Violence

The first distinction Galtung makes is that between 'physical and psychological violence [...] between violence that works on the body, and violence that works on the soul; where the latter would include lies, brainwashing, indoctrination of various kinds, threats, etc.' (p.169). This is essentially the same distinction we have noted throughout between somatic and non-somatic views of violence. Here the notion of "violence that works on the soul" bears a remarkable resemblance to both the kinds of mental anguish noted in the previous discussion of psychological violence and the constraint of autonomous will noted in the discussion of both Mill and republican liberty.

Second, he distinguishes between *positive* and *negative* approaches to influence: '[a] person can be influenced not only by punishing him when he does what the influencer considers wrong, but also by rewarding him when he does what the influencer considers right' (p.170). This has its own striking resemblance to a previous discussion, in so far as what Galtung terms a *positive* influence may be conflated with an offer just as what he terms a *negative* mode of influence might be conflated with a threat. The relevance of this is that, because Galtung aligns violence with prevention of realization, he too stands in diametric opposition to the view of threat espoused by Steiner and inherent in purely somatic views of violence such. In other words, because Galtung finds it 'useful to conceive of violence in terms of influence' (p.169) he, like Steiner, is tied to the view that threats and offers may indeed be largely indistinct from one another in terms of their operations on an agent, but in this will regard each as having equal potential to be deeply violent rather than equally admissible.

This forms the basis for a third distinction, which asks ‘whether or not we can talk about violence when no physical or biological object is hurt’ (p.170). This could easily be misinterpreted; the question is not whether or not there can be violence where no object is hurt in the sense that nothing physically or non-physically “bad” happens to anyone, but rather whether or not threats or threatening behaviour will count as violent. Galtung answers this in the affirmative, in large part because of his emphasis on influence in general. If violence is a case of detrimental influence on the potential realizations of agents, and a psychological mode of violence has been acknowledged, then it would be very odd if threats were not counted amongst that which has a detrimental influence on an agent’s realizations given that, as related to distinction two, a threat plays upon an agent in much the same way as any other form of psychological deterrent, or conversely, incentives with the aim of deterring. In this sense ‘there may not be violence in the sense that anyone is hit or hurt, but there is nevertheless a threat of physical violence and indirect threat of mental violence that may even be characterized as some type of psychological violence since it constrains human action’ (p.170).

The fourth distinction then turns to the wider question posed by the above, and the most fundamentally relevant question here regarding the nature of inflicting forces. The point consists in the question as to ‘whether or not there is a subject (person) who acts [...] can we talk about violence when nobody is committing direct violence’ (p.170). This distinction Galtung regards as the single most important in his characterization of structural violence. It is summarised that:

we shall refer to the type of violence where there is an actor that commits the violence as personal or direct, and to violence where there is no such actor as structural or indirect. In both cases individuals may be killed or mutilated, hit or hurt in both senses of these words, and manipulated by means of stick and carrot strategies. But whereas in the first case these consequences can be traced back to concrete persons or actors, in the second case this is no longer meaningful. [...] The violence [here] is built into the structure and shows up as unequal power and consequently life chances. (p.171)

Understanding this point is critical to a rounded and accurate grasp of Galtung’s position and, more importantly, structural violence in general. What the above embodies is the delineation of Galtung’s coinage of *structural violence* from mere *personal* or *direct violence*. This also marks the greatest point of separation between structural violence and violence as infliction. So far it has been accepted that

violence as infliction is physical or non-physical violence that takes place between agents and/or bodies of agents. In this sense it refers, in Galtung's lexicon, to *personal* or *direct violence*. Even latent violence understood through violence as infliction has been discussed in only so far as it stems from some threat with an identifiable author. In Kant's case, for example, the focus was on standing armies and the other cases mentioned in Sc.2 – sectarian conflicts, civil wars, emotional abuse via latent violence and so on – have all equally been largely attributable to given parties in a way distinct from how they may be in the case of structural violence. The thought Galtung singles out here – and structural violence singles out in general – differs from that encountered previously in that it acknowledges certain states of affairs as *violent* even when no clear or singular inflictor can, or can easily, be identified.

In other words, it acknowledges as violent states of affairs which had they been brought about by a clear inflicting party would be termed violent under violence as infliction but in which an inflictor may aggregate or hard to clearly identify. In this we can turn back to the examples of “racism, sexism, political violence, and grinding poverty” noted by above by Farmer. In a deeply racist society, the U.S.A. for example, it may be hard to trace the violence inflicted upon Black or Hispanic Americans when it is considered generally (as opposed to individual instances) back to specific inflicting parties and yet the violence inflicted on them is no different in real terms from how it would be if this were not the case. Rather than being some instance actuated by some inflicting force, the violence they suffer simply is merely the norm of the socio-political and economic structure which they inhabit. As Galtung himself puts it: ‘[p]ersonal violence represents change and dynamism – not only ripples on waves, but waves on otherwise tranquil waters. Structural violence is silent, it does not show – it is essentially static, it *is* the tranquil waters’ (p.173). So where in Sc.3 the idea of *fear under the shadow of conflict* was of paramount importance, here in relation to structural violence we might say that Black and Hispanic Americans are subject to violence on account of their *fear* or *suppression under the shadow of racism*.

As a kind of sub-distinction of the above Galtung then notes a fifth distinction, ‘between violence that is *intended* or *unintended*’ (p.171). Which comes to be of significance first, ‘when *guilt* is to be decided, since the concept of guilt has been tied more to *intention*, both in Judaeo-Christian ethics and in Roman

jurisprudence, than to *consequence* (whereas the present definition of violence is entirely located on the consequence side)' (p.171, 172). And, secondly, because this connection 'brings into focus a bias present in so much thinking about violence, peace, and related concepts: ethical systems directed against *intended* violence will easily fail to capture structural violence in their nets – and may hence be catching the small fry and letting the big fish loose' (continuing p.172). In essence this captures part of the same concern present in distinction four. It would be a great weakness on the part of structural violence if, for example, the situation of the Americans that live under the shadow of racism was not deemed violence merely because some case could be made that because certain features of the market, employment and prevailing attitudes are merely "unintentional" facts of the matter, no violence is present.

Finally, Galtung also notes, as his sixth distinction, 'the traditional distinction between two levels of violence, the *manifest* and the *latent*' (p.172). As he understands it "[m]anifest violence, whether personal or structural, is observable; although not directly since the theoretical entity of 'potential realization' also enters the picture. Latent violence is something which is not there, yet might easily come about" (continuing p.172). That Galtung retains this distinction, and that it is central to structural violence in general, seems natural when it is considered how the idea of structural violence would look without it. It would be problematic if a concept that acknowledged violence built into societal and political structures and mechanisms, and the significant role threat plays therein, only recognised what Galtung terms "manifest" violence. In Galtung's particular formulation this is because 'violence by definition is the cause of the difference (or of maintaining the non-decrease) between actual and potential realization, increased violence may come about by increases in the potential as well as by decreases in the actual levels' (p.172). It would be somewhat contradictory if a given definition of violence incorporated *potentialities* alongside *actualities* while at the same time ignoring latent, in favour of only *manifest*, violence. If we look back to our previous discussion, threat understood under the lens of latent violence is, after all, a force that renders certain possibilities that might otherwise have been open to an agent unavailable; the war children living under the shadow of conflict may be unhurt

but their wellbeing is undoubtedly in an infinitely worse state (the actual) than it would have been otherwise (the potential).

IV. *Shortcomings*

Structural violence as Galtung characterises it and the six dimensions drawn-out briefly above are worth remarking upon because, on the one hand, they solidify much of the conceptual terrain already discussed into a formal conception of structural violence. Most strikingly, they alight upon many of the same concerns that would be present in a rounded conception of violence as infliction while at the same time incorporating something even further removed from violence merely as infraction, and more diverse still than violence as infliction. On the other, while alone they may be rather persuasive, Galtung's composition as a whole is in fact somewhat problematic. This may in large part be because of how he defines violence in general. His stated point of departure, that 'violence is present when human beings are being influenced so that their actual somatic and mental realizations are below their potential realizations' (p.168), is on the face of it very convincing. In fact, it captures some of the inherent link between violence and liberty discussed in the previous section. However, it may run the risk of being worryingly over-inclusive meaning that it will be hard to agree that it conveys the full normative significance of violence.

Galtung's stated condition of avoidability admittedly helps in some way to illuminate the difference between those things which are violent and those things which are simply unhappy occurrences. In his example, the man who dies of TB because there is no known cure or treatment is victim to what we might think of as a deeply unhappy circumstance, namely that he has an incurable disease.³¹ Yet he would have been a victim of *structural violence* had he died in the present day, for example, in which adequate treatment could have been provided or, more to the point, *would* have been provided had he occupied a different societal position. Yet what also seems to follow from this is that *any* negative

³¹ While it is retained here for continuity, Galtung's use of this example seems odd given that the man's death may not have been avoidable once the disease had been contracted, but may very well have been – as was often the case in the 19th Century – avoided had he been furnished with better living and working conditions.

outcome (call this condition *a*) where there was potential of a better one and could have otherwise been avoidable (call this condition *b*) will be classed as violent. However, these criteria could be satisfied in cases that it would seem inappropriate to regard as violent. Below is an example.

Toddler, unbeknown to Mummy who is distracted with Big Sister, leaves Toy Car at the top of the stairs. Daddy, who is unobservant, comes along the landing, steps on Toy Car and hurtles down the staircase. Now, the fact that Daddy has a bump on his head is clearly negative, since it is an actuality which is worse than a realizable potentiality (not having bumped his head), therefore it satisfies condition (a). It was also avoidable since 1) Mummy could have not been distracted, especially if 2) Big Sister hadn't spilt the juice, let's say. Equally 3) Daddy could have paid more attention, and of course 4) Toddler could plausibly (though debatably) have chosen to put his car somewhere more sensible. Thus condition (b) is also satisfied. But it seems counterintuitive to say that this was a case of violence, even if it would only amount to "indirect violence" under Galtung's account. It also seems undesirable. On the one hand, it would render "violence" a rather generic and unforceful term that simply applies to everything from genocide and dictatorship to avoidable bumps and grazes. After all, the aim here is to come to a view of violence that conveys the full normative significance of the term. For another, it makes perfectly excusable minor accidents "violent" and thereby leaves us with little meaningful way of delineating very serious cases from entirely innocuous ones.

Nor is this problem confined merely to manifest physical violence; it is equally applicable to psychological violence. Accepting the same conditions (a) and (b) we can imagine an equivalent case. Daddy is listening to the cricket in the next room. Earlier in the day Mummy had teased Big Sister that she mustn't sneeze too loudly during the cricket or Daddy will be angry. Big Sister sneezes just at the point that Daddy's favourite team loses a vital wicket, at which point Daddy yells "you moron!" at the radio. Big sister, who is of an earnest disposition and mistook Mummy's earlier teasing for a sincere warning, assumes Daddy was yelling at her and, understandably, burst into tears. Big Sister is so fond of Daddy that her anguish is severe. The fact that she is so aggrieved is clearly very bad since it is an actual which is considerably worse than the potential, thus condition (a) is satisfied. Undoubtedly it was also avoidable: 1) Mummy could not have teased her, even if she meant no harm, 2) Daddy could have

shown a little more restraint in the face of calamitous batting collapse, though he too meant no harm, and 3) Big Sister could have (though arguably, in the case of children) taken Mummy a little less literally. Thus condition (b) is satisfied.

It seems equally unsatisfactory to regard this as psychologically violent, especially given that it was ultimately caused by misapprehension on the part of the victim who, had she understood the situation more clearly, may well have found it very amusing and therefore perhaps the antithesis of anything violent. It may even be supposed that, in line with such a definition of violence, Mummy and Daddy could also be said to have suffered psychological violence each at the hands of the other, given their negative and avoidable anguish at having caused such distress to Big Sister. Mummy at the hands of Daddy in that if he had not yelled at the radio her teasing would have not caused any problem, and Daddy at the hands of Mummy because had she not teased Big Sister, Big Sister would not have mistaken Daddy's outburst for being directed at her.

While these examples represent fairly small-scale traumas, the problem contained within them remains a pertinent one; such cases capture how misappropriated violence may become as a term when conceived in the way Galtung invites. The point being that, while it ought most meaningfully to be applied to cases of serious harm, trauma and injustice it can equally capture perfectly innocent cases in the net of "violence". The latter case equally highlights the similarly problematic potential for psychological violence by misapprehension. At the heart of this is a concern regarding what in many ways seems to be intuitive about violence really refers to. What Galtung's characterisation of violence fails to account for, despite his very appealing dimensions of violence and their extraordinary compatibility with violence as harm infliction, is that violence seems to embody something more significant than mere detriments and upsets. It seems, in this sense, to refer to some more meaningful object.

The problem is not unique to Galtung. It could just as easily be applied to the concept of structural violence in general. It would, after all, be a hard to see how a condition of avoidability alone would be enough to determine whether or not violence could meaningfully be diagnosed. The central frustration in this is that while structural violence does certainly seem to capture something that

intuitively in line with a meaningful conception of what violence really means, it does not have a firm enough conceptual footing to always be usefully or convincingly employed. This being the case, we are left with the choice of either discarding it altogether and settling for an understanding of violence merely as harm infliction, or significantly revising it in order to arrive at something which captures what is good about structural violence while ensuring against what is not. For the remainder of this section, I am going to make the case for why structural violence ought to be retained under a normatively significant understanding of violence, both on account of the compelling nature of the thought it embodies but also its relevance to moral and political philosophy on that account.

V. The Moral Force of Structural Violence

Principle among the reasons why structural violence is so worth retaining is this: that any understanding of violence as harm infliction will, in fact, be impoverished if it fails to include structural violence. This is because in leaving out concern over structural violence, understandings of violence as harm infliction will be in the unsatisfactory position of ignoring forms of violence that, were they borne out of any other state of affairs, would be of the highest concern. In this sense, it is a shortcoming of violence as infliction that it does not include structural violence on an apparently arbitrary reckoning.

To see why, it is worth taking a step back and considering more broadly the essential thought that structural violence really entails and just how in line it is with those that underpin violence as infliction. While he does not refer to it in such terms, speaking in 2014 the British social activist Harry Leslie Smith invokes perhaps the clearest articulation of what structural violence really refers to and why it matters. Smith gives a recollection from his childhood in Barnsley, Yorkshire, in the 1920s:

I still remember hearing, while I played as a child on my front step, the anguished cries that floated from a nearby neighbour's window. They were the screams from a woman dying from cancer, who couldn't afford morphine to ease her passage from this life. No one in our community was safe from poor health, sickness and disease. [...] Tuberculosis tortured my sister and left her an invalid that had to be restrained with ropes tied around her bed. My

parents did everything did everything within their power to keep Marion alive and comfortable, but they just didn't have to do so to get her the best clinics, find her the best doctors or the right medicines. Instead, she wasted away before our eyes until my mother could no longer handle her care and she was dispatched to the workhouse infirmary, where she died at the age of ten. Mum and Dad couldn't afford to bury their darling daughter, so like the rest of our countries indigent she was dumped nameless into a pauper's pit. (Speech to Labour Party Conference, September 2014).

Smith's memories are archetypal of the what structural violence aims to capture as a thought and why it is so important, as well as the atrocities which would be left out of other narrower accounts. We can remind ourselves of the central delineation: 'violence with a clear subject-object relation is manifest because it is visible as action [whereas] violence without this relation is structural, built into structure. (Galtung, p.171). Here, given that the suffering described is on account of mere poverty, it would indeed be hard to trace the harm inflicted back to some *specific* inflicting party in any meaningful way. Instead it is caused by wider facts of the matter – or structural *mechanisms*, as Farmer calls them. As Smith himself puts it: 'poor mum and dad; no matter how hard they tried to protect me and my sisters, the cards were stacked against them' (2014). This last phrase especially encapsulates the central thread that lies at the heart of structural violence; namely that things should be effectively rigged against certain agents or groups of agents such that they are subject to the "hard surfaces of individual suffering" we saw mentioned by Farmer.

In this regard it is worth considering exactly what types of suffering are taking place in the kind of tragic scenario described by Smith. Both somatic and psychological harm, as well as, on inspection, latent violence are all present, and are in such a way that the situation would be considered *violent* under violence as infliction if only they originated from something more concrete than a structural mechanism or, in other words, some feature *built into the character of the situation*.

Somatic harm is present for the woman in agony without morphine in so far as she is in grave physical pain. Yet it follows that were she in this condition and someone was, while in possession of morphine, refusing to give it to her – perhaps as some form of punishment, torture or just wilful cruelty – then she would undoubtedly be a victim of somatic violence. Psychological harm is present in numerous

respects; it is suffered by the Smith parents because they are 1) not able to secure adequate medical care for their children, subsequently 2) to care for them when they are sick and 3) perhaps cruellest of all, are unable to even afford an appropriate burial for their daughter once she has died. Just as in the case of the woman without morphine, if we were to imagine here that they suffered this unhappiness on account of being imprisoned, for example, or as part of some sort of conspiracy against them, then a very strong case may be made that they are the victims of psychological violence.³²

Even latent violence – in fact, especially latent violence – is in many ways embodied in the kind of situation Smith describes. As he puts it: ‘no one in our community was safe from poor health, sickness and disease [...] rampant poverty and no health care were the norm for the Britain of my youth’ (2014). The ever-present threat of sickness and death Smith recalls would conform in every way to the idea of latent violence if only it could be traced to more concrete parties such as the warring factions noted earlier. The anguish and desperation of Smith’s parents, for example, in the knowledge that, even while their children are presently healthy, they *may* become untreatably sick as a result of (and sustained by) extreme poverty is not so far removed from the child who while not under bombardment at a given moment may come under it at any time. Equally, if we infer a little further from Smith’s speech, we might suppose that while not mortally sick himself many of his classmates may be, as may their families, siblings, friends and so on. In this sense too his situation is not so far removed from that of the war child; just as she lives with violence hanging in the air, and in such a way as to *itself* qualify as violent in a non-somatic sense, the same may just as easily be said of Smith and his neighbours.

The overriding problem is that the above scenario seems to embody everything that would constitute a state of violence under an infliction-based understanding if only it were brought about by some more clearly distinguishable inflicting force. However, because it is more deeply engrained into the character of the situation such that no clear inflictor can easily be identified it will not be considered violent. This engenders something of an arbitrary distinction: if you are subjected to some specific type of suffering by a discernible party then it is violent, whereas if you suffer the same (or very similar) suffering

³² Such atrocities under imprisonment are not after all fictional, as consideration of events of the 20th Century attests.

because it is an inherent feature of the society in which you live it is not. So, if one racial group, for example, has suffering inflicted upon them by another then we call it violent, yet when the same suffering is inflicted instead via society at large in the form of social discrimination, unequal access to medical and education resources, social exclusion and so on it is not considered violent even though the suffering itself is the same.

This an intuitively unsatisfactory conclusion. While it would seem natural to say that while one is subject to violence where certain suffering is inflicted upon them by discernible parties, but not where the same suffering comes from some unavoidable fact of the world, this is not true of instances where that suffering stems from societal structures and norms. This is the same intuition identified by Galtung's coinage of structural violence, and, as we have seen, he deals with it by negative outcomes (i.e. suffering) are brought about but which could have been avoided. We have already seen to problems that this entails, however. So then, if structural violence is to be retained, the challenge becomes how we can more adequately articulate the central intuition and accurately distinguish between situations that are instances of structural violence and those which, while very grave, are not. A solution to this challenge may be found by looking further afield at other philosophical projects which focus on imposed suffering as a central concern. In Sc.6, I will look to the field of poverty and global justice in an attempt to arrive at a refined view of structural violence. This will also provide framework to the concluding argument of this paper.

6.

Violence and Justice

I. Aligning Structural Violence with a Core Criterion of Basic Justice

While the use of the term “structural violence” itself remains curiously uninvoked in philosophical discourse, much of the territory it occupies is not actually new. The idea of suffering and injustice inflicted via mechanisms and social structures rather than clearly discernible parties is prevalent most strikingly in discussions of justice and global poverty. By looking there, a solution to the problem may be sought. Thomas Pogge concentrates in large part with the relationship between institutions and social justice, and for now it may be illuminating to align some idea of justice broadly defined with that of freedom from imposed suffering and, therefore, violence. In so doing it becomes a little clearer as to how structural violence may be appropriately refined.

As Pogge – who crucially conceives of justice in terms of the idea of human flourishing – puts it, ‘[i]t is relevant for assessing the justice of social institutions *how* such institutions affect the flourishing of individuals’ (Pogge, 2002. P.42) because ‘the decisive point missed by the usual theories of justice [is that], to be morally plausible, a criterion of justice must take account of the particular relation between social institution and human flourishing’ (p.43). To which he adds the hypothesis:

That what matters is not merely the *causal* role of social institutions, how they figure in a complete causal explanation of the shortfall in question, but also (what one might call) the implicit *attitude* of social institutions to the shortfall in question. Thus a high incidence of domestic violence (a shortfall in women’s secure access to physical integrity) may show a society’s legal order to be unjust if it could be substantially reduced through more vigorous enforcement of, and more severe punishments under, existing laws. But the same abuse of the same woman would indicate an even greater injustice if it were not illegal at all – if spouses were legally free to beat each other or, worse, if men were legally authorized to beat the women in their households. (p.42)

What the above represents is a valuable articulation of the same central concerns of structural violence as it is most coherently understood. Most importantly it follows that, if what structural violence concerns itself with is essentially suffering inflicted by societal mechanisms that would be considered violent according to understandings of violence as infliction (*interactional* violence, if we borrow from Pogge’s terminology) if only clearly discernible inflicting parties had inflicted it, then causal functions of institutions *as well* as prevailing attitudes will be relevant. Misogyny or racism, for example, may be brought about and sustained via both societal constructions *and* by prevailing attitudes. In the former incarnation, it may be that a given social group is not legally entitled to vote, whereas in the latter they

may be legally entitled but in real terms prevented from voting, possibly via active prevention, threats or mere social taboo. It is given this shared central concern that we should delve further into Pogge's project, for in his attempts to identify a core criterion of basic justice he provides some valuable framework for the project of honing structural violence.

In Pogge's own project based along these lines, he primarily concerns himself with rights – most especially human rights – given that these he identifies as effectively *proxies* for human flourishing. As he puts it: 'internationally acceptable core criterion of basic justice might best be formulated [...] in the language of human rights' (p.44). In turn, human rights claims are, as Pogge asks us to understand them, primarily 'claims on coercive social institutions and secondarily [...] claims against those who uphold such institutions', he continues: '[s]uch an *institutional* understanding contrasts with an *interactional* one, which presents human rights as placing the treatment of human beings under certain constraints that do not presuppose the existence of social institutions' (p.45).³³ Human rights themselves Pogge understands simply; he:

Propose[s] to explain [human rights] as follows: the postulate of a human right to X is tantamount to the demand that, insofar as reasonably possible, any coercive social institutions be so designed that all human beings affected by them have secure access to X. (p.46)

Thus a social institution that does not afford human beings secure access to life, liberty and security of person (Article 3 of *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, 1948), for example, will be failing in the demand placed on them by that human right, and therefore will be in contravention of a core criterion of basic justice. In understanding this it is particularly important to grasp how exactly a core criterion of basic justice is supposed to be understood. This is because a core criterion of justice shares the same fundamental object as a conception of structural violence, in so far as what renders a situation structurally violent will also be in contravention of a core criterion of justice. And in this sense

³³ To observe a qualification Pogge himself makes on this:

[t]he institutional understanding I have in mind diverges from a familiar one that conceives a human right to X as a kind of meta-right: a moral right to an effective legal right to X. So understood, human rights require their own juridification. [...] [this] understanding leads to demands that are, in my view, both too strong and too weak. They are too strong because a society may be so situated and organised that its members enjoy secure access to X, even without a legal right hitherto. [...] [they are] also too weak, because legal and even constitutional rights, however conscientiously enforced, often do not suffice to ensure secure access. [...] I am mainly thinking of cases where, though legal rights are effectively enforced, poor and uneducated persons are nonetheless incapable of insisting on their rights, because they do not know what their legal rights are or lack the knowledge or minimal economic independence necessary to pursue the enforcement of their rights through the proper legal channels. (p.45)

incorporating features of a criterion of justice may be what is needed to suitably refine structural violence. Most relevant to the discussion here is that, as Pogge has it, the formulation of such a criterion essentially originates in question of

the personal and ethical value of human life [in which the aim is] not to ascertain wherein this value lies, but to determine the social context and means that persons normally need, according to some broad range of plausible conceptions of what human flourishing consists in, to lead a minimally worthwhile life. This goal expresses respect of human autonomy, especially insofar as the criterion [sought] is to be based on very weak assumptions about the components of ethical value. The main assumption here is merely existential: it is a historically and geographically universal fact that almost all human persons feel a deep need for an ethical world view by reference to which they can judge whether their own life, and also the lives of others they may care about, is good. (p.48)

Naturally however there are, as Pogge notes, divergent views of in what such world views consist – there is, in other words, what in Rawlsian terms we might call the *fact of reasonable pluralism*. Accordingly, of the greatest relevance here and in striking alignment with the discussion of liberty in Sc.4, he then adds an additional stipulation. Namely that:

[e]ven a modest criterion of justice should [...] demand that social institutions be designed so that the persons affected by them can develop, deepen, and realize an ethical world view of their own. The essential presuppositions for this capacity can be presented under two headings. First, liberty of conscience, the freedom to develop and to live in accordance with one's own ethical world view so long as this is possible without excessive costs for others. [...] And second, political participation: the freedom to take part in structuring and directing any comprehensive social systems to which one belongs. [In addition to which] more elementary goods are important for both the ethical and the personal value of human life. Among these are physical integrity, subsistence supplies (of food and drink, clothing, shelter, and basic health care), freedom of movement and actions, as well as basic education, and economic participation. (p.48, p.49)

What is so relevant in this initial framework set up by Pogge is that, just as his project shares the same central thought as structural violence, the conceptual qualifications he makes can be very easily co-opted into a refined conception of structural violence. To see how, we might first broadly align justice – or rather the negation of it – with violence; or, putting it another way, if we equate *injustice* with inflicted suffering. This makes sense when we consider what the content of situations embodying structural violence may be and compare it with the kind of scenarios that concern Pogge.

For example, the two clauses of Pogge's stipulation above – liberty of conscience and access to political participation – are as follows. In relation to liberty of conscience, that 'this freedom must include various other liberties, such as freedom of access to informational media (such as books and broadcasts) and freedom to associate with persons holding similar or different ethical views' (p.48). And in relation to political participation, that it 'includes the freedom publicly to express ethical criticisms of political institutions and decisions, freedom of assembly, and freedom to participate on equal terms in the competition for political offices and in the struggle over political decisions. (p.49). Just as these are "demands", as Pogge puts it, of even a modest criterion of basic justice, they seem to be equally demanded even under a modest conception of structural violence. Turning back to a previously noted text-book case of structural violence, we might consider a deeply racist society. In so doing – and given the remarkably Millian character of the stipulation at hand – we should equally be mindful of the discussion that took place in Sc.4, in which the conceptual significance of domination of the consciousness in relation to both liberty and violence was noted.

Imagining a society in which one particular racial group, say, has far less secure access to education, free and unbiased media and – probably largely because of this – does not enjoy equal freedom of political participation or representation. They will undoubtedly be subject to institutional injustice (as Pogge might call it) and, by the same token, also subject to structural violence. The same may be said of the shared content of a criterion of justice as envisaged by Pogge and structural violence beyond just these two stipulations. The kind of poverty-borne suffering described by Harry Leslie Smith above, for example, is just as perfect a representation of structural violence as it is of the kind of grave poverty that is the ultimate focus of Pogge's project.³⁴

³⁴ Pogge notes of the present day the same abject condition recalled by Smith from 1920s when he observes that: 'socioeconomic rights, such as that "to a standard of living adequate for the health and wellbeing of oneself and one's family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care" (UDHR, Article 25), are currently, and by far, the most frequently underfulfilled human rights'. And with particular relevance to the kind of unhappiness we saw described by Tacitus and Sallust in the discussion of liberty, as well as his own stipulation of political participation, he continues: 'Extremely poor people – often physically and mentally stunted owing to malnutrition in infancy, illiterate owing to lack of schooling, and much preoccupied with their families survival – can cause little harm or benefit to the politicians and bureaucrats who rule them' (continuing p.91, 92).

Once the two are equated in this way, we may try to ask the same questions of structural violence that Pogge does of a core criterion of basic justice. Most importantly: what is the starting point in reaching a suitable criterion of structural violence? This, however, prompts another, deeper question: what is brought about by structural violence as it has been described so far? This second question hits upon the root of the problem that faces structural violence, since it may be answered in two similar but ultimately distinct ways. One answer is “detriment” – understood here very simply as what Galtung might prefer to call “negative outcome” where there was a possible better one – and the other “suffering”. While similar (suffering is undoubtedly to the sufferer’s detriment) the two diverge in a crucial way. Detriment, as it is understood here, finds coherence in deviation from some more positive or beneficial (quite simply, “better”) state of affairs. Returning to the problem cases raised before, the bump on Daddy’s head is what we might call a detriment. In what *suffering* finds coherence, however, is something of a more complex question. Suffering – at least when it is understood in a normatively and morally significant way – appears to require some more substantial basis than mere detriment. Racism, misogyny or the kind of poverty induced misery recalled by Smith seem naturally to embody modes or means of *suffering* as opposed mere detriments.

The key point to note is that the same may just as naturally be said of injustice; detriments may be unjust and injustice invariably detrimental, but there is something far more significant contained within claims of injustice than ones of detriments brought to bear. Being fined for a public order offence may be to my detriment but being fined for voicing political opposition or for being of a different race or religion is not only detrimental but also fundamentally unjust. Given this and the fact that justice and structural violence, as well as structural violence and suffering, have been in some way equated already, it may be feasible to approach suffering in the same way that Pogge approaches coming to a criterion of justice. In this case a diagnosis of suffering – certainly of structurally imposed suffering – can equally be said to primarily concern (to repeat from Pogge): *the social context and means that persons normally need, according to some broad range of plausible conceptions of what human flourishing consists in, to lead a minimally worthwhile life* (repeating p.48).

Once we do this, structural violence becomes a more focussed idea. We can similarly adopt the more detailed features Pogge requires of a plausible criterion of justice into our plausible conception of structural violence. It follows that structural violence should also demand above all else 1) liberty of conscience: freedom to develop and live in accordance with one's own ethical world view, 2) freedom of political participation and 3) secure access to elementary goods necessary for both the ethical and the personal value of human life such as physical integrity, subsistence supplies (of food and drink, clothing, shelter, and basic health care), freedom of movement and actions, basic education and economic participation (all paraphrasing p.48, p.49).³⁵

Liberty of conscience can be adopted on the basis that, as Galtung puts it, structural violence may equally take place via physical violence and *violence that works on the soul*. Violence inflicted on the conscience also constitutes *psychological* violence and, as was discussed in relation to violence and liberty, effectively embodies the idea of violence as dominion and violence under the shadow of oppression. As previously noted, Farmer also stresses the relevance of constraint of agency to the idea of structurally violent forces. Denial of the freedom to participate in the political process also falls within the scope of structural violence, on the basis that under such a situation one will be unable to do anything to challenge or later the forces from which some particular violence originates. This, in turn, may be regarded itself as violation of liberty of conscience. Finally, any societal mechanism or structure that denies the basic goods Pogge lists above may be considered archetypal of structural violence. That such elementary good matter at all is because without them, one will be denied access to a minimally worthwhile life on account of the limitations and suffering that will be brought to bear upon their lives; without them, one will be subject to the insidious and sustained suffering, as farmer calls it, that embodies structural violence. It is, after all, exactly the lack of these subsistence supplies that can bring about the kind of widespread and inevitable suffering Smith describes.

³⁵ Before taking each in turn, it is important to remember that what is deemed violent under violence as harm infliction is equally deemed violent under structural violence; it is only the on the question of the inflicting force that the two diverge in a significant way.

Importantly, what 1-3 represent are demands that, while important, have what Pogge refers to as a ‘measure of low specificity’ (p.50). As he puts it in reference to his own project, they should be recognised as necessary means to human flourishing and thereby the objects of human rights, ‘but only up to certain quantitative, qualitative, and probabilistic limits: what human beings truly need is secure access to a minimally adequate share of all of these goods’ (p.49). What this does in relation to structural violence is provide some means of curtailing the scope of violence claims in so far as certain trivial claims will not be easily allowed for. There is, for example, a danger that understandings of structural violence without this stipulation will count *any* situation in which people who, while still themselves affluent, do not have as much wealth and resources as some others in their society will be counted as subject to violence. Such a conclusion would quite significantly undermine the project of coming to an understanding of violence that captures the full normative significance of the term. By incorporating Pogge’s base level of minimal access to such goods into an account of structural violence we can avoid the risk of structural violence being misunderstood as overly demanding and unrealistic. In both Pogge’s project and that of structural violence what matters is that agents are suitably protected from deprivations and unjust denial of such goods. This underlines the wider point, that what structural violence denotes is *suffering* as opposed to mere detriments.

II. *Suffering and the Object of Structural Violence*

So far then, I have attempted to show the conceptual alignment and parallels between Pogge’s discussion of the proper understanding of a core criterion of basic justice and the idea of structural violence. These parallels being as they are, and the projects having so much shared conceptual territory, I stated that the same approach Pogge has to formulating his criterion of justice should equally be adopted by structural violence. What now remains to be done is to show explicitly how a conception of violence with these additions can avoid the unsatisfactory position of counting trivial cases alongside gravely serious and genuinely violent ones. Doing so will also serve a second purpose: it will help to

elucidate the above suggestion that the central object of structural violence is not, as it is usually framed (though most probably through oversight rather than intention), detriment, in the sense of mere avoidably negative outcomes, but rather *suffering*. In turn suffering also appears to require some more conceptually robust framework, and in this regard the discussion below will set the ground for that in the next section.

There is a crucial phrase that we have seen Pogge use above, namely: *human flourishing*. Thus far the point has been made that structural violence concerns suffering inflicted through structure and that those inflictions which are violent when carried out by or between agents should be counted as equally violent when inflicted through societal structures and mechanisms. Now I would like to turn to a final conceptual parallel and argue that suffering as it should most meaningfully be understood in the relevant context of violence concerns at its most fundamental level the negation of *means to human flourishing*.

First, it must be understood what “means to human flourishing” really means in this context. As Pogge frames it: ‘[t]hat human persons are flourishing means that their lives are good, or worthwhile, in the broadest sense. Thus, the concept of human flourishing, as I understand it, marks the most comprehensive, “all-in” assessment of the quality of human lives’ (p.27). Alone this is somewhat structureless, and so should be understood by way of a simple distinction, that, as Pogge puts it, ‘goes back at least as far as Plato’ (p.28), between *means* and *components* of flourishing.

Components of flourishing [are] good for their own sake, [whereas] *means* to flourishing [are] good for the sake of their effects. Something (e.g. happiness, wisdom) is a component of flourishing if and only if it is constitutive of flourishing, part of what flourishing does or can consist in. Something (e.g. affluence, education) is a means to flourishing if and only if it tends to enhance the components of flourishing on balance. (continuing p.28).

In terms of applying the above to the issue of structural violence and suffering, it is first important to recall a previously noted stipulation of Pogge’s that we have broadly co-opted already; namely ‘that social institutions be designed so that the persons affected by them can develop, deepen, and realize an ethical world view of their own’ (repeating Pogge, p.48). Given this and the fact that questions as to what constitutes the essential components of flourishing ‘still [elicit] an overwhelming diversity of

responses' (p.48) it is clear that what should be of most concern here is means rather than components. After all, it has been noted already that a principle concern of both basic justice and structural violence is liberty of consciousness. Accordingly it would be problematic to set out a pre-ordained list of *components* of flourishing, since coming to one's own conclusions regarding these is an essential part of what it means to be accorded both a basic level of justice and freedom from psychological dominion under violence, as discussed in Sc.4. Thus, as Pogge puts it:

[a] sought universal criterion of justice ought to work with a thin conception of human flourishing, which might be formulated largely in terms of specific means to, rather than components of, human flourishing. Though disagreements about what human flourishing consists in may prove intractable, it may well be possible to bypass them by agreeing that nutrition, clothing, shelter, certain basic freedoms, as well as social interaction, education, and participation are important means to it, which just social institutions must secure for all. (p.36)

How Pogge then utilises this distinction himself is to inform the formulation of his core criterion of basic justice, which takes place largely in the language of human rights. However, for it to operate here, we do not need to understand it much beyond the above. We need only entertain the following claim: that suffering refers to the negation of the means of human flourishing understood in the way set-out by a core criterion of basic justice. In other words, that when one suffers in a way constitutive of structural violence, they are denied those things that could be reasonably regarded as a means to their flourishing. Human flourishing may then, in this sense, be thought of as the *object of structural violence*; the thing which such violence negates.

Retaining this claim allows structural violence claims to be more discerning in problem cases such as those raised earlier. Rather than Galtung's criteria of structural violence (a negative outcome brought to bear that could have been avoided) we can formulate instead that one is subject to structural violence when what can reasonably be considered their means to human flourishing has been obstructed, and therefore suffering has taken place. Approached like this we can contrast situations of meaningful structural violence with mere detriments such as those suffered by Daddy when he falls down the stairs.

A bump on the head and the trauma of falling down the stairs as a result of the carelessness of others is undoubtedly detrimental, but it is hard to see in what way it constitutes a meaningful imposition of suffering and, therefore, a negation of means to human flourishing. Putting it in more strictly structural terms, a comparison between someone who while financially comfortable is not as wealthy as some of his neighbours and someone who lives subject to the kind of destitution suffered by a contemporary of Smith's comes to mind. The relatively well-off man cannot make any feasible claim that he is subject to structurally imposed suffering as we understand it here, since – while admittedly not so rich as some of his neighbours – he is not deprived of any of the essential basic goods noted earlier, most notably access to subsistence supplies and means of acquiring them, nor equal political participation, liberty of conscience and so on. He is in this respect in a situation in stark contrast to someone subject to the kind of poverty described by Smith. In short, his position does not amount to *violence* in any way.

However, there may be scope for an objection here. What if, for example, he is well-off but not as rich as some of his neighbours, but this is because he along with all his equally not-as-rich neighbours is in this position because they are all of one particular ethnicity, for example? In other words, what if the separation between the rich and the affluent-but-not-as-rich follows along the lines of racial demographics. It would be just as unsatisfactory for this to be excluded under a conception of structural violence as it would be for trivial cases of detriment (but not suffering) to be included. However, it has been noted that secure access to economic participation is part of a criterion of justice and has in turn been incorporated into the central demands incurred by a robust conception of structural violence. Linked to this, it has also been noted that secure access to political participation and liberty of conscience are similarly requisite. What sets the latter scenario apart is the very nature of the inequality; one particular group does not have equally secure access to economic participation *automatically* on the basis of some arbitrary factor (their race, in this case). Moreover, they are subject to an arbitrary structuring of society which, it seems safe to presume, they would seek to remedy if they had secure access to *political* participation as well. Equally, in terms of liberty of conscience, we should be reminded of the discussion that took place in Sc.4. Here particular emphasis was placed on the psychological violence inherent in states of dominion, of which institutional racism seems archetypal.

In this regard it could be put bluntly that the defining point of difference between the two scenarios is in reality very simple: one situation is racist, and the other is not. Racism, in turn, cannot help but be structurally violent and cannot help, in this sense, but fly in the face of a sensible list of the means to human flourishing.

III. *Conclusion*

The aim of this section I have attempted to show how structural violence may be suitably refined by co-opting features of Pogge's formation of a core criterion of basic justice into a conception of structural violence. This project has taken the following structure: first, noting as a central flaw of structural violence the failure to acknowledge a seemingly natural distinction between detriment and suffering, I have tried to show how *suffering* ought to be regarded as distinct from mere detriment, on the basis that suffering concerns means to human flourishing. In this respect, a central claim has been that means to human flourishing represent the object of structural violence. It is hoped that when set up in this way, structural violence avoids the serious pitfalls of conceptual uncertainty and over-inclusion, and that it can therefore be retained as a valid conception of violence.

This also draws to a close the discussion of each of the three basic categories of violence put forward at the outset. So far violence as infraction has been shown to be seriously impoverished, whereas violence as harm infliction has appeared to be a far more nuanced view, capturing far more of the full normative significance of the term. However, it suffers a quite serious shortcoming if it fails to include structural modes of violence alongside interactional ones. Lastly, structural violence has been shown to be a normatively powerful and, I hope, persuasive idea once it is suitably refined.

If all of this is accepted, then what has transpired is that while violence as harm infliction captures the greatest portion of what "violence" in its most meaningful and significant sense refers to, it will not suffice as a fully satisfying conception unless it includes acknowledgment of structural violence. Yet in

this there is a challenge since the definition will, as a necessity, require alteration. In attempting to come to a suitably revised conception, attention must also be given to the implications of everything that has been said so far in relation to issues of culpability and implied moral imperative that stem from violence so conceived. Such concerns will occupy the concluding section, in which it is hoped that a full and rounded understanding of violence as it is most meaningfully understood will be arrived at.

7.

Violence, Violation

I. *Constituents of Violence*

For the discussion here to result in a refined understanding of what violence really embodies – one that captures the full normative significance of *violence* – consideration should go first to the modes of violence that must be properly accounted for in a well-rounded and meaningful view of the term. In other words, each meaningfully significant permutation of violence discussed so far must be accounted for in any final assessment, such that none of the following modes of violence should be left aside. By way of a recap of the discussion so far, the constituents of violence that must be adequately accounted for are as follows.

While purely somatic understandings of violence must be regarded as irredeemably narrow in scope – leaving out at least as much violence as they include – it goes almost without saying that somatic modes of violence are still an integral part of any *non-somatic* conception. As we have understood it throughout, a non-somatic conception of violence is one in which violence concerns *both* physical and non-physical inflictions. Being thus understood, a rounded view of violence must also account for

psychological violence, as argued for in Sc.3. It is on the same reckoning that latent violence must be included, in large part because it is inextricably linked to psychological violence. The role of threats hanging in the air and *contexts of violence* that are a central part of what latent violence consists in have been portrayed already as *themselves* psychologically violent forces, as the painfully real examples of the war children discussed by Dr. Brophy attest.

Following from the logical implications of latent violence, an important link has also been observed between it and dominion, wherein the idea of threats hanging in the air as a negating force in the face of human autonomy and liberty of the consciousness has been observed. Along these lines the discussion has also included an enquiry into violence under the lens of liberty, in which the republican conception of liberty has appeared to capture much of the same central conceptual concerns as a rounded non-somatic view of violence. As well as being informative in its own right, considering this parallel also prompts consideration of *structural violence* – in which the potential for wider societal mechanisms and structures to be deeply violent forces is accepted – under a rounded view of violence. Just as the early republicans emphasised the negating effect on liberty posed by the right of the sovereign and the idea of arbitrary domination of the will, structural violence prompts consideration of domination through fundamentally unjust and violent societal structuring. More crucially, structural violence also poses a problem for a purely agential, or *interactional*, account of violence as harm infliction. It raises questions regarding the point of meaningful distinction between scenarios in which the same given suffering is considered violent and those in which, not being traceable to a clearly discernible party, it is not. Here the central concern has been that this is (more often than not) a seemingly arbitrary point of distinction. This becomes most apparent when another distinction between *suffering* and *detriment* is considered and suffering then aligned with some conception of *injustice*, linked in this case to *means to human flourishing*. Once one considers the relationship between institutional ordering of society, as Pogge invites, and a more substantive view of suffering as broadly tied to human flourishing is adopted, it becomes hard to hold to a view of violence that is strictly interactional and ignores structural incarnations given the moral gravity of the shared *object* of suffering. This is especially true once Pogge's minimal demands of liberty of conscience, secure access to political participation and basic

elementary goods (most saliently physical integrity and subsistence supplies) imposed by a core criterion of basic justice are similarly incurred by a refined conception of structural violence.

These will be considered accurate approximations of the *constituents* of violence, which while informative and diverse may often manifest via the interactions with one another. What seems most naturally to be required, if a rounded view that takes account of all such modes of violence is to be arrived at, is the identification of some unifying feature shared amongst them. What, in other words, is shared amongst all these modes of violence that makes them *violent* in a meaningful and normatively significant way?

The best answer to this question is, I think, that what each constituent embodies in its own way is *violation*. Violation here is being understood simply and in the way it normally would be, as proximate or synonymous with contraventions, breaches, transgressions of and failures to respect some object that should not be so treated or contravened. In this sense, of course, and especially as it is being employed here, violation requires some object or thing violated: one cannot meaningfully claim that something has been violated without being able to point to something in respect of which that violation has taken place; i.e. my violating of X's right to Q requires the identification of some right on the part of X to Q in order to be intelligible. Accepting this analysis, the question becomes what this object is and how it should be conceived of in relation to violence.

II. *Conclusion: Violence as Violation*

While arriving at an answer to the question of how violence should be understood under the lens of violation may appear a lengthy undertaking at this later stage of the discussion, the point is that, in fact, much of the answer has been traversed already. To see how, the central elements of greatest concern in each constituent mode of violence should be remembered, as certain significant continuities run

between them. For the purposes of this discussion, I am going to pick the two most significant continuities (though more could feasibly be added).

The first central continuity shared amongst the constituents of violence is some, albeit varying, relation between violence and – to use Mill’s term – the *inward doing of consciousness*, which here may be thought of as synonymous with what Pogge refers to as a *liberty* of consciousness. In the case of both latent and especially psychological violence, the single greatest point of concern is the role of threat as related to psychological harm. We discussed, for example, the seriousness of *threats hanging in the air* in relation to profound emotional violence – and in some cases, emotional sufferings so severe as to manifest in *physical* symptoms alongside emotional ones. Such violence is nearly synonymous with ideas of the *inward domain of consciousness*, in so far as it would seem incoherent to conceive of psychological violence (which relies in part upon *latent* violence) without acknowledging it. Similarly, it was this conceptual alignment that prompted the discussion of violence under the lens of liberty in Sc.4. There particular attention was given to the paralysing effect of living under a state of dominion, and the relation between this and non-somatic accounts of violence. Most significantly, this discussion paid special attention to – and strongly refuted – the idea that violence could in any way be regarded as *preference-neutral*. This was on the basis that any understanding of violence that did not take into account the mental dispositions of agents effected – the extent to which they are dominated, subjugated, live under threat and so on – would fail to reflect any of the full force and significance of what violence meaningfully entails. Discussion of the republican account also set some of the ground for that of structural violence, in which the significance of the inward domain of consciousness was similarly explicit. Galtung, for example, notes amongst his dimensions of violence – under the mantle of “violence that works on the soul” – the significance of psychological suffering in any analysis of violence built into the character of given societal structures. That structural violence must include consideration of psychological violence was retained as valid, particularly given the argument in Sc.5.1 regarding the shared considerations of structural violence and violence as infliction. Structural violence would, after all, be somewhat redundant if it counted only physical suffering and left out latent and psychological modes of violence. The case may even be made that in many ways structural violence

puts *more* emphasis on suffering played out upon the inward domain of consciousness rather than on that inflicted on the body. This is because it holds as its central concern, especially according the refinements put forward here, the basic justice afforded to those living within the relevant structure.

Of course, how *somatic* violence concerns the inward domain of consciousness may be less immediately clear. While a purely somatic account of violence has been rejected throughout, *somatic modes of violence* must still be equally included in any rounded view. In this respect it must be remembered that somatic violence has not been rejected – this would be both radical and undermine much of the discussion of the interplay between modes of violence – only a *purely somatic* account of violence has. In fact, somatic violence has been shown to be an integral part of psychological violence. In the various examples given throughout of the violence inflicted on war children under the shadow of conflict, the fundamental concern has been for the *interplay* and often *interdependence* of physical and non-physical violence. The point being that, far from being separate, neither physical nor non-physical violence can be seen entirely in isolation from one another.

The point being advocated here is that common among all the central constituents of violence identified here is a continuing element of concern. Namely that, in one way or another, all such modes of violence when they are understood in a nuanced and intersectional way are brought to bear in a fundamental way upon the inward domain of consciousness. Understood under the lens of violation, it is the sanctity – or better, the deserved *inviolability* – of this that violence concerns.

Alongside and (linked to) a core concern for the inward domain of consciousness, the second central continuity amongst all the listed constituents of violence is what, borrowing from Pogge, it suffices here to call basic *elementary goods*. For our present purpose these do not need to be understood much beyond how they have been presented by Pogge already. In part because their normative (not to mention moral) gravity is enough for them to be understood as a broad conceptual entity, but also because, as Pogge notes, they are part of a wider conceptual apparatus requiring a measure of low specificity and therefore fulfil far less of their function when they cannot be applied universally and in equal measure to diverse world views and scenarios. Here they can be thought of simply as goods requisite in respect of the ethical and personal value of human life, including physical integrity, subsistence supplies (of food and

drink, clothing, shelter, and basic health care), freedom of movement and actions, basic education and economic participation (repeated paraphrase of Pogge. 2002, P.48, p.49). The concurrence of concern for such goods amongst the categories of violence discussed so far is, in fact, first most apparent in Pinker's analysis of somatic violence in the course of human history.

While much attention has been given so far to the purely somatic nature of Pinker's view, it remains a curious feature that it *relies* on such elementary goods to underpin its claims of an aggregate "decline" in violence. Revisiting the discussion briefly, it should be observed that Pinker's *better angels* advance human affairs in conjunction with certain historical trends he identifies, all of which in their way require and, more to the point, further secure access to our stated elementary goods.

Considering the first three of these for brevity and as the most straightforward examples, the question may be asked as to what each subsists in. *The pacification process*, for example, marks a shift from anarchic *hand-to-mouth* existence to organised agricultural societies, comprised of cities and small-scale governments. As discussed in Sc.2, much of the advance of such forces and the trend towards the *better angels* of human nature comes about as a result of a cost-benefit-analysis, whereby more assured access to what are effectively equivalent to what Pogge calls *subsistence supplies* (food, shelter etc.) can more easily, and with less risk of death and injury, be secured via a shift *away* from violent infraction. In turn, the resulting *civilising process*, in which larger and more organised states with central governments and structured economies begin to emerge, further protects access to such goods. In doing so, it also enables improved access to other goods such as political and economic participation. Advanced opportunity in these respects, and presumably more widespread and secure access to education (another good noted by Pogge), leads in turn to what Pinker refers to as *the humanitarian revolution*, which, as part of the Age of Reason, signalled moves towards the abolition of widespread and culturally engrained violent practises in respect of advanced attitudes and understandings of the value of human life. This historical trend in particular parallels the very foundation of our elementary goods as being focussed towards the ethical and personal value of human life.³⁶ Thus, the point is, even

³⁶ The examples noted in the discussion of liberty serve as an example of this kind of shift in thought in fact, though Pinker clearly has in mind a much later shift in history at the time of the Age of Reason. Slavery being

an overly narrow, purely somatic view of violence counts such goods – or things approximate to them – as elemental in the *negation* of violence.

In this sense – if only this sense – there is a marked continuity between Pinker’s account and more complex modes of violence. Just as Pinker sees such goods as negations of violence, non-somatic constituents of violence appear to hold the negation of such goods as *themselves* an embodiment of violence. In this respect also, and understanding violence through the lens violation, the violations present in each mode or constituent of violence share a common object.

In other modes of violence, the significance of these elementary goods is far more explicitly the fundamental concern. As we have seen them exemplified so far, latent violence, psychological violence and structural violence all incorporate as a central feature some acknowledgment of the value of such goods, in so far as negations of them would be counted as violent under understandings of each. As it has been discussed throughout, psychological violence can demonstrably be seen as antithetical to physical integrity (in so far as it can have serious physical manifestations). In so far as it can engender, as discussed in Sc.3 and Sc.4, forms of psychological self-restraint and *dominion* it can be said to restrain freedom of action, educational development (as Brophy noted of the war children, and the early republicans speculated of the populace under tyranny) and in turn economic participation³⁷.

In a more general regard for both educational development – and in equal reference to both structural, latent and psychological violence as I have argued they should be understood – we might also look back to the characterization of violence offered by WHO, which emphasises the role of (both actualised and threatened) maldevelopment and deprivation in relation to violence. While the WHO account is not in its own right one that has been taken up here – but instead an insightful prompt to further enquiry – the point remains that both deprivation and maldevelopment are integral to all the non-somatic modes of violence discussed so far. In turn, maldevelopment and deprivation are inextricably tied to the

defined in terms of dominion *contrary to one’s nature* might just as easily have been coined by William Wilberforce as by the Pandects under Justinian.

³⁷ It seems uncontentious enough to note – as would be equally natural in discussion of structural violence – correlations between levels of education provision and economic participation. Such a link is noted frequently by Pogge, for example. His observation of this fact is referenced in footnote 32, in Sc.5.5.

elementary goods relevant here, in so far as they are diametrically opposed. Such maldevelopment and deprivation – exemplified by the suffering of Harry Leslie Smith and his neighbours or Dr. Brophy’s war children – should be seen as the negation of everything that these basic elementary goods are intended to ratify as the proper preserve of a just and, as they are being used here as objects of violation, non-violent state of affairs.

If the continuities above are accepted, an instance or scenario of violence will be embodied, irrespective of the form it takes – whether structural, psychological, latent, physical – in violation of either or both the inward domain of consciousness or the broad elementary goods described above. To understand the full gravity of what this entails, it is worth remembering the discussion of *suffering* as opposed to detriment. As distinct from detriments, suffering was defined as consisting in the negation of what Pogge terms *means to human flourishing*. As employed by Pogge, the idea of *means to human flourishing* was used to inform a core criterion of basic justice. An unjust societal structure, for example, is, in Pogge’s mind, one that denies anyone living subject to it secure access to the means to human flourishing. In other words, secure and assured access to such means are what is *demand*ed by a core criterion of basic justice. It was in giving an approximation of these that we saw Pogge note the paramount significance of liberty of conscience and secure access to certain “elementary goods”.

Given that these two approximations have been noted as the two most fundamental continuities shared in one way or another by our constituents of violence, it makes sense, if we agree with Pogge, to regard means to human flourishing as the more general continuity – the more general unifying feature – of all the constituents of violence.

Thus we might formulate, on the basis of this and everything we have said so far, that an understanding of violence that captures the full normative significance of the term will look like this. Violence should be understood above all as violation. While it may exist in diverse and varying forms, each mode of violence cannot be seen in complete isolation from the others. Instead violence should be understood as a more complex and interlinking entity; as something able to permeate and reside non-exclusively in actions, cultures, historical context, societal structures; in threats, dominion, trauma; physical, mental and societal harms. Although it may indeed be discussed with reference to specific primary modes – as

somatic, psychological, latent and so on – an understanding of it that captures the full normative significance of the term will conceive of it holistically and in terms of violation. Violation, however, implies some violated thing by virtue of which violation has taken place. In the case of violence, the violated thing ought to be broadly defined as the *means to human flourishing*. Thus, someone whose secure access to adequate means to human flourishing is violated is subject to violence. I submit that this understanding captures the full normative significance and moral force of the term violence.

III. *An Epilogue*

At the beginning of this paper I said that apart from the normative and moral weight that violence contains in its own right, understood in the way put forward here it also represents a remarkably pertinent conceptual entity to which moral and political philosophers should pay more attention. Its relationship to discourses on global justice has been discussed at length in Sc.6. The parallels of both the conceptual terrain and related reasoning between the two can, of course, be observed either way round; just because here the search for an internationally acceptable core criterion of justice has been used to inform a refined understanding of violence, and these then adopted into a rounded conception of violence more generally, it does not mean that violence understood as violation could not similarly be incorporated into or used to inform discourses on justice.

Moreover, the relevance of violence as it is conceived here to the language of human rights is also striking and more work could be done to apply it more specifically in human rights discourse. It is worth noting, for example, that a list of the requisite demands of *non-violence* based on violence as violation might contain many demands identical to those contained within the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Most importantly, violence understood in this way goes some way to reinforce moral claims on human rights; a violation of the right to health and wellbeing, for example, is not only in contravention of the moral demands of a human right, but also *violent* on that account.

Unfortunately, however, as a conception of violence, the one put forward here also comes with certain limitations. These, it should be stressed, are no more severe than those of any other conception, however they must be remarked upon nonetheless.

First, it must be noted that, unfortunately, this is not in the proper sense a pacifist thesis. It does not follow from what I have said here that just because violence is a matter of violation of means to human flourishing that it is therefore always necessarily unjustifiable. This alone does not provide guidance in questions of when it is and is not permissible to use violent resistance, for example. Unhappily it does not follow that just because I shoot a man who is part of a fascist army sweeping across Europe and am therefore undoubtedly violating his means to human flourishing as well as being party to countless other violences (he may, for example, have been a boy barely out of school forced into military service, he may have a family that depends on his return for their financial, not to mention emotional, future) that what I do is unjustifiable by necessity. As has been a principle part of the discussion throughout, violence is a complicated and insidious entity that can consist in the interplay of many constituent modes. Under the understanding put forward here, it is violent to maim and kill, just as it is to bring about wars people must maim and kill in. It is violent to starve and bombard certain populations, just as it is to keep them in extreme poverty, dominion or paralysed under the threat of retribution or arbitrary punishment, death or economic servitude. However, violence conceived in this or any way does not, alone, solve a long-observed problem: that sometimes it seems one may be forced to violence irrespective of how much they abhor it. In the case of two soldiers, it is quite probably on account of some insidious permutation of violence that they are each faced with the prospect of having to kill the other, and when one kills the other it is undoubtedly and categorically violent under violence as I am conceiving of it, or according to any sensible conception. However, while I think it certainly follows from what has been discussed here that one should never be violent without *compunction*, sadly it does not follow necessarily from my contention that all violence is unjustified all of the time. As noted, the soldier that the other faces may be part of a fascist army, who would doubtless inflict violences of every kind if allowed to continue. In this regard, my thesis puts forward an argument regarding how violence

should be understood in its most normatively significant way, sadly it is not helpful in its present form in answering the question of what one does when faced with extraordinarily violent forces.

What I think can be said in a general way, however, and what I hope this paper has gone some way to advance as an idea, is that violence understood in its most powerful and normatively significant way always embodies a violation; in all incarnations being that which violates one's means to human flourishing and therein the sanctity of human life in terms of its ethical and personal value and, therein, the dignity of human life. As such, while it may not always be avoidable, it nonetheless carries the moral force of something intuitively unjust, and thereby wrong.

Secondly, a bigger question that there is not space to answer here is posed by the conclusions of this paper. More specific discussion is required of the kinds of duties and obligations that would be imposed by any treatise of *nonviolence* formed under this understanding of violence as violation. As the parallels between questions of violence and those of justice – in which questions regarding implied duties abound – suggest, settling this question would be a serious undertaking. However, it may suffice for now to suggest the possibility of a very simple principle of nonviolence: that to avoid being party to violence, one must not bring about or participate in any practice or state of affairs that upholds violence under any of the guises retained here. In this sense, the duty posed is a negative one: that one *not contribute* to or *promote* violence. While this may be more modest than a positive duty of non-violence, when explored it may well have some fairly profound implications regarding the permissibility of human interactions and societal structures. The fullness of what this may entail, however, must be left for later.

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