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**An exemplary life? A personal construct analysis of the autobiography of the  
Commandant of Auschwitz.**

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## **Abstract**

*This article analyses the autobiography of Rudolf Hoess, commandant of Auschwitz. Textual grid, ABC and self-characterisation analyses of the autobiography are used to construe Hoess's writing. The textual grid analysis suggests that Hoess saw his adult self as being different from others but his young self as similar to Jews. Conflicts in self-construing are identified. The ABC analysis indicates that, from his perspective, it made sense for Hoess to choose not to leave the concentration camp service. The self-characterisation analysis focuses on whether Hoess experienced Kellyan guilt and it suggests that he did, but in unexpected contexts.*

## **Introduction**

Rudolf Hoess was appointed Commandant of the Auschwitz concentration camp on 1st May 1940, and he was in command for three and a half years. During his stewardship of the camp, between one and four million men, women and children were murdered (Snyder, 1995). Hoess was executed for his crimes in 1947. Whilst in prison awaiting trial for mass murder before the Polish High Court, with the death penalty as the expected outcome, he wrote an account of his life (Hoess, 2000).

In his Introduction to Hoess's autobiography, Primo Levi (a survivor of Auschwitz) says:

"...this autobiography of the Commandant of Auschwitz is one of the most instructive books ever published because it very accurately describes the course of a human life that was exemplary in its way." (p. 19)

This comment reflects the personal construct approach to understanding people. Most people would undoubtedly look at the actions of Hoess at Auschwitz with disbelief that any 'normal' person could commit such atrocities. However, from his own perspective (the perspective from which personal construct psychology tries to understand him) Hoess was trying to be the model SS officer - dutiful, efficient, dedicated to his allotted task, and obedient towards his superiors in the SS. Much of his autobiography is a testament to what he considers as carrying out his "duty".

The purpose of this paper is to use Hoess's autobiography as material in an attempt to construe him through his own eyes without prior categorisation. We are therefore adopting an idiographic approach to understanding Hoess through his writing using personal construct methods. To achieve this, his autobiography will be viewed using

the credulous approach which George Kelly said personal construct psychotherapists should adopt with their clients.

This is not the first time that narratives written by killers have been analysed using personal construct methods. For example, in exploring the limits of credulity Winter, (2007) and Winter et al. (2007) have analysed a book written by the serial killer, Ian Brady, by converting it into a ‘textual grid’ using the method proposed by Feixas and Villegas (1991). A similar approach was undertaken in the present paper. In addition to the textual grid analysis, an “implicative dilemma” identified in Hoess’s autobiography was subjected to an “ABC” analysis (Tschudi, 1977; Tschudi and Winter, 2012). The autobiography was also analysed as if it were a self-characterisation (Kelly, 1955/1991) but focusing on whether Hoess felt “guilt” in the personal construct sense. Applying these methods, this paper will attempt to understand how one human being became responsible for the murder of so many others.

## **Method**

### *Textual Grid Analysis*

Textual grid analysis essentially requires the conversion of a written text into a repertory grid by the identification of all element-construct units in the text, namely instances in which an adjective (or construct pole) is applied to an aspect of the world, usually a person. Similarly to a repertory grid, a data matrix is then constructed, with elements along one axis and construct poles along the other, each cell being filled by a 1 or 0, depending on whether or not the construct pole is applied to the element concerned. Appropriate methods of grid analysis are then applied to the matrix.

An initial reading of Hoess' book by two members of our research team resulted in the extraction of 32 elements referring to people (including the self as a child, as a young man, and as an adult) or groups of people, together with 342 construct poles applied to these people. After following Feixas and Villegas' (1991) rules for the reduction of the grid to a manageable size by elimination of elements to which fewer than two construct poles were applied and construct poles applied to fewer than five elements, 29 elements and 59 construct poles remained. These formed the basis of our first analysis, which was a hierarchical cluster analysis of the elements on the basis of their similarities using their correlations as an index for similarity. However, as all of the correlations in the matrix were very weak, it was apparent that further reduction of the number of constructs in the grid would be necessary to make any analysis of these meaningful. This was achieved by classifying the construct poles in terms of content categories. Two coding systems were used for this purpose, those developed by Landfield (1971) and by Feixas et al. (2002). Applying Landfield's system, the construct poles were assigned to 26 categories, and these were reduced to 18 by using the Feixas and Villegas rule of removing any which were applied to fewer than five elements. Applying the Feixas et al. (2002) coding system, the construct poles were assigned to 21 categories applied to at least five elements. The two textual grids derived from the use of these coding systems were analysed by the Slater analysis option of IDIOGRID (Grice, 2002) as if they were composed of ratings, since each cell contained the number of times a separate construct pole within a particular category was applied to the element concerned.

### *ABC Analysis*

The ABC method has been described as a means of exploring the "advantages of symptoms" (Tschudi and Sandsberg, 1984). The method is particularly apposite

where a person states that they would like to change to being something seemingly within their power, but for some reason do not change to that different way of being because of the “implicative dilemmas” (Hinkle, 1965; Tschudi, 1977) involved in so doing. The ABC method (Tschudi, 1977) involves a process whereby at A1 the current position is stated and at A2 the desired position is given. At stage B1/B2 the disadvantages of A1 and the advantages of A2 are respectively recorded. Finally, at stage C the *advantages* of A1 and the *disadvantages* of A2 are identified by the interviewee as C2 and C1 respectively. As Fransella, Bell and Bannister (2004) comment:

..... In effect the person is being asked to say that their problem is, at least in part, actually serving a purpose for them - that is, what their current problem is protecting them from.” (p. 44)

The method is used in this article to explore the dilemma that Hoess says he faces - namely, that his desired state is to leave the concentration camp service and return to a more ‘normal’ way of life, but he feels compelled to stay in the service with all its horrors (Hoess, 2000).

### *Self-Characterisation Analysis*

At around 150 pages long (excluding Appendices), Hoess’s autobiography is by no means a "sketch" in the usual sense envisaged by Kelly's instructions for writing a self-characterisation. However, there seems to be no reason why such a piece of writing cannot be construed in a similar way to the more usual form for a self-characterisation.

Kelly (1955/1991) described various ways in which self-characterisations might be analysed, such as identifying themes, looking at how the narrative is organised, and making a dimensional analysis of the sketch. Primo Levi's introduction to Hoess's autobiography highlights the main themes, events and contradictions in Hoess's account of his life in a way that would be difficult, perhaps impossible, to better in view of Levi's personal experience of the horror of Auschwitz. Therefore, in terms of the analysis of the autobiography as a self-characterisation, the focus in this article is the more limited one of exploring Hoess's autobiography specifically in relation to the Kellyan concept of 'guilt', which is one of several approaches suggested by Jackson (1988) for analysing self-characterisations.

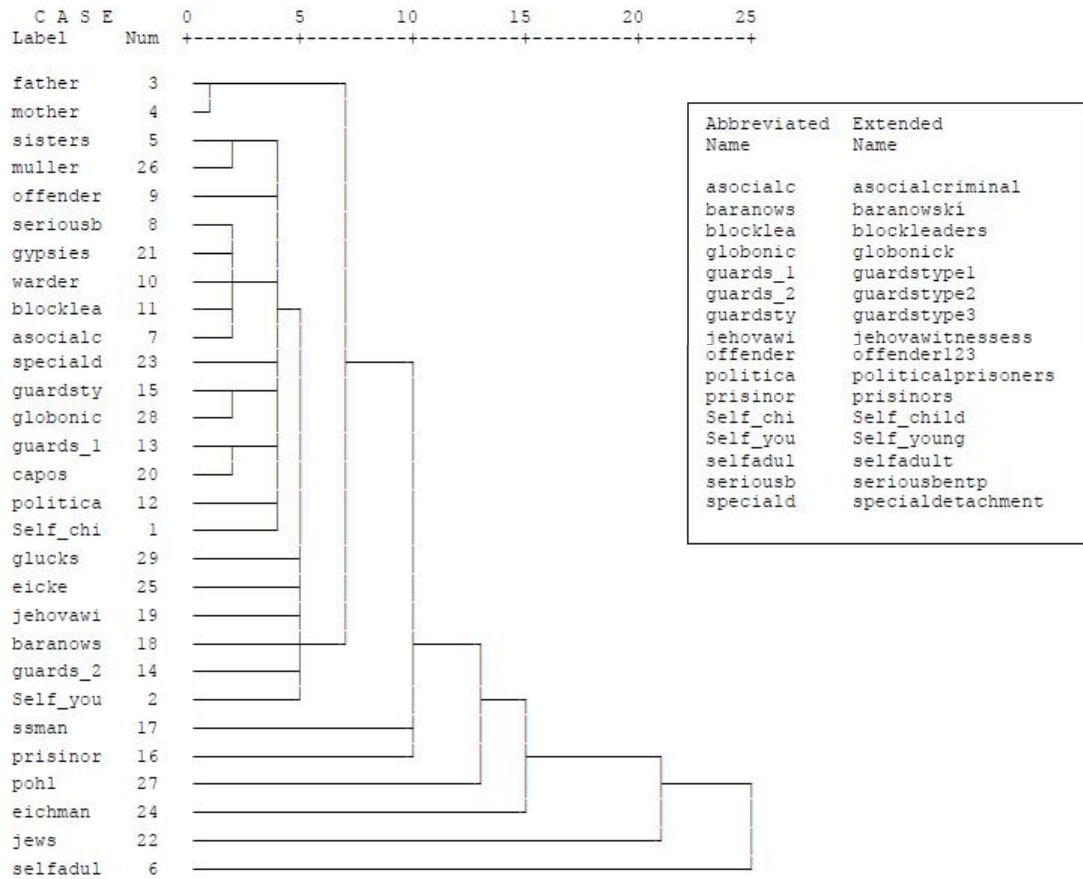
## **Results**

### *Textual Grid Analysis*

The result of the hierarchical cluster analysis of the elements is shown as a dendrogram in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Element dendrogram from textual grid analysis



Most of the elements are lumped together in one big but rather heterogeneous cluster, which is difficult to characterize. Separated from it are mother and father. On the other hand, the self as adult and Jews were construed as different from all other elements. The elements Pohl and Eichmann, both high-ranking SS officers, are also fairly isolated elements. It should be noted, however, that the solution of this cluster analysis must be viewed with caution as the clusters are heterogeneous, not stable, and a ‘chaining effect’ of isolated elements is visible. A nonlinear principal component analysis was therefore conducted, excluding all elements to which less than three constructs were applied and a 2-dimensional solution emerged (see Figure 2). Based on the factor loadings, the first component was largely defined by Hoess’s

parents. The second component, which is independent of the first, is bipolar and contrasted him as an adult with SS men, which is perhaps consistent with Fransella's (1977) demonstrations of dissociation of the self from a negative stereotype of a group to which one belongs.

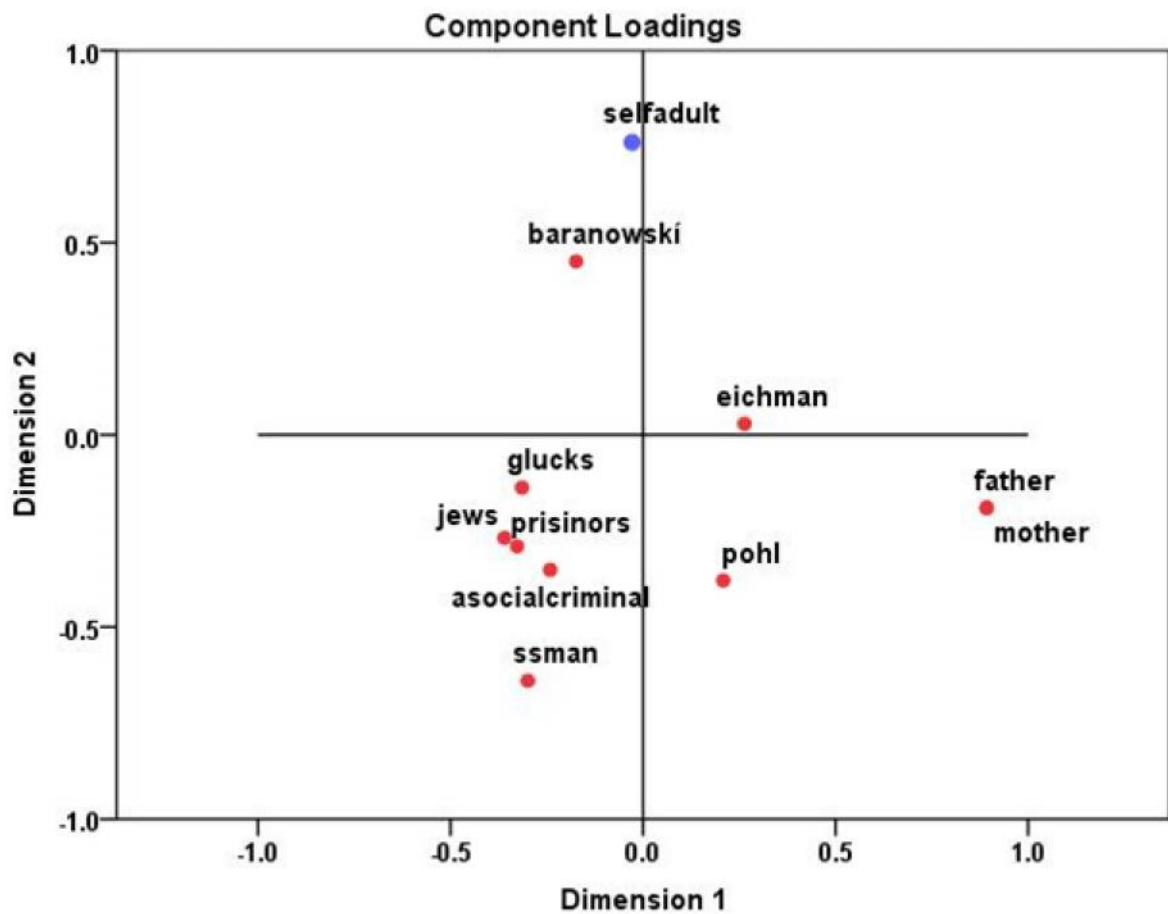


Figure 2: Factor plot of the loadings of the elements (non-linear PCA)

IDIOGRID analysis of the second textual grid, in which Landfield's (1971) construct content categories were used, confirmed the construed dissimilarity between the self as adult and all other elements, the closest element to the self being prisoners.

Jews were viewed as being most similar to the self as a young man. Analysis of the third textual grid, which used the Feixas et al. (2002) construct content categories, again indicated that the self was construed as very different from other elements, but self as a young man was construed as most similar to Jews, as well as to his father.

Interpretations of the textual grid results are speculative since the skewness of construct and element statistics questions the appropriateness of multivariate methods of analysis. An alternative method, the self-identity plot (Makhlouf-Norris and Norris, 1973), provides a graphic illustration of Hoess's construed isolation from others in that, on the horizontal axis, representing similarity to his adult self on the left, every element is viewed as distant from the adult self (see Figure 3).



Figure 3. Self-identity plot

A more qualitative approach, which may provide an indication of conflict in construing, is the identification of occasions when contrasting poles of a construct category are applied to a particular element. In relation to the adult self, as indicated in Table 1, this occurred with Landfield’s construct categories concerning social interaction, forcefulness, organisation, tenderness, and involvement.

<b>Social Interaction</b>	
<b>i) Active</b>	<b>ii) Inactive</b>
talkative	unapproachable
securely attached to family	unsociable
	tongue tied
<b>Forcefulness</b>	
<b>i) High</b>	<b>ii) Low</b>
firm	obedient
obstinate	exhausted
boisterous	dejected
	weary
	satisfied
	disillusioned
	powerless
<b>Organisation</b>	
<b>i) High</b>	<b>ii) Low</b>
tidy and clean	unable to concentrate
never drunk	absent-minded
	bewildered
<b>Tenderness</b>	
<b>i) High</b>	<b>ii) Low</b>
never cruel	strict
soft	bloodthirsty beast
not indifferent to human suffering	cruel sadist
not evil	mass murderer

Table 1

A closer examination of the sections of text concerned indicated that for some of the categories, such as social interaction, the variation in self-constructions essentially involved what Kelly (1955/1991) would have termed slot rattling, reflecting changes in his mood state, some of which were alcohol-induced. For others, such as organisation and forcefulness, some of the variations reflected changes in his context, for example from being a prisoner as a young man to being a concentration camp commandant. More interesting, though, are the variations in his self-construing on the tenderness dimension. His constructions of himself in terms of high tenderness, for example as 'never cruel', and someone who 'had a heart' and was 'not indifferent to human suffering', appeared to indicate how he viewed his basic character. On the other hand, his constructions of himself in terms of low tenderness in some cases indicated views that he considered others held of him, such as being a 'cruel sadist' and 'bloodthirsty beast'; and in others, such as being 'cold' and 'stony', they reflected a façade that he considered that it was necessary to adopt. Thus, he was able to view the person who appeared to lack tenderness as not the *real* Rudolf Hoess, who was a character too complex for others to have the capacity truly to understand.

On the Feixas et al. system, as indicated in Table 2, the categories on which there was conflict in construing of the adult self were warm and cold; extroverted and introverted; conformist and rebel; dependent and independent; peaceable and aggressive; sympathetic and unsympathetic; and active and passive.

<b>Warm</b>	<b>Cold</b>
never cruel	stony
merry	cold
	often severe
	strict
	bloodthirsty beast
	cruel sadist
	mass murderer
<b>Extroverted</b>	<b>Introverted</b>
talkative	unapproachable
	unsociable
	tongue-tied
<b>Conformist</b>	<b>Rebel</b>
obedient	enemy of the state
<b>Dependent</b>	<b>Independent</b>
securely attached to family	independent
<b>Peacable</b>	<b>Aggressive</b>
hatred foreign to nature	irritable
<b>Sympathetic</b>	<b>Unsympathetic</b>
soft	hard
not indifferent to human suffering	thinks worst of everyone
had a heart	
ready to see the best in fellow creatures	
<b>Active</b>	<b>Passive</b>
boisterous	exhausted

Table 2

### *ABC Analysis*

The ABC analysis was conducted in order that an apparent “implicative dilemma” (Tschudi, 1977) expounded by Hoess could be explored. This dilemma, which relates to the issue of whether Hoess felt guilt about his role as an SS officer in the concentration camp service, is outlined in Table 3. It is apparent that, from *his* point of view, he has many 'good' reasons to stay in the concentration camp service. To him, it makes more sense not to change and to stay in the service of one of the principal instruments of terror of the Nazi state.



<p><b>A1. Present State</b></p> <p><i>In the concentration camp service</i></p>	<p><b>A2. Desired State</b></p> <p><i>In a 'normal' SS unit or back to his former life as a farmer.</i></p>
<p><b>B1. Disadvantages of Present State</b></p> <p><i>Cannot pursue his true vocation as a farmer.</i></p> <p><i>Have to witness and ultimately be responsible for the cruelty towards prisoners by others.</i></p> <p><i>Not able to show his real human feelings; cannot sympathise with the lot of the prisoners.</i></p> <p><i>Have to be "cold and even stony" and stifle my human emotions.</i></p>	<p><b>B2. Advantages of Desired State</b></p> <p><i>Could continue to be a farmer.</i></p> <p><i>Would not have to be witness to and ultimately responsible for the cruelty towards prisoners by others.</i></p> <p><i>Could show his "inner feelings" and real character.</i></p>
<p><b>C2. Advantages of Present State</b></p> <p><i>Can wear the black uniform of the SS and have a secure well paid job.</i></p> <p><i>Doesn't have to admit that he is too soft for the job of camp commandant and risk being expelled from the SS and made a "laughing stock".</i></p> <p><i>Can comply with his oath of loyalty to the SS and his vow of fidelity to the Führer.</i></p>	<p><b>C1. Disadvantages of Desired State</b></p> <p><i>Would have to leave the SS and give up the black uniform and the privileges that go with it.</i></p> <p><i>Would show "weakness" if he asked to leave the concentration camp service.</i></p> <p><i>Would have to face being cashiered or discharged from the SS.</i></p> <p><i>Would have had to disregard his oath of loyalty to the SS and his vow of fidelity to the Führer.</i></p> <p><i>Would have to betray the Führer and National Socialism.</i></p>

Table 3. ABC analysis of a dilemma faced by Hoess

*Self-Characterisation Analysis*

The context in which he wrote about his life means that the issue of guilt is a constant shadow in the background of Hoess's narrative. How could someone who has committed mass murder in the most sinister of contexts not feel guilt? Kelly

(1955/1991) explains our need to assume that people 'must' feel guilty for their misdeeds by suggesting that attributing guilt is a prerequisite for punishing an offender - we have to assume the offender feels guilty *so that* we can justify punishing him/her:

“In order to take protective steps against the threat that his presence arouses within us we take symbolic measures called ‘punishment’ against him [the evildoer] ..... That may makes us feel a little safer from the looming shadow of ourselves as ‘evildoers’. We treat the evildoer as if *he* were experiencing guilt.” (pp. 505-506)

However, though he was found ‘guilty’ by a court, it is unlikely that Hoess felt guilt in the personal construct psychology sense of the word, which, as will be explained, demands that a person is dislodged from his “core role structure” (Kelly, 1955/1991, p. 502). Such ‘dislodgement’ is far more psychologically far-reaching than, say, the hardship Hoess says he felt at exterminating the gypsy population in Auschwitz even though the gypsies were his “best loved prisoners” (Hoess, 2000, p. 128).

Kelly's definition of guilt is very different from that applied in the typical criminal justice system. For Kelly, guilt was about a person 'feeling guilty' from a psychological point of view, as opposed to being 'found guilty' by others. Hoess (2000) admitted his guilt in the legalistic sense:

"Unknowingly I was a cog in the wheel of the great extermination machine created by the Third Reich. The machine has been smashed to pieces, the engine is broken and I, too, must now be destroyed." (p. 181)

Despite his curious use of the word "unknowingly", Hoess's guilt from the point of view of the criminal law under which he was tried is undoubted. However, whether he felt guilt in the Kellyan sense for his part in the Holocaust is perhaps less likely. It *is* likely, though, that Hoess felt Kellyan guilt in other areas - or might have done, had he not obeyed the orders given to him. An examination of the complex relationship between Hoess and Kellyan guilt will now be attempted, by first describing the theoretical aspects of Kellyan guilt and then exploring Hoess's autobiography to see how it measures up to those aspects.

Kelly (1955/1991) said that:

"Guilt refers to a condition of the person's construction system and not to society's judgement of one's moral culpability" (p. 489)

and he defined guilt as:

"Perception of one's apparent dislodgement from his core role structure" (p. 502)

Therefore, to feel guilty in the Kellyan sense, Hoess would have had to have been dislodged from his core role structure. As Walker (1996) notes, Kelly "gave no explicit definition of 'core role structure'" (p.14). However, Kelly (1955/1991) did say that a person's core role is:

"..... based upon a construction whose elements are the presumed constructs of certain other persons. A core role involves that part of a person's role structure by which he maintains himself as an integral being." (p. 503)

From what he said in his autobiography, it is clear that as an SS officer, Hoess's "core role" was to do his duty and carry out his orders, for the benefit of what he considered to be the greater good. He wrote:

"I regarded the National Socialist attitude to the world as the only one suited to the German people. I believed that the SS was the most energetic champion of this attitude and that the SS alone was capable of gradually bringing the German people back to its proper way of life." (Hoess, 2000, p. 180)

and,

"If the Führer had himself given the order for the 'final solution of the Jewish question', then for a veteran National-Socialist [i.e. such as himself] and even more so for an SS officer, there could be no question of considering its merits." (ibid, p. 145)

So, far from feeling guilty about obeying his orders to commit mass murder, it is more likely that he would have felt Kellyan guilt if he had *refused* to obey the orders he had been given. Indeed, it can be argued that Hoess acted as he did to *avoid* feeling guilty.

Kelly (1955/1991) was in no doubt about the powerful force of guilt as it is defined in personal construct theory:

"A man [sic] belonging to a preliterate culture establishes for himself a core role structure based upon his *membership in a tribe*. Then he breaks taboo. He no longer belongs. He may not even be able to sustain life in the face of this guilty loss." (p. 504 - our italics)

Avoiding the "threat of guilt" (ibid, p. 877) is a powerful brake on destructive

behaviour occurring within a society and that would seem to apply even to societies such as Nazi Germany and cultural groups within it such as the SS. Hoess (2000) describes the relationship of members of the SS to Himmler, his 'tribal chief':

"As Reichsführer SS, his [Himmler's] person was inviolable. His basic orders, issued in the name of the Führer [i.e. Adolf Hitler], were sacred. They were carried out ruthlessly and regardless of consequences, even though these might well mean the death of the officer concerned ...." (p. 145)

and,

"What the Führer, or in our case his second-in-command, the Reichsführer SS, ordered was always right." (ibid)

With grim irony, where Kellyan guilt *can* be detected in Hoess's autobiography is in his discussion about the treatment (as opposed to the murder) of prisoners. He actually says:

"And it is here that my guilt actually begins." (Hoess, 2000, p. 80)

At this point, most readers would perhaps predict an outpouring of shame and self-disgust by Hoess, but Hoess's confession to feeling guilty seems to be because his "sympathies lay too much with the prisoners" (ibid) and so he considered himself "not suited" (ibid) to the concentration camp service. For example, he refers to a time when he was working in a concentration camp when he seems to have felt guilt because he saw prisoners being maltreated and he lacked the courage to stand up for them (Hoess, 2000 at p. 80-81). When writing about the treatment of prisoners in Auschwitz, he says:

"When during the course of this investigation I have had to listen to descriptions of the fearful tortures that were enacted in Auschwitz and also in other camps, my blood runs cold. I knew very well that prisoners in Auschwitz were ill-treated by the SS, by their civilian employers, and not least of all by their fellow-prisoners. I used every means at my disposal to stop this. But I could not." (p. 178)

## **Discussion**

In this article our aim has been to take a credulous attitude and to attempt to understand Rudolf Hoess by applying Kelly's personal construct psychology to construe his autobiography.

The incorporation of some novel modifications, such as the use of construct coding systems, into textual grid analysis of Hoess's autobiography has allowed us to begin to construe his construction processes. The indication from this analysis that he saw some similarities between Jews and himself as a young man suggests that Jews may have been threatening to Hoess since, in the words of Landfield's (1954) exemplification hypothesis of threat, 'a person would be perceived as threatening if he appeared to exemplify what the perceiver once was but no longer is.' Kelly (1955) used this hypothesis to explain the threat posed by evildoers, and consequent punitive behaviour towards them. It has similarly been used to explain staff attitudes, and practices, towards psychiatric patients in the U.K. and Sierra Leone. Staff who saw psychiatric patients as similar to themselves were more likely to be opposed to their discharge from hospital in the U.K. (Winter, Baker, and Goggins, 1992), and more likely to keep them in chains in Sierra Leone (Winter et al., 2010). Arguably, this reduced threat by emphasizing the distance between psychiatric patients and the staff

members themselves and, conceivably, extermination of Jews could have served a similar purpose for Hoess.

The picture of Hoess described in the textual grid also bears a remarkable similarity to the arsonist described by Fransella and Adams (1966). Those authors found that even though the person in question had been convicted of nine acts of arson, he did not see himself as 'an arsonist' - indeed, he saw himself as being a quite different sort of person from an arsonist, even when he was lighting fires. *His* reasons for committing arson were quite different from those of arsonists in general (Bannister and Fransella, 1986). So too it seems to be with Hoess. He freely admits that he was guilty of mass murder, but his reasons for committing these acts are not those of someone who was wicked, but of someone who was just obeying orders and doing his duty as a soldier. As Hoess says:

"Let the public continue to regard me as the blood-thirsty beast, the cruel sadist and the mass murderer; for the masses could never imagine the commandant of Auschwitz in any other light.

They could never understand that he, too, had a heart and that he was not evil." (Hoess, 2000, p. 181)

Such people are perhaps not nearly as unusual as we would like to think and the recent murders in Norway by Anders Breivik (Walters, 2011; Winter and Tschudi, 2012) may prove to be yet another example of this way of construing.

Hoess's writing supports the view that for him the SS was certainly a "culture group" (Kelly, 1955, p. 909), or "tribe" (ibid, p. 504) and that it went to extreme

lengths to create a culture that would bind its members together inextricably. Indeed, the chief of the SS, Heinrich Himmler, modelled it upon the Jesuits (Höhne, 1972).

In the context of his life at Auschwitz, the "certain other persons" (Kelly, 1955, p. 503) involved in the core role structure of Hoess were the senior members of his SS "tribe" - people who were themselves the prime movers in perpetrating the Holocaust. Their construing can be found in documents such as the minutes of the Wannsee Conference held in 1942, at which the "Final Solution of the Jewish Question" (the Nazi euphemism for the murder of the Jews) was determined by the SS (Snyder, 1995).

Kelly (1955/1991) also understood how those wishing to control others can *use* guilt to get them to do their bidding. He wrote:

"Because guilt is such a powerful destructive agent there is great danger in letting the means for making people feel guilty rest in the hands of hostile persons .....

..... he [the hostile person] demands appeasement of his original views. He condemns 'deviationists from his party line,' ... If he has the means to excommunicate members of this group, he may effectively use their vulnerability to guilt order to obtain appeasement for himself.

.....No one is capable of taking a wholly independent stand against such tyrants if his core role is really jeopardised ..... To give a person control over the means of making others feel guilty is, in some respects, equivalent to giving him control over life and death. In fact, ordinary death is



less threatening to people than is the total loss of their core role." (pp. 909-910)

Erich Fromm described Himmler, Hoess's boss, as "an example of the sadistic authoritarian who developed a passion for unlimited control over others." (Snyder, 1995, p. 148). Such a man seems very likely to be extremely hostile in the Kellyan sense<sup>1</sup> and just the sort of person to use guilt as a tool in the way that Kelly described. That might indeed, to use Primo Levi's expression, persuade someone like Hoess to lead an "exemplary life" of disciplined conformity and unquestioning obedience, in order to maintain his core role structure.

Thus, it seems that because it was against the rules as laid down by his superiors to mistreat prisoners, Hoess was thereby dislodged from his core role structure and felt guilt. However, he felt no guilt about murdering them in their millions, because those same superiors had decreed that was to be done. So Hoess was *not* a man who could not feel guilt in the Kellyan sense: on the contrary, he is actually an exemplar of that view which requires that guilt has to be understood by looking at a person solely from their subjective point of view.

Primo Levi wrote the introduction to Hoess's autobiography, so perhaps it is appropriate for him to have the last words in this article. In his book, *If this is a man - The truce*, Levi (1987) pointed to another aspect of Kellyan guilt: the subjective guilt the innocent can feel in the presence of evil perpetrated by others. So it was when the Soviet army liberated Auschwitz and those prisoners who had remained in the camp met their saviours. Levi (1987) says:

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<sup>1</sup> Kelly (1955/1991) describes "hostility" as "... the continued effort to extort validation evidence in favor of a type of social prediction which has already been recognized as a failure." (p. 565)

"They [the Soviet soldiers] did not greet us, nor did they smile; they seemed oppressed not only by compassion but by a confused restraint, which sealed their lips and bound their eyes to the funereal scene. It was that shame we knew so well, the shame that drowned us after the selections [the process by which the SS chose prisoners to be murdered], and every time we had to watch, or submit to, some outrage: the shame the Germans did not know, that the just man experiences at another man's crime; the feeling of guilt that such a crime should exist, that it should have been introduced irrevocably into the world of things that exist, and that his will for good should have proved too weak or null, and should have availed in defence." (p. 188)

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