

MAN'S INHERENTLY GOOD NATURE

Throughout the ages, the question has been posed as to whether man is inherently good or not. From all outward appearances, there doesn't seem to be any effective way of answering this question. *If* the answer were to state that he is good, then this would seemingly imply that all men are born this way. If that were the case, then how does one explain career criminals, or other who commit heinous actions with frequency (i.e. Hitler and Stalin)? This paper will address these questions from a psychiatric perspective (more precisely, by addressing the issue at the level of the unconscious mind). It should be stated that although the question of man's inherently good nature will be fully addressed, the anomaly pertaining to those who regularly engage in heinous acts will only be broadly addressed. This is for the simple reason that the most judicious way of focusing and studying the aetiology of (as an example) career criminal behaviour, is to work on an individualistic basis. If one attempts to proceed with broad overall generalizations (in relation to aberrant behaviour), this is overwhelmingly conducive to the formation of highly erroneous conclusions. Once these questions are answered, the answers will illuminate another question that had been the bane of human existence (especially in the United States, and until recently, South Africa.). This pertains to the genesis of racism. The reader may feel that this is a foolish question to ask. Obviously white people were opposed to coloured people because they were coloured. This, of course, is clear. The question is, *why precisely* was skin colour such a divisive issue for whites for so long? Why couldn't whites recognize that blacks were their fellow human beings who did not deserve to be subjugated and discriminated against? This paper will elucidate upon this.

When the reader initially reads the central thesis of this paper, initially, it will be confusing. You will not comprehend its meaning, or the nature of the central concept which I am striving to convey. Its explication will be presented within the course of the paper.

Man is inherently good for when we look at others, we see "ourselves". This results in an overwhelming tendency to treat others as we would wish to be treated by others.

As forewarned, this is obviously of an extraordinarily nebulous nature. Unfortunately, its exposition *cannot* be stated simply. Its apposite exposition will be of a somewhat elaborate nature.

The single most perplexing component of the thesis pertains to how we see "ourselves" when we look at others. When we look at others, we see individuals who are clearly and distinctly different from ourselves. How could we possibly see "ourselves" when we look at others? It is patently evident that one does not see an individual who physically resembles one's self when one looks at another person. Therefore, what is the precise meaning of the initial part of this thesis? This will be the most elaborate aspect to clarify in the presentation of this paper.

Ideally, we would like to believe that we are all equal to each other and no one person should ever be above another. Although we might like to think that this ideal is actually in effect, is this principle true *in practice*? In order to illustrate that this is not true in practice, a blatant example shall be delineated from the bastion of brotherly equality, the communist Soviet

Union. I was told by an individual who grew up under Soviet communism that when addressing strangers, the most common term was *tovareesh* (comrade). However, this term was not utilized when addressing convicted criminals. This is for the simple reason that they committed acts of treason against the Soviet motherland. Therefore, they were not your comrade. Instead, if you chose to be formal with them, you would instead use the term *grazhdaneen* (citizen). This would be the most blatant example that all people within society are not equal even if we would like to believe that in principle, we are equal. In the West, the inequality among individuals manifests itself via the salaries that are earned. Those who earn the higher salaries are, generally speaking, more valued by society. Doctors, lawyers, and scientists are valued to a larger extent by society than waiters, janitors, and garbage men. Consequently, the wealth and social standing of the former are at a much higher level than the latter. Accordingly, it is our skills (or lack thereof) which will establish the differences among us, and our value to society.

These disparities are not to be taken lightly. One individual may become a serial rapist, another spends a life time in menial low paying work, a third runs a small business which employs ten people (thereby providing a livelihood for the families of these ten people), and the fourth cures cancer. There are *inordinate* chasms among these four people. Their overall value to society is highly varied in nature. Consequently, the following critical principle should be kept in mind (despite the fact that it is somewhat obvious). *It is the product of our minds which will establish the differences among us.* It is this principle which will begin to illuminate what the initial part of this paper's thesis entails.

Are we capable of looking at another person and *knowing* the product of their minds? Barring peripheral factors such as grooming and clothing, when we walk down the street, do we know who is the rapist, the worker engaged in menial work, the small businessman, or the biochemist? Obviously not. Even the peripheral factors of grooming and the sophistication of the attire has the potential to be highly misleading. When women have allowed perfect strangers into their home (via a pretext on the part of the stranger), and subsequently been raped by them, the woman has been asked why she allowed a perfect stranger into her home for *any* reason. Part of her answer was that he was well dressed, well groomed, and perfectly mannered. He didn't seem like a criminal. Unfortunately, this well dressed, well groomed, and perfectly mannered person *was* a rapist. To take this one step further, let us take two exceedingly diverse individuals. One is a mass murderer, the other is the world's leading neurosurgeon. The latter is so skilled that he has been capable of saving countless lives via operations that no other neurosurgeon in the world could perform. If we were oblivious as to whom was whom, and both were equally well dressed/groomed, could we ascertain who was who *merely* by looking at them? Certainly not. Therefore, keep the following in mind. Although it is the product of our minds which establishes the differences among us, *we are incapable of ascertaining the product of a person's mind merely by looking at him.*

The two principles which will have bearing on the preliminary part of the thesis from page one are as follows.

1. It is the product of our minds which will establish the differences among us.
2. We are incapable of ascertaining the product of a person's mind merely by looking at him.

When we look at another person, whom do we see? Do we see another person who's much "worse" than us (a career criminal). or do we see someone who's much "better" than us (the neurosurgeon who's saved countless number of lives). It is impossible to ascertain merely by looking at them. There are inordinate differences among the products of various people's minds, yet we have no way of knowing the precise nature of these differences merely by looking at the person. Given these principles, when we look at another person whom *do* we see?

We see "ourselves". Since we are *incapable* of looking at another person and knowing the product of their mind, we see somebody who we assume to be no better or worse than us. Since we see somebody who is like us, then there will be an inordinate tendency to treat them the way we ourselves desire to be treated. Since we ourselves would like to be treated well, we will also tend to treat others reasonably well. Ergo, man *is* inherently good.

In my paper on The Origins of Religion, I conducted a thought experiment in order to fortify the thesis of that paper. (If you did not read that paper, I have no intention of repeating myself in *this* paper for the sole purpose of elucidating upon the precise nature of a "thought experiment".) I shall now conduct another thought experiment in order to fortify the thesis of this paper.

For the purpose of this thought experiment (hereupon referred to via the physics term of a Gedanken experiment), we shall assume that two highly diverse (yet equally) intelligent species evolved here on earth. One would have been the human species, the other would have been crocodiles (for the purpose of this Gedanken experiment the crocodiles are just as intelligent as we are and possess an equal capacity for the development of a civilization that is the equivalent of ours). Working within the parameters of this hypothetical scenario, conflict would have inevitably arisen between these two species. They would have been in a perpetual state of war and may have succeeded in wiping each other out. This would have been for one primary reason. When these species looked at each other, they would not have seen "themselves". They would have seen an organism which was *exceedingly different* from themselves. Consequently, there would have been the (unconscious) feeling that this other organism was beneath their own species *regardless of the fact that the product of their minds were fundamentally equivalent*. On this earth, we will only treat another member of a species the way we ourselves would wish to be treated if we see "ourselves" when we look at that species. An additional degree of evidentiary foundation can be established for this principle by scrutinizing a situation outside the parameters of the presented Gedanken experiment .

When a zookeeper (or some other animal trainer) appears on a talk show to present his animals, there consistently seems to be one type of animal which seems to elicit the strongest response from the audience. Namely, a baby chimpanzee (an adult chimpanzee doesn't elicit the same response as babies are "cuter"). The reason for this can be found, to one extent or another, within this paper. Although we certainly do not see "ourselves" when we look at a chimpanzee, monkeys are the one species which bears the greatest "resemblance" to us. They have a head like ours (in contrast to a dog's head), two arms, a torso, and two legs. There is no other animal which bears such a resemblance to humans. To take this one step further, if there is an only child who experiences difficulties making friends, the *best* type of pet for this child would be a monkey. This monkey may be the closest thing to a friend that the child would experience. This is for the simple reason that when the child looks at the monkey, this is the one animal in which he sees, to some superficial extent, "himself ".

Although this (fundamentally) completes the exposition of the thesis of this paper, certain principles must be clarified and extended. When the product of a person's mind *is* known (via their actions) society could be divided into two groups in relation to how these individuals are treated. One group may be comprised of individuals who would be viewed as "morally corrupt" (to say the least). As an example, there may be "stuck up snobs" who refuse to give appropriate tips to those in the service sector. Their fundamental attitude would be that they're "losers" who deserve their lot in life. Although this is *not* an example of a person being "morally corrupt" if they are cognizant of the product of a person's mind, the following examples may show that, at the very least, the moral fibre of some should be seriously questioned. When Ted Bundy (a mass murderer) was executed in Florida in the late '80's, on the night of his execution there were people on the streets holding signs saying Nice day for a Bundyque, or Have a seat Ted. They *enjoyed* the fact that he was being killed. Another example of this would be as follows. In the past, I have seen advertisements in magazines (aimed at the military) for T-shirts saying I'd rather be killing terrorists. Again, the idea of taking joy in the killing of another person prevails. A certain proportion of society advocates attitudes of this nature and sees nothing wrong with it. However, another proportion of us believe in the following. *Regardless of what that person has done (or their station in life) they are still a human being and are fully entitled to a minimal level of treatment.* This means that if you engage the services of those in the service sector, they are entitled to a tip which is commensurate with their performance. Furthermore, even if a person is a terrorist who has killed dozens of innocent people, there is no need to experience actual joy in taking his life during the course of combat. Although I am fully cognizant of the fact that a professional soldier must be capable of killing without regret or remorse (otherwise he will fail in his duties thereby causing his own death and possibly the death of his entire team), there is a chasm between killing without remorse and actually enjoying the process of killing. For those who wish to call themselves professional soldiers, they must walk the fine line between the two (otherwise they're little better than psychotic murderers themselves). *If the reader agrees with me on the latter point, the question must be raised, why are there people in the former group given the nature of this paper? For that matter, given the nature of this paper, why are there career criminals, or butchers like Hitler, and Stalin?*

As stated towards the beginning of this paper, this will only be addressed in broad terms. The simplistic answer is that we must scrutinize the influences that these individuals have experienced during the course of their lives. The "stuck up snob" may have been born to wealth and privilege and been taught by his (conceited) parents to look down upon those whose station in life is lower than his. The soldier who was taught to kill without remorse may have taken his lessons too far by crossing the line and actually finding killing gratifying. The career criminal may have started to associate with those on society's fringe (gangs) and been "indoctrinated" with a mentality of maintaining a dominant position over the innocent via crime. The domineering boss at work who renders the work place a living hell (thereby behaving in a manner which most people would not behave in) may have allowed power to consume him without thinking about how his actions and deeds are adversely affecting his subordinates. Consequently, the fundamental thesis of this paper remains valid (man is inherently good as when he looks at others, he sees "himself" by virtue of the fact that he is incapable of discerning the product of their minds merely by their appearance, thereby causing him to treat others as he himself would wish to be treated). However, for those who consistently behave in a

reprehensible way, they would have experienced particular influences during the course of their lives which would have induced this aberrant behaviour.

This completes the elucidation of the title of this paper. However, as stated in the introductory paragraph, the tenets thus far established will explicate the psychological genesis of racism. On the basis of what's already been written, the reader should have some rudimentary concept of what will be presented.

When whites looked at blacks, they simply didn't see "themselves". As far as they were concerned, when they viewed a black person there was a clear and unequivocal distinction between themselves and the person they were looking at. Since they didn't see "themselves" there was absolutely no reason to treat blacks the way they themselves would wish to be treated. Consequently, for the longest time, blacks were oppressed and subjugated by whites. There were various factors which exacerbated this precept in the minds of whites. When the slave trade was initiated, blacks were being stolen from African villages which were much simpler than the civilization that was being developed in the West. In the minds of "white America", this fortified their belief that blacks were inferior. Furthermore, since they were slaves, they were obviously denied rudimentary education. As a result of being denied education, their intellectual capabilities were never developed thereby furthering the belief of whites that blacks were inferior people. Even after the abolition of slavery, these beliefs persisted for the longest time. The belief was predominantly rooted in the fact that when a white person looked at a black person, they did not see "themselves", but rather, someone who was distinctly different from them. The white belief in black inferiority was further exacerbated by *alleged* "proof" of their alleged inferiority. Specifically, they were denied education *and* an equal opportunity to succeed in life. Given these latter two facts, it was inevitable that they wouldn't do well in life. Consequently, white oppression continued for the longest time for one primary reason (the psychological basis of racism previously outlined) and two secondary reasons (the denial of education and the refusal to grant blacks an equal opportunity to succeed in life). It was only via the civil movements commencing in the fifties that whites eventually acknowledged that even though there were clear differences in the appearance of whites and blacks, blacks are no less human than whites and they are fully entitled to the same opportunities as whites.

Therefore, what was the psychological genesis of racism? The *psychological genesis* lay in whites not seeing "themselves" when they looked at a black person, but rather seeing someone who was distinct and different from themselves. Consequently, there was no desire whatsoever to treat them as equals. On the contrary, since they were viewed as inferior (and this belief was seemingly fortified by their inferior civilization in Africa in conjunction with the inferior mental capabilities as a result of denying them rudimentary education) they were subjugated and oppressed by whites in order to serve the needs of whites.

Some readers may feel that there is a serious flaw in this theory pertaining to the genesis of racism. This flaw pertains to the caste system of India. This is a sociological system which divides people into various strata *exclusively* on the basis of their birthright. The manner in which the individuals within the lower strata are treated by those of a higher strata can potentially be horrifyingly reprehensible. Just a few examples to delineate this are as follows. If a Brahmin (a member of the highest caste) were to take a shower and then so much as see an Untouchable (a member of the lowest caste), he would take another shower. If a member of the

Untouchables came within physical proximity of a member of a higher caste, the individuals of the higher caste would disperse immediately so that they wouldn't be anywhere near the Untouchable. If the shadow of an Untouchable so much as fell on the food of a higher caste member, the food would be thrown out. (It would only be appropriate to state that there was nothing wrong with these people. This was simply the stigma associated with their caste.) This is how Indians treat their fellow Indians. When Brahmins look at Untouchables, they *do* see "themselves". To be specific, they see an individual with the exact same skin colour as themselves. Yet the treatment of the lower caste members is appalling. Given this fact, how can this theory of racism be accepted as entirely valid?

The reader must give due recognition to the following. It is not only psychological factors which affect man's behaviour. There is also the question of biology *and* sociological factors which have bearing on how man behaves. In India, from the time they are very young, the upper caste members are actively taught to discriminate and oppress the lower caste members. When this is ingrained in you from a young age, it becomes the "natural" way of life, despite it not being psychologically "sound". As a result of upper caste members being indoctrinated from their childhood with these concepts, they victimize the lower caste members despite seeing "themselves" when they look at a lower caste member. To put it succinctly, the explanation of this anomaly is to state that sociological factors should also be given due consideration when developing theories to explain man's behaviour.

Conclusions

1. Man is inherently good. This is the result of him seeing "himself" when he sees others as one cannot ascertain from another's appearance the product of their minds. Since he sees "himself", there is an overwhelming tendency to treat others the way he himself would want to be treated.
2. Those who commit misdeeds/heinous actions with regularity require an analysis of their individual lives to assess the influences which have caused them to behave this way.
3. The psychological genesis of racism can be established via the first conclusion. When whites looked at blacks, they did not see "themselves", but rather, someone who was distinctly different from themselves. Since they did not see themselves, there was no desire to treat them as they themselves would wish to be treated. On the contrary, since they were viewed as inferior, they were subjugated and oppressed by whites.