

**MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. AND NON-PHYSICAL PSYCHOLOGICAL VIOLENCE  
AS A TACTIC FOR POLITICAL CHANGE**

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## Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to assess Martin Luther King Jr.'s theory, practice, and pragmatic function of Nonviolent Direct Action, and to propose that it must be understood as violent in a substantive way. The purpose of interpreting King's Nonviolent Direct Action as violent is to show the efficacy of the theory, which is to fend off critiques of futility and to expose the psychological and philosophical depth of the seemingly simple tactic. Nonviolent Direct Action is commonly considered to be a method of civil disobedience that aims to motivate substantial social or political change without a physically violent clash. However, this thesis identifies more fundamentally the presence of an intention to inflict a harmful or painful psychological effect on those it is directed against, to affect a response from the conscience that motivates a change of behaviour. For that, there must be a strategic staging of events by the oppressed and their supporters who are unable and unwilling to overcome the oppressor on traditionally physically violent terms. The unviability of traditional violence for the oppressed group necessitates a reliance on a psychological tactic to invoke negative emotion in the oppressor. After an introductory chapter, this thesis will proceed to reconstruct King's theory of nonviolence by examining a collection of his written works, written records of his sermons and speeches, and Jonathan Eig's biography *King: A Life*. Next, a chapter is devoted to analyzing the novel categorization in this thesis of Nonviolent Direct Action as violent by considering what psychological violence means, and how other nonviolent tactics that exclude psychological violence are insufficient to effect social or political change in contexts of the oppression of Black Americans. The fourth chapter examines Richard Gregg's book *The*

*Power of Nonviolence*, which supports the case for the use of nonviolent tactics in the face of physically violent oppression. Maintaining, among other things, that nonviolent tactics promote the well-being of the oppressor and the oppressed and allow for good standing between the groups in the future. The fifth chapter contains an exposition of William James's work including *Principles of Psychology* and other essays. Comparisons between James's theory and King's practice will be drawn, especially concerning their positions on innate moral feelings of harmony, dissonance, and the moral universe. The sixth chapter will make concluding remarks.

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## Ch 1 Introduction

This thesis will assess the efficacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s theory of Nonviolent Direct Action as a political tactic in situations of racial oppression and defend it against critiques of futility, inadequateness and general quietism brought against King. Jonathan Eig writes in his new biography, *King: A Life*, that

We don't appreciate that King was making demands, not wishes. "In a sense, we've come to our nation's capital to cash a cheque", he (King) said that summer day in 1963 as he stood at the foot of Abraham Lincoln's statue. We've mistaken King's nonviolence for passivity. We've forgotten that his approach was more aggressive than anything the country had seen- that he used peaceful protest as a lever to force those in power to give up many of the privileges they'd hoarded. We've failed to recall that King was one of the most brutally divisive figures in American history- attacked not only by segregationists in the South but also by his own government, by more militant Black activists and Northern Liberals. (Eig, *King: A Life*. pg. 12-13).

The efficacy of Nonviolence will be shown to be rooted in the psychologically violent aspect of King's seemingly quiet 'lever' of force. The intentional quietness will be shown to be a crucial feature of the discord between an oppressed minority obtaining basic humans rights from under the thumb of an oppressive majority. In the remainder of this introductory chapter, I provide an overview of some main matters of this thesis. The following chapter, titled 'Martin Luther King Jr. and the Functioning of Nonviolent Direct Action' will explore King's practice, his interpretation of the functioning, and understanding

of what it means to enact a tactic of Nonviolent Direct Action. The next chapter titled 'The Nature of Violence and Unavailability of Rational Persuasion' argues that rational persuasion and Nonviolent Direct Action are distinct in that rational persuasion requires an equitable, established relationship, whereas Nonviolent Direct Action is implemented in situations where a relationship cannot be established. Rational persuasion can only be viable when the targeted party is open to being persuaded. This chapter will also posit a special definition of violence to address the paradoxical categorization of a nonviolent tactic as violent in a substantive way. Thus, Nonviolent Direct Action is implemented when there are political or social barricades (like racism) to rationality that cause harm to a person or group which warrants a violent, yet pragmatic, response. The next chapter titled 'Moral Jiu-Jitsu: Combative Nonviolent Manipulation' interprets Richard Gregg's seminal book *The Power of Nonviolence* which suggests that a nonviolent method of resistance against a violent aggressor is efficacious because of the negative emotions and psychological manipulation that is inherent to the functioning of the tactic. The nonviolent resister understands that they will not overpower their aggressor in physical terms, thus, a covert coercion of emotion is implemented to deter physically violent behaviour. Subsequently, the fifth chapter titled 'William James and the Importance of Sentience in Nonviolent Resistance' proposes that a Jamesian lens is critical to understanding King's at times grandiose or religious statements about the inherent goodness of 'this world'. The sixth chapter will conclude this thesis with an explanation and justification of the sense in which an aspect of violence is being attributed to King's program of Nonviolent Direct Action.

More immediately, this chapter provides an overview of the practice of King's

nonviolent resistance as an act of civil disobedience with the intention to create a crisis that cannot be ignored. The crisis involves utilizing what should normally be lawful action to provoke a known physically violent oppressive group to attack an oppressed group. The intention of the provocation is to display the unjustified physical violence and the oppression of which it is an instrument. The spectacle of physical violence by an oppressive group met with intentional, active refrainment to engage by the oppressed group exhibits and amplifies the brutality of the oppressive group and the prevailing injustice. The oppressed group aims to make blatant their oppression by displaying themselves as non-aggressive, non-threatening, and non-combative, rendering the physical violence of the oppressive group unwarranted to themselves and onlookers.

King seeks to alter the ideas of the oppressor rather than match the oppressor with the physical violence the oppressor initiates. If an oppressor strikes the oppressed and the oppressed retaliates or strikes back in self-defense, the oppressed is engaging with their oppressor on terms set by the oppressor, terms that the oppressor knows they will always dominate. King rather 'throws a wrench' into the relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed, pushing the oppressor off their moral footing by refusing to engage in the relation that the oppressor expects. The absence of physical retaliation seeks to create novel doubt in the mind of the oppressor that "maybe I'm doing the wrong thing" or "it feels bad to beat someone who will not defend themselves", creating an unpredictable new relation. This tactic assumes that even the vilest oppressor feels some sort of dissonance in relation to their oppressing. Nonviolence intends to draw out this dissonance in the oppressor and use it as leverage to revise their behaviour; the intention is to stir, jar or rock negative emotions such as shame or guilt in the mind of the

oppressor, and of the citizens generally, at the expense of bodily harm or death to nonviolent resisters.

It is posited by King that *viewing* the physical suffering of non-threatening agents who refuse to physically defend themselves, draws out negative feelings of shame, guilt, doubt, or absurdity. Such feelings of shame, guilt, doubt, or absurdity in an oppressor are often repressed by entitlement, socially inherited ideas, or a fear of losing some advantageous privilege. This thesis will argue that the repression of shame, guilt, doubt, or absurdity in combination with privilege manifests as feelings of anger, hatred, resentment, and superficial superiority. It will be argued that the social, political, and physical oppression without remorse of Black Americans by White Americans is the result of repressed feelings of dissonance (along with socio-economic conditions, international and domestic geo-politics, and historical contributions that are beyond the scope of this paper). This is not to say that White Americans are blameless, or that centuries of 'White evil' can be credited as ignorance. It will not be argued that it is the responsibility of an oppressed group to struggle to treat their own oppression. But it will be argued that understanding White hatred shows why King had to be concerned with how his tactic and its practice were viewed publicly, and thus why Nonviolent Direct Action gets accused of pacifying the White majority.

King asserts that engaging in physical violence breeds feelings of hate, anger and fear which generate an endless cycle of physical violence and the emotions that inform it. It will be shown that King's only reasonable, available tactic for securing voting rights for Black Americans was to create an active psychologically violent tactic that *seemed* quiet, weak, or conceding. Physically violent retaliation or self-defence ran a high risk of

producing an excuse for further oppression or physical violence. Retaliation or self-defence provides 'evidence' to further the production of negative stereotypes about oppressed groups. Thus, King refused to engage with the physical violence exercised by White civilians and police.

It will be argued that the efficaciousness of Nonviolent Direct Action is the causing of psychological pain or suffering in the mind of the opposition as a tactic of intentional behaviour deterrence. The psychological pain or suffering is incurred by behaviour that intends to stir, provoke, or jar feelings of dissonance which will be shown to be violent in nature. This behavioural sense of violence that is posited to be active in Nonviolent Direct Action is further discussed in 'Appendix: Focusing Violence'. The psychological pain or suffering experienced as a product of Nonviolent Direct Action is generated by an active 'intention to inflict' pain and suffering for a purpose. This thesis will show that the intention of King's Nonviolent Direct Action is to create a psychological harm that is of a similar type to that of threatening. Although both threatening and Nonviolent Direct Action abstain from physical altercation, both possess an active intention to cause psychological harm with the intention being a change of behaviour.

Some may say that King's nonviolent tactic must be rooted in rational persuasion. To understand King's Nonviolent Direct Action as amounting to a violent political tactic, it is important to distinguish between King's nonviolence and purely rational persuasion. King posits as his desired ends a community that allows for open communication between members, a general sense of goodwill towards others, an understanding that ideas can be in error, and a harmonious feeling flows from human concern for one another. King calls his ideal the 'Beloved Community'. The Beloved Community not only allows for all

voices to be heard but acknowledges that all voices can have something worth hearing, allowing for a plurality of interest-laden ideas to exist. This presumes that experiences inform ideas, and that feelings of harmony or dissonance result in ideas for the individual who *feels them*. But the reality of the contexts from within which King is operating is a social space that has historically rejected reasonable appeals of equitable communication from oppressed minority groups. King pursued legal and political procedure in hopes of securing voting rights for African Americans, but King's attempts of procedural social and political change were refused. King's attempts of rational persuasion were met with the racism and discrimination he was battling. Rational persuasion cannot be a viable option when the opposition systemically refuses to listen. It will be shown that Nonviolent Direct Action must be a method of last resort because King understands that purposefully agitating the mind of another to experience negative feelings of shame, guilt, doubt, anxiety, or absurdity intentionally inflicts *productive* harm and suffering. King reserved Nonviolent Direct Action for an opposition who present an imminent threat to physical safety and psychological well-being and who also refuse to allow space for rational reasonability.

I devote a chapter to Richard Gregg because he is important to understanding the psychological efficacy of nonviolent political tactics in a way congruent with King's views. Gregg asserts that nonviolence as a political tactic is an appeal to feelings rather than an attempt initially to mitigate actions. He maintains that nonviolence weakens the morale of the opponent, creating an opportunity for defeat, while sets up a foundation for good relations in the future. The refusal to strike one's aggressor signals to the aggressor that regardless of the suffering the aggressor inflicts, the victim at a basic level respects and

cares for the aggressor as a human being, at least refusing to inflict physical suffering. Gregg calls this nonviolent resistance 'Moral Jiu-Jitsu'. Nonviolence as a political tactic is 'Moral Jiu-Jitsu' because it invites the opponent's strike in order to use that strike as an opportunity to suggest a new idea to the opponent in hopes that the new idea will alter the motivation of the opponent to strike again, in effect as in ju-jitsu, drawing the opponent in so as to reverse the opponent's thrust.

It is crucial to understand why the targeting of ideas is so efficacious for King. As will be shown in the chapter on William James, James suggests that it is crucial to grasp the origin of ideas, the inherent partiality to one's own ideas, which makes them difficult to alter, and that action and behaviour are a manifestation of ideas, especially in moral decision-making. James holds that humans feel harmonies and dissonances spontaneously, but just because 'this feels right to me' does not place all moral ideas on equal moral footing. James tells us that we must tolerate the seemingly absurd ideas of others because we can never know how harmonious or meaningful their ideas feel to them, and in the end, they could be right or impart to us some important learning. But James stipulates that felt harmonies of rightness and wrongness are only to be accepted as on an equal moral footing, and thus are tolerable, when a felt harmony or dissonance is harmless to others. The conception of harm that James briefly accepts will be interpreted as being highly contextual, thus avoiding the Jamesian trap of dogma in moral decision making.

King exercises a form of Jamesian tolerance, but receives not tolerance in return, but harm. James would treat this as grounds to abstain from tolerance, which King then does by working to alter ideas that he cannot be expected to tolerate. Due to the partiality

of persons to their felt harmonies and dissonances by virtue of feelings being inherently personal and private, James posits that people can only 'feel their own pain', that initially or directly one's own pain is the only pain that is salient enough to be important to *them*. I suggest that this is why King intended to make pain and suffering blatant for and unignorable by White Americans. Though you cannot feel my pain, witnessing my pain certainly can make you feel something that perhaps you had not felt before.

James theorizes a "moral universe"; where people coexist peacefully, where the ideas of others are tolerated and learned from, and there exists a general *faith* that ideas in conflict can be reconciled. Faith for James is required for the manifestation of any ultimate idea or attitude. For King's Nonviolent Direct Action to be an effective political tactic, he needed to mobilize Black Americans to embody his doctrine of nonviolence. To do so, King had to acknowledge centuries of senseless abuse while endowing Black Americans with a sense of *faith* that nonviolence is the best solution to their conflict. Once faith in Nonviolent Direct Action was instilled, it necessarily had to be perpetuated for the functioning of the tactic. Nonviolent Direct Action requires an enormous amount of faith to put oneself in the way of injury or death in hopes that a purpose will be achieved. So, in addition to the curating and staging of Nonviolent resistance, like the March from Selma to Montgomery, King also instilled a novel faith in Black Americans that their freedom was worth suffering for, that their suffering had a real possibility of delivering their freedom.

Both King and James speak to the role of struggle in the meaning of human life; both assert, as we shall see, that struggling towards a goal is beneficial in and of itself. James asserts that psychologically, if all *moral* conflict were easily reconcilable, it would not feel 'good' or specially satisfying to settle them --that struggle towards an end is

something meaningful and adds a 'zest' to human life. The 'zest' James remarks on explains how King successfully mobilized Black Americans to 'love their oppressor'. Assuredly it is difficult to refrain from matching the physical violence brought against you, but King affirmed that the difficult nonviolent struggle towards desegregation and racial integration is beneficial to the 'Black personality' in and of itself, regardless of the obtainment of full equality. 'Loving the oppressor' will be shown to be deeply and complexly pragmatic, while remaining genuine. 'Loving the oppressor' for King, afforded a superficial membership to the oppressive identity in order to covertly invoke the conscience while avoiding blame and punishment, while aligning with basic Christian moral rules. Refusing to meet the oppressor with the physical violence they initiate and instead matching physical violence with compassion for the oppressor's fallibility, shows an understanding and faith that the victim and the aggressor can join as friends in the future. James's ideas about the psychology of the moral universe, faith, and the origin of ideas show how a difficult struggle toward a goal is required for a feeling of meaningful achievement, thus, the pursuit of Nonviolent Direct Action will be shown to be beneficial in itself.

This thesis acknowledges, as does King, that for those engaging in oppression and physical violence, there exists some feeling of dissonance even without the intentional 'germination' by others of such dissonance. To suggest that negative dissonance would not have occurred without intentional interference from other persons ignores the appeal that both James and King make to innate feelings of harmony or dissonance that naturally exist. To say that White Americans, or any other oppressive majority fail to feel any undesired or unhealthy emotion in reaction to the oppression they

exercise paints the oppressive majority as simply ignorant or mindless. This places the burden of addressing White ignorance wholly on the shoulders of the oppressed or concedes to the ignorance of the oppressive group because 'this is just how they are'. What nonviolence does is *stir up* feelings of dissonance that already exist and converts them into new, motivating negative feelings.

Nonviolent Direct Action is the intentional process of drawing out the oppressor's hate to destabilize it with curated circumstances in which hate becomes shame, guilt, doubt, anxiety, or absurdity. Provoking the feeler to avoid the behaviour that causes them shame, guilt, doubt, anxiety, or absurdity by virtue of the targeting of the conscience. Behaviour that consciously intentions to inflict a painful effect certainly does exist in King's Nonviolent Direct Action, but the effect is not to inflict a negative feeling that did not in some measure exist already. The intention is to bring to the surface emotions of shame, guilt, doubt, or feelings of absurdity and anxiety which possess a more transformative potentiality than emotions of anger and hate.

## Ch 2 Martin Luther King Jr. and the Functioning of Nonviolent Direct Action

Martin Luther King Jr. posited a philosophical doctrine of nonviolence to respond to the oppression, segregation, and physical harm endured by Black Americans at the hands of White Americans. The American crisis of race was perpetuated by Southern attitudes that echoed throughout legislation, often supported by the Supreme Court, which stood in conflict with the radical change in the Black evaluation of the 'self' that emerged following Black participation in the Second World War and rising literacy rates (King, "Non-Aggressive Procedures to Interracial Harmony", pg.2). King cites respect for human dignity as the consideration that makes physical violence impermissible, along with the pragmatic consideration of the potentiality of backlash if physical violence in retaliation were exercised by Black Americans.

Nonviolent Direct Action maintains dignity because it avoids reducing another human to a thing, a thing that can have its life ended on 'your' terms. Physical violence as a remedy for conflict refuses to engage in emotional or psychological dialogue, but rather chooses to eliminate the source of the conflict altogether. Nonviolent Direct Action causes mental pain and suffering but does not destroy the target altogether to simply 'silence the noise'. A primary principled and pragmatic aim for the functioning of Nonviolent Direct Action for its participants, is to assume moral agency of one's oppressor; regarding one's oppressor as capable of acting morally and treating them as such. This signals to the oppressor that the Nonviolent resister does not wish to eliminate them, intending no obvious harm. For King, the nonviolent resister aims to redeem their oppressor and to reform their hatred into understanding, defeating the injustice, while

being careful to avoid defeating those who act unjustly (King, “Non-aggressive Procedure to Interracial Harmony”, pg.3).

King advocated for creating an uncomfortable tension that cannot be ignored (King, “Letter from Birmingham Jail”, pg.2). For example, thousands of nonviolent demonstrators engaged in a 5-day march from Selma, Alabama to Montgomery, Alabama. The publicized purpose of the march was to advocate for voting rights for African Americans. The march became as expected, a physically violent conflict where White civilians and police beat peaceful Black protesters unprovoked. Active nonviolence is the refusal to retreat, acquiesce, or be fearful in the face of physical suffering or death. Selma and Montgomery were chosen because of the city’s reputations for police brutality against Black Americans (Stanford: The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute, “Selma to Montgomery March”). At a blockade of State Troopers and local police on the Edmund Pettus bridge, the nonviolent resisters were asked to disperse, but refused. Cheered on by White onlookers, police beat protesters with clubs, fired tear gas into the crowd, and chased down nonviolent resisters (Stanford: The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute, “Selma to Montgomery March”,). The event was covered on national news and coined “Bloody Sunday” sparking the protest's intended purpose of provoking national outrage (Stanford: The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute, “Selma to Montgomery March”). King asserted that the tension displayed at the Selma to Montgomery march was intended to avoid answering the oppressor with physical harm, avoiding “internal violence of the spirit”, while also being active, resilient, and unrelenting (King, “Non-Aggression Procedures to Interracial Harmony”, pg. 4). This nonviolent tension is curated and implemented by King as a

weapon to disarm a physically violent oppressor by invoking their *conscience*. President Lyndon Johnson said when presenting the Voting Rights Act to Congress that, “The real hero of this struggle is the American Negro. His actions and protests, his courage to risk safety and even to risk his life, have awakened the conscience of this Nation...” (Eig, *King: A Life*, pg. 766). The desired and achieved result was for physically violent oppressors to agree to settle the conflict by peaceful negotiation by what the oppressor would assume is their own accord. However, this recalibration of social opinion and behaviour occurred because of a targeted invocation of the oppressor’s conscience by nonviolent resisters.

King posits that a nonviolent resistance must only be implemented as a method of last resort. The act of civil disobedience organized by King in Birmingham Alabama and the bus boycott that provoked it, was a response to the White majority’s insistence on patient waiting, rather than action towards the enshrinement of the Black right to vote. “This ‘wait’ has almost always meant ‘never’” wrote King, stalling; in lieu of action left the Black community with no other option (King, “Letter from Birmingham Jail”, pg. 2). Nonviolent Direct Action is only a viable option when there has been a thorough collection of data that shows that true injustice exists, and there is civil negotiation following a proper legal procedure where either the procedure or operators are unfavourable towards the negotiator. Additionally, there must be a period of ‘self-purification’ that trains individuals in nonviolent resistance. Nonviolent Direct Action is then implemented where resisters defy some law or rule and expect an onslaught of physical violence in return (King, “Letter from Birmingham Jail”, pg. 3). In the face of physical violence, while refraining from partaking in physical violence, King sought to “create the kind of tension in society that

will help men to rise from the dark depths of prejudice and racism to the majestic heights of understanding and brotherhood.” (King, “Letter from Birmingham Jail”, pg.2). This tension is not created by the nonviolent resisters; rather, it already exists as a quiet undercurrent (King, “Letter from Birmingham Jail”, pg.2). King hopes that once this uncomfortable tension is exposed to the public, a general feeling of uneasiness will result, the uneasiness provoking action towards treating and curing the tension. The uneasy dissonance that King refers to in the mind of the White American oppressor certainly shows up as an ‘uneasy’ or ‘uncomfortable’ tension, but and even more specifically shows up as anger, bitterness, selfishness, entitlement, or rigid individualism.

By virtue of the oppressor’s dominant role, the terms that the oppressor sets will always favour the strengths of the oppressor and target the weaknesses of the victim. In King’s America, about 90% of the population self-identified as ‘White’ (bearing in mind that U.S. Census data was self-proclaimed and only was administered to those living at a permanent residence) (census.gov, “\*Special Edition\* 1950 Census Record Release”). For the Black minority, revolting against their physically violent White oppressor surely would result in domination by the White majority given its sheer size, force, and available resources (King, “Love, Law and Civil Disobedience”, pg. 6). Aside from the practical implications of meeting an oppressive majority with physical violence, if the victim reciprocates the oppressor’s violence, that provides the oppressor with ‘evidence’ to further oppress the victim group. King asserts that a victim community ought to only pursue nonviolent resistance against their physically violent oppressor because it is the only tactic where the size, privilege, or resources do not determine success, determination and faith does instead (King, “Love, Law and Civil Disobedience”, pg. 7).

King identifies ways that victim groups may handle their oppression (King, "Love, Law and Civil Disobedience", pg. 1-2). The victim group could acquiesce, relinquishing dominance to their oppressor and accepting a status of less-than-personhood. The capitalization of stolen Black labour by way of slavery, supported by biased religious views and pseudo-science, portrayed the Black American as non-human. Black Americans were degraded to a status of less than citizenship which produced feelings of dissonance in Black minds that showed up as undeservingness, lack of worthwhileness and general hopelessness. King maintained that "As long as the mind is enslaved, the body can never be free. Psychological freedom, a firm sense of self-esteem, is the most powerful weapon against the long night of physical slavery" (King, *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community*. pg. 44). Illiteracy among Black Americans made social mobility not only impossible but inconceivable. Highly decorated Black World War One veterans, who were not only eligible for but encouraged to apply for GI Bill benefits found that even risking their lives in the name of the American Citizens did not earn them equality. Black veterans were barred entry to banks, their inquiries for student loans dismissed as unserious, and their college applications rejected (Eig, *King: A Life*, pg. 91). The inaccessibility of education made for a starkly identifiable differentiation between the 'ability' of White and Black Americans, further contributing to the aforementioned feelings of inadequacy. The contrast was especially marked in working Black men who were isolated from the education that Black women absorbed by way of the rearing of White children in White homes (King, *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community*, pg. 113). This lack of 'worthwhileness' created by acquiesce reverberated throughout Black communities, instilling in the fabric of Black America that acquiescence was the only

option; accepting a life lived within the parameters of their less-than-personhood with no space to flourish. The hopeless attitude of Black America is reflected in the 'Uncle Tom' characterization of Black Americans as weak, obedient, and servile to White Americans (King, "Non-Aggressive Procedures to Interracial Harmony", pg. 3; Eig, *King: A Life*, pg711-712). The acceptance of 'thing-i-f-cation' was manifested as 'crushing frustration', especially for Black Southerners where racial discrimination was active socially, interpersonally, and legally. Eig writes of King's father and grandfather that:

He (Jim King) never learned to read or write. He never voted. He never owned property. Instead, he lived in a perpetual state of debt to the white man for whom he farmed. He grew lean, edgy, and angry. American hasn't given Jim King much, and then, bit by bit, it took away what little he accumulated, leaving frustration, travail, and rage. That's how his son Michael described it. (Eig, *King: A Life*, pg. 25).

Another possibility King considered was that the victim group could revolt against their oppressor, reciprocating their oppressor's physical violence. This tactic powered by anger was supported by Black activists like Muhammad Ali, Malcom X, and Stokely Carmichael. These activists regarded this option as viable because the violence that the victim discharges is always in self-defence. Some may even say that it would be a disservice or disrespectful to the victim to abstain from retaliatory violence, but King believed that oppressed groups cannot afford to 'flirt' with violence, saying:

there is a voice crying through the vista of time saying "He who lives by the sword will perish by the sword" ...The method of violence would be impractical and immoral. If this method becomes widespread, it will lead to terrible

bloodshed, and that aftermath will be bitterness that will last for generations.

(King, "Non-Aggressive Procedures to Interracial Harmony", pg. 3).

King finds retaliative violence to be 'weak', as conceding to partake in physical violence is a result of poor reflection about the repercussions of one's action. Moreover, King says that engaging in physical violence generates bitterness in the hearts of both the victim and the oppressor.

But endlessly waiting for change to 'man made laws' distorts the personality of Black children and harbours an unconscious bitterness towards all White people, says King (King, *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community*, pg. 106). It is inevitable that when one is infinitely waiting for the human rights which they deserve, they will harbour a resentment towards those who withhold those rights and a sense of 'nobodiness' will set in (King, "Letter from Birmingham Jail", pg. 9). King therefore seeks to harness the tension that comes from resentment and alienation and transform it into 'productive' energy of love and faith, believing that tension is always needed for social change or a shift in understanding (King, "Birth of a New Nation", pg. 9-10). King does not advocate for acquiesce, acceptance of oppression, or violent retaliation. Rather he intended to construct a crisis with the energy of love rather than hate to force open the door of negotiation. Creating a crisis with the energy of hate rather than love firmly seals the door of negotiation shut out of fear.

The social space where a conflict of ideas can be reconciled non-violently King calls positive peace. Positive peace requires a common respect for the human personality and an acknowledgement that dignity is deserved by all humans in common (King, "Non-Aggression Procedures to Interracial Harmony", pg. 2). The presence of positive peace

creates a healthy and mutually beneficial co-existence that King calls the 'Beloved Community' (King, "Birth of a New Nation", pg. 8). The Beloved Community signifies an acknowledgment for respect of others, accepts that humans are fallible beings that can make serious mistakes, but regards all mistakes as having the potentiality of redemption (King, "Non-Aggression Procedures to Interracial Harmony", pg. 2). King asserts that it is prudent for the creation of the 'Beloved Community' to avoid humiliation of the violent oppressor, writing that,

He does not seek to defeat or humiliate him. And I think this is very important, that the end is never merely to protest but the end is reconciliation... Now the method of violence seeks to humiliate and defeat his opponents, and therefore it leads to bitterness". (King, "Non-Aggression Procedures to Interracial Harmony", pg. 3).

By contrast, 'negative peace' is considered as an uneasy climate of non-conflict, which results in acquiescence or violent backlash (King, "Non-Aggression Procedures to Interracial Harmony", pg. 2-3). Even a community of legal desegregation, where two conflicting groups live as legal equals but are socially segregated is not 'true' peace. Negative peace results in a lack of fraternization between groups, negative stereotypes about the victim community, and the common occurrence is physical violence against the victim group by the oppressive group (King, "Non-Aggression Procedures to Interracial Harmony", pg. 2-3). King posits that negative peace can only exist when the victim community agrees to accept segregation or discrimination, shunning their natural craving for freedom and instead conceding the desires of those who are already free (King, 'Love, Law and Civil Disobedience'). Real peace is not the absence of some negative force,

rather real peace is the presence of some positive force for benevolence, common acceptance, and friendship (King, "Non-Aggression Procedures to Interracial Harmony", pg. 2-3).

King asserts that when people are dominated, there will always come a point where the dominated grow tired of their domination:

There seems to be a throbbing desire, there seems to be an internal desire for freedom within the soul of every man. And it's there; it might not break forth in the beginning, but eventually it breaks out. Men realize that, that freedom is something basic. To rob a man of freedom is to take from him the essential basis of his manhood. (King, "Birth of a New Nation", pg. 2)

When people are deprived of freedom, it strips them of their essential basis of personhood, creating feelings of dissonance for both the dominated and the dominator. King cites a 'strange' feeling in Montgomery, that the struggle for justice had a 'cosmic companionship', so "we walked and never got weary" (King, "Non-Aggression Procedures to Interracial Harmony", pg. 5). In other words, it feels bad to be dominated by another human, and it feels bad to deprive a human of their freedom. King asserts that, it "seems to be a fact" that humans cannot do wrong without eventually feeling the need to cover up their wrongdoing with "garnets of righteousness" (King, "Non-Aggression Procedures to Interracial Harmony", pg. 1). A feeling of superiority imparted by generations of ownership of Black labour in combination with a self-serving depiction of God worked as justification for White Americans to subject Black Americans to physical and mental slavery after the eradication of owned labour in 1863. So long as the enslaved agreed to concede

their rights and equal ability to flourish, a quiet negative peace existed, where there was no real justice or feeling of goodness, but there was no blatant conflict. (King, "Non-Aggression Procedures to Interracial Harmony", pg. 2-3).

Negative peace is ideal grounds for the oppressed to hate their oppressor and the oppressor to hate the oppressed, instigating a perpetual cycle of hate and domination. But King insisted that it is unproductive to hate one's aggressor, that hate left alone festers, breeding bitterness, resentment, and fear which cannot be stable grounds for the understanding or respect necessary for lasting positive peace. Rather, one must separate the aggressor from their aggressive actions, understanding the aggressor as a fallible human whose ideas have been misled or distorted. One can correctly judge an action as evil, bad, or harmful, while refusing to categorize the actor as evil, bad, or harmful. King presumably derived this sentiment from the basic Christian teaching to hate the 'sin' but love the 'sinner'. King maintains that even in ignorance or error, the aggressor deserves respect, compassion, and a faith that their behaviour can be redeemed. Separating the action from the actor who has been morally lead astray reframes one's oppressor as fallible, rather than evil. Again, considering centuries of Black oppression and slavery at the hands of White Americans, it is hard to understand how the bombing of children in church or lynching of innocent men is anything less than evil. But King's faith of redemption allowed him to believe that varying degrees of good and evil existed in all humans.

The alternative to loving one's oppressor, is accepting negative peace and its emotional climate. Bitterness towards the situation as 'oppressed' and hatred of the oppressor refuses a faith in the potentiality of goodness in the enemy, engendering a

frustrated radicalism or a sense of surrender (King, "Letter from Birmingham Jail", pg. 9). These negative feelings are naturally occurring in an oppressed community, so these feelings require a release-valve that healthily relieves the oppressed group of their anger and frustration, King writes:

So let him march; let him make prayer pilgrimages to the city hall; let him go on freedom rides and try to understand why he must do so. If his repressed emotions are not released in nonviolent ways, they will seek expression through violence; this is not a threat, but a fact of history. (King, "Letter from Birmingham Jail", pg. 16).

King says that if these strong emotions are not released in a careful, thoughtfully nonviolent way, then surely pent-up frustration will be manifest as a physically violent expression (King, "Letter from Birmingham Jail", pg. 16). For an oppressed group like Black Americans, this runs a costly risk of further oppression, harm, and suffering.

For King, the modern stereotypes of the Black 'criminal', 'Uncle Tom' or 'Br'er Rabbit' are the result of provocation by White citizens and biased legislation. If White America refrained from treating Black Americans with violence, contempt, and hatred then there would be no reaction from Black America that could be misconstrued. Consider the Black Lives Matter protest across the United States in reaction to the murder of George Floyd by police. In Minneapolis, following Floyd's murder, peaceful protest began on May 26<sup>th</sup> (Baily, et al., "Chaotic Minneapolis Protests Spread Amid Emotional Calls for Justice, Peace." *The Washington Post*. May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020). By the evening of May 26<sup>th</sup>, a group of protesters marched to the Minneapolis police department's third precinct and vandalized

the building: spray-painting, throwing rocks and eventually breaking a window (Baily, et al., "Chaotic Minneapolis Protests Spread Amid Emotional Calls for Justice, Peace.", *The Washington Post*. May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020). A skirmish between protesters and vandals broke out with protesters imploring vandals to stop. Minneapolis police returned the vandalism with tear gas and rubber bullets fired into the crowd of vandals and protesters. Following the aggravation by police, the formerly peaceful protest became agitated. Protesters set fire to the third precinct station and looting lasted through May 28<sup>th</sup>. State officials mobilized the National Guard in the largest deployment in American history since World War Two, resulting in two deaths, over six-hundred arrests and half a billion dollars in property damage (Baily, et al., "Chaotic Minneapolis Protests Spread Amid Emotional Calls for Justice, Peace.", *The Washington Post*. May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020). The conflict escalated into a three-day riot that was ultimately defused by military force. The dominant rhetoric was that Black Lives Matter protests are violent, destructive and ought to be stopped by whatever means necessary. In fact, the protest remained peaceful until police aggravated the conflict with violence. As King believed, outbursts of anger and frustration, like the behaviour of the vandals in Minneapolis, although justifiable, runs a high risk of receiving brutality in return and is a poor method of garnering respect and understanding from one's opposition.

The attitudes of the nonviolent resistance that King postulates were first popularized by Gandhi during the Indian Revolution against British control. Gandhi was largely influential for King's non-violent doctrine and provides the basis upon which King constructs his motivation for and theory of nonviolence. An understanding of Gandhi is crucial to understanding King's theory of nonviolence, while also adding crucial

philosophical depth to King's ideas that could otherwise be criticized as shallow or glossing. Gandhi asserts that means matter morally; that means, and ends should always cohere; 'pure' means lead to pure ends (Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj*, pg. 81). For example, retaliative physical violence by a victim with the goal of desegregation may result in the end of desegregation. But physical violence used as a means will always stir hate and bitterness for both the oppressor and the victim. The desired end apparently results, but true understanding, compassion and empathy between groups is excluded by the physically violent means.

Gandhi posits that there is a salient difference between "brute force" and "soul force" (Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj*, pg. 3). Brute force is characterized by physical intervention, while soul force is defined as nudging persuasion without physical duress. Gandhi creates a case to illustrate the difference between soul and brute force; imagine pulling a child from a fire. The ends are favourable; protecting the child from harm that the child is unable to understand or foresee (Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj*, pg. 7). However, the means must be considered as 'brute force' when one intervenes with the child to physically pull them from the fire, even with the well-being of the child being paramount. Here, brute force is permissible in pursuit of the well-being of the child, but this is not to say that brute force is acceptable if the option of soul force is available. Soul force incubates tenets of character that are favourable which brute force does not establish. When the child is pulled from the fire using brute force before they are ever burned, the child will continue to not understand the harm the fire could cause. When brute force is the only method of deterrence, it is possible that the child will come into a situation where they need to be pulled from a fire again. Brute force provides little opportunity for education, persuasion,

or altering behaviour in the long term. If one is to pull the child from the fire each time they fall in, the child will understand that there is something undesirable about falling into fires. But the child will not understand that the fire can burn them, can disfigure them for life, or that their death or injury will cause insurmountable anguish to their parents.

Soul force incubates tenets such as avoidance of self-interest, stirring up the enemy's or the targeted person's consciousness, and making them aware of one's kind heart; it seeks to educate about the wrongdoing (Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj*, pg. 6). You cannot pull a child from imminent harm of third degree burns with soul force; some situations require brute force. However, brute force cannot stand alone as treatment for undesirable behaviour. To alter ideas about 'falling in the fire' soul force must also be employed. The child must be taught that riding a bike around the fire creates the likelihood of falling in, that fire is destructive and painful when touched, and that if the child were injured by the fire, the people who love the child would be hurt as well. When there is no other option, brute force is permissible when self-interest is absent, and well-being is the intended goal. But brute force must be accompanied by soul force to have a lasting transformative effect on ideas and subsequent behaviour.

Considering Gandhi, King sets in place several tenets of his conception of 'good practice' nonviolence. The first is that non-injury must be set firmly as requisite for all those practicing nonviolent resistance. Nonviolence dictates that even when physically struck, it is impermissible to inflict physical injury on another. King says plainly that, "if you are hit, do not hit back" (King, "Love, Law and Civil Disobedience", pg. 2). Engaging in physical violence gives in to one's angry, frustrated, or hateful emotions and allows space for them to fester and multiply; left alone, these emotions perpetuate and are thus set as

central facets of the personality. Once set, these hateful emotions can be passed down generationally, creating sequential decades of unproductive hatred. So, in pursuit of reconciliation and future friendship, nonviolent resisters must protect themselves from hating their oppressor.

King acknowledges that it is instinctual to defend oneself against the threat of injury but maintains that a nonviolent struggle is the only way to obtain pure means that can result in pure ends. Nonviolent struggle is supported by a *faith* that this universe is on the side of justice: “the movement was based on hope, that this movement had something within it that says somehow even though the arc of the moral universe is long, it bends towards justice” (King, “Love, Law and Civil Disobedience”, pg. 7). King’s conception of practical justice involved a law or rule that is in harmony with moral law; any law or rule that uplifts the human personality equally is just, any law or rule that degrades the human personality is unjust (King, “Letter from Birmingham Jail”, pg. 10). Thus, all rules or laws that enshrine racial segregation by being applicable to some, not all, are unjust. Preferential treatment by the law predicated upon race “distort[s] the soul and damages the personality. It gives the segregate a false sense of superiority and the segregated a false sense of inferiority” (King, “Letter from Birmingham Jail”, pg. 10). Nonviolent resistance principally requires *belief* that the project could result in the desired ends. King says, “with this faith we will be able to adjourn the councils of despair, and to bring new light in the dark chambers of pessimism” (King, “Lost Speech”, *The Washington Informer*). So, it is this deep faith in an alternative that makes reconciliation a viable option in the eyes of nonviolent resisters (King, “Love, Law and Civil Disobedience”, pg. 7).

King has a faith that this universe is on the side of his conception of justice. Thus,

King and his other nonviolent resisters manifest justice by their means. Other Black activists, like Malcolm X, had faith that a different tactic would result in desegregation, that being more militant would bring about an end to the race conflict in the United States. The use of militancy may feel like a natural choice as it may feel more instantly satisfying but seeking desegregation by physical violence only instigates further violence. King was sympathetic to Malcolm X, as acquiescing to White oppression cannot be an acceptable existence. But for King, physical tactics like militancy fail as a tactic for political and social change because they set the oppressor and the oppressed in opposition to each other within terms that the oppressed cannot win, King writes:

For five long hours I pleaded with the group to abandon the Black Power slogan. It was my contention that a leader has to be concerned about the problem of semantics. Each word, I said, has a denotative meaning- its explicit and recognized sense- and a connotative meaning- its suggestive sense. While the concept of legitimate Black Power might be denotatively sound, the slogan "Black Power" carried the wrong connotations. I mentioned the implications of violence that the press had already attached to the phrase. And I went on to say that some of the rash statements on the part of a few marchers only reinforced this impression. (King, *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community*. pg. 30).

King posits that a non-romantic love for human beings, even if non-reciprocated, is at the forefront of generating a lasting understanding between groups in violent conflict. "Agapeic" love is an understanding, redemptive, creative goodwill for other humans by virtue of their personhood that seeks nothing in return. King defines agapeic love as

“(loving) not because he likes him, not because their ways appeal to him, but he loves every man because God loves him”, making it possible for King, to “loving the person who does an evil deed while hating the deed that person does” (King, “Love, Law and Civil Disobedience”, pg. 3). King asserts that the nonviolent resister must ‘love’ their enemies, the resister must maintain a capacity to forgive those who have done wrong (King, “Love, Law and Civil Disobedience”, pg. 3). But King notes that to forgive a wrongdoing does not mean forgetting or putting a false label on evil (King, “Love Your Enemies”, pg. 2). Rather, the nonviolent resister does not allow wrongdoing to stand in the way of a relationship with the wrongdoer. King says that forgiveness is important when one pursues a ‘fresh start’: “I’ll forgive you, but I will never forget what you’ve done” allows the nonviolent resister to love in the sense of agape, allowing the wrongdoer their human fallibility, while condemning their actions (King, “Love Your Enemies”, pg. 2).

Good and evil are not exclusive to those who perform good and evil deeds; rather, there is a duality to all human beings. An evil deed is not all that someone is; goodness can be found in one’s worst enemy, and evil found in one’s most precious friend (King, “The Christian Way of Life in Human Relations”, pg. 4). Some people certainly produce more evil than others, but King notes that a “persistent civil war of good and evil rages within all of our lives”, an evil act does not mean that there is no goodness within the actor (King, “Love Your Enemies”, pg. 2). How can it be that some people are more evil than others, when at birth it seems that no newborn is naturally inclined to hate, hostility, or physical violence? King posits that hate primarily grows out of fear, ignorance, and misunderstanding (King, “Love Your Enemies”, pg. 3). To win over an enemy in productive friendship, humiliation must be avoided, as a wounded pride provokes the fear,

ignorance, and misunderstanding that already exists in a hateful heart. A heart that possesses goodwill rather, allows for an easy flow of empathy for the hateful, understanding that the hateful would be better off loving (King, "Love Your Enemies", pg. 3). "Evil is a chain reaction", says King: to return physical violence with physical violence will only further undesirable situations and relations. Hate is psychologically damaging to the 'soul' and 'human personality', it scars and distorts one's sense of values and their objectivity, King writes:

I am concerned that Negroes achieve full status as citizens and as human beings here in the United States. But I am also concerned about our moral uprightness and the health of our souls. Therefore I must oppose any attempt to gain our freedom by the methods of malice, hate and violence that have characterized our oppressors. Hate is just as injurious to the hater as it is to the hated. Like unchecked cancer, hate corrodes the personality and eats away its vital unity. (King, *Where Do We Go From Here: Community or Chaos*, pg. 66).

With agapeic love, one does not love their enemy because they are likeable or because one does not see the harm they have done; rather, the nonviolent resister makes a *choice* to forgive their enemy.

To simply dictate that one must 'love' their enemy can be viewed as philosophically empty or impractical, but those who make these kinds of critiques, King would say, fail to understand the true meaning of love and the pragmatism involved in King's interpretation of nonviolence. King asserts that there is something in humans that is innately responsive to "goodness" (King, "Love, Law and Civil Disobedience" pg. 3-4). To King, there always

exists a hope that even the cruelest segregationist has the potential to become a loving integrationist by virtue of some incommunicable feeling of goodness which naturally flows from agape (King, "Love, Law and Civil Disobedience", pg. 4). The civil disobedience that King organizes is the product of many people feeling a shared dissonance towards the oppression of Black Americans. The inclination to goodness is also what makes harming other humans *feel bad*. King identifies a certain dissonance that comes about when humans are not concerned for the welfare of each other. It is this dissonance that King identifies and harnesses as the engine that generates feelings of shame, guilt, and doubt in the mind of White America. If some innate human experience of sentience did not exist commonly, then all attempts at social and political reconciliation would fail.

Philip Henry Pitts was a white man born into four generations of lawyers, who in 1965 was freshly graduated from Alabama Law School. His father served as Selma's city attorney at the time. Pitts sat in his car in the parking lot of a restaurant on March 7<sup>th</sup> watching police brutalize Black nonviolent resisters unprovoked on the Edmund Pettus Bridge during the Selma to Montgomery March. Pitts recalls several years later,

Some of it you want to remember and some of it you don't. I sat in a car by the Edmund Pettus Bridge and watched. My God, what is this happening? Of course, I didn't voice any objection to it. Of course, I knew it was wrong. I knew it was wrong. I never voiced any objection. I didn't even tell Daddy I knew it was wrong. It was really inhumane (Eig, *King: A Life*, pg. 754-755).

Pitts, who was raised by white upper-middle class southern parents, who had been educated in the South, and presumably was friendly with, or at least cordially interacted

with the police officers who conducted unjustified physical violence against peaceful protestors *felt* morally that the clash was wrong. One could say that this invocation of a moral 'gut feeling' could also be at play for racists, and others against King. Police officers at the Edmund Pettus Bridge could cite a moral gut feeling of their own as support for their behaviour. But the difference between the feelings of King and racist Police, is that the racist Police's moral gut feeling is predicated upon socially perpetuated falsehood about Black people. For the moral gut feeling that racism is right to occur, a personal indoctrination of negative falsehood about Black people also be believed. The moral gut feeling that racism is correct depends upon belief that is categorically false. This falsehood was created as a method of control over Black Americans and to maintain the advantage of White privilege. There is a distinction between a moral gut feeling conjured in good faith, versus one constructed in bad faith as a way to benefit oneself or out of the lazy inheritance of socially constructed stereotypes. King believes that when someone is doing something that should feel morally bad, like beating an innocent nonviolent protester in bad faith, although they may not immediately or clearly identify that there is some feeling of dissonance in relation to their wrongdoing, the feeling of wrongness manifests eventually.

Considering the way dissonance can be misidentified and acted upon in bad faith, King emphasized the role agapeic love played in Nonviolent Direct Action. It would have been unstrategic for King to blatantly assert that he intended to shame White Americans into reforming their racist opinions and laws. Instead, King first sought to win over the trust of White America, presenting himself as a non-threatening man of God who 'loved' them, and intended them no harm. The winning over of White America allowed their

consciences to begin to question their behaviour. It is easy to hate someone who hates you, but it is far more difficult to hate someone who you think loves you unconditionally.

To appeal to the conscience of White America, King necessarily had to create resisters that had no reason to be hated. An out-pouring of forgiveness, and an understanding of the aggressor as a fallible human, as fallible as their victim, King says, makes the nonviolent resister difficult to hate (King, "Love Your Enemies", pg. 3). The mechanism of nonviolence which targets the conscience of the aggressor involves the sustained suffering of 'good' people. The efficacy of nonviolence requires a prolonged demonstration that one will sustain suffering in the name of their desired end for 'as long as it takes'. Eig remarks on a Black Bus Boycott participant, Dealy Cooksey, who was interviewed following the boycott protest:

"We got these white folks where we want 'em and there ain't nothing they can do but try to scare us. But we ain't rabbit no more, we done turned 'coon... If he in a tree and you shake him down, He'll kill three dogs, and if he's in the water, he'll drown every dog that come in the water..." (Eig, *King: A Life*, pg. 273).

Cooksey's remarks illustrated the truth of something King said: that undeserved suffering was redemptive. He reminded Black Americans who agreed to suffered in the name of equality of their moral superiority to those who oppress them, and the Black Community's growing sense of righteousness created a problem for the white power structure" (Eig, *King: A Life*, pg. 273). This demonstration of one's commitment to their cause signals a true sincerity and belief in the desired ends, sincere commitment to a project signals that perhaps the project is true or right. But then what can be said of sincere commitment to

immoral ideas? Again, Police officers on the Edmund Pettus bridge must have sincerely believed that their physically violent attack of non-violent protestors was the right thing to do. Although sustained suffering in the name of an idea communicates commitment to the presumed rightness or truth of the idea, commitment to an idea must be done in good faith. The absence of self-interest must be part of the foundation upon which a belief and subsequent commitment to an idea of rightness and wrongness can be built. The absence of self-interest allows for a more objective view of permissibility, and for King, a public declaration of an absence of self-interest communicates an undeniable commitment to piety. Optically framing King as self-less to avoid the creation of an opportunity for public scrutiny.

Regardless of whether the desired ends come to fruition, King attributed a value to voluntarily struggling or suffering in the name of unself-interested ends. King believed that meaningful, lasting reconciliation between White and Black Americans was possible, and accepted the cost of struggling towards it. At Ebenezer Church in Atlanta, following a summer of Black Power incited riots in Chicago, King said:

I choose to give my life for the hungry... This is the way I'm going. If it means suffering a little bit, I'm going that way. If it means sacrificing, I'm going that way. If it means dying for them, I'm going that way, because I heard a voice saying, "Do something for others". (Eig, *King: A Life*, pg. 895).

If reconciliation fails to be manifest, even with a sustained effort, at least the beneficial effects of unself-interested struggle result. It is crucial for the functioning of nonviolent resistance that there be a deep belief firmly planted in its practitioners. Otherwise, withstanding the suffering, and possibility of death, necessary for the practice would be

intolerable.

King maintained that hate can spread and fester if not carefully remedied. Hate left unattended will result in bitterness, anger and fear resulting in more hate. But when hate is channeled into nonviolent resistance, then bitterness, anger, and fear melt away. This is not to say that King is neutral towards his aggressor; King concedes that feelings of hate need to be carefully offloaded by some sort of 'release valve'. Nonviolent Direct Action acts as the release valve to express feelings of hatred, but does so in such a way that the Nonviolent Resister is protected from the repercussions or punishment for acting upon unbridled angry emotions.

### **Ch 3 The Nature of Violence and the Unavailability of Rational Persuasion**

This thesis centrally argues that King's theory and practice of Nonviolent Direct Action which abstains from physical violence is nonetheless violent in nature. This can be considered as contradictory or paradoxical, but the role of psychological violence can be plainly seen as present when stipulations on intention and the utilization of context are made, and when Nonviolent Direct Action is compared to its alternatives. It will be shown that Nonviolent Direct Action requires intentional behaviour to cause psychological harm or suffering that other nonviolent tactics, such as rational persuasion, do not possess. The success of King's attempts to promote social and political equality for Black Americans lies in the camouflaged duality of the tactic itself, that it is in fact violent although does not seem to be violent to its victims. The covert nature of the violence King implements also fends off accusations that King was conceding and pandering to the White opposition. One could contest that a tactic of social and political change that refuses to harm a person physically is nonviolent, but this statement depends on the acceptance of a narrow and outdated understanding of 'violence'. As noted in the Appendix: Focusing Violence', psychological harm to a person, especially when it is intended and premediated is clearly violent behaviour in a common sense of violence. King's Nonviolent Direct Action intended to inflict psychological violence the opposition as a method of behaviour deterrent knowingly camouflaged as moral epiphany. Failure to accept the aforementioned sense of violence as correct, and present in Nonviolent Direct Action confuses senses of violence, of which there are several as outlined in the 'Appendix: Focusing Violence'.

The function of Nonviolent Direct Action, as advocated and practiced by King, consists of three elements; a) an intention to create a psychological harm in the mind of some person(s), so as to b) evoke their conscience, which c) ultimately leads to a change in their behaviour and social practices. The practice of these elements in combination, to elicit a desired end, will be characterized as violent in this thesis although it seems paradoxical in assigning a characteristic of violence to a tactic that on its face aims to avoid physical violence entirely. But this amounts to a legitimate application by extension of the notion of violence. Violence in a normal sense is behaviour that hurts, damages, or kills someone or thing without the consent of, or against the will of the victim. There is another common sense of violence that describes the circumstances of an occurrence as violent, such as a violent rainstorm, but this is of different and distinct sense of violence that is not required to class behaviour as violent. In the context of interpersonal relations, for a behaviour to be violent in the usual sense there must be some *conscious intention* to harm another. The behaviour is done to harm the victim psychologically as a means to some end as a desire of the aggressor. There can be situations where negligence creates a violent act or occurrence, but this type of circumstantial violence is not of the same moral kind as intentional violence.

For example, there is a salient difference both morally and legally between homicide by way of manslaughter, and homicide by way of murder. Accidentally killing someone is bad and punishable, but killing someone on purpose is worse, and specially punishable. The difference morally and legally between manslaughter and murder is evident when one compares sentencing; the sentencing for manslaughter in Canada is a minimum of four years in prisons, while sentencing for murder is imprisonment for life

under sections 234,235 and 236 of the Canadian Criminal Code (Government of Canada, “Part VIII: Offences Against the Person and Reputation”). Between the two cases, the differentiation in severity of sentencing depends on *mens rea*: in the case of manslaughter, there is no criminal intention involved, while homicide requires a willful intent to murder. Intentional behaviour matters morally; again, one can call a rainstorm ‘violent’, but strong winds are not of the same nature as rape because the weather does not intend its destructive behaviour. The naming of a rainstorm as violent is a descriptive of its occurrence of powerful forcefulness regardless of if the rainstorm causes harm or not. Whereas the accurate naming of rape as violent is a descriptive of the behaviour, which is obviously violent as it intends and does harm. Nonviolent Direct Action can be characterized as violent behaviour due to the intention to inflict suffering on another person as the means to some end.

Consider some analogies. To make a threat is a behaviour intended to make someone fearful about some action that could be brought against them that could result in harm, damage, or suffering. Threatening is violent because it intends to mentally affect someone in a negative way as a method of altering their behaviour. It is the fear for one’s life or well-being which threatening evokes that creates mental harm or suffering in a substantial way, substantial enough for threatening to be legally punishable in Canada. A threat must be intentional: there does not exist a situation wherein one can threaten another by accident. This is because the threat itself must be a preconceived imagined scenario created only to function as a method of deterrence or coercion. The threatener must necessarily believe that their threat will affect their victim in a way that causes fear, and that out of fear, the victim will presumably alter their behaviour. Nonviolent Direct

Action is congruent with threatening, though with a difference. It involves an intention to cause psychological harm, but Nonviolent Direct Action aims not only at fear, but at shame, regret, or guilt as well to affect a justifiable change of behaviour in its target. In addition to, and distinct from the intention to make someone fearful, which flows from rational concern for one's well-being, the intention to make someone also guilty hinges on the invocation of the moral conscience. To make someone fearful one must appeal to the target's basic sensibilities about their own safety and well-being. To coerce someone to do something they do not want to do by way of stirring fear, you might threaten to kill their entire family. The target understands that if the threat becomes action, those they love will suffer and they themselves will be deeply hurt, so out of fear the target of the threat concedes to the threatener. Nonviolent Direct Action, by contrast, affects basic sensibilities about well-being (fear of the *literal* physical suffering in hell as per popular Christian devotion present in mid-century America) and also emotional sensibilities (shame, guilt, absurdity, etc.) about moral rightness and wrongness.

For the conscience to be successfully invoked, context matters. One must identify and capitalize on some idea that the target fundamentally believes to be important, meaningful, and true. If one was to display an act of nonviolence in modern Canada, and the nonviolent resister was to claim that their nonviolent struggle was in the name of what is right as dictated by Witches, the conscience of the average Canadian would not be activated. Belief in the cosmic, spiritual, or metaphysical role of witches in Canadian society is not prevalent; the average Canadian's conscience would not react to an appeal to some authority that is unbelievable to them. In King's context of mid-century America, Nonviolent Direct Action intended to stir shame, regret, or guilt about the oppression of

Black Americans by an appeal to blatant suffering in plain sight, and to fundamentally appeal to American Christian beliefs of respecting one's neighbour, equality under God, and the joining of humankind as God's children. The Christian Bible set the terms of morality for over 90% of Americans from 1950-1960 (Newport, "Percentage of Christians in U.S Drifting Down, but Still High", pg. 2). King's status as a respected pastor arguably provides him with at least some moral authority that seemed legitimate to moderate and racist Americans alike. King's public assessment of the failure of the American people to join in peace as children of God accuses White American as having failed to abide by Christian moral teachings, and thus make them vulnerable to Divine consequences. The shame, regret, or guilt felt by American oppressors about their actions flow from an anxiety about failing to uphold Christian godliness, and also a literal fear of the eternal divine repercussions of sin. American Christianity was so effective in stirring up feelings of shame and guilt that King's close friend and psychologist James Bashai refused to categorize King's unpleasant moods as depression: rather his psychological state of constant emotional distress was because "he was a man with a determination to stand up for his thinking and also to live a good Christian life and often felt that he came up short"(Eig, *King: A Life*, pg. 709). Even King felt intense guilt and anxiety about his own sins which inevitably occur in any human life that has been lived.

In the mid-sixties King suffered intense guilt about his many marital indiscretions. His guilt was amplified when he learned his sin had an audience upon discovering the FBI had tapped not only his personal home phone, but his office phone as well (Eig, *King: A Life*, pg. 718). Coretta Scott, King's wife said in the decades following King's assassination that the FBI's surveillance of King and J. Edgar Hoover's constant pressure

on media to report on King's salacious behaviour was intended to capitalize on King's Christian feelings of shame, intending to push him to suicide (Eig, *King: A Life*, pg. 718). Hoover identified a moral standard that King held himself to, utilized the shame King inevitably felt in failing to meet his own moral standard, and then attempted to use King's shame as leverage to alter his behaviour.

Shame, guilt, fear, and the feelings alike are the coercive mechanisms of Christianity, this context is crucial to the functioning of Nonviolent Direct Action. That said, not all physically violent conflicts are a suitable fit for a Nonviolent remedy. As for another aspect of context, the decrease of devotion to Christianity in the late 1960's, especially among students and other young people who found a freer and more enjoyable lifestyle subscribing to the newly emerging hippy and beatnik movements, provoked widespread skepticism of King, which is why he found it difficult to appeal to public morality and to garner large monetary donations towards the end of his life (Eig, *King: A Life*, pg. 903). By the end of the sixties, King was viewed as old-fashioned or even naïve in his religious faith in justice; the context had changed, and Nonviolent Direct Action struggled to maintain its traction. The context of a shared moral scheme, the intention to use that shared moral scheme to stir negative emotions and feelings to create a psychological harm as a method of non-consensual behaviour alteration, characterizes Nonviolent Direct Action as violent behaviour.

One's conscience can be depended on under certain conditions to create feelings of shame, guilt, or regret that can prompt a change in behaviour. But shame, guilt, and doubt are certainly amplified when a display of Nonviolent Direct Action takes place in front of an audience. King does assert that there is goodness in all humans that innately

leans towards light and justice, making the conscience the ideal target for coercion. However, as evident in the four hundred years of slavery followed by the Jim Crow and Reconstruction Era, the conscience of segregationists or racist-minded persons cannot be depended on in a vacuum to activate a shift in behaviour. Nonviolent Direct Action works best when three parties are involved: the oppressed nonviolent resisters, the oppressor, and the moderate bystander. The oppressor is put to shame by the nonviolent resister's display of bravery, commitment, and respect. That is, by the aggressor's act of beating an innocent person who refuses to fight back, the conscience is triggered, and perhaps a realization occurs that physical violence is unwarranted. But it cannot be assumed that the conscience is activated identically, rather it is activated in varying degrees. Some oppressors instantly feel very badly about their brutal display, while others can absolve themselves of guilt by appeals to custom, social constructs, blatant ignorance, or dismissal of negative self-regard prompted by the Nonviolent display. But if the oppressor's physical violence took place in front of their peers, then the oppressor is now not only concerned about how their actions *feel* to them, but also about how their actions *look* to others. There is a salient difference between what one finds appropriate to do 'behind closed doors' and what one finds appropriate to do in public. An anxiety about whether one is acting correctly is especially likely to exist when one fears that others are passing judgment on them. Thus, the conscience of the physically violent oppressor is more intensely affected when Nonviolent Direct Action takes place where it can be viewed and judged, but the bystander's conscience is also symbiotically affected as well. The bystander cannot ignore the spectacle of brutality that the oppressor exercises. Nonviolent Direct Action is staged intentionally to make the oppressor/oppressed dynamic

blatant and the disparity between the groups obvious. Thus, for the society at large, the scene of the oppressive majority beating the oppressed minority who are calling for peaceful reconciliation is intended by those involved in Nonviolent Direct Action to provoke a painful mental effect; bystanders are reminded that their peers are capable of unconscionable physical violence and that by virtue of their bystanding, they are effectively allowing it. The bystander thus begins to feel guilty, regretful, or shameful about their role in the scene, their conscience has also been affected with in a painful way.

To further see that violence is not necessarily physical in nature, consider a deliberate onslaught of insults that target a known 'sore spot', especially, say, where the aggressor is a parent, and the victim is their child. By way of constant verbal berating and belittling, the child is likely to become psychological disturbed or even physically sick. Here, the parent does not physically engage with the child, but the child is mentally and physically suffering at the intentional hands of their parent. Violence can be characterized as an intentional behaviour that aims to harm, cause pain, or make suffer an agent with the desired end being an alteration of behaviour that the agent does not desire or consent to. The harm, damage or suffering that Nonviolent Direct Action intends is the stirring up of negative emotions and feelings, capitalizing on the opportunity negative self-regard presents to alter behaviour. Nonviolent Direct Action ensures that the targeted party thinks that the change of behaviour is decided by them by virtue of their conscience, but in fact, without the active intervention by the nonviolent resister, conceivably the change would never occur. The purpose of paradoxically categorizing Nonviolent Direct Action as violent is to centrally to assert that as a tactic, is a reasonable method of treatment for extreme physical group violence and oppression.

The nonviolent resister shrouds the intention of stirring painful mental effects of shame, guilt, anxiety, or doubt in the conscience of the victim: this is a function of Nonviolent Direct Action's pragmatism. A threat is easy to identify and condemn, it is difficult to desire reconciliation with someone who threatens you. The fear and mental discomfort inflicted by threat making can make the inflicted wary of a relation with the inflictor in the future out of apprehension that the threat will be followed through with. Blatant threatening as a tactic in King's contexts is even more pragmatically problematic because it was common to apply negative stereotypes of the 'trickster' or the 'criminal' to Black Americans. The 'trickster' is depicted in African American oral tradition as a protagonist who is weak, immoral, conniving, an outsmarting anti-hero who usually bests a White character with trickery and deception (Martin, *Dancing on the Color Line*, pg. 22-23). Prominent examples include Uncle Remus and the Br'er Rabbit. If King were to publicly make an obvious threat against White Americans that demanded that 'if oppression is not ended America would be reprimanded by God, or suffer some existential moral consequence', King would be rejected as a manipulator, or he would be politically and socially reproved for threatening the White American majority. Such events would surely generate reverberations that would heighten wariness of Black Americans, resulting in an increase in violence and discriminatory behaviour by White Americans.

King stipulates that Nonviolent Direct Action must be reserved as a method of last resort, because of the psychological harm it inflicts (King, 'Letter From Birmingham Jail'). Perhaps in different contexts, King would advocate for blatant threats to mitigate oppression, but the violent, racist social and political climate of 1950's America would not allow for the success of threats or physical violence due to the blatancy of the harm

intended by such behaviour. Any explicit response to oppression that could be viewed as 'forceful', 'direct', or 'strong' would be deemed by the (oppressive) authorities as unacceptably 'violent', 'dangerous', or a 'nuisance', creating an illegitimate cause for extreme physically violent repercussions. Nonviolent Direct Action is designed in such a way that it does produce harm, pain, or suffering to its victim, but carefully conceals the effect of the nonviolent resister with the transformation in the White victim's own consciousness, an effect that is in fact justified.

The physical violence and oppression of racism becomes customary to the oppressor. The entitlement of racial privilege or normalized White superiority was taken up as ideal material for the nonviolent resister to subject to new terms that the perpetrators of racism were not expecting. Novelty and surprise jars the oppressor's habits and ideas, presenting an opportunity to influence a change in the future. The oppressor experiences an uncomfortable dissonance that irritates their conscience under the new parameters that the victim has set. To cure the irritation, the oppressor is led to change their behaviour and the ideas that inform it. The oppressor is made to affirm that *they* are responsible for the recalibration of their ideas. However, the recalibration of ideas would presumably never occur without the targeted intention of the nonviolent actor to inflict some harm or pain to the conscience of the oppressor by the demonstration of the nonviolent resister's distinctive tactic.

The strategic opposite of 'physical violence' is 'rational persuasion', where the intention is to change someone's mind with facts, logic, and reason rather than physical violence. The intent of rational persuasion is enlightenment about a topic, the offering of objective clarity that could result as an alteration of ideas, which could manifest as a

change of behaviour. The oppression of Black Americans did not allow for successful attempts to rationally persuade their White opposition. The oppressed are alienated from the ability to employ rational persuasion as a tactic deployed by their oppressor to maintain their dominance. The segregation of the oppressed from their voice in political and social spaces treats the oppressed as a non-functional member of the community, which makes the oppressed easy to ignore or discredit. The chronic segregation of a citizen from their right to be heard creates a feeling in the mind of the oppressed that they have nothing worth saying, as it will not be heard anyway; instead, the oppressed group acquiesces to their oppression. By virtue of the political and social silencing of oppressed groups, a creative tactic must be designed as a viable tactic in defense from physical violence.

Even those who were openly sympathetic to King's project still experienced habitual and social blocks to accepting the eradication of racism by way of rational means. The 'moderate White' understood intellectually that racism is wrong, but still refused to take action towards abolishing it. This illustrates why rational persuasion is not enough in King's context, the moderate White had already been persuaded of the wrongness of the racial oppression but continued to refuse to act to change racist behaviour. When there is a disconnect between rationality and ideas, there is a need for a dynamic, active, and novel tactic that affects the conscience of the oppressor, even with psychological pain, to provoke a realignment of ideas with actions.

Meena Krishnamurthy shows in her paper, "Martin Luther King Jr. on Democratic Propaganda, Shame, and Moral Transformation", that rational persuasion was not a viable tactic of social and political change for even the moderate White who openly

condemned racial segregation. Krishnamurthy posits that rational persuasion cannot motivate a change in ideas or behaviour when people are caught up in an 'affected ignorance'. Krishnamurthy writes: "White moderates now understood precisely how wrong racial segregation was, they also knew that acting on this injustice would mean giving up practices and structures that benefited them. They blinded themselves to the full truth of segregation's wrongness" (Krishnamurthy, "Martin Luther King Jr. on Democratic Propaganda, Shame, and Moral Transformation", pg. 309). Krishnamurthy suggests that Democratic propaganda; "truthful propaganda aimed at promoting and fostering democratic political action by stirring emotions" is the only political tactic that can affect those suffering from affected ignorance (Krishnamurthy, "Martin Luther King Jr. on Democratic Propaganda, Shame, and Moral Transformation", pg. 307). Krishnamurthy claims that the emotion King aimed to appeal was *shame*, in seeking to 'hold a mirror' up to White moderates by plainly showing that they had betrayed their own principles, and that they were acting in self-interest rather than on their self-proclaimed moral abhorrent for racism. But in addition to shame, as previously established, fear and anxiety about divine punishment is also crucial to evoke the attention of those who excuse their reflection in the 'moral mirror'. Motivation by shame *accompanied* by fear can, in the right circumstances, force self-criticism, or moral self-threatening for what inflicted thinks is their own good. Thus, excavating subconscious White supremacist ideology that blocked the ability for its adherents to behave in accord with the ideas they understood as true. A psychologically violent method, that utilized feelings alike to shame, while also causing legitimate fear, forces self-critique.

King held that all in common felt, at some level, that racism was inherently wrong.

White moderates asserted their identification of the wrongness of racism, but advocated for patience, waiting for legal remedy being more favourable and effective in the pursuit of ending racism. The moral duality of asserting that racism is wrong but advocating for the continuation of racism for the foreseeable future shows that deeply entrenched ideas of the permissibility of racism or of White supremacy certainly were still active in the mind of even the those who renounced segregation. The moderate White *felt* that racism was wrong, identified a dissonance in the relations that existed, understood that the dissonance was attributed to the moral wrongness of oppression predicated upon race, but nonetheless the mental habit to accept racism persisted. Krishnamurthy argues that this type of rationalization is an 'intellectual evasion', where an individual flees an uncomfortable truth for a comfortable falsehood, convincing themselves that the falsehood is true (Krishnamurthy, "Martin Luther King Jr. on Democratic Propaganda, Shame, and Moral Transformation", pg. 310). The uncomfortable truth implicitly accepted was that 'segregation is wrong, and I ought not contribute to it the way that I do', and the comfortable falsehood explicitly proclaimed was that 'Black Americans are violent, disorderly, and rash, segregation is best for the safety of everyone'. The White clergymen whom the "Letter to Birmingham Jail" was addressing blamed King for the onslaught of violence which ensued from the Selma to Montgomery march rather than holding the police accountable for their unprovoked attack. The clergymen rationalized their justification for ignoring the moral question at the heart of the attack, taking no action towards the end of segregation while publicly asserting that racism is wrong and ought to be ended (Krishnamurthy, "Martin Luther King Jr. on Democratic Propaganda, Shame, and Moral Transformation", pg. 312).

Rational persuasion was not sufficient for igniting any meaningful change to the subconscious White supremacist ideology because the moderate White already knew it was wrong; they required no persuading. Krishnamurthy notes that appeal to rational persuasion is unlikely to overcome rationalizations when self-interest is in play (Krishnamurthy, "Martin Luther King Jr. on Democratic Propaganda, Shame, and Moral Transformation", pg. 313). So, King necessarily had to appeal to 'democratic propaganda', fear, and aim to stir up negative emotions to arouse a change behaviour in order to constructively affect the moderate Whites; to make them feel that they were failing their own moral standards, and to see Black Americans as having the moral authority to call out the moderate Whites' moral failures. Regarding the production of self-critical shame, Krishnamurthy notes that John Rawls asserts that shame is painful, "for it is the loss of an especially valuable good, our self-respect" (Krishnamurthy, "Martin Luther King Jr. on Democratic Propaganda, Shame, and Moral Transformation", pg. 317). Shame diminishes one's self-respect because it entails understanding that one 'knows better'. Such shame is especially important when others see a failure by some persons to meet their own self-imposed moral commitments. Shame is painful because it reveals an aspect of oneself that one would prefer not to see, and the viewing of this aspect by another reveals that one is not entirely who they claim to be.

Krishnamurthy posits that the discomfort that King intends to stir up exists implicitly in the gap between an ability for empathy and a lack of action. To rectify this discomfort, one may reject empathy altogether, or affirm that any action that one may take will not make any difference. It is common to be told of some situation of suffering, but when the sufferer is far removed (socially, physically, etc.) it becomes difficult to imagine oneself in

the sufferer's position. The inability to commiserate blocks the natural flow of empathy. James would agree, telling us that moral blindness to the suffering of others is itself a contributing cause to a troubling conflict. So, King needed to display the Black perspective to White Americans by an indirect method that gets the attention of the White self (Krishnamurthy, "Martin Luther King Jr. on Democratic Propaganda, Shame, and Moral Transformation", pg. 323). Since spontaneous empathy is not viable, King necessarily appealed causing some psychological suffering or pain, and also stirring an anxiety about divine punishment for their actions to motivate either a change of ideas, or a nudge towards a certain behaviour.

Thus, Nonviolent Direct Action intends harm and is importantly effective. Nonviolent Direct Action is an intentionally violent behaviour that utilizes a shared moral scheme to cause harm or pain in order to initiate a new behavior. Those who criticize King for meekness or quietness fail to understand Nonviolent Direct Action and the distinct senses of violence in invokes in a complete and meaningful way.

## Ch 4 Moral Jiu-Jitsu : Combative Non-violent Manipulation

Richard Gregg endorses nonviolent resistance as a viable substitute for war or other physically violent conflict between groups. He asserts this on the basis that nonviolence has potential to weaken the morale of the opponent, creates less harm, sets the foundation for good future relations, and eliminates bitterness from the aggressor/victim relationship (Gregg, *The Power of Nonviolence*, pg. 84). The power of nonviolence for Gregg is rooted in an appeal to feelings rather than a mitigation of actions (Gregg, *The Power of Nonviolence*, pg. 84). Gregg constructs an example of the functioning of nonviolence on the level of the individual: if an aggressor strikes their victim and the victim subsequently strikes back in retaliation or self-defence, the violent response from the victim provides the aggressor with reassurance and moral justification for their initial discharge of physical violence (Gregg, *The Power of Nonviolence*, pg. 49). Mirroring a physically violent reaction shows the aggressor that the victim and the aggressor weigh physical violence equally on their moral scales (Gregg, *The Power of Nonviolence*, pg. 49). The initial physically violent act is made to seem justifiable to the aggressor by virtue of the reaffirmation by the victim that physical violence is a condonable option. The confirmation that the victim will react in a certain way sets a precedent for this type of exchange to recur and solidifies the aggressor's understanding of how to handle conflict. The aggressor is assured that they can rely on the victim to react in a predictable way that will maintain their preconceived moral judgments (Gregg, *The Power of Nonviolence*, pg. 50).

Gregg posits that it is the surprise of nonviolence to the aggressor that thwarts the

aggressor's prediction of the relation they have chosen to initiate. The nonviolent resister intends to present a new idea to the aggressor whose behaviour has become habitual. The aggressor initiates the relation, but the victim reframes the relation in a way that forces the aggressor to make an actual choice about their actions rather than depending on a norm or habit that has been socially perpetuated. Perhaps the aggressor first thinks that their victim fears them when they refuse to act in self-defence, thinking that the victim must be paralyzed with fear and thus unable to fight back. But the victim's composure contrasts with the usual characteristics of a fearful sufferer (Gregg, *The Power of Nonviolence*, pg. 50). The novelty of this interaction between the aggressor and their victim implants doubt in the mind of the aggressor, thinking perhaps "am I doing the wrong thing?". The aggressor starts to feel insecure, doubtful, or guilty about their ignorance of how to handle this new relationship. Instead of the victim providing the aggressor with the physically violent retaliation the aggressor expects, the victim 'pulls his aggressor forward with kindness', using their psychological leverage to subdue the physical force of the aggressor (Gregg, *The Power of Nonviolence*, pg. 50).

Gregg calls his interpretation of nonviolent resistance "Moral Jiu-Jitsu". Jiu-Jitsu is known as 'self-defence for the little guy'. The size, speed and strength of the agent does not determine their success; rather, Jiu-Jitsu relies on a careful strategy, quiet attack and manipulating an opponent's own strength and size so that it is a hinderance to them. In Jiu-Jitsu, instead of blocking a punch and returning it with another, the punch is invited, and the attacked person grabs the fist, and pulls it forward in hopes of throwing the opponent off balance. The intention of the Jiu-Jitsu-er is to throw their opponent off balance because they know that they will never be as strong as their opponent. If the Jiu-

Jitsu-er were to engage with their opponent by returning the punch, the Jiu-Jitsu-er would not escape the conflict without serious injury, while the instigator walks away virtually unharmed.

The refusal to accept victimhood, and instead assuming the position of a 'resister' provokes introspection that transforms the expected reaction into conflict management (Gregg, *The Power of Nonviolence*, pg. 54). Gregg's naming his interpretation of nonviolence 'Moral Jiu-Jitsu', implies that nonviolence is combative in a similar sense. Gregg can compare nonviolence to Jiu-Jitsu because both tactics of conflict management involve an active intention to alter an opponent's behaviour by a combative means. Jiu-Jitsu is a practice of physical combat, intending to subdue the opponent by means that causes physical harm or pain. Nonviolence is a practice of non-physical combat, that intends to subdue an opponent by means that cause psychological harm or pain (Gregg, *Power of Nonviolence*, pg. 60). The difference is that the harm or pain that Jiu-Jitsu causes is physical, like the pain of being punched and the bruise that follows. The harm and pain that nonviolence causes are psychological in nature, like the shame of discovering a large moral mistake, or a fear of eternal damnation, and the lasting feeling of wrongdoing that follows.

The advantages of nonviolence for Gregg are as follows; nonviolence is not morally taxing; it is easier to justify the moral permissibility of nonviolence. Nonviolence requires less physical energy than physical violence, and instead a strong will. Nonviolence is pragmatically energy- conserving, while hatefulness and exerting physical violence are mentally and physically exhausting (Gregg, *The Power of Nonviolence*, pg. 52). Consider this example; suppose A and B have some sort of conflict of ideas, and that

A is dominant in some way, and B is vulnerable in some way. In reaction to their conflict of ideas, A attacks B with physical violence and B responds with physical violence. Part of B's response is defensive and instinctive, but part of it is also an imitation of A. B feels intimidated by A and on account of self-respect, instinct, and little time to calculate the repercussions of their retaliation or self-defence, B strikes back. Physical violence is reciprocal: it feels unnatural to B to abstain from a physically violent relationship that A has chosen to initiate. A and B have thus set in motion a predictable cycle of physical violence, Gregg would agree that "war is a constant state of reciprocal action" (Gregg, *The Power of Nonviolence*, pg. 80). A always initiates, B always retaliates, and B's retaliation gives A a reason to aggress B again, exhausting both parties, rendering them stuck in a reciprocal cycle of irreconcilable conflict.

When A induces a physically violent relationship, B becomes the victim. A treats the retaliation by B not as 'self-defence' but as due to 'unruliness', 'incorrigibility', or a 'natural inclination to violence' which A uses to justify using physical violence for their own 'safety' or that of the community. Gregg notes that it is important to the psychology of a soldier to fulfill the role of the protector (Gregg, *The Power of Nonviolence*, pg. 80). Without the belief that the soldier is protecting something/someone from a true threat, they are left feeling useless and absurd. It is difficult to imagine how it could feel justified to harm or destroy something/someone that poses no threat at all or serves no use. From within this cycle of violence, as initiated and maintained by A, B is left with few options to stall A's physical violence. The cycle B is caught up in was created to harm B while simultaneously to subordinate B so that any act to push against A's physical violence gives A more reason to be physically violent. From here, it seems that B's only option is

to voluntarily submit to A, which would lead to physical harm of B.

Gregg posits that B's only option is to implement some other form of self-defence or retaliation that exists outside of the cycle of violence that A has started. Rather than physically 'striking back', which would be useless for B, B ought to appeal to surprising A's emotions; aiming to stir, harness, and utilize negative emotions in A to break the cycle of physical violence (Gregg, *The Power of Nonviolence*, pg. 50). The goal of nonviolent resistance for Gregg is to shame the aggressor into refining or recalibrating their moral ideas so that, when a conflict arises, the aggressor does not again presume that physical violence is a viable solution because it makes the aggressor *feel bad*, Gregg writes:

He suddenly and unexpectedly loses the moral support which the usual violent resistance of most victims would render him. He plunged forward, as it were, into a new world of values. He feels insecure because of the novelty of the situation and his ignorance of how to handle it. He loses his poise and self-confidence. The victim not only lets the attacker come, but, as it were, pulls him forward by kindness, generosity, and voluntary suffering, so that the attacker loses his moral balance. The user of nonviolent resistance, knowing what he is doing and having a creative purpose, keeps his moral balance. He uses the leverage of a superior wisdom to subdue the rough direct force of this opponent. (Gregg, *The Power of Nonviolence*, pg. 50)

Nonviolence aims to be a step ahead of the aggressor in logic; predicting the cycle of physical violence that the aggressor will instigate enables avoiding an instinctual reaction or an unmitigated reaction out of surprise. This show of careful planning and prepared self-discipline of the nonviolent resister decreases the morale of the aggressor, as it

shows that by contrast, the aggressor is operating by habit and inherited ideas. Nonviolence increases the morale of the nonviolent resister by showing a victimized group that there is an alternative to physical violence that they can implement that is powerful and effective (Gregg, *Power of Nonviolence*, pg. 66). The existence of an alternative to the usual procedure for handling conflict actively works to fend off the inferiority complex that is bred by generations of social, political, and physical oppression. The existence of an alternative shows victims that they can escape their victimhood.

Important to the efficacy of nonviolent resistance, is the psychology of suggestion. A nonviolent resister presents the violent aggressor with a new way to settle a dispute, a pathway to reconciliation that the violent aggressor has never encountered before. The fact that the nonviolent resister is offering up an alternative to the current relationship between the nonviolent resister and the physically violent aggressor makes the position of the physically violent aggressor less favourable than they initially thought. The physically violent aggressor has inherited a belief about how disputes are settled, but the presentation of a new idea by the nonviolent resister shows that the resister has put patient thought of their own into the mechanics of the interaction. The physically violent aggressor only goes through the motions without personal reflection or moral consideration. Faced with the initial suggestion of an alternative, the physically violent aggressor is the most receptive, being shocked by the novelty of the idea and by the fact that the nonviolent resister made a suggestion at all. The aggressor is also affected by the spectacle of bravery and faith demonstrated by nonviolent resistance, stirring an emotion in the physically violent aggressor that they had not previously experienced (Gregg, *The Power of Nonviolence*, pg. 53). Gregg holds that if one wishes to change the

behaviour of another, one can do so “by creating inside his own personality a strong new impulse that is incompatible with his previous tendency” and that the most effective way to create a new impulse is to challenge the ideas that inform it (Gregg, *The Power of Nonviolence*, pg. 60).

Gregg and King agree that nonviolence as a tactic involves dramatic ‘setting of the scene’, whereby the socially oppressed refuse to play into the stereotypes and expectations the aggressor has set out for them. This stirs a realization in the aggressor and in bystanders that the aggressor is unjustified in imposing physical violence onto the victim. Gregg notes that “when doubt comes, morale crumbles” (Gregg, *The Power of Nonviolence*, pg. 81). It is not the nonviolent resister's bargaining or reasoning with the violent aggressor that is at work to *convince* them that they are wrong; rather the nonviolent resister abstains from action and allows the physically violent aggressor to *feel* that their own judgment has erred. Gregg writes,

Nevertheless, the ideas to be conveyed are so unusual that the understanding of them by the recipient] of nonviolent resistance] may be slow or incomplete. At first and perhaps for some time, the understanding will be more emotional than intellectual...There is both an emotional and an intellectual element to be transmitted- both feelings and ideas. There will be difficulties arising from the unusualness of the feelings and ideas, but no more difficulties arising from inadequacy than in the case of any other sort of language [like violence].  
(Gregg, *The Power of Nonviolence*, pg. 62)

The realization that one has acted in error is more likely to occur in the context of a nonviolent resistance, according to Gregg (Gregg, *The Power of Nonviolence*, pg. 53).

When the aggressor is upset, angry, or afraid enough to lash out in physical violence with the intention to harm or kill someone, the surprising conduct of a nonviolent resister presents a new idea while the aggressor is in a heightened emotional state. The nonviolent resister is in an emotional state as well, but the behaviour of the violent aggressor does not surprise or scare the nonviolent resister, rather it is expected. The nonviolent resister has taken the initiative, setting up new terms of relations that they have prepared for their purpose. The nonviolent resister has been prepared and trained to maintain their self-control, which conserves their energy and lessens the likelihood of an unplanned physically violent outburst by the nonviolent resister (Gregg, *The Power of Nonviolence*, pg. 54). The output of physical violence powered by anger cannot be sustained without some reward or achievement (Gregg, *The Power of Nonviolence*, pg. 52). Thus, the more the aggressor 'fights' without results, the more exhausted, discouraged, and doubtful the aggressor will feel. It is in this state of unfulfilledness that the aggressor is most suggestible to new ideas.

The nonviolent resister remains calm, measured, and confident in their decision to abstain from physically violent retaliation regardless of the physical violence imposed by the aggressor (Gregg, *The Power of Nonviolence*, pg. 50). The victim's nonviolence is not acquiescence or fear, Gregg writes, "it is easier and requires less courage to attack than to withstand fire without retaliation" (Gregg, *The Power of Nonviolence*, pg. 50). Nonviolence is active, meditated, unflinching endurance of pain aimed at an intended result. The intended result is to present new moral ideas to the aggressor that could affect a change in behaviour, to provoke some confusion of their usual expectations of physically violent relationships (Gregg, *The Power of Nonviolence*, pg. 51). It is not that

the nonviolent resister wholly creates negative emotions in the mind of the physically violent aggressor, but, rather, allowing the physically violent aggressor to harm a nonviolent resister forces some negative feelings of shame and guilt to the surface. Gregg writes:

We may say that nonviolent resistance is a sort of moral manipulative activity in which the factors used and operated upon are largely psychological. It may clarify our thinking somewhat to remember that we are not considering two static entities, an angry person versus a kindly person. We are dealing with two natures and an environment, each of which is mobile and changing, constantly acting on the other, influencing, changing, then responding to the new condition thus created. Another process develops after the struggle has proceeded for some time, namely, that of reassuring the violent party. Much of the latter's original basis of anger or fear is removed. He finds that the resister does not bear enmity towards him, that at least his 'better self' and potentialities are respected instead of humiliated. (Gregg, *The Power of Nonviolence*, pg. 64).

However, Gregg maintains that it is more psychologically difficult to refrain from violence than to discharge it (Gregg, *The Power of Nonviolence*, pg. 58). It feels unnatural to subject oneself to pain and suffering, thus making nonviolent resistance both emotionally and physically taxing. But it is the goal of the nonviolent resister to reverse the aggressor's output of rageful energy and use it against them. The violent aggressor is exhausted, their efforts are unrequited and generally frustrated, leaving them more likely to fall into the habitual motions of the physical violence they initiated. Nonetheless, this emotional state

also leaves the aggressor vulnerable to suggestion because their habitual tendencies are not working in the way they expect. The nonviolent resister is certainly under intense psychological stress, but of a different kind than their aggressor. The nonviolent resister endures physical violence with the *hope* that their suffering will deliver a safer life for their community. They have planned for and trained to be able to withstand the psychological damage and physical injury they endure. There are no shocking surprises or new ideas offered to the nonviolent resister by their physically violent aggressor. The nonviolent resister's psychological stress comes from the endurance of suffering, which they expect. The physically violent aggressor has not planned or trained to enter the relation, and they have no further goal in mind to respond to what unexpectedly develops.

Gregg examines the psychological theory of 'circular response' proposed by M.P. Follet in "Creative Experience" which dictates that a response is not fixed: "my behaviour is a response to the new situation which, I in part, have created", in that relations between humans are always created in contexts and in particular conditions (Gregg, *The Power of Nonviolence*, pg. 51). Physical violence depends on an understanding by the aggressor that physical violence is a sound mode of procedure, that it will result in an intended outcome for the aggressor while the victim is forced to struggle to defend themselves or die. But when a victim no longer opts into the procedure, the procedure is no longer viable, and the intended outcome becomes unreachable without the participation of the aggressor *and* the victim. This type of security dilemma is a common occurrence: we see a country fearing a neighbouring country for some reason, say because of a rumour of espionage, so they purchase a tank as a protective measure. The neighbouring country sees the purchase of the tank to be a threat, and they purchase two tanks. Both countries

increase their military capability until one country runs out of money, or the pressure of the neighbouring country's mounting collection of tanks provokes an attack.

Nonviolence creates a shift in commonly accepted ideas of what kind of power is valuable. For Gregg, collective physical violence is generated artificially by inheriting ideas, a lack of personal examination, and baseless fear. Gregg writes that, "as soon as a soldier starts to think of certain sorts of things, he begins to be an individual, to separate himself from the mass mind" (Gregg, *The Power of Nonviolence*, pg. 81). Gregg suggests that a choice to endorse a novel 'loving' attitude when attempting to reconcile conflict has a higher probability that both groups will feel satisfied in their reconciliation and creates the least harm while doing so. This is not to say that a universal love for all humans is sentimental or mawkish, depending on the 'goodness of heart'; rather, this kind of love shows up as a patient insight, involving understanding and imagination, as similarly reflected in King's 'agapeic' love. The love that powers nonviolence for Gregg is a 'baked in' human inclination that makes physical violence trigger a feeling of dissonance while making nonviolent human associations feel harmonious. To love your enemy is to make it clear to them that you respect them; once this is known, it becomes easier for a new idea about the victim to exist in the mind of the enemy.

The nonviolent resister has no other option than to appeal to their physically violent aggressor's *feelings*:

With a very proud or self-deceiving person, or a hardened soldier or policeman as attacker, the actual violence might be severe, repeated and lasting before the change of attitude or heart of the attacker come about. Yet even among such attackers the surprise and wonder would often be so great as to cause a

far quicker about-face and solution than might first be expected. When a solution is found, there is a satisfaction and good feeling, a finer attitude and action not only among the participants to the struggle but among all onlookers and public. To have the finer potentialities of men flower forth and bear fruit enhances the morale of all who learn of it. (Gregg, *The Power of Nonviolence*, pg. 67).

To establish a new relation, given the threat of physical harm or death, and the commitment to abstain from physical violence, the nonviolent resister must believe that the physically violent aggressor is capable of *feeling* shameful or guilty. The nonviolent resister also must believe that their physically violent aggressor deserves to be treated with respect and dignity. Gregg asserts that all humans deserve to be treated with respect and dignity because it not only signals to others that amicable human relations are the desired end, but also suggests that a *display* of respect for another is reciprocal in nature, Gregg writes:

From childhood we all tend to like people who show respect for our personality. This tendency operates between parties in a conflict... Respect for the personality is a prerequisite for real freedom and fine human association. It is proof of unselfishness and of moral poise and understanding... This respect, shown by the nonviolent resister, gradually tends to put his attacker to shame and to enhance the respect of any onlookers towards the former. (Gregg, *The Power of Nonviolence*, pg. 54)

But it must be acknowledged that generations of oppression and physical violence can cause B's true belief that A is worthwhile or capable of gracious understanding to wane.

Gregg maintains that to resolve conflict, the process of erroneous thinking must be targeted and resolved. Engaging in A's cycle of physical violence will only result in A's desired end which is domination and maintenance of privilege. The nonviolent resister must have *hope* that their aggressor can be reformed into a friend, neighbour, or peer regardless of the history of the aggressor to undertake nonviolence as a tactic for reconciliation in the first place (Gregg, *The Power of Nonviolence*, pg. 78). If the victim assumed that their aggressor is irredeemable, evil, and brutal, then a project of nonviolent resistance would be an impossible undertaking.

A key aim of successful nonviolent resistance is to remove the fear, hate and anger felt by the victim and to replace those feelings with sympathy and goodwill. Gregg suggests that a general reduction of fear and anger in a society reduces overall cruelty as well. Nonviolent resistance also creates a shift in what kind of power is valuable, aiming to show that the output of respect and dignity for others is more valuable than physical violence. For Gregg, respect and dignity felt towards one's aggressor comes from an outflow of love for the aggressor, to love one's aggressor is to understand that the aggressor's ideas and moral judgments have been distorted or led astray. To love one's aggressor is to acknowledge that their circumstances and experiences have caused an error in their moral judgment. If one's aggressor cannot deny the love their victim has for them regardless of their aggressive ideas or mistakes, it will be more difficult for the aggressor to continue victimizing and provides the ideal conditions for the aggressor's ideas to be refined (Gregg, *The Power of Nonviolence*, pg. 56).

Social approval has a large influence on human behaviour, according to Gregg. Social instincts are what make friendship desirable, rejection by a lover painful, and a

stable connection to parents important for a stable connection to others in the future. An inclination towards 'love' for other humans in this sense is a natural desire. Nonviolent resistance demonstrates to both the aggressor and onlookers that nonviolent resisters are sincere and deeply committed to their cause, that the nonviolent resister is so committed that they are willing to die without self-defence. Voluntary suffering is proof of sincerity and indicates respect for the basic humanity of the aggressor: in other words, 'I believe that you do not deserve physical harm, so much so that I will endure harm instead'. Gregg asserts that a demonstration of respect for the aggressor puts their violent attack to shame and enhances the respect *onlookers* have for the courage and self-control of the nonviolent resister. An unnatural feeling of fear and anger towards other humans is replaced by more natural 'good' feelings of unity, sympathy, and goodwill. Gregg suggests that the reduction of fear and anger reduces the chance of 'knee-jerk' physical violence, decreases the chance of cruelty, and promotes collectivist social behaviours that contribute to a high quality of life.

Gregg offers an interpretation of Gandhi's 'child and fire' example. Imagine that a small child is about to thrust their foot into an open fire. Gandhi implores the reader to consider if they would be justified in intervening in the child's action and physically pulling the child from the fire, or if as a bystander, the reader ought to remain uninvolved and allow the child to play in the fire. Gandhi asserts that if one is to intervene in the child's actions, it must be done with the child's own interests at the forefront; the authority of intervening with the child must be exercised for the sole benefit of the child. Now apply this to the nonviolent Indian resistance against colonial rule by the British,

If you say that the actions of the English, being evil, represent fire, and that

they proceed to their actions through ignorance, and that therefore they occupy the position of a child and that you want to protect such a child, then you will have to overtake every evil action of that kind by whomsoever committed and, as in the case of the evil child, you will have to sacrifice yourself. If you are capable of such immeasurable pity, I wish you well in its exercise. (Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj*, pg. 16).

Thus, Gregg asserts that cowardice is more harmful than physical violence, that the inner attitude is more important than the outer act, but that it is also important that the outer act be a true expression and reflection of one's inner state. Gregg argues that the shame and embarrassment felt by the aggressor when their victim refrains from physical violent retaliation is amplified when there are onlookers (Gregg, *The Power of Nonviolence*, pg. 52). From an onlooker's perspective, the relation between a physically violent aggressor and a nonviolent resister looks especially brutal; it is a display of the inner attitude of the aggressor which is blatantly misaligned with the context of the situation.

There are several reasons why Gregg thinks that the witnessing of suffering is so salient and possesses the ability to stir a new desire opposite to a previous desire. Suffering is very familiar to the human nervous system, Gregg notes. A response to stimuli associated with pain is visceral, which is why we turn our children away from war broadcasted on television or a car accident in a parking lot. It is natural to want to protect children from viewing suffering because it causes some pain or suffering to them. Viewing suffering creates some involuntary sympathetic response from the attacker and from onlookers: most can attest to wincing when they see a cyclist struck by a car, no matter if the cyclist is defying traffic laws or not. Gregg stipulates that consciousness may 'crust-

over' sympathy for those in pain, but the subconscious will always respond to it. Sympathy can regrow if the spectacle is repeated.

Gregg discusses the psychologist John B. Watson who explains that a newborn baby is instinctively afraid only of falling and of sudden loud noises (Gregg, *The Power of Nonviolence*, pg. 78). All other fears are conditioned or modelled to the newborn by its parents. Parents teach their children to have a fear of strangers, even friendly strangers, which seems to be unintuitive to children. But a repeated warning from parents of the danger of strangers, or what has happened to other children who are trusting of strangers, entrenches the idea that strangers are scary and to be avoided. The child then spends its life crossing the street when someone is walking their way, out of fear of strangers. Much like a fear of strangers, collective physical violence is a conditioned reflex. Once an idea is conditioned, where the fear associated with 'x' becomes a reflex reaction, it becomes a strong mental habit. We see this phenomenon in "groupthink" or mob mentality. Gregg asserts conditioned ideas can become a reflex, making them feel like an instinct, but this is not to say that conditioned ideas cannot be deconditioned. Displays of nonviolent resistance work to normalize the replacement of physical violence with nonviolence, deconditioning a default physically violent response and reconditioning a nonviolent response. The goal is not just to break the cycle of behaviour of the aggressor, but to alter the ideas of the aggressor that trigger the viability of physical violence as an idea. The altering of the ideas rather than simply aiming to engage with the behaviour of the aggressor both protects the victim from harm and allows the aggressor to feel a sense of moral transition for the better. This orientation leaves the aggressor and the victim generally more satisfied.

Gregg asserts that it is crucial for nonviolent resisters to remain open and empathetic to the aggressor; at any chance of opening negotiation, the nonviolent resister must engage (Gregg, *The Power of Nonviolence*, pg. 64). Moreover, it is important for a nonviolent project to have complete transparency with the media. Instead of making statements to the media, nonviolent resisters must make themselves 'non-reportable'. So nonviolent resisters should show up publicly with inarguable 'clean-cut-ness', manners, language and a general non-combativeness. This helps assure the aggressor and bystanders that the nonviolent resisters are not seeking domination, harm, or the defeat of the aggressor. It also works to challenge negative stereotypes of the victim that the aggressor has constructed. A display of superficial membership to the aggressive group signals that the nonviolent resister respects the aggressor and that the aggressor and victim are not especially different, Gregg writes: "When you compel respect, you're on the road to upsetting your opponent's morale" (Gregg, *The Power of Nonviolence*, pg. 87).

The more committed that victims become to a nonviolent tactic, the more salient the warning to the aggressor becomes that their physically violent behaviour may be in error, or at the least, that some novel curiosity in the mind of the aggressor may be provoked about the moral permissibility of their actions. Victory by way of nonviolence is a satisfying resolution for all involved because if ideas about the value of physical violence are successfully altered, no party ends up defeated, but rather all end up reconciled (Gregg, *The Power of Nonviolence*, pg. 93).

## Ch 5 William James and the Importance of Sentience in Moral Decision-Making

The purpose of an examination of William James is to show psychologically, through a philosophically pragmatic lens, how nonviolence is a viable option for political and social change and how a nonviolent tactic can be undertaken. Reference to James will show that ideas are the engine of behaviour, and that insofar as ideas are inherently private and interest laden, they are difficult to change. James also shows that humans seem to be ruled by sentience, that some objects or relations *feel* either harmonious or dissonant, and it is these feelings that inform most ideas. Thus, to alter the behaviour of another, ideas must be addressed primarily with careful preparation. James's theory of ideas will show that King *chooses* to target extremely personal ideas about moral rightness and wrongness to garner an emotional response that will provoke a change in behaviour as a pragmatic contextual choice.

James asserts that the mind does not solely operate on sense perception, but this is not to say that there certainly is an operation of the mind that processes perceived sensory data and works to categorize data into 'types' of things (James, "Are We Automata?", pg. 47-48). The categorization of 'things' allows for the mind to quickly and effectively understand perceived data by comparison to other 'things' that have already been categorized. But what the mind finds to be *important* is a seemingly spontaneous function of each individual mind (James, "Are We Automata?", pg. 47; Dooley, William "James on the Human Ways of Being", pg. 77-78) For example, consider a busy highway: all minds will collect sensory data of the highway, including the sound of cars barreling in either direction, the smell of burning diesel, the breeze created by cars zooming by, a

visual experience when one car is overtaken in the left lane. The sensory data exists to all minds perceiving the busy highway. But some minds will notice a foreign sports car, while others fail to register the difference of a Lamborghini from a Toyota. The objects of sensation have no value other than the value a mind attributes to them, making the value of things largely predicated upon personal judgment. One mind finds perceiving a Lamborghini on the highway a special instance that they will relate to friends. Another mind will not notice the Lamborghini's difference from another car, or perhaps would be irritated by the sport car's loud exhaust and flashy colours on a crowded highway.

The mind perceives sensory data, spontaneously finds some data important, finds other data forgettable, and categorizes what it finds important into attitudes and interests which inform ideas about this world (James, "Are We Automata?", pg. 45). The moral categorization of good, bad, best, and better is predicated upon a spontaneous experience of sentience which involves a feeling of either dissonance or harmony in conjunction with the experience of some object or relation. A feeling of harmony or dissonance determines the object or relations categorization as good, bad, best, or better (James, *Principles of Psychology*, pg. 1267). Thus, there cannot exist a dogma for moral judgments, only a plurality of personal *feelings* experienced in relation to certain moral objects or relations (Dooley, "William James on the Human Ways of Being", pg. 81).

Peter Dooley asserts that James "welcomes the energizing power of religion and the catalytic power of saints" as a method to improve human society because religion tends to promote the communal feelings of moral harmony and dissonance (Dooley, "William James on the Human Ways of Being", pg. 83). Religion works well to encourage general goodwill because the radical pluralism of the mind finds it at times confusing to

sort out what one ought to do among infinite and contradictory choices; context confuses personal feeling, the feelings of others can dilute the salience of how an object or relation is experienced, and it is sometimes easier to default to a rule than judge a situation independently. This is not to say that James advocated for religious or cultural singularity; rather, he regarded religion as a pre-emptive adaptive strategy for a rich and respectful society wherein plurality could exist in its full complexity (Dooley, "William James on the Human Ways of Being", pg. 83). Religion simply works to compile moral rules that groups of people generally agree upon. So, it is not that religion itself can dictate moral answers, but that religion is a tool to organize types of things into good, bad, best, and better. Friendliness to one's neighbour is deemed good, while the murder of children is bad. James understands the function of religion as a method of unity, while disparaging any metaphysical sanctity in the teachings or authority of the religion itself.

Regardless of religious doctrine, rightness or wrongness of an object or relation fundamentally is only felt from the seat of a certain life that has been lived. Which is why a child raised devoutly Catholic can grow into an adult that identifies as an atheist, but who can despite their atheism agree with their Catholic parents on several moral matters. The individuality of the mind and the diversity of individual experience make the moral scope of this world amorphous. But this is not to say that most objects or relations are always felt as good or bad in common: contestation between moral ideas certainly exists. However, James asserts it seems true to him that *most* would agree that certain things are always morally wrong. Most would agree that violent murder of children is always bad, which is the only indication of rightness and wrongness to anyone. Moral rightness or wrongness predicated on individual feeling can be misunderstood as being shallowly

individualistic, such that under that logic hedonism would rule morality. But hedonism is not what James is suggesting: rather, James observes that people conjure individual moral feelings, but want to organize in groups and desire to live peacefully together, saying that: “most (people) apt to be a member of a more inclusive whole” (James, “The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life”, pg. 159). Moral judgments are interest-laden and extremely personal to the perspective of the person who *feels* them, but there is some element of this universe which creates a desire to join in agreement and makes some moral objects of relations feel harmonious to most people in common. It is not an uncommon occurrence to feel satisfaction or relief when you discover that the co-worker that you think is lazy and entitled, also annoys your boss. It is not an uncommon occurrence to feel embarrassment or grief when expressing your love for a partner and finding that they do not feel the same way. It cannot be a coincidence that it feels bad to have other minds disparage an idea that to oneself felt truly harmonious. So, moral judgements are in a way personal, but also interpersonal in that moral judgments involve a desire to be agreed upon. The externalization of ideas about the rightness or wrongness of some interpersonal behaviour as part of the functioning of the mind will always be social in nature. James writes:

Our belief in truth itself, for instance, that there is a truth, and that our minds and it are made for each other—what is it but a passionate affirmation of desire, in which our social system backs us up? We want to have a truth; we want to believe that our experiments and studies and discussions must put us in a continually better and better position towards it; and on this line we agree to fight out our thinking lives. (James, “The Will to Believe”, pg. 20).

Consider this example: there exists an admirer of John Singer Sargent's oil paintings. The admirer loves the entirety of Sargent's work and feels deeply that Sargent is the best artist of all time. The assertion that Sargent's paintings are the best to ever exist *feels* harmonious for that person. Suppose the Sargent admirer encounters a devoted admirer of the work of Rembrandt who feels deeply that Rembrandt's paintings are the best of all time, and that art produced by American portraitists is terrible. Pointedly, the Rembrandt admirer finds Sargent's portraits sloppy, uninspired, and dull. These different convictions and respective opinions are the type of seemingly spontaneous feelings of harmony or dissonance that James suggests are the basis for feelings of moral rightness and wrongness. For the admirer of Sargent's paintings, they are perfect for no reason other than that is what is *felt*, and thus the value of Sargent's paintings flows from a personal affection towards them. The supporter of Rembrandt feels that Sargent's paintings are bad, and Rembrandt's paintings are better, for no reason other than that's what the admirer *feels*; thus, stripping Sargent's work of value, and placing value on the work of Rembrandt. Neither admirer is wrong in their subjective preference towards their preferred artist, it is simply a seemingly spontaneous feeling of harmony or dissonance to sensory data. Art experts could agree on a selection of tenets that make art good, bad, better, and best, but even experts would have a subjective preference for some art over others for no reason other than it feels harmonious to them. An art expert could understand that proportion is important to beautiful portraits, while still favouring Sargent over Rembrandt (Rae, "William James's Moral Universe and Interpersonal Relations", PHI5345, University of Ottawa, Fall 2021). So, take again the two clashing art fans; perhaps both are art experts and agree that there are several tenets that make art

beautiful. However, their respective ideas about which characteristics make for the best art, what characteristics should be present in certain styles of art, or how these characteristics should be judged can still meet in disagreement on the basis of personal judgment.

Once a mind identifies a feeling of harmony in a moral situation, the feeling gets a 'foothold or anchorage' by way of externalizing the felt harmony from inside the mind into the outer world through some sort of behaviour (James, "The Will to Believe", pg. 151). Consider again the fans of Sargent and Rembrandt; the Rembrandt admirer's disapproval of Sargent's paintings conflicts with the other person's admiration of them. Suppose that the admirer of Sargent is the only person the admirer of Rembrandt has ever met who is a fan of art, and upon their meeting, the Rembrandt admirer asserts that "Sargent is bad, and Rembrandt is better". Without the Rembrandt admirer's making known their view, the Sargent admirer would always think that Sargent is the uncontested best artist of all time. It is the externalization of the differing evaluations in the world by way of behaviour that creates the space for conflict. The ideas would never conflict if not outwardly declared, but it is their respective desire for affirmation that drives their ideas into conflict.

James says that a feeling of harmony seeks to satisfy some type of moral desire which can only be rectified outside of the mind where it can interact with other ideas and have a chance to be proven harmonious to others (James, "The Will to Believe", pg. 151). James is forthcoming in conceding that he cannot *prove* that there are objective moral truths in the way that  $2 + 2 = 4$  is objective, he only asserts that he makes moral suggestions based on the ways life feels to him. James feels that if there may be ethical facts to be learned (which he seems to think that there are), and humans should apply to

inquiry in general (Putnam, "Pragmatism and Moral Objectivity", pg. 223). I can conclude that James suggests there is a current in this universe that makes some things feel dissonant or harmonious in common. Again, most people in effect wince when they see a cyclist struck by a car, even if the cyclist is defying traffic laws. And there is a common tendency to turn a child away from the television when something disturbing is broadcasted on the evening news. Thus, the inquiry by a community into what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour is not only good in itself, but by virtue of the intelligent and equitable exchange involved in coming together to investigate, the inquiry could lead to the discovery of some moral truth and a precedent for functional interpersonal exchange (Putnam, "Pragmatism and Moral Objectivity", pg. 223).

Conflict thus flows from the commitment of individuals to their ideas in combination with a natural desire for the human mind to join with other minds in agreement about the functioning of this world. In order to attempt reconciliation, there must be an appreciation of the experiences that draw people to hold certain ideas, such as fundamental hopes, and values (Forster, "The Disunity of Pragmatism", pg. 147). A world where no one can agree about any moral matter would certainly be disorienting. For human life to operate well in this world, it is necessary that there be a consensus on at least some things: that the sky is blue, the earth is round, fire is hot, murder of children is morally wrong, and so on. The absence of conflict, thus, and the presence of agreement, results in peace, in good relations between minds: as James would say, in a universal feeling of harmony. By contrast, the presence of significant disagreement results in irritation, in a lack of relation between minds, and a universal feeling of dissonance. Moral judgments about what is justifiable and unjustifiable are built on individual feelings, which makes it seem

impossible for all minds to feel the same way. But James maintains that although the settling of moral ideas is difficult, it is possible because there is a natural human desire to come to harmonious agreement because it *feels good* to do so.

James provides an example to explain the private nature of the mind and the function of private ideas once they are externalized 'out into the world' for congruency testing. James asks his reader to imagine a new-born baby that forms an idea of a lit candle in its mind, informed by no sensory experience of a lit candle out in the world. The idea of the lit candle exists in the new-born baby's mind but has "no status anywhere else" (James, *Principles of Psychology*, pg. 918). If the idea of the lit candle was never contradicted by a sensory experience of a lit candle out in the world, the new-born baby would have no reason to believe that a lit candle is anything other than their own conjured idea of it. The new-born baby's idea of a lit candle would persist regardless of the idea's accuracy, James writes "*Any object which remains uncontradicted is ipso facto believed and posited as absolute reality.*" (James, *Principles of Psychology*, pg. 919); thus, the conflict which occurs between ideas typically takes place outside of the mind in the outer world where both sensory data and other's ideas exist and intermingle. Moral ideas are vulnerable to alteration or correction by contradictory evidence, or by ideas externalized by other minds that are built by other experiences and attitudes. Conflicting ideas come to engage with each other by way of the mind's externalizing the idea in behaviour or action (voicing the idea, acting in accordance with the idea), where another mind might refuse to concede to the idea of the other. If an oppressor were never confronted with a contradiction to their racist idea out in the world, likely their idea would persist. This is why equitable social and political participation is important, a diversity of lives that have been

lived represented in a public discourse presents a contradiction to ignorance. Without that, ignorance would persist, social norms would fail to be challenged, and in King's context, Black Americans would fail to repatriate the right to personhood without an active externalization of contradiction to the racist ideas of White Americans.

The transition of an idea from existing in the mind to existing outside of the mind as behaviour is basic in James's conception of the functioning of the mind. James explains that human behaviour (aside from behaviour that is motor) is always predicated upon an idea in the mind that is believed to be *true*. The belief in the idea is thus put forth into the world as action because of an inherent desire for the idea to be true to other minds (James, "The Will to Believe", pg. 151). Thus, for James, the belief in the idea that a universe of reconciliation exists necessarily precedes any action towards it. King's struggle towards racial integration entailed that he held an idea that racial integration was possible, which was an unpopular and unlikely to be true idea to hold considering the life that he lived. But the act of struggling towards the reconciliation of contentious race relations in America first needed a feel true to King's individual mind, while also being acknowledged as an *ideal* rather than a guarantee of this universe (King, "Unfulfilled Hopes", The Stanford Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute; James, "What Makes Life Significant", pg. 153-154).

An element of *faith* that a moral idea is 'right' is required for the settling of conflicting moral ideas (James, "The Will to Believe", pg. 17). James acknowledges that it is extremely difficult to square conflicting moral ideas that are believed to be true, but he upholds a personal *faith* that reconciliation is possible. James believes that the settling of ideas is difficult, but ought to be undertaken in because it *feels good* to do so. Certainly,

if ideas functioned in a way that allowed for easy reconciliation or no conflict at all, it would not feel especially meaningful or important to settle them (James, "The Will to Believe", pg. 21). Paul Forster writes concerning James's views of disagreement, that a belief in reconciliation is required for any resolution to be viable, that:

According to James, the metaphysical debates he highlights persist because each side is moved by different, legitimate needs; the tough-minded need for beliefs firmly founded in facts and the tender-minded need for a sense of significance of life. This suggests to him that the path to reasonable resolution of these controversies lies in thinking through a conception of the world that does justice to both (all) tendencies, while freeing us from the compulsion to view them as irreconcilable. This method of evaluating metaphysical views- intellectually (in terms of their inner logic and consistency with established evidence) and morally (by their capacity to sustain harmonious feeling ideals and adapt them to one another and the circumstances of life)- is, for him, the core of the pragmatic method of philosophy" (Forster, "The Disunity of Pragmatism", pg. 149).

James acknowledges that he only asserts what his mind finds to be important or meaningful, what judgments *feel* harmonious to him considering the experiences and data collected through the lens of his own life. Thus, one's position in a family, their occupation, community, social or political hierarchy and the experiences that flow from such naturally inform one's ideas, judgements, and subsequent actions 'out in the world'. Experiential bias can 'crust over' the common sentient experience of harmony and dissonance, but the innate or early feeling will always persist on some unconscious level.

Consider this example that James provides on a faith in nihilism, which can illustrate King's faith in his project of reconciliation and show how Jamesian faith is necessary for the participation in his nonviolent resistance. James asks his reader to consider 'M' being the material world, and 'x' being a belief about the material world. Human A views 'M' as hopeless, bad, and meaningless. Now take human B, who perceives 'M' through an optimistically hopeful lens; 'M' is a place of struggle, where overcoming aversion results in long-term satisfaction, and creates knowledge that will be useful in mitigating future aversions. For human B, who perceives the same 'M' as human A, the character of the world is vastly different, and human B's life is vastly more enjoyable (James, "The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life", pg. 29). So, it is clear that for James, his idea of a moral ideal does not comprise a set of principles or a clear picture of moral achievement, such as 'do the most good for the highest number' or 'a moral universe is a society wherein all citizens are naturally equal'. Rather, James's 'moral universe' entails a personal attitude which *James chooses* because of a) his personal experiences, b) his faith in and desire for reconciliation, and c) a harmonious feeling that a) and b) are the right thing to do (Dooley, "William James on the Ways of Human Beings", pg.82). James and King choose to be hopeful that moral reconciliation, however unlikely, is possible and is good in itself because it imparts a harmonious feeling (James, "The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life", pg. 46; King, "Love, Law and Civil Disobedience", pg. 4). James and King defend the prospect that one day, the act of pursuing a moral universe (an ideal aimed at harmony) could create moral universe (some reality where general harmony exists); thus, an attitude that acknowledges the possibility of definite moral reconciliation is required to inform such behaviour (James, "The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life",

pg. 173; King, "Non-Aggression Procedures to Interracial Harmony", pg. 2; Rae, "William James's Moral Universe and Interpersonal Relations", PHI5345, University of Ottawa, Fall 2021).

James holds that the inability to transfer one's feelings of conviction for their moral ideas creates a 'moral blindness' in human beings. This amounts to a failure to truly understand the interests, experiences, ideas, and opinions other than one's own because one can only live their own life. Thus, one's own ideas dominate their values and behaviour, while the values and behaviour of others seem absurd (James, "On a Certain Blindness of Human Beings", pg. 134). It is an unfortunate feature of humankind that feelings of suffering or conviction cannot be transferred to others, but Micah Hester and Joseph John make an interesting point in their paper "To See or Not to See? That is the Question: James's on a Certain Blindness in Human Beings", that James's moral blindness must be understood as blindness by degrees. If moral blindness did not exist by degrees, then humans would either be completely blind, with no existence of empathy, sympathy, or understanding, or humans would be able to see and understand the inner life of others entirely. Hester and John draw an analogy with 'legal blindness', whereby persons who are partially visually blind are considered blind although they see shadows and vague figures; it is not a question of 'you are blind, or you are not' it is a question of 'how blind are you' (Hester, John, "To See or Not to See? That is the Question: James's on a Certain Blindness in Human Beings", pg. 62)? By virtue of the inability to transfer feeling, there is some degree of blindness in all humans, but "the veil can be lifted". The lifting of the veil, and the transferring of feeling can be shown in, for example, reading a heartbreaking story, being a student of a skillful teacher, or being witness to a display of

suffering or bravery (Hester, John, "To See or Not to See? That is the Question: James's on a Certain Blindness in Human Beings", pg. 63). Hester and John interpret James as suggesting that some people see further than others because they a) pay attention to their own experiences, b) pay attention to the experiences of others, and c) admit that their moral blindness will never be overcome entirely, but they can attempt to lift the veil by way of a) and b) for the sake of peaceful reconciliation that feels good (Hester, John, "To See or Not to See? That is the Question: James's on a Certain Blindness in Human Beings", pg. 62).

James claims that conflict created by moral blindness can be at least managed on its way to reconciliation with an acknowledgement of *tolerance*; an understanding of moral blindness and accepting Hester and John's a), b) and c) stipulations. Harmony felt towards one's own moral ideas may never be felt by others as strongly, so by virtue of the plurality of interest-laden, private ideas, for James, *strategic management* of conflict maximizes the hope for new imaginative possibilities that only the adoption of tolerance and hope for reconciliation can inspire (Croce, "William James's Psychology of Philosophizing: Intellectual Diversity, Selective Attention and the Sentiments in Our Rationalities", pg. 332). Tolerance thus is not a cure-all for conflict resolution, especially physically violent conflicts; an oppressed person cannot be asked to simply tolerate their oppression and to put themselves in their oppressors' shoes. Rather, tolerance and understanding of the emotion that informs or flows from individual ideas amps up empathy and tamps down anger. Tolerance is a method to understand the opposition as a sentient human alike to oneself. If one is to acknowledge that "they like Rembrandt as much as I like Sargent even though I think they are wrong" then at least there can be an identification

with the congruency of feeling convicted to an idea. This identified congruency can bring the conflict to at least a self-identification with one's opposition, increasing the available space for resolution. Again, the reframing by King of the White oppressor as fallible rather than evil, draws out a self-identification with Black Americans. This self-identification is required for nonviolent resisters to endorse and embody the agape that is pragmatically required for the functioning on Nonviolent Direct Action. The more tolerant conflicting agents are of each other, the more likely they are to come together in equitable discussion to work together to address and cure their conflict. Paul Croce asserts that James suggests pathways to responding to intellectual difference, rather than positing 'one-size-fits-all' moral propositions. Conflict generates friction, especially when people are aggressively committed to the correctness of their own ideas, but a choice can be made as to how to channel the energy that fuels the conflict (Croce, "William James's Psychology of Philosophizing: Intellectual Diversity, Selective Attention and the Sentiments in Our Rationalities", pg. 332). If the energy that is generated between two minds in conflict is funneled towards antagonism, then the conflict will persist. But if the energy is diverted to a commitment to reconciliation, tolerance, or optimism for future harmony, then the conflict is far more likely to be settled on terms that feel harmonious for all (Croce, "William James's Psychology of Philosophizing: Intellectual Diversity, Selective Attention and the Sentiments in Our Rationalities", pg. 332). So, it is not that James of King offers tolerance as the lynchpin to the resolution of conflict (since James openly declares himself a pacifist and openly clashes with militarists); rather, tolerance is a method of creating the conditions that develop a relationship that allows for resolution to be a viable option.

But felt harmonies about rightness and wrongness can only be tolerated on equal moral footing insofar as the action is *harmless*. (James, "The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life", pg. 147). Todd Lekan critically points out that struggle between tolerance and harm in Jamesian terms becomes paradoxical when say, a dogmatic fundamentalist rejects the idea of tolerance, especially towards someone who they regard as having false values (Lekan, "Who Are Moral Philosophers? Ethics William James Style", pg. 82). Must the fundamentalist's ideas about rejecting tolerance be tolerated? For James, moral values are not derived from premises supplied by moral or religious theory; rather, the sense of right and wrong are identified as a 'sense'. General rules like 'do not kill children' are useful, but they must be supplemented with 'cultivated moral perception' (Lekan, "Who Are Moral Philosophers? Ethics William James Style", pg. 84). A kind of 'sympathetic imagination' must be embedded in social criticism (Lekan, "Who Are Moral Philosophers? Ethics William James Style", pg. 84). The actual work of creating a social space where reconciliation is possible requires drawing on imaginative and emotional modes of apprehension, all of which involve some sympathetic understanding of harm through tolerance (Lekan, "Who Are Moral Philosophers? Ethics William James Style, pg. 85).

So, it is not that one must tolerate all harmful behaviour, or that the presence of harm negates the requirement for tolerance all together. Rather, James accounts for the reality of the limited altruism found between those who do not share the same ideas. An interpersonal conflict of ideas is not abstract, because there must be a context which sets the scene for the conflict, involving actual beings who have interests and perspectives informed by their personal experiences (Lekan, "Who Are Moral Philosophers? Ethics

William James Style”, pg. 86). Harm is not an abstract entity, but rather can be sensed within certain contexts. Racists in the United States are harming Black people and communities by discrimination, oppression, and physical violence, but racist White Americans are unable to wholly identify the harm they cause because of a context of superficial barriers to empathy that are created and maintained by their privilege. In order for White Americans to see the proof of the harm they caused in a salient way; King altered the parameters of the context in order to make the harm undeniable albeit the oppressor’s racism.

If the inflictor had to endure the suffering, surely there would be a notable decrease in violent crime, abuse, war, genocide, or oppression. It is this ‘moral blindness’ which James posits, that is of the sort King works to mitigate with his tactic of nonviolence. King does not inflict the same suffering on his opposition that they inflict on him, but he makes his own suffering so blatant and clear that the inflictor cannot ignore the suffering that is being endured at their hands. King is pragmatically tolerating the harm brought against him, so as to take advantage of the context to bring out a new reaction. The respectable manners and clean-cut presentation of the nonviolent resisters strip away stereotypes of incorrigible or inherent differences between the resisters and the inflictors. The refusal to strike back portrays the resister as a benevolent resister rather than an opponent. The refusal to do to the inflictor what they do to the resister stirs in the inflictor a dissonant feeling because even under intense suffering, the resister will not make the inflictor suffer as the resister does. The inflictor cannot feel the sufferer’s pain, but King’s tactic of nonviolence pokes small holes in his opposition’s ‘moral blindness’, so that the inflictor can come to see through their own moral blindness to a degree. King purposefully makes

plainly obvious the suffering that is inflicted, in hopes that seeing the suffering will stir up natural feelings of dissonance that, in parallel ways, King and James think exist in this world.

As established, James posits that objects and relations are categorized as morally permissible or impermissible by sentience; the experience of either a harmonious or a dissonant feeling most people seem to experience in common (James, "The Will to Believe", pg.20). King would agree, while logic and reason can show that some object or relation is permissible, logic and reason devoid of feeling is not enough to class a behaviour as permissible. For moral behaviour to be classed as permissible, it must feel permissible. (King, "Remaining Awake Through a Great Revolution", *Oberlin College Archives*). The grounding for King's moral sentience is the rule of God who generates bad feelings as a repercussion of bad actions. For James, moral sentience presumes a metaphysical truth about human nature, whereby perhaps a combination of biology, evolution, and some unnamable facet of humanhood makes what is morally good, feel good.

James posits a 'moral universe', a place where, although ideas inevitably come into conflict, reconciliation is possible by virtue of an acknowledgment of moral blindness and the tolerance that flows from it (James, "The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life", pg. 148). Members of James's moral universe actively struggle towards their desired ends, undertaking their projects while acknowledging that struggle is an inevitable part of interpersonal relations. Acknowledging that some things that are absurd to 'me' may feel perfectly sensible to 'you' allows for an atmosphere of tolerance. The struggle towards the desired ends instills in members a certain satisfaction with life, imparting a deeply

personal sense of value and meaning.

King posits his idea of a 'Beloved Community' which he explains is an ideal social space where a general respect for others exists, where an inclination towards positive peace is evident, where there is an acknowledgment that conflict is inevitable, but that conflict can be defused non-violently (King, "Love Your Enemies", pg. 2-3; "Birth of a New Nation", pg. 9). The central tenet of King's Beloved Community is a consideration that peace flows from an innate respect for human dignity and that the exercise of physical violence when encountering a conflict of ideas only corrodes the dignity of both the aggressor and the victim. King asserts that it is not in the nature of his Beloved Community to aim to humiliate the opposition, but rather to win over opposition in understanding and friendship (King, "Birth of a New Nation", pg. 9). Considering King's context, for Black Americans who endured depersonalization and physical and mental abuse, it would be difficult to convince them of the existence of a peaceful 'Beloved Community' that holds respect as its central feature. This could seem plainly nonsensical; but understanding King's Beloved Community through the lens of James's moral universe helps show the deep efficacy to King's ideas. King asserts that even the most opposed ideas, like race relations in America, can be settled peacefully, which requires an understanding that conflict is caused by the opposition of ideas. King recognizes this and thus aims at the ideas that inform the behaviour primarily, rather than conjuring a treatment for the behaviour itself. Moreover, the respect that King sets as basic to his Beloved Community must flow from a Jamesian understanding that there is a multitude of ideas that emanate from a multitude of fallible minds. King can respect his oppressor because, in effect, he sees, as James does, that humans are fallible, that one's ideas are informed by their

experiences at least to a meaningful degree, and that forming ideas and acting on those ideas could always result in error. King forgives his oppressor by virtue of their humanness and his identification that he is an erring human as well. It is evident that King's moral universe that upholds respect at the forefront depends on James-like conception of 'moral blindness'.

James stipulates that his moral universe is not devoid of struggle, but also that struggle adds a meaningful satisfaction to human life, James writes,

The ideal was so completely victorious already that no sign of any previous battle remained, the place just resting on its oars. But what our human emotions seem to require is the sight of the struggle going on. The moment the fruits are being merely eaten, things become ignoble. Sweat and effort, human nature strained to its uttermost and on the rack, yet getting through alive, and then turning its back on its success to pursue another more rare and arduous still—this is the sort of thing the presence of which inspires us, and the reality of which it seems to be the function of all the higher forms of literature and fine art to bring home to us and suggest.(James, "What Makes Life Significant", pg. 154)

King would agree that there is a fulfilling mental and emotional benefit to the undertaking of difficult projects. Both theorists uphold that the realization of what is being struggled for is certainly desirable, but that the struggle towards the desired ends is in itself, worthwhile, rewarding, and beneficial. Coretta Scott King was quoted by the *Washington Post*, following President Lydon Johnson's White House Conference on Civil Rights, saying:

When you feel what you are doing is right... you are ready for the tough times

when they come, and you face them and accept them. You learn too that the bad times do not last forever, and you know that they are part of the price you must pay for the privilege of standing by your convictions. (Eig, *King, A Life*, pg. 854).

The struggling towards the reconciliation of ideas in good faith constitutes James's idea of a 'moral universe' and King's 'Beloved Community'.

Given this infinite plurality of interest-laden ideas, James is careful to state that this universe is not structured such as to enable settling *every* instance of moral conflict. But the action of struggling towards the reconciliation of *all* moral ideas is what he perceives as the meaning of human life. He considers that his experiences and attitudes of struggling towards the reconciliation of ideas *feels* the most satisfying to *him*. For King and James, struggle provides profound meaning to the desired ends of reconciliation. The struggle towards reconciliation is undertaken because it *feels* important to pursue it. But the struggle itself also provides a sense of deep satisfaction and appreciation for the achievement of the ends. It is the act of undertaking a difficult project and struggling towards the fruition of it that affords a deep meaningfulness that James called 'zest', 'zest' that gives meaning to human life (James, "On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings", pg. 134-135). The idealization of a desired end to conflict, and the struggle for that, for both James and King is crucial to meaning in human life.

Undoubtedly, for King, three-hundred years of slavery of Black Americans and subsequent oppression, discrimination, and violence, that persisted through the Reconstruction Era and the codification of Jim Crow laws, is an intensely difficult struggle. Some three-hundred years of oppression and discrimination cannot be simply understood

as a project of 'zest' or 'meaningful struggle' that makes life 'feel satisfying'. The racialization of Black Americans by White Americans made Black life unimaginably painful, fearful and at times hopeless. There are critics of King, and perhaps of James, that would assert that struggle in some contexts cannot be framed as meaningful or positive, that framing struggle in this way can only be falsely done by those who face no real or serious struggle in their lives. The Black Power movement headed by Stokely Carmichael seemed to fulfil a craving that Black Americans had for immediate change. Carmichael felt that Black Americans had waited long enough, that the practice of measured tolerance required for Nonviolence had produced little improvement, the struggle that King prompted being largely laborious and ineffective (Eig, *King: A Life*, pg. 865). A Black mother who loses her son to racial violence would assuredly find it insulting to be offered consolation that 'this experience gives your life zesty meaning'.

This being said, King agrees with James that there is a transformative nature of engaging with struggle. King says that the nonviolent struggle of Black Americans transitions them from a self-identified sense of being 'less than' citizens to a harmonious feeling of deservingness of equal citizenship and human rights. Oppression of Black Americans produced a general feeling of dissonance among Black communities, a self-identification implied 'no-bodi-ness', a temperament that accepts oneself to be 'thingified', King writes: "Negro infants were born in ghettos, taking their first breath of life in a social atmosphere where the fresh air of freedom was crowded out by the stench of discrimination" (King, *The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, pg. 510). King understood that the practice of nonviolence would have a transformative effect on Black communities, and claimed that although Black Americans were tired of having to fight for

the rights which they deserved, that “suffering was part of the process of redemption... (That) the cruelties of racism would, by necessity, lead to the rebirth of America” (Eig, *King: A Life*, pg. 772). The novel, hopeful suspicion that ‘perhaps things don’t need to be this way’ in combination with intense struggle invigorates a sense of ‘worth-while-ness’. The carefully made choice to abstain from physical violence, while being aware of the ill-fated reasons why physical violence comes about, instills a sense of moral admirability in oneself.

For King’s nonviolence to be taken seriously as an effective political tactic, he needed to mobilize Black Americans to embody his nonviolence. King needed to endow Black Americans with some sense of *faith* that nonviolence is the best solution to their conflict, far more effective than retaliating by physical violence. King’s tactic did aim at the attainment of voting rights for Black Americans among other facets of social equality, but the transformative nature of the *struggle* of nonviolence gives nonviolence a doctrine of double effect with a slight alteration to the classic interpretation. The doctrine of double effect makes a substantive differentiation between what one intends to do, and what is foreseen as an outcome of the action, Philippa Foot argues that it is sometimes morally impermissible to act in some way when there is a foreseen undesirable side effect that is not the aim of the action (Foot, "The Problem of Abortion and the Doctrine of Double Effect", pg. 1-2). For the matter at hand, both the aim and the foreseen side-effect are desirable; the aim being desegregation, and the side-effect being an improvement of the mental well-being of Black Americans by virtue of the faith, endurance and tolerance required for a display of nonviolent resistance. Even if the struggle towards legal and social equality failed during King’s lifetime, certainly the beneficial effects of faith in

reconciliation; a newfound sense of 'worthwhileness' for the oppressed, and an unwavering 'agapeic love' for all of humankind will reverberate through a community for generations. Future generations who do not need to affirm their sense of 'worthwhileness' or of deserving basic human rights will be better prepared to undertake projects of difficult reconciliation. The efficacy of King's nonviolence first shows up as the altering of negative ideas that Black American's had about *themselves*. James's conception of the 'moral universe' is set into practice by King. King in effect thus embodied James's ideas on struggle and meaning in human life.

As James posits and King demonstrates, there seems to be some undercurrent to this world that conjures a feeling of dissonance when someone is subject to undue suffering in plain sight. The idea that it normally feels wrong to humans to view baseless suffering in plain sight, *feels* true and important to King. It feels so true to King that he acts to exploit this presumed dissonance. King's identified dissonance is felt by his supporters regarding the racialization and oppression of African Americans to the extent that they are willing to accept suffering or death in the hope that racialization and oppression will stop. The success of King's Nonviolent Direct Action can be found ultimately in the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which endowed African Americans with full voting rights. Thus, the dissonance that King aimed to stir up, that he felt must in essence exist in most humans, did affect the conscience of White Americans. He forged a shift in ideas and subsequent behaviour.

But it must be noted King did not alter the ideas of all White Americans, racism persists in the United States today. James explains that moral judgments can become clouded or distorted by several factors like habit or custom. But that when performing an

act that is wrong, but customary, the actor could likely feel a suspicious sense of dissonance that perhaps the actor is unable to diagnose (James, *Principles of Psychology*, pg. 20). Suppose that it is customary in some political system to set the boundaries of an electoral district to favour a certain party's political success and to disadvantage others. The disadvantaged party would recognize that this custom is unfair, as the strategic 'cutting up' of electoral districts disadvantages those whom the party represents. However, the advantaged party either fails to understand the wrongness of gerrymandering electoral districts, or they understand its wrongness but figure that some other benefit to them outweighs the wrongdoing. The advantaged party persists in their advantage unknowing of the suffering they inflict, owing to distorted ideas about rightness and wrongness created by inherited advantage. Forcing the advantageous party to redraw electoral boundaries would result in bitterness, an aversion to compromise or a contempt for the disadvantaged party. King writes,

Constructively it [nonviolence] can save the white man as well as the Negro. Racial segregation is buttressed by such irrational fears as loss of preferred economic privilege, altered social status, interracial marriage, and adjustment to new situations. Through sleepless nights and hangered days numerous white people struggle pitifully to combat these fears. (King, *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community*, pg. 61)

When an advantage is inherited, it no longer *feels* like a special advantage, but rather becomes a feeling of entitlement. In an ad taken out by the National Committee of Negro Churchmen in 1966 in the New York Times, clergymen reiterated that the struggle for the endowment of equality between races:

...sought to put an end to the imbalance of power that made white people feel they were justified in getting what they wanted through their accumulated power and while tying "a white noose of suburbia around the necks" of Black people, leaving them all too often poor and unprotected. (Eig, *King: A Life*, pg. 891).

So, King not only sought to stir up a universal dissonance, but James would say he also effectively sought to change customs, culture, and habit that blocked or distorted universal dissonance.

It has been shown that for James, actions and behaviours are the only knowable form of ideas to anyone other than the owner of the idea. Actions and behaviours are the outcome of ideas that are sensed or understood as important, a faith that the idea could be right or true outside of the mind motivates a transition from only existing in the mind to being 'out in the world' as behaviour where it can be perceived, verified, or disparaged by others (James, "Are we Automata?", pg. 42; James, "The Will to Believe", pg. 151). This provides a clarification for King's seemingly astringent Christian principles and would show his contemporaries that he was not whitewashing or seeking trivialized induction to whiteness by his assertions of 'love' for his White oppressor. Critiques of King that charge him with abandoning or insulting his Blackness by expressing a 'love' for the White community who oppress him fail to acknowledge that King did hate his oppressor to some degree, while pragmatically framing the oppressor in such a way that he could not hate them wholly. King cannot love the sinner and hate the sin entirely as he suggests he does. King hates the oppressor insofar as he hates the signals of ideas the oppressor finds important enough to externalize into the world as behaviour, especially when these

expressions of ideas come to harm him (and others like him). So, King does hate racist behaviour and ideas that inform it, but he can love the racist as a fallible human who has the potential to be redeemed. This particular focused hating of one's oppressor allows for an outpouring of justified hate for the oppressor but funnels the energy of hate into a productive solution rather than a cause of further issue. If there existed no hate for one's oppressor or rather for what the oppressor does, then a tactic like Nonviolent Direct Action would be difficult to generate, because of the active, persistent, and tenacious energy needed for it. Moreover, the benefit of a nonviolent tactic to the practitioners would be limited if there was no considerable transformation in the *feelings* of the practitioners themselves. Nonviolent Direct Action is beneficial in that it effectively affirms the self-esteem of its practitioners. Without the transformation of the common angry and frustrated feelings of 'no-bodi-ness' to the hopeful feelings of 'worth-while-ness', the project would not leave the gate. Hating the racism of the oppressor generates energy that needs to be offloaded but does not create a particular target for hateful feelings. Rather, hating the act while understanding and respecting the actor as fallible motivates a desire to treat poor behaviour rather than eliminate the actor themselves. Reference to the ideas of William James has shown that nonviolence is a creative and pragmatic release valve that transitions negative feelings of the oppressed into positive ones.

## Ch 6 Conclusion

Martin Luther King Jr.'s tactic of nonviolence chose to stir up, draw out, and capitalize on negative feelings of shame, guilt, anxiety, and doubt in his opponent. The intent of this intentional infliction of psychological harm was to bring about a novel shift in ideas about moral rightness and wrongness in the minds of White Americans that yield a change in their racist behaviour. King's theory and practice of Nonviolent Direct Action is efficacious as a tactic of social and political change because it leverages the common moral ground held by mid-century Americans, the common moral ground being a commitment to (a Christian) God, a fear of damnation, and a sense of collective pride felt by Americans in the mid 1900's. The common ground that King leverages *assumes* that the former tenets are important to mid-century American identity. Devotion to a common God in combination with America's international leadership in technology, economy, and war instilled a sense of collective self-importance and pride in its citizens. King assumed that people of the 'greatest country in the world' with a strong religious consciousness would be strongly affected by appeals that make them feel that 'perhaps we have done something morally wrong, shameful, and embarrassing'.

Feelings of shame, guilt, doubt, anxiety or absurdity are transformative in nature as these negative emotions that are experienced in relation to one's own actions or ideas create a feeling of discomfort in the conscience that allows an opportunity for ideas to be altered or transformed. Moreover, the intention of drawing-out uncomfortable feelings shrouds the intention to inflict some suffering or pain with the conscience of the sufferer. The strategy of the nonviolent resister to inflict intentional psychological violence is

camouflaged, while veiling the feeler (the White opposition) from sensing that they are being *harmed*. Rather, the White opposition chalks up their negative feelings to a moral epiphany, and thus change their behaviour willingly of what they believe is their own accord. In a legitimate way, the White opposition is veiled from sensing that they are being *harmed* while the nonviolent resister is intentionally succeeding in harming them.

It has been shown in this thesis that retaliative or defensive physical violence is not a practical or viable option for an oppressed minority as were mid-century Black Americans. Retaliative or defensive physical violence is easily recognizable and condemnable, running the risk of an onslaught of more physical violence, oppression, and alienation from their rights for the already oppressed minority. So, the method of self-defense implemented by King causes some harm psychologically to the oppressor, while King's intentions to cause psychological harm remains covert, unblameable, and the optics of the method remain 'nonviolent'.

King did not have the possibility of a receptive and equitable relationship with White Americans or American legislatures. His attempts at procedural social and political change were always baselessly rejected due to racism and prejudice. The grounds for rational persuasion did not exist for King, so King sought to employ a method of social and political change that quietly caused his opposition psychological pain and suffering, as to invoke the conscience, allowing the opportunity for a relationship that allowed communication between Black and White groups. This thesis has shown that King's Nonviolent Direct Action is distinct from both rational persuasion and physical violence. Nonviolent Direct Action is a tactic which abstains from physical altercations, as does rational persuasion, but includes intentional behavior which capitalizes on a shared moral

context to exploit fundamental, intimate ideas to cause psychological pain and suffering. So Nonviolent Direct Action is nonviolent in the sense of violence that it abstains from some forceful occurrence but is violent insofar as it intends to cause harm to a person. Nonviolent Direct Action is more forceful and potent than rational persuasion while also avoiding the repercussions of physical violence.

Critiques brought against King's theory of nonviolent resistance that claim it amounts to whitewashing, that is, pandering to or acquiescing to the White majority, fail to see the tactic as violent, and fail to understand the philosophical and psychological pragmatism of covertly harming the mind for the sake of social, political, and literal protection. Bernard Lafayette, a prominent southern civil rights activist, and a long-time member of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee accused King of being too accommodating, or too middle class throughout the entirety of his career (Eig, *King: A Life*, pg. 731). Lafayette fails to acknowledge that if an oppressed minority were to meet their violent oppressor with either retaliative physical violence, likely the oppressed minority would be overpowered by the advantage of the majority, further oppression would be exercised, and negative stereotypes of the oppressed minority would be perpetuated. King says of Malcom X's militant tactics in his struggle for 'Black liberation', that to call Black Americans to "arm themselves" was "very unfortunate". That if Black Americans were to respond to their oppression by the means used to oppress them "it will only certainly give White Americans 'an excuse to kill up a lot of us'" (Eig, *King: A Life*, pg. 739). Reference to Gregg has shown that engaging with physical violence breeds not only real risk, but feelings of hate, bitterness, anger, and fear for all persons involved. This induces a cycle of physical violence and the emotions that inform it. The slow, quiet

struggle that is Nonviolent Direct Action is beneficial for affirming a sense of self or 'worthwhileness' in the minds of the oppressed group while actively fighting oppression. The oppressed fights their oppressor with methods that favour the position of the oppressed, thus providing the oppressed with a legitimate chance of success.

A Jamesian lens is crucial to understanding why targeting ideas is favoured over attempting to mitigate behaviour for King. James shows that ideas are the foundation of behaviour, and that ideas are inherently personal, private and interest laden. For an idea to become behaviour there must be a hope or faith that the idea is true or right, and James posits that there exists a natural desire for the idea to be verified as true or right by other minds. Thus, a conflict of ideas, like the clash of race relations in America, is the product of conflicting ideas that both parties deemed important, right, and true. The sense of truth about an idea can feel very salient to the feeler, making a correction to an erroneous idea be extremely precarious. King's doctrine of Nonviolence requires a Jamesian perspective to understand how his seemingly 'quietist' method of idea alteration by way of appeal to basic sentience is actually deeply pragmatic and, most importantly, effective.

King's nonviolence first gives the oppressed group a sense of faith in the project, which James says is required for action towards the goal of the project. The faith in the project is required to be able to withstand the suffering that the project will certainly impart to its practitioners. The withstanding of suffering endowed a sense of satisfaction, self-confidence, and 'zest' to the practitioner, which further fuels the faith in the project. The struggle towards the project thus provides value in and of itself to practitioners, regardless of the achievement of the project.

James illuminates how there seems to be some current in this universe that makes

some objects or relations feel dissonant and other harmonious. James asserts that rather than creating some dogma about moral rightness and wrongness, for most people it just seems to feel bad to watch someone suffer in plain sight. King focused a Jamesian conception of sentience and utilized innate feelings of dissonance by staging suffering in plain sight to invoke painful emotions in the minds of his opposition, appealing to his opposition's feelings rather than just treating their actions.

Nonviolent Direct Action is necessarily behaviour that is harmful intentionally. Nonviolent Direct Action is the staging of suffering in plain sight, without the sufferer intending to inflict any physical suffering upon their aggressor. The aim of this public display of suffering is to stir negative, uncomfortable, or painful feelings of shame, guilt, anxiety or doubt. The nonviolent resister intends to inflict feelings of shame, guilt, anxiety or doubt on their aggressor in hopes of forcing a change in ideas about the rightness or wrongness of actions or behaviour, eliminating oppressive behaviours in the future. The nonviolent resister shrouds their intention to inflict pain in their status of 'victim', while their true motive is to force their aggressor to recalibrate their position as 'oppressor', 'dominator' or 'aggressor'. This thesis has demonstrated how the sense of violence that Nonviolent Direct Action enacts is effective in its context to garner substantial social and political progress. Nonviolent Direct Action is a suitable treatment for some situations of racial oppression.

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## APPENDIX: FOCUSING VIOLENCE

This thesis asserts that Nonviolent Direct Action, the strategy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., is violent in a substantive way. The interpretation of violence argued for is a type of psychologically violent behaviour that is different from some common conceptions of violence primarily in that it avoids physical intervention. It involves instead causing harm psychologically to produce a non-consensual change of behaviour in its target. A key to non-physical, psychological violence is an intention to do harm. Harm can be done psychologically and physically non-intentionally, but intentionality classes such acts as different types of behaviour. To elaborate the assertion that psychological behaviour that intends and causes harm is violent, special attention is needed to what violence is, and how an act or relation is classed as violent.

It is common and easy to categorize killing, for example, as a generally violent act. But the accompaniment of intention to kill or not to kill and the circumstances of the killing can class the act as plainly violent in the ordinary sense of the word or can create some semantic ambiguity. To further contribute to this ambiguity there are also at least two senses of violence that are accepted commonly but are easily conflated. Confusion about which sense of violence is appropriate occurs because both senses can and do usually apply to the same objects or relations. However, the two senses of violence do not necessitate each other.

First consider the role of intention when classifying violence. The intentional stabbing of some person resulting in death, where death is intended makes the killing inarguably violent, and as such classes it as murder. However, accidental killing of a

cyclist by hitting them with your car, where death is not intended would not commonly be denoted as a violent behaviour, and as such would be classed differently than the former, as manslaughter instead or murder. Both are homicide but are classed as different types of homicide. The difference between these two types of killings, and what warrants their distinct classes as different types is the intention of the behaviour to do harm. The violent component of this discussion is the *behaviour* of the agent. Intentional behaviour to cause harm can be easily classed as violent.

But if we consider the accidental killing of a cyclist, even one who is at fault by defying some traffic law, while the occurrence of their body hitting your car and splattering across the road could be called violent, the result would still be manslaughter. The situation is violent in the same sense wherein childbirth can be called violent although all participants are willing, and no harm is intended. This sense of violence refers to the circumstance or context of the *occurrence* rather than the behaviour. We can call a rainstorm violent in its forcefulness and power yet acknowledge that the rainstorm neither intends nor does harm. The homicide of the cyclist and childbirth are themselves violent occurrences, not violent behaviour. Nor do these occurrences hinge on intention to be classed as violent, rather, the occurrence of the event isolated from the behaviour is violent in and of itself. Intention and circumstance both have the effect of classifying behaviour or occurrences as violent, but in distinct senses of violence.

To differentiate the two senses of violence that have been posited and to further the case that both intention and circumstance can class violence (but in their different senses), *The Oxford Dictionary* gives two senses of violence: “a) Violent behaviour that

is intended to hurt or kill someone, and b) Physical or emotional force and energy” (*Oxford Learner’s Dictionary*, ‘violence’). *Cambridge Dictionary* also provides two senses of violence: “a) Actions or words that are intended to hurt people, and b) Extreme force” (*Cambridge Dictionary*, ‘violence’). Both dictionaries agree that there is a sense of the word violence that means 1) “behaviour that does harm to a person”; an easy example would be murder as discussed. There is another sense of violence that means 2) “active forcefulness”, violence here functions as a description of the circumstances of an occurrence that is violent, an example of this sense would be a hurricane. An act can involve both senses of violence: murdering someone with a baseball bat is behaviour that does harm to a person, with active forcefulness. But the colour red can also be violent in its striking vivid forcefulness of colour. The colour red has no intention to be striking, or potential to cause harm; rather it is in itself a violent occurrence of colour.

An act is violent when what applies is conception 1) the causing of harm (and more harm if intended), and or, when what applies is conception 2), which suggests some forceful occurrence is present. As discussed, these conceptions can be applied independently without the existence of the other. It is conception 1) that is argued to be the type of violence Nonviolent Direct Action is classed as. It becomes obvious that conception 1) is present in light of the intention to cause harm in a psychological way. Behaviour that does harm where the harm is intended can be more easily categorized as violent than the same act that is nonintentional, as we saw in our discussion of murder and manslaughter.

Beyond dictionary definitions, legal definitions of violence provide support for the

position that violence can be 1) “behaviour that does harm to a person”, though the harm is non-physical but psychological instead. Legal reference is important because (ideally) laws and rules that are enshrined in a community signal a common agreement within that community that the *behaviour* that has been prohibited is impermissible. For example, the Government of Quebec defines violence thus: “an interaction between two or more persons, an act of violence occurs when words, texts or behaviours, whether obvious or subtle, are used intentionally against another person that may bring about some negative repercussions” (*Forms of Violence*, Government of Quebec). There is no mention of a necessity of physicality for a behaviour to be defined as violent, only that there is behaviour used to intentionally garner negative repercussions. This reflects conception 1) of violence, i.e., the focus on harm. The Government of Quebec goes on to name and outline psychological violence, which by definition includes no physical interaction. Psychological violence is used to gain or maintain control over someone by strategies that rely on constant criticism, belittling, distorting reality to alter another’s perception of it, making someone chronically doubt themselves, manipulation of emotions, and social isolation (Government of Quebec, *Forms of Violence*).

Empirical evidence, logic, and history further supports legal opinion. So, overlapping the legal definition of violence and the law’s stipulation on psychological violence, psychological evidence is required to corroborate the legal perspective that psychological violence is violent in a normal way. The “Abused Person Syndrome” (formally known as “Batter Wife Syndrome”) is the product of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or coercion to do something contrary to one’s will at the hands of a family member (New York State, ‘Guide to New York Evidence: Rule 7.06’).

Psychological violence in the context of Abused Person's Syndrome is the use of verbal insults, dominance, control, isolation, ridicule, or the use of intimate knowledge for degradation. This nonphysical behaviour is designed to control, subdue, punish, or isolate someone using humiliation, shame, or fear (Karakurt, Silver, 'Emotional Abuse in Intimate Relationships: The Role of Gender and Age'). Dr. Karakurt of Case Western Reserve University finds that "For the termination of an abusive marriage, a better indicator than frequency of physical violence may instead be the severity of emotional abuse, over time, emotional abuse can be as powerful a control tactic as physical abuse" (Karakurt, Silver, 'Emotional Abuse in Intimate Relationships: The Role of Gender and Age', pg.4). There is a notable but not fundamental semantical difference between "abuse" and "violence" in that abuse usually suggests a pattern of violence, compared to the word violence, which does not suggest repetition. Dr. Karakurt's choice to use the word "abuse" simply denotes several violent acts. To provide further evidential support for the former legal definition of violence, Dr. Karakurt posits that psychological violence is circumstantially more harmful than physical violence. The circumstance arguably being that psychological violence is only violent in conception 1), lacking the presence of conception 2). Even with only conception 1) present in instances of psychological violence, that is, behaviour that (intentionally) does harm, Dr. Karakurt believes that psychological violence can be worse than physical violence because it is especially cruel that it leverages the emotions and authority of an intimate relationship to do the harming.

It has been established that by definition there is no necessity for an act of violence to be physical. It is plausible, normal, and necessary to recognize that

psychological violence, a behaviour that is threatening, coercing, manipulating, emotional blackmail, and defaming to result in intentional psychological harm in order to control, is indeed violent in conception 1) of the term. Conception 1) of violence is reflected as violent in Canadian law and it is corroborated by psychological evidence. If we fail to acknowledge this sense of violence, we lose progressive and important concerns on what counts as violence. But even if this conception of violence is rejected by definition, Dr. Karakurt's contribution to the discussion of psychological violence manifested as Abused Person's Syndrome shows that psychological violence is just as, if not more harmful than physical violence in its affects.

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