Violence and Suffering, Responsibility and Choice - Issues in ethics and development

DES GASPER*

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Part of the broadening of ideas of 'development' involves matters of personal security and societal peace. This paper examines why and how, with reference to conceptual and historical analyses and to case studies of domestic violence, emergency relief in civil wars, and South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. It considers: physical violence as a major and ethically central aspect of many people's experience; how violence and the resultant suffering are neglected and even denied, due partly to an economics-style focus on commodities; and some alternative lines of intellectual and practical response, at individual, agency, and societal levels, to past, present and prospective violence.

INTRODUCTION : COSTS, CHOICES AND ETHICS IN DEVELOPMENT

Astonishingly, the world remains ruled to a considerable degree according to figures about Gross National Products. A measure of levels of monetized activity (actual plus in a few cases imputed monetized flows) is illegitimately taken as a measure of welfare, at least as a strong and adequate proxy. But levels of monetized activity are unreliable measures even of the welfare generated by those activities;[i] let alone of the content of

* Des Gasper, Institute of Social Studies, PO Box 29776, 2502 LT The Hague, Netherlands; gasper@iss.nl. My thanks go to the contributors to this special issue; to John Cameron, Nigel Dower, and Hugo Slim for bringing issues of violence into the agenda of the U.K. and Ireland Development Studies Association study group on ethics and development; to John, Sipko de Boer, Jankees van Donge and Thanh-Dam Truong for comments on this introduction, and to Raymond Apthorpe and Cris Kay for invaluable advice on the whole set of papers.

whole lives that contain more than economic exchanges. Physical violence is amongst the clearest instances where one dimensional measures of social progress through GNP or the like prove unacceptable, even if GNP were a good measure of what Pigou described as that part of welfare which can be compared with the measuring rod of money. The suffering from violence is neither to be ignored nor to be captured by a money measure; nor, most would say, is it to be fed into an aggregation of costs and benefits, for the costs and suffering have been or are of specific people (Amerindians, for example), different from those who benefit. Consider South Africa, or Brazil (Buarque, 1993), where multi-faceted violence has been endemic, to support or replace, or as a pathological effect of, particular socio-economic models.

Development means widening the ‘range of human choices', wrote Arthur Lewis in 1955 (cited by UNDP, 1996:46). The Human Development Reports (HDRs) agree: ‘Human development can be expressed as a process of enlarging people's choices' (UNDP, 1996:49). Enlargement alone of the range of choices is not enough: some options are undesired; and some are insignificant, like your 50th tv channel. HDRs choose to stress valued choices, ‘people's capabilities to lead the lives they value' (loc.cit.), a liberal position which emphasises individual freedom and trusts that people's values are not twisted. The choices must be not only those of the rich. Thus the Human Development concept encompasses several dimensions (ibid.:55-6): 1) empowerment, seen in expansion of capabilities, plus participation; 2) equity in distribution of basic capabilities and opportunities, so that everybody has at least a certain minimum; 3) sustainability, of ‘people's opportunities to freely exercise their basic capabilities'; 4) community membership, belonging; 5) security, notably in people’s daily lives. The addition of community membership recognises that human life is too complex to be captured by one slogan about choice or capabilities (though the HDRs sometimes still try to do so). And the separate listing of security recognises that this is valued in itself, not only as a condition for empowerment; ‘everyone should enjoy [at least] a minimum level of security’ (UNDP, 1996:56).

Post-war development studies has been an inheritor of 18th-19th century Western optimism. Both have held that material progress is possible, and essential, and can bring with it most other good things, including peace, liberty, tolerance, equity, even wisdom.

But whereas violence was an explicit and leading concern in the earlier work, as something that progress leads us away from, it has been less attended to in modern development studies. Phenomena of violence were central in much social philosophy of earlier centuries, from Hobbes' vision of a war of all against all, to Marx and Engels's witness to the brutal extension and policing of capitalism and colonialism inside and outside Europe. In contrast, the economics-dominated mainstream of post-war development studies held both that the problem of economic growth had been rendered universally soluble—given if necessary some lubrication from international funds and international advice to help whatever social and political restructuring might be required ('modernization')—*and* that this growth would dissolve societal conflicts. This has been the picture assumed in most textbooks of development economics or manuals of development planning. Violence has been a minor focus, if mentioned at all.

In reality, processes of sustained economic growth and concomitant modernization have nearly always involved huge amounts of directly associated suffering, as Peter Berger noted 25 years ago in his *Pyramids of Sacrifice: Political Ethics and Social Change*. Much of this suffering is from physical violence: manifest, intentional, and large-scale, by governments and their opponents, by vigilantes, by traffickers in people and now also traffickers in parts of people--planned suffering. Some other, unintended, violence may be seen as 'side-effects', such as increased or unexpectedly unreduced levels of domestic violence and civil conflict. The table indicates examples of such intended and unintended suffering, both through violence and through other paths.

	Planned suffering	*Unplanned suffering*
Suffering from violence	As in development strategies; e.g. via slavery, forced labour, expropriation, ethnic cleansing, other forced removals	'Side-effects'; e.g. suffering from domestic violence, and diversion of emergency aid to fight civil wars
Other suffering	E.g. forced savings, economic adjustment. [In these cases, violence is not applied but typically remains as a threat, a potential enforcer.]	E.g. from natural hazards; and from societal dysfunction

The field of ethics and development (henceforth 'development ethics') as formulated by Berger (1974), Denis Goulet (1971), and others arose to make clear at least the following:

- first, development strategies and paths typically involve serious value costs; including major human costs and suffering. In Berger's terms, some of these are physical, which obligate a 'calculus of pain', and others are psychic, which require a `calculus of meaning'.[ii] Even in development ethics there is sometimes danger of over-absorption in theorizing the good and specifying requirements for human flourishing, as compared to analysing and counteracting bads;
- secondly, the very idea of development is value-relative; so the direction of the path demands to be discussed, otherwise it will be determined solely and tacitly by power, including the power to make others carry most of the costs and to determine which costs will be counted and which ignored;
- thirdly, each prevailing orthodoxy—Eurocentric 'stages-of-growth theory', 'the Washington consensus', or whatever—deserves value-based examination, because there were or are serious empirical alternatives and value alternatives to it.

Development ethics is thus in large part about choices: choices about values and about strategies. Ethical discussion about development only has much point because there are real, serious choices to make. If there were but one development path that could be taken seriously--because all others on examination proved to be grievously flawed by instrumental and/or value misconceptions--there would not remain much to discuss; only the propounding of the one true way.

Awareness of costs and conflicts has recovered in significant degree in the 1990s. Consider two notable book-length policy analyses from the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, guided by its then Minister of Development Cooperation, Jan Pronk. The first, 'A World of Difference', in 1990 spoke of a world of wide variety, which if carefully understood and engaged with can be made much different and better. Its successor, 'A World in Dispute', spoke in 1993 in a changed voice, of the world of the former Somalia, the former Yugoslavia, the Caucasus and many other parts of the former Soviet Union, Ayodhya and the Bombay massacres, and ongoing mayhem in

Afghanistan, Algeria, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka and elsewhere. Since then Rwanda, the former Zaire and others have joined the list.

The collection

While suffering, both intentionally caused and unintentional, includes very much besides suffering through violence, this set of papers focuses on violence, given the damage it causes to life, health, trust, personhood and dignity. The collection looks especially at physical violence, given its dramatic ability to harm and destroy, its prevalence, and yet its relative neglect in development studies. It considers both violence and possible responses, including issues of choice and responsibility: by individuals, by organizations, and in public policy. And it treats both responses to the fact of and heritage from past violence (as in apartheid South Africa), and responses to ongoing and prospective violence (such as in current 'complex emergencies'). Who has a duty to respond and to what, which alternatives do they face, what choices could be effective and fair?

The first three papers, including this one, are more conceptual, theoretical and general, and refer to broad historical experiences and styles of thought. John Cameron's 'Kant's categorical imperative as a foundation for development studies and action' offers a major conspectus of the problematique of violence and its partner, deception. He finds grounding in a Kantian perspective of human agency and mutual respect. Building on the work of Onora O'Neill he proposes this as a set of ethical principles suitable to guide and energize development work. Cameron lays out a massive agenda for analysis and for policy and policy experimentation..

In 'Development, Violence and Peace: a conceptual exploration', Nigel Dower gives reasons why development and the reduction of violence should be seen as intimately and favourably connected with each other, and also with justice and environmental protection, even though it appears that development, narrowly conceived as economic growth and betterment, is in many cases to the detriment of the others. `Development' invariably functions also as a synonym for, and typically also a theory of, progress: it thus incorporates many values, and it typically and, he argues, plausibly presumes that these are--in general and in the long-run--mutually supportive.

Three case studies follow. All are concerned with how to *respond* to violence, past, present, or prospective. Firstly, Purna Sen provides a study of domestic violence, by men on women in Calcutta, the extent and forms of women's resistance, and forces which can influence their degrees of choice and autonomy. Secondly, I analyse the terrible choices faced by aid and relief agencies in civil war situations, and different types of orienting principle which they might use. Lastly, Wilhelm Verwoerd assesses the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in South Africa and whether it has contributed to rebuilding South African society from the legacy of institutionalized and licensed violence. I discuss each of these in more detail later.

So far this opening paper has introduced the scope of the collection:- violence, the resulting suffering, and choices in the face of this violence and suffering, including questions of who has responsibility. The next two sections now look more closely, and with special reference to violence, at potentially conflicting rationales for the field of development ethics: that `development' is often value-damaging and that it is value-relative. If both 'development' and 'violence' are value-relative, then how much can remain of claims that damage caused by development-induced violence and by development-hindering violence is on a huge scale and demands response? Later sections survey some responses: first, those that define away the problem by downgrading the costs or denying the existence of alternatives; and then approaches that face up to real and painful choices.

'DEVELOPMENT' AS VALUE-DAMAGING? ON VIOLENCE

Longterm economic growth has demanded substantial sacrifices on the part of the earlier generations for the sake of benefits to their successors. Largescale investment has historically often been facilitated by oppression of, and surplus extraction from, weaker groups. In contrast to the image of 'take-off', images like 'Vales of Tears' and 'Valleys of Death' imply, first, an interim period of increased suffering, likely to be enforced rather than voluntary, with diversion of resources to investment and marked by wrenching changes in styles of life; but second, eventual arrival in the sunlit uplands of widespread greater affluence. Berger's phrase *Pyramids of Sacrifice* hints at mighty

structures built on the broken lives of victims. It becomes a yet bleaker metaphor if the sacrifice is unending. His phrase refers to the Aztecs' ritual killings on the steps of their pyramids, to fulfil what the gods were thought to require as precondition for a better future. Bloodletting and conditionality were linked. But if the gods do not exist, or do not keep their promises, or have been misinterpreted, then the future is not better. Even in the 'take-off' scenario, costs are permanent for those sacrificed.

The twentieth century was indeed probably the most violent yet (MacRae, 1998). Whether casual intra-national violence declined, we do not know for sure; but levels of domestic violence are high. Wars between states were waged at new pitches of intensity and destructiveness, with an ever greater proportion of civilians amongst the casualties. Wars within states have proliferated, including some waged by states upon large sections of their own inhabitants (such as Armenians, Jews, Chinese and Russian landowners, educated Cambodians, Tutsi Rwandese). In South Africa a minority built a more subtle, routinely and extensively brutal, system of oppression of the large *majority,* a system now only most painfully and partially dismantled. Yet while George Orwell's *1984* offered as one image of human history a boot smashing a face *for ever*. the victory of the anti-apartheid struggle impressively showed a different pattern.

Many types of violence demand attention. Those below overlap, and other types exist too. The list serves here simply to mark a series of universes of suffering.

- Violence against workers, and tenants. The slave trade was one, enormous, sub-set.
- Violence against indigenous peoples. Encountering these peoples and desiring the resources where they lived, desiring also their labour to exploit the resources, European powers rationalized violent seizure and the use of almost unbridled power, in various ways: 'the lands were empty'; 'the people were vicious savages'; 'we brought peace to chaos'; 'the savages reneged on agreements'; and so on.
- Violence against other civilizations. Rationalizations such as 'they broke agreements' and 'we brought peace' still figured in European dealings with evidently non-empty, non-primitive lands. (Kiernan's *The Lords of Human Kind* gives a compilation.) Hardened in centuries of intra-civilizational wars in Europe, and wielding superior military technologies promoted in the competition betwen emergent states, European powers moved on to subdue the world.

- Violence against other races and ethnic groups, including within given political frontiers (as in South Africa, or Yugoslavia)..
- Violence against women - a massive, worldwide phenomenon. Purna Sen's paper in this collection reports on disturbing levels of domestic violence even in a city considered one of the most pacific and safe in India. The South Africa created by three centuries of rule by 'higher civilization' is reportedly the rape centre of the world as far as routine sexual violence goes. And across the world many armed conflicts appear to unleash tidal waves of rape, some unplanned, some planned from above. What rape reveals is not simple sexual desire, rampant when the possession of power allows. Do soldiers feel desire for those they have never met before and instead proceed to hurt and abuse? The desire seems to be for violence and to humiliate and humble others, and the expression is of hate, resentment, anger, power, and self-exaltation.
- Violence against children, another possible pandemic.
- Violence against oneself, including through 'substance abuse' from alcohol and other drugs. These forms of violence go beyond the scope of this collection, but they underline the inadequacy of the 'economic man' model of personhood. The drugs trades, centred on filling the gaps of meaning left in the homelands of economic man ideology, underpin vast systems of structural, physical violence.

Why list these universes of suffering? One reason is to then ask, first: which pictures of human nature and potential can accomodate the realities of violence, which can not, and which corresponding models for development (as a direction of improvement) are therefore adequately grounded.[iii] And second, to ask what is the relation between particular paths of development (meaning here economic growth and corresponding social modernization) and these realms of suffering. If the suffering is eternal, unavoidable, or determined entirely by forces other than socio-economic development—say by unchangeable features of human nature—then it could be, for policy, irrelevant, except to stimulate our concern to promote some countervailing universes of satisfaction through development; or except insofar as development changes the boundaries of what is changeable (for example by genetic engineering).

The question of relationships between paths of development and realms of suffering is raised not to be settled now, but to indicate a permanent agenda for attention. Is violence integral or accidental, avoidable or unavoidable, to the type of development path being considered, and on what scale? Is the violence only temporary, a transitional feature of a phase of restructuring, or is it a permanent product, a structural feature of the type of society created?

Certainly in some cases, a link from the type of socio-economic development to resulting violence is evident; in some other cases probable; and in further cases more debatable. Pakistan in the 1960s was lauded by many abroad; but the development imbalance between the former East and West Pakistans, in great favour of the latter, culminated in the numerically superior East launching its own political movement, its murderous repression by the forces of West Pakistan, and a bloody war. The explosion in the 1990s of states like Yugoslavia (see Woodward, 1995) and Rwanda was significantly related to massive economic stresses acting on inflammable divided societies struggling to meet their aspirations, and debt schedules, in the face of severely adverse external conditions. The Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda concluded the following:

> [Explanatory factor 6 behind the 1994 Rwanda genocide was:] The economic slump starting in the late 1980s and the effects of the actions subsequently taken by the government in consultation with the international donor community, i.e. the structural adjustment programmes of 1990 and 1992. The economic deterioration, largely due to a sharp decline of world market prices for coffee—Rwanda's prime export earner—as well as to unfavourable weather and economic policies such as increased protectionism, price controls and other regulations, affected the whole society. In US dollar terms, GDP per capita fell by some 40 percent over the four years 1989-1993... The international community, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, overlooked [the] potentially explosive social and political consequences when designing and imposing economic conditions for support to Rwanda's economic recovery. (Eriksson et al., 1996:15).[iv]

‘DEVELOPMENT’ AND ‘VIOLENCE’ AS VALUE-RELATIVE? ON CONCEPTS

A second starting point for development ethics is potentially contradictory to the first. The first stresses the costs of development and how they are distributed across people; the second demands attention to what are the values contained in the ideas and programmes of development, and to alternative value-stances within and/or against ‘development’. The potential contradiction arises if all possible value-stances are considered equally valid—for example a stance that treats indigenous peoples as sub-human and hence violence against them as of no weight or even as praiseworthy. Besides ‘development’ (in the sense of societal improvement), ‘violence’ and ‘cost’ too are value-relative terms. For assessment of costs depends on who is taken into account, and on what these people value and disvalue; and the precise boundary between violent and other behaviour will depend on value judgements.

Before examining the concepts of ‘violence’and ‘development’ further, we should note that many a major concept in social theory and ethics is ‘thick’, meaning at least that it has multiple components. Different weightings of these components produce different interpretations and usages of the concept. Second, each interpretation of a thick concept such as ‘development’ gives a way of describing, a way of grouping instances, that reflects a theory of connections which is open to debate; and typically also reflects a, debatable, set of values, if the concept describes degrees of normative attractiveness (as for example do ‘development’ or ‘freedom’). That each interpretation represents a theory, a package of perspectives, values and selected experiences, and an energizing vision, implies that they are typically ‘essentially contested’. Their meaning is perenially in dispute (Gallie, 1962; Connolly, 1993).

‘Violence’

Violence’ itself is a quasi-normative notion, with contested boundaries. When, for example, does ‘sport’ become ‘violence’? Is any abrasive interaction violent? Typically ‘violence’ has a negative connotation--Dower reports Harris’s definition that violence damages, not merely changes, something of value--though it can be potentially justifiable by its instrumental role and thus by what it may permit or enforce. This is the

standard view of war. (In some cultures, however, war has been glorified for itself, just as in some sub-cultures violence is glorified.) What then is disapproved of, and hence liable to be called violence? Dower observes that at root there is a link between 'violence' and 'violation', e.g. of rights. Verwoerd hardly uses the term ‘violence’; the South African TRC’s mandate extended across the range of gross human rights violations, and he uses the latter term extensively. A large proportion though of the violations investigated by the TRC did centrally involve physical violence, and often derived from it a special painfulness and traumatic quality. Lacking the resources of a national commission, for purposes of manageability most of the studies in this collection prioritise physical violence.

Cameron examines alternative definitions: ‘Is any form of exercise of power "violent" *per se*? Is any form of action on a human body without the clear consent of the possessor of that body an act of violence?... [Does] violence [occur] whenever there is a non-negotiated loss of choice on how to conduct life...[?] .. This abstract principle is difficult to use in practice... By comparison, the bruise or slash, chains or prison bars, or the instruments of execution are clearer evidence of human agency under stress.... For the purposes here, the concept of violence will be restricted to situations of activities between human beings where at least one person becomes physically damaged or is physically restricted without giving consent to the activity... Certainly violence has several dimensions which a purely physical perspective may not capture. However, a preliminary investigation, as this is, needs to be bounded in order to be manageable.’ Sen’s paper makes a similar choice.

Dower has the most complex treatment. He too notes ‘in addition to the active violence of individuals the violence of institutions and structures which impedes and oppresses’, and the categories of psychological, cultural, and passive violence, the last of these being failure to act to alleviate suffering. But further, he stresses the existence of a range of conceptions (thick definitions) of any major category in ethics and social philosophy. Thus for the opposite of violence, ‘peace, there are different conceptions ranging from the negative absence of war or overt conflict, through the Hobbesian idea of a period of time in which there is no disposition to or preparations for future war or violence..., to a state of harmonious relationships in which justice flourishes.... [This

last] conception is idealistic, in the sense that apart from some very small social groups, it is not realised fully. But it nevertheless provides a yardstick against which one can measure progress..... [and a basic] attitude which essentially affirms, asserts or assists what is of value. We could call this the way of non-violence or peace.....'.

'Development'

Dower suggests that despite evidence that economic development in many cases appears to generate increased conflict and violence, there remains a strong leaning to say that 'real development' involves peace. How can this be?

A simple explanation notes that the term 'real development', or just 'development' used in that sense, marks a switch to a normative concept, of improvement, away from a more neutral descriptive concept, of economic growth and associated social change. By monitoring such uses of concepts, we can avoid foreclosing any evaluation of the desirability of economic growth. Otherwise when a particular instance of economic growth appears intolerable, it can be dismissed as not 'real development'; and thus 'development' automatically get good evaluations. But given that the predominant operationalisation of 'development' remains GDP growth, the result is that GDP growth remains insulated from serious criticism.

The idea of 'development' is not reducible to economic growth, or even structural economic change, for which we have adequate terms already, and which indeed can often conflict with the other desired elements. 'Development' typically represents instead a vision of societal progress, within which various components figure—comfort, peace, environmental balance, and more—all considered as major parts of a good life. We very widely employ 'development' as this sort of multi-dimensional, normative, conception—not as a single-dimensional concept.

The simple explanation is not quite enough. If we simply had a pair of concepts, one descriptive and one normative, why would they not just go under the separate names 'economic growth' and 'social improvement'? Why do they seem to become conflated under a single, different, label: 'development'? One can suggest, firstly, that this is because neither growth nor improvement is felt to exhaust the content of the term 'development'; but that still begs the question why they are treated as components of a

single term. So, further, the combination could reflect an underlying theory: that economic growth overwhelmingly brings social improvement, and indeed is the indispensable condition for major improvement. Thirdly, this motivating vision requires a 'protective belt', to cope with what are considered exceptions; and this is provided by the category of 'not real development', which relies on the dual usage of 'development' and the tactical oscillations that it allows. This broader usage is thus not simply wishful thinking nor, more favourably put, only for inspiration and motivation. Dower suggests that in general the major components are over the longer run mutually supportive in sustainable societies, *regardless* of how precisely they are conceptualized.

> **...**even if there are significant variations in the way human flourishing, peace, justice, and care for the environment are understood, the framework of societal order is still needed. There is a kind of minimum structure and unity to the virtues of the social domain.... That a society here and now must have *some* commitment to peace, justice, environmental care and the pursuit of development and see a kind of incoherence in failing to see the joint necessity of these conditions, is my contention.... [So] if something like the above account of the necessary structure of conditions for society is the case, we have the basis for the claim that [economic] development, peace, justice, and environment, whilst not inevitably mutually supportive, will come to be seen as [generally] such... Development [more broadly] actually relates to the whole picture - general human flourishing in conditions of peace, justice and care for the environment.

Dower elaborates in subtler form these two arguments—that 'development' is a broad conception that combines various aspects of life, and second that the aspects can on the whole support each other—with special reference to peace and the reduction of violence. While the broad conception does not strictly depend on the second argument, its use is strengthened by it.

His argumentation illustrates how the value-relativity of key concepts here does not take us to the point of emptiness. The concept of violence is not merely a matter of taste. Who will accept a view such as 'you have this thing against involuntary organ trafficking, thanks to your dated individualistic notions of agency and autonomy; let's

just go with the flow' ? The papers in this collection share a concern for individuals' agency and autonomy, and a belief in the capacity and importance of individual and collective reasoning. From this stem a concern with the conditions that promote agency and autonomy (see Doyal & Gough, 1991, for a fine theorization of basic needs), and the conditions binding on individuals to accord others the rights that they claim for themselves (see O'Neill, 1996, for an impressive post-Kantian formulation).

DOWNGRADING THE COSTS OF VIOLENCE AND DENYING ALTERNATIVES

One major type of response to violence and to the suffering it produces is to downgrade and deny them. Part of this denial derives from an economic worldview in which economic growth equals improvement, and the conception of people has been reduced to that of assiduous pursuers of commodities. That worldview also generates powerful incentives to minimize estimates of the costs of economic growth and change and to exaggerate the benefits.

Market theory: only interests, no passions

In the worldview of conventional modern economics, human beings are the species *homo economicus*: commodity and comfort seekers, usually implicitly conceived as law-abiding and peaceful. (Only in more extreme models does *homo economicus* seize any opportunity to break the law and misuse other people if it will work to his own gain.) Their identity is as producers and consumers, no more; their activity is utility maximization, and they operate within mutually agreed and respected contracts. As producers and consumers they are endlessly motivated by the lure of more commodities. The model fits much of life poorly or very poorly. In reality, though money is frequently a good motivator, it achieves that by offering generalized command over commodities which are pursued in important part (as business marketers know, but most economists do not) in hope of identity, status, novelty, security and other forms of meaning. Adam Smith himself stressed this (Hirschman, 1977:108, 143).

Early market theorists were typically aware of *homo economicus* as an idealization, a stereotype (Rothschild, 1994). But they held that a focus on commodities

and private material gain through market exchange did make men more rational, prudent, and peaceful. The market helped to control and replace 'the passions' by 'the interests', they believed, as recounted by Albert Hirschman (1977).[v] In reality, the market is only an attractive alternative if it offers adequate possibilities for generating profit, and this depends on forces of production and powers of exploitation. Further, the market must be instituted and regulated; people must when necessary be restrained by the State from pursuing gain through violence. In many colonies there was little such restraint, instead active State support for violent colonizers, though indeed this was to institute particular exploitative forms of market relations; and surpluses thus generated did play a role in sustaining pacification 'back home'. Elsewhere Hirschman concludes (1986) that market activity *both* conduces to peace and order (the *doux-commerce* thesis), *and* to undermining its own moral foundations (the self-destruction thesis); and that where the balance lies in particular cases requires historically specific investigation. But the predominant social science of market activity has until very recently screened out such issues.

According to Hirschman, while Smith stressed that drives for meanings underlay the drive for economic gain, this gave the latter its unceasing energy and centrality in marketized societies, and could imply that if all passions are channelled through the market, then social scientific attention should focus on market mechanics (Hirschman, 1977: 108-13). This conclusion, and the programme for a separate science of economic behaviour focused only on more material interests (comfort, money and commodities), lived on even after the reasoning was forgotten and superseded by 19th century loss of belief in the calming effect of commerce (ibid.:128). Most modern market theorists forgot the passions altogether. Their rational bargainers either had no proclivities for violence, or were restrained by States of extraordinary capacity, which floated in an explanatory vacuum and themselves had no proclivities for violence other than as required to restrain others' violence. This thinking continued on even into perhaps the most violent century in history.

Overall the mainstream vision of development of the 1950s through 1980s—human fulfilment through the peaceful pursuit of investment and industrialization—was insufficient as a description, as a prediction, and as a

prescription. Theories of 'basic material needs' in the 1970s hinted at something more, since they emphasized security too, including security against violence and deception. Theories of 'basic human needs' went much further, and brought back the passions: impulses for esteem, status, identity, novelty. The darker passions and potentials tended however to be passed over: wishes for domination, superiority, exclusion of others and of the unfamiliar. And 1980s and 1990s neo-liberalism restored *homo economicus* as theoretical foundation, at the same time as those passions mounted and raged. Viewed globally, the market does not appear to have displaced the passions by the interests, in the twentieth century as a whole and the present era in particular. Movement might even have been in the contrary direction.

The downgrading and defining away of costs

To overlook likely and actual costs, because of a deficient conception of persons, is one thing. Also important is ignoring costs to others because of self-interest. Now, downgrading of costs can certainly apply to the costs of not changing, as well as to the costs of change; and the violence of the status quo can be worse than the violence of change. In both cases, downgrading of costs often has a motor propelling it: the large gains that relatively small, and thus highly motivated, groups can reap or already do reap from the situation or from change. But concentration of benefits, and thus the motor that drives downgrading and denial of costs, may typically be particularly intense for new investments. To highlight change's costs—such as 'external' costs inflicted on innocent bystanders—would reduce the public attractiveness of investments and their supportive policies, and thus their chances of sustained approval and funding.

While externalities and when to ignore them are standard issues in cost-benefit analysis, policy analysis and law, less recognised are distortions generated by the application to public analyses of aspects of an economic worldview derived from private financial calculations. In perhaps increasing order of lack of appreciation: first, the practice of discounting of future costs and benefits, at rates more or less closely linked to market real interest rates, generates massive bias against longer-run effects and future generations. This tends to downgrade benefits more than costs, since costs are typically more concentrated in the start-up period; but it then generates a

counteracting tendency, to try to maintain the estimated attractiveness of activities and compensate by ignoring as many costs as possible. A second distortion is blindness to the whole domestic sector and the work and lives of women in the home: the ignoring of all *unpaid* inputs as costs. Domestic violence is part of the ignored experience. Thirdly, the treatment of all *paid* inputs as costs leads in a societal-decision context to large exaggeration of labour costs, by ignoring the positive personal value of much paid work. Such work might better be seen as a benefit, or at least not as a cost, rather as involving transfer payments. Instead the exaggeration again spawns a compensating tendency to deny or underestimate many real costs and to exaggerate or fabricate many benefits.

Legion are the methods for such 'cost-control' and creative accounting of benefits (see e.g. Gasper, 1986a, 1996a). For example, in order to ignore the suffering and relative disadvantage of certain groups it is often posited that 'they were(/would have been) so poor already(/otherwise)': 'the baseline is so low' (Nozick, 1974; discussed in Gasper, 1986b). Similarly, a presumption often arises that there are no trade-offs: 'All good things go together; if they don't then not all can be good' (see Gasper, 1986b). This raises morale, avoids a notion of tragedy, and dismisses by the wave of a definition the costs of out-groups, who are usually the groups who are already relatively weaker.

The neglect of 'externalities' in the form of non-commoditized suffering (and happiness) applies more broadly still in economics-dominated evaluation. Take a notional case. An enraged and jobless young man robs and murders a sickly retired person. No one withdraws from paid employment as a result; instead resources are expended for the funeral and the police investigation, so GNP might even rise. Further, a transfer of resources out of health care and into 'productive' investment might result, leading to later GNP rise. ('Productive' here in practice means: conducing through monetized activity to the increase of GNP.) The enriched young man proceeds to entertain and then rape a series of women. GNP is unharmed by the rapes, for the women continue to carry out all their commitments. In fact GNP even rises due to monetized medical treatment of victims who do not withdraw from monetized employment or who (housewives, retired persons, girls) are not in it. Interrupted later in

the process of killing and dismembering a jobless immigrant in order to sell the body parts in the international market—an activity likely to boost GNP, and increasingly practised—the young man kills a policeman, leading to export of some of his organs too. The GNP boost might be countered if the wage bill of the police force falls; but recruitment from the ranks of the unemployed soon restores that. The net result of this series of events: unemployment down and GNP up; three people dead, several raped, others afraid, one bestial and triumphant. The example is not remote from some current realities (see e.g. Truong, 1999, on international trafficking).

The denial of alternatives

Sister to the exclusion-by-definition of costs comes denial of the existence of alternatives, past or present. It forms another tactic for ratification of a given course of action. Such denial perhaps most often involves simply the blind eye, not looking. It can also use arguments: first, that alternatives exist but are not serious, due to alleged internal contradictions--there is only one viable path, all others self-destruct, and so whatever one's values one must agree on that one path, say the free-market order or 'the' Islamic way; secondly that alternatives are inconsistent with fixed and overriding moral tenets. As discussed here in my paper 'Drawing a Line', one example concerns the claim by some relief agencies that 'the humanitarian imperative', embodied in their organizational mission statements, obliges them--leaves them in all cases no alternative but--to try to provide succour to, and save the lives of, those who are in distress, regardless of any projected negative consequences overall when we take into account for example the actual capture and use of the resources.

REAL ALTERNATIVES AND PAINFUL CHOICES

Granted there are serious alternatives in how to respond to physical violence, how should we think about such choices? How can we combine due weight to the special undesirability of such violence, with an ability to think constructively about what can bring improvement when faced with 'tragic choices' where all options involve major costs?

Notions of tragedy, evil, duty, dilemma

The notion of tragedy refers to great costs and misfortunes. The economics sense of tragedy involves recognition of costs, and of trade-offs, and (sometimes) of inequity. In other words, costs are unavoidable to obtain benefits; secondly, the two can be compared; and thirdly, they are not proportionately distributed between people but situations can still be compared (when this is not prevented by the strongest party). In the mainstream economics worldview, costs are conceived as foregone benefits: the cost of using something for one purpose is specified as the value of the benefits foregone by not using it for the best alternative purpose. Everything is open to comparison. Costs are just to be summed and compared to benefits; there are no categories of cost that are formally specified as categorically unacceptable—such as killing, and letting die—except, that implicitly the framework of current laws has normally been accepted. Economists' cost-benefit analysis itself specifies no boundaries: it can be applied equally to trade in body parts or in dead children (as in Jonathan Swift's satire about famine-stricken 18th century Ireland). The thought-processes of a profit-seeker in a commoditized economy become applied to all choices.

Other conceptions of tragedy go further, to argue that sometimes costs cannot be compared on a common scale with benefits, and that some costs are intolerable, perhaps even when unavoidable. Some costs involve, in one type of language of ethics, doing evil: they cannot be weighed against benefits or be outweighed by however much benefit. The cannibalization of an unwilling innocent for body parts to save however many others is considered never justifiable (let alone as operationalized in the world market via ability to pay), even for discussion. The cost of doing something is then not to be counted only as the value of the best foregone option. Choices have still to be made, but rather than the smooth calculation of maximum advantage, they can involve a searing process that scars the psyche. The concept of a *dilemma* arises here: where each option available involves damage to values deemed fundamental - such as life and, for Kantians, non-deception and non-coercion. If such human values are fundamental then

as Cameron argues they must be separately studied, not concealed under the calculations of market values.

Suffering is a very utilitarian theme, and so is represented in economics. While its operationalization by reference to commoditized transactions introduces great distortions—we noted how non-commoditized parts of life can be ignored, the commoditized parts weighted in proportion to ability to pay, and creative accounting enters since markets generate incentives to manipulate their own categories—suffering caused by violence is certainly important in utilitarian ethics. However violence in itself is not a significant category there. Utilitarianism contains no inherent restrictions on what is acceptable, only its principle of increasing utility and reducing disutility. If violence brings greater utility then it is considered desirable; if a sadist damages a masochist we have a 'win-win solution'.

Violence is a category of significance *in itself* in for example Kantian ethics. As explained in Cameron's paper (also e.g. Baron et al., 1998; O'Neill, 1991), violence has a particular unacceptability in Kantianism, or at least a special degree of undesirability, as an infringement on the autonomy and dignity, and frequently the capability, of a human being, a creature endowed with reason and the capacity to set and pursue its own ends. Kantianism is deontological (an ethics of duty) and violence is in general not accepted even if its effects are good.[vi]

The different statuses accorded to violence are an example of a more general contrast between *deontological* and *consequentialist* ethics. The former have commands concerning what is inherently obligatory or proscribed, and therefore generate felt dilemmas in situations where *all* of the options infringe one of these commands. The latter type of ethics (such as utilitarianism) permit and advocate any actions that produce overall more desirable consequences, and generate no dilemmas except through our inability to confidently specify the consequences of past or present actions. In 'Drawing a Line' in this collection I examine the contrast between such ethics, with reference to choices facing relief agencies operating in conflict-driven emergencies.

We have seen how the utilitarian variant of consequentialism uses a particularly narrow picture of personhood. The Kantian picture is richer: here the rational actor is not only a calculator of satisfactions, but is self-conscious, able to reflect on and choose

ends as well as means, able to sympathize with others and to reflect on the consistency of his actions towards others and the principles he demands in respect of himself. While richer, this picture is still somewhat thin. Religious or Aristotelian or neo-Aristotelian positions, and theories of basic human needs, for example, have richer pictures of personhood and thus generate further ethical propositions. But the richer the picture, the greater also the danger of specifying as essential some features which are too culturally contingent, and of encountering disagreement. A vision of personhood that can sustain a widely convincing ethic might require an intermediate degree of specification (Gasper, 1996b, 1997). A Kantian-style emphasis on choice, on real ability to choose, is indeed reflected in the influential work of Amartya Sen on 'capabilities' and the UNDP Human Development Reports which have recognised security as an essential part of human development.

On the provision of individuals with real alternatives

I will not essay a comprehensive analysis of policy responses to violence, which would have to rest on a comprehensive problem analysis. Instead I will, as the final part of this introduction, frame the responses in the three case studies. They span three distinct levels. Purna Sen asks what can empower individual (women) victims of violence; my paper asks how can relief and aid agencies think about how to help countries in situations of *de* facto civil war; and Wilhelm Verwoerd considers at the level of an entire national political strategy what is the role of unearthing the truth about systemic, deliberate past violence in South Africa.

Purna Sen's interviews with a wide variety of women in Calcutta generate a striking hypothesis: that basic education and access to support networks are considerably more effective in helping women respond to and remove domestic violence than is paid employment in itself. The many different variables involved mean that further studies should try to check and refine this finding, as against alternative hypotheses (for example, poverty may conduce to each of female employment and low education and violence, and hence to their correlation). In Sen's careful examination of her own case the hypothesis seems robust. And it matches a picture of people as limited, thinking, feeling agents, who live in groups, not as masterfully calculating

maximizers of pecuniary advantage; so that capacitization requires the acquisition of skills, confidence, emotional support and alternative viable identities, even more than a wage.

On agencies' responsibilities: mission versus vision?

We saw that a more plausible picture of personhood than in utilitarianism may conduce to a more complex model for ethical thinking; but that a deontological model is liable to produce dilemmas, cases where its proscriptions eliminate any space of acceptable action. In facing dilemmas, one type of resolution is through denial not of alternatives or of costs, but of responsibility. Thus the dilemmas generated by one divergence from consequentialism--viz., rejection/endorsement of some actions regardless of their consequences--are coped with by a further divergence, the delimitation of one's field of responsibility, so that one need not even consider the consequences. The result may be the questionable embrace of actions, such as relief interventions, regardless of what appear to be their negative consequences in some cases, such as the fuelling of civil wars and even of genocidal forces. The relief agencies' defence is that misuse of the resources they provide is the responsibility of the autonomous agents who perform that misuse, not of the agencies. Critics argue that this ethics of subdivided responsibility can lead to an irresponsible practice, in which 'relief' becomes a career assessed by its missionary style rather than by its wider results and in fact helps to reproduce the conditions taken to establish the need for it.

In 'Drawing a Line' I examine this deeply contested debate. What are the roles and responsibilities of the relief and aid agencies - just as supply contractors and ritual easers of conscience? We need to distinguish the questions `who is to blame?' and `what is to be done?'–suppliers may not be to blame for misuse but must take it seriously when deciding what to do--and between the spheres of feasible reference for agents at different levels. Wider-ranging assessments become in one way more feasible as we move from individuals through agencies to States, *provided* doctrines of pre-specified organizational mission do not hinder vision, and provided agencies build their capacity and morale for such choices – including both organizational memory and

organizational conscience (Slim, 1997). Otherwise organizational amnesia and organizational convenience can generate 'administrative evil'.

On societal reconstruction – Truth and *Reconciliation?*

A different type of response to dilemmas involves working out a hierarchy of degrees of unacceptability: so that some considerations come to 'trump' others. Wilhelm Verwoerd's paper considers the debates in South Africa about what to do about past violence. Picking a path forward through the legacy of divisions and damage, he widens the *horizons* of assessment beyond the traditional ethical-legal level of justice for directly harmed individuals. He places responses to past violence in a context of long-term development implications, with attention to what are feasible paths of social betterment and of greater social justice. This, he argues, helps to defend the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) against the claim that it has been part of an abandonment of justice for the sake of peace and a spurious reconciliation. In addition Verwoerd deepens the *content* of assessment and the analysis of what drives societies in their long-term development paths. The importance for individuals and for all South Africa of an uncovering of past gross human rights violations is, he argues, to help to further delegitimize the past, to establish trust between State and citizens, and by respecting families' right to know, to help unblock social energies. The TRC's opponents might argue that the feelings of meaning and dignity require a fuller settling of the past than just truth without sanction. Here Verwoerd refers back to horizons: to the nature of the political compromise that permitted the transfer of power, the more inclusive development that it in turn permits, and the vital potential contribution of this to social justice and dignity.

Can one excuse the TRC for failing to act on matters which were admittedly the responsibility of others—for example, past seizures of land—but whose injustice would then be magnified by the TRC's own measures of amnesty to wrongdoers from the apartheid system? Is this not the sort of 'not our responsibility' argument queried in 'Drawing a Line'? In sub-optimal situations, attempts at partial optimization can bring deterioration. The argument is in fact different. Firstly, the colleagues are not absent: as Verwoerd remarks, in South Africa the Land Claims Court, the Reconstruction and

Development Programme, and other instruments for longer-term development with justice are in place, but vitally depend on full delegitimation of the previous regime; whereas manifestly no one was in place to stop forces of the genocidal former Rwandan state from using relief resources for continued pursuit of their genocidal 'mission'. Secondly, the TRC hypothesis centrally involves calculations of long-term society-wide consequences, not an escape from them. The scope of deliberation in the TRC reflects though a national level exercise, and is not necessarily extendable to individuals or field agencies.

Verwoerd's paper, and the South African TRC path, in effect represent a set of hypotheses, a major 'Experiment with Truth', to use Gandhi's phrase. The content of this set of hypotheses reflects much of a Kantian concern for individual dignity as expressed in Cameron's paper; but goes beyond rigid deontologies. It seems to reflect--like Berger's calculi of pain and meaning--a post-utilitarian consequentialism. Policies must promote the good, not only respect the right; but the content of the good is broader than utility, as Dower implies, and much of what promotes the good is found to be precisely that which respects the right, including people's dignity, as the other papers suggest too.

CONCLUSION

(1) Physical violence provides a clear and major instance of why the concept of 'development' should extend, and is being extended, beyond a focus on commodities and monetized flows.

(2) 'Development' and 'violence' are 'thick', contested concepts. Despite evidence of considerable positive association in many cases, there are reasons to hold that development (in the sense of improvement) includes reduction in violence and insecurity, and further that development (in the sense of economic growth and associated social change) and lesser violence can be mutually supportive.

(3) The field of development ethics has emerged to highlight and weigh the physical and psychic costs of programmes of 'development', and the relativity of concepts of

'development' according to which criteria and whose criteria are used; and to both emphasize and inform the choices available to persons and groups.

(4) Violence and the suffering it produces are downgraded and denied partly due to systems of thought in which people are seen as sets of ínterests without any passions, and 'development' is interpreted as acquisition and consumption of commodities; and because of associated incentives to minimize estimates of costs and deny alternatives. A modified Kantian emphasis on promotion of people's real ability to choose--as reflected in work by Onora O'Neill, Amartya Sen, and, indirectly, UNDP--seems able to function as a relatively widely acceptable counter view.

(5) While recognizing the special significance of violence, as violation of human dignity and destruction of human capacity, we need ways of thinking which improve choices rather than shortcircuit them by denying responsibility for the effects of choices or by declaring absolute proscriptions which then clash and generate unsolvable dilemmas.

These themes are illustrated and extended in the five papers that follow. We hope the collection will stimulate others to share in and deepen its lines of work.

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[i] See e.g. Daly & Cobb, 1989; and work from the New Economics Foundation in London.

[ii] Unfortunately Berger's terms suggest, contrary to his intention, that meanings bring no pain.

[iii] Combatants in modern wars--men--kill with little compunction and little regret, as part of the job, according to the major study by Bourke (1999). She stresses the influence of heroic myths of battle from preceding periods of peace. Omaar & Sevenzo (1999) describe women's notable capacity for brutality too.

[iv] Similarly for Yugoslavia: 'The real origin of the Yugoslav conflict is the disintegration of governmental authority and the breakdown of a political and civil order.... A critical element of this failure was economic decline, caused largely by a program intended to resolve a foreign debt crisis.' (Woodward, 1995).

[v] 'Interests' were seen as the reasoned variants of some calmer passions, but accorded a new name to give them a greater acceptability and authority (op.cit.:28-43).

[vi] Similarly, good effects obtained by evil means--say the pleasure derived by the executors of illicit violence--are not accepted. Various quasi-Kantian positions are possible if the effects of violence nclude the reduction of violence overall.