

Creating Monsters: How Persons Become Perpetrators of Genocide



October 18, 2013
Society for Descriptive Psychology

Rwanda, April, 1994

- The principal and the inspector of schools in my district participated in the killings with nail-studded clubs. Two teachers, colleagues with whom we used to share beers and student evaluations, set their shoulders to the wheel, so to speak. A priest, the burgomaster, the subprefect, a doctor— they all killed with their own hands ... They wore pressed cotton trousers, they had no trouble sleeping, they traveled around in vehicles or on light motorcycles ... These well-educated people were calm, and they rolled up their sleeves to get a good grip on their machetes. For someone who has spent his life teaching the humanities, as I have, such criminals are a fearful mystery

Introduction



- Genocide by the numbers
- Monsters and Monsters
- Banality of Evil and ordinary man theories
- Ordinary Men and extraordinary Evil-
- Sylvie, DP, and How persons participate in genocide



Overview of stages of genocide the sociopolitical level

- Monsters are different
- Monsters are powerful
- Monsters are threatening
- Monsters must be contained
- Monsters the source of Our community distress
- Monsters must be destroyed

Ordinary Man Descriptions

- ◉ Monster Explanations

- ◉ Zimbardo's Zombie is Unleashed

- ◉ Waller's Dr. Jekyll Spawns Mr. Hyde

- ◉ Ordinary Man Explanations

- ◉ Fujii's Dramaturgical Explanation

- ◉ Browning's Police Battalion 101



DP, Rwanda, and the Social Practice of Genocide

- The social practice of degradation and assigning the status of monster
 - Statuses and stages of the practice
 - A denouncer -not limited to reducing the status of an individual
 - Treating someone as a monster (or various versions thereof) and humiliation
 - Rwandan perpetrators as denouncers and executioners
 - Ultimate degradation of a person and of a community
 - Killing the culture and brutality

DP, Rwanda, and the Social Practice of Genocide

- ◉ My World, Our World, and Social Practices
 - ◉ Multiple statuses, relationships and reasons to act
 - ◉ Highly significant relationships- Fujii and Gladwell.
 - ◉ Acting as myself but also as a community representative
 - ◉ "A person acquires concepts and skills by practice and experience"
 - ◉ Resolving what counts for me with what counts for Us
 - ◉ AOC and Trusted sources
 - ◉ Participation and Behavior Potential

Zimbardo, Waller, and Fujii revisited

- Changes in the moral perspective and stronger reasons to act.
- Multiple statuses, multiple communities—not new selves or Identities
- Social Practices are created and accepted, not merely imagined

- "To demonize, moreover, is to promote a vision of the otherness of evil that shuts down not just the possibility of reconciliation but also the possibility of prevention. If we allow ourselves to imagine that evil is somehow extraordinary, somehow beyond the human, then we can never identify and address the very ordinary situational and organizational features that regularly produce it."

James Dawes-Evil Men

Making sense of the behavior of persons, then, is no mere intellectual task. How we think about and understand others matters and this understanding advances the possibility that we can rid our lives and the lives of our children and the lives of generations to follow of this greatest of monsters.

The Parameters of Genocide

1. **World View:** A history of one group, CyX distinguished from another, CyA and seen as potentially "not one of Us".
2. **Relative Status envy:** CyX within historical memory as well as in reality for many people, has increasing BP within Our community, CyA.
3. **Restrictive Degradation Practices:** A series of degradations/restrictions of CyX in the years preceding the genocide that reduce CyX members positions in the greater community.-
4. **Social Practice Breakdown :** Circumstances that threaten the core social practices of CyA such as war, plague, economic depression- situations that are reality not merely hearsay for the standard normal member of CyA are present.
5. **World Reformulation:** Political elite of CyA at the state level and influential leaders at the more local levels institutionalize CyX as a threat to the community by assigning the status as an outsider, by carrying out degradation practices that reformulate CyX as a community of "monsters".
6. **Grave Community Violation(s):** Various precipitating events, the killing of a top leader of CyA, wars, give political elite reason to consolidate power and do so by attacking an enemy within. This allows various political opponents to be described as one of Them and then confined or eliminated.
7. **Mass participation in SP of Genocide:** The support of ordinary citizens as bystanders and as perpetrators either formally or informally, is required to eliminate whole communities.
8. **Multiple Statuses:** Perpetrators participate for multiple reasons as individuals but also have reasons to participate as CyA members.
 - 8a. Perpetrators may act on multiple statuses and the circumstances, one of which being what community Perpetrator A is acting as a member of, gives us understanding of what PrA is doing by doing that: Saving his country, getting revenge, settling an old score, enriching his pockets, supporting his friends, etc.
9. **Ultimate Degradation of a Community:** Perpetrators as community representatives take statuses as denouncers and executioners and carry out ultimate degradation through killing and destruction of the culture.
 - 9a. PrA may be acting on multiple statuses and that action can be described as an enactment in a stage of another SP (Making a living, Getting revenge, etc.) But PrA is also participating in the social practice of genocide.