



THE VIOLENCE OF 'CLASS'  
...the short step from obedience'- training...  
to Auschwitz...

Pamela Satterwhite

HUMMING WORDS



PRESS

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“My soul is like a singing bowl – it *hums*.”

Cover: from John Boswell’s *The Kindness of Strangers:  
The Abandonment of Children in Western Europe from Late Antiquity to the Renaissance*

Page 9: Francisco Goya, *The Grape Harvest*

Back: Jean-Leon Gerome, *The Slave Market* (portion)

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Nas2EndWork (the NEW)  
The Nascence to End Work Savings Endowment  
(NEWSE)  
P. O. Box 3952  
Berkeley, CA 94703  
510.420.8054  
nas2endwork@gmail.com  
www.nas2endwork.org

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## *The Violence of 'Class'*

In the ancient Mediterranean world, 'violence', 'necessity', and 'coercion' was one word. By inter-weaving those ideas into a single meaning, they accurately captured the reality of our lives under 'class'.

'Necessity' means 'want', 'need', 'scarcity', or 'food-shelter-water-clothing-insecurity'.

Prior to the installation of the current 'class-based' 'solution' to the question of how we reproduce the necessities that we need in order to live – to the problem of how to reproduce food, knowledge, shelter, water-access, and clothing – our solution was to help each other, to consciously address the problem communally.

The 'class-based' 'solution' was to exploit, and then manufacture, the fear of 'scarcity', and then divide the work of reproducing our lives into 'higher' and 'lower', 'intellectual' and 'manual', 'conception' and 'execution', 'head' and 'hand'... creating simultaneously hierarchical gradations of this 'work' as a means of keeping us jumping through hoops, ever-reaching for a higher rung – as a means, therefore, of maintaining exclusive control by the few over decision-making, and of limiting alternative ideas.

If we are kept busy with the business of mere survival, the sole point of life is reduced to 'reducing insecurity.'

Another way to look at this scheme is through the lens of 'atomization' – which is the key to manufacturing 'scarcity' – i.e. shattering into a million pieces our fundamental unity, our allegiance to each other... and to the earth... to the ancestors... and the yet-to-be... in order to redirect our allegiance from the complex web of life... to those who want to replace it in our eyes (minds)... and sit atop us, pretending to be gods.

When a class-based-scarcity is made the defining quality of our lives, a 'jungle-ethics' presides. This is the underlying context of our lives that we never discuss – never acknowledge the existence of... or that it causes such (often unconscious) pain... and rage... or that... when sat on... when kept in survival-mode... souls cannot grow.

The result is captured succinctly in Marlon Riggs' words:

"Anger unvented becomes pain, unspoken becomes rage, released becomes violence, cha cha cha..."

If cooperation and communal sharing are inherent in our human nature – and I believe they are – then a systematic attempt to re-craft that nature had to be initiated and consistently

applied if the plan is to replace 'communal sharing' with 'human inter-relationships based on competition and greed'... in order to keep us from seeing... that we don't need would-be-philosopher-kings ('power'.)

I believe that is exactly what happened, and that 'power' believes that the key to a successful re-crafting of human nature, is to insure the early instilling of 'obedience' in child-rearing... an obedience then continuously reinforced by the systematic limiting of other options, of our possibilities for coming together... which would enable us to see our common experience, figure out what is being done to us... and develop an accurate judgment (analysis) of the forces shaping our lives.

All thanks and much gratitude are due to Alice Miller for providing her help with the task of developing this accurate judgment.

Parents, even if they are highly educated and have sufficient time at their disposal, are helpless when it comes to understanding their child so long as they must keep the sufferings of their own childhood at an emotional distance.... Thus, I see it as my task to sensitize the general public to the sufferings of early childhood... (Alice Miller, *For Your Own Good: Hidden Cruelty In Child-Rearing and The Roots of Violence*, 1980, p. xv)

In *Prisoners of Childhood* I took pains to point out that looks expressing disapproval and rejection that are directed at the infant can contribute to the development of severe disturbances... in the adult.... every small child needs an empathic and not a 'controlling' human being (whether it be father or mother) as caregiver.

An enormous amount [of abuse] can be done to a child in the first two years.... The child will overcome the serious consequences of the injustice he has suffered only if he succeeds in defending himself, i.e., if he is allowed to express his pain and anger. If he is prevented from reacting in his own way because the parents cannot tolerate his reactions (crying, sadness, rage) and forbid them by means of looks or other pedagogical methods, then the child will learn to be silent. This silence is a sign of the effectiveness of the pedagogical principles applied, but at the same time it is a danger signal pointing to future pathological development. If there is absolutely no possibility of reacting appropriately to hurt, humiliation, and coercion, then these experiences cannot be integrated into the personality; the feelings they evoke are repressed, and the need to articulate them remains unsatisfied, without any hope of being fulfilled. It is this lack of hope of ever being able to express repressed traumata by means of relevant feelings that most often causes severe psychological problems. (Alice Miller, *For Your Own Good: Hidden Cruelty In Child-Rearing and The Roots of Violence*, 1980, p. 6 – 7)

This perfect adaptation to society's norms – in other words, to what is called 'healthy normality' – carries with it the danger that such a person can be used for practically any purpose. It is not a loss of autonomy that occurs here, because this autonomy never existed, but a switching of values, which in themselves are of no importance anyway for the person in question as long as his whole value system is dominated by the principle of obedience. He has never gone beyond the stage of idealizing his parents with their demands for unquestioning obedience; this idealization can easily be transferred to a Führer or to an ideology. Since authoritarian parents are always right, there is no need for their children to rack their brains in each case to determine whether what is demanded of them is right or not. And how is this to be judged? Where are the standards supposed to come from if someone has always been told what was right and what was wrong and if he never had an opportunity to become familiar with his own feelings and if, beyond that, attempts at criticism were unacceptable to the parents and thus were too threatening for the child? If an adult has not developed a mind of his own, then he will find himself at the mercy of the authorities for better or worse, just as an infant finds itself at the mercy of its parents. Saying no to those more powerful will always seem too threatening to him.... Individuals who refuse to adapt to a totalitarian regime are not doing so out of a sense of duty or because of naïveté, but because they cannot help but be true to themselves. (Alice Miller, *For Your Own Good*, 1980, p. 83 – 4)

The greatest cruelty that can be inflicted on children is to refuse to let them express their anger and suffering except at the risk of losing their parents' love and affection. The anger stemming from early childhood is stored up in the unconscious, and since it basically represents a healthy, vital source of energy, an equal amount of energy must be expended in order to repress it. An upbringing that succeeds in sparing the parents at the expense of the child's vitality sometimes leads to suicide or extreme drug addiction, which is a form of suicide. (Alice Miller, *For Your Own Good*, 1980, p. 106)

The family structure could well be characterized as the prototype of a totalitarian regime. (p. 146)

It would be an easy matter to misunderstand my claim that the untold deep humiliation and mistreatment Hitler suffered at his father's hands without being allowed to respond was responsible for his insatiable hatred. Someone may object by saying that an individual human being cannot destroy an entire people on such a scale, that the economic crisis and the humiliation suffered by the Weimar Republic contributed to producing the catastrophe. There can be no doubt that this is true, but it was not "crises" and "systems" that did the killing, it was human beings – human beings whose fathers were able to point with pride to the obedience instilled in their little ones at a very early age. (p. 264)

It is easy for those who have never become aware of having been victims, since they grew up believing in the principles of being brave and self-controlled, to succumb to the danger of taking revenge on the next generation because they themselves have been unconsciously victimized. But if their anger is followed by grief over having been a victim, then they can also mourn the fact that their parents were victims too, and they will no longer have to persecute their children. The ability to grieve will bring them closer to their children. (Alice Miller, *For Your Own Good*, p. 273 – 4)

Someday we will regard our children not as creatures to manipulate or to change but rather as messengers from a world we once deeply knew, but which we have long since forgotten, who can reveal to us more about the true secrets of life, and also our own lives, than our parents were ever able to. We do not need to be told whether to be strict or permissive with our children. What we do need is to have respect for their needs, their feelings, and their individuality, as well as for our own. (p. xi)

Alice Miller's essential work, for those hoping to move beyond a society based on coercion, has been pretty much ignored on the Left, despite her important observation (among an almost innumerable number) that being taught to 'rule' ourselves, makes us 'subject' to 'rule'.

Along with coercion-based child-rearing, the other key means 'power' relies on to systematically impair our judgment – limit our thought process – is 'jobs', the wage-work system itself, which makes it structurally-impossible for us "...to have respect for [our] needs, [our] feelings, and [our] individuality...."

The belief in the need for a system of 'wage-work' is founded on the illusion, the ideology, of 'scarcity' which then feeds the (self- and societal-) justification... for putting ourselves on the auction block.

And so... enter now, 'Stage Right,' Those-Who-Hide- Behind-Scenes... the Architects... the Directors... the Invisible Hands – 'Plato's Tribe' – who took it upon themselves to re-craft human nature... pound out of us our earth-given knowledge of "the true secrets of life"... in order to design us to fit ends determined only by them. Into their hands – and theirs alone – has been placed responsibility for the design of our common world. And to reclaim responsibility into the hands of 'the all' ... we must first understand their Plan.

"All difficulties are but easy when they are known," Shakespeare told us.

And to help us know this... chiefest... difficulty, for the species, in these times... to view bare and exposed their Plan... so we can choose to undo it... let us now welcome in... the one who speaks for them... Bentham. (1748 – 1832):

When a number of persons (whom we may style *subjects*) are supposed to be in the *habit* of paying *obedience* to a person, or an assemblage of persons, of a known and certain description (whom we may call *governor* or *governors*) such persons altogether (subjects and governors) are said to be in a state of *political* SOCIETY.... (Jeremy Bentham, *A Fragment On Government*)

Government supposes the disposition to obedience: – the faculty of governing on the one part has for its sole efficient cause, and for its sole measure, the disposition to obey on the other part. (Jeremy Bentham, *Pannomial Fragments*)

The law cannot confer a benefit, without at the same time imposing a burthen somewhere; – it cannot create a right, without at the same time creating an obligation – and if that right be of any value, even a numerous train of obligations....

Rights are, then, the fruits of the law, and of the law alone. There are no rights without law – no rights contrary to the law – no rights anterior to the law.... A right without a law is an effect without a cause. (*Pannomial Fragments*)

Without rights there can be no happiness... but rights cannot be created without obligations.... The end of all these acts of authority should be to produce the greatest possible happiness to the community in question.... Still, of the operations by which it is possible to conduct men towards this end, the effect – the constant, necessary, and most extensive effect, is to produce evil as well as good; to produce evil, that good may be produced, since upon no other conditions can it be produced. (*Pannomial Fragments*)

“To produce the greatest possible happiness to the community” it is ‘necessary’ to produce evil. If this sounds like Hegel, like Machiavelli, like convoluted Plato-logic... that’s because it is.

If we all agree that the only authentic definition of ‘happiness’ is ‘self-creating’... honoring, living and fulfilling our earth-given gifts... no convoluted reasoning to justify ‘rule by the few’ is needed. But instead, we are bombarded, via its control of the media, with ‘power’s’ definitions.

Bentham instructed ‘power’ on the importance of controlling the lexicon... the key definitions that ‘justify’ ‘class.’ Let us never forget his advice to rulers:

“He who defined the language ruled the universe...” making the sovereign-legislator “the ultimate lexicographer...” The larger the scope and operational range of his abstractions, the wider his area of government, of legislative and judicial authority. To him, he said, “belongs the power of making wrong and right change nature...” (Mary Peter Mack, quoting Jeremy Bentham, *A Bentham Reader*)

His “greatest happiness principle” is actually the “greatest-happiness-to-work” principle... His purpose-in-chief: to keep us working... and, more precisely, to keep us ‘happy’ to work. This, he argued, should be the goal of the state.

“The force of the physical sanction being sufficient, the employment of the political sanction would be superfluous.” All that was needed was the “scientific and economical” treatment of the poor. Bentham believed that poverty was part of plenty... The task of the government was to increase want in order to make the physical sanction of hunger effective. (Karl Polanyi, quoting Jeremy Bentham, *The Great Transformation*, p. 117)

But for coercion to lead to ‘effective governance,’ Bentham said, i.e. lead to the instilling of obedience, it cannot stand bare and naked *as* coercion:

[Government] operates principally through the medium of education: the magistrate operating in the character of a tutor upon all the members of the state, by the direction he gives to their hopes and to their fears. Indeed, under a solicitous and attentive government, the ordinary preceptor [teacher], nay even the parent himself, is but a deputy, as it were, to the magistrate: whose controlling influence, different in this respect from that of the ordinary preceptor, dwells with a man to his life’s end. (Jeremy Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*)

Bentham, unlike today’s representatives of Plato’s Tribe, was not reluctant to call this psychological manipulation. On the contrary, his ambition was to be known as the inventor of “the logic of the will”, a ‘science’ of control which, for those who possessed it, would render management of ‘the people’ effortless. Violence, he believed, was crude, and carried heavy costs. Much better, he said, to instill ‘discipline.’

In *Waking Up: Freeing Ourselves From Work*, citing Alice Miller, I wrote that we ask ourselves, when we hurt each other, “shouldn’t we be more *controlled* than that?” Well, that’s Bentham speaking through us. “Rule yourselves,” he would say, “that you may be *subject* to rule.”

Violence is both the official prerogative of the state, and its agents, as well as a key ideological means for justifying its management over us. It provides the ideological cover that allows ‘power’ itself to stay hidden. For if, as the con goes, violence is inherent in human nature, not only does the onus shift from ‘power’, that stays hidden... to those of us on which it (seemingly invisibly) sits... but we (horribly) turn to it for help in ‘controlling’ it... that is to say, ourselves.



This has been ‘power’s M.O. from the beginning. It’s a protection racket on a global scale... create the problem and then make people pay... with their souls... with their lives... for you to ‘solve’ it.

All the suffering since ‘class’ began is solely for this .0001% to pretend to be masters of the universe.

It’s not even so much that we are designed to be greedy, acquisitive, competitive and violent, although this attempt is made, but even more, the point is, that *our thoughts are designed* such that we *believe* humans to be inherently “greedy, acquisitive, competitive and violent” – a definition of ‘human nature’ crafted to reflect ‘power’s own image: violent, competitive, acquisitive and greedy. And this is not ‘greed’ for money, but greed for ‘power’ (we owe Shakespeare for showing us, in *The Rape of Lucrece*, the single abyss underlying all forms of it... of ‘greed’.)

Bentham’s constant question: “How can the few control the many?” (while always telling themselves, as Alice Miller pointed out, that it was “for our own good”), he answered by saying: by controlling what we can think, which he believed he’d created the ‘science’ of... to which he gave the name: “the logic of the will.”

The specific question that preoccupied Bentham was, “How do you control popular opinion such that people will give their obedience, and ‘governance’ can occur?” He said that ‘the people’ will believe a thing *with certainty* only if that thing is “confirmed by the reputed perceptions of all other men *without exception*” (Bentham, *Rationale of Judicial Evidence*). He went on to say that as long as there is this degree of control (that is to say, total control) of our thoughts, ‘power’ can even make us believe that which is contrary to physical reality and to our physical nature as living things – particularly, our need to be free.

But ‘power’ must stay hidden to exist. It cannot seem to be about *intentionally* impairing our judgment... though in controlling what we can think, it is quite clearly doing this. And Bentham showed them how.

‘Power’s lexicon... or you could call it, “the moral universe of ‘class’”... is premised on an intentional ‘re-crafting’ – by controlling what we can think, and thereby, essentially, impairing our judgment.

Government exists, or so the story goes, by the informed consent of the governed. But what when, as Bentham advised, consent is intentionally manipulated? is intentionally kept ill-informed... akin, perhaps, to the planned intoxication... of a rape victim?

## *The 'Worker' As 'Intoxicated Woman'*

On a recent *Democracy Now!* There was an interview with a woman who had spoken out courageously on Fox News about being raped – and who as a result was bombarded with hateful comments because she'd dared to say that 'rapists' are not some special category of human who are innately evil, but rather our brothers and fathers and friends, and that we need to teach men not to rape – adding: "we need to teach people what 'consent' is... what 'rape' is."

Hearing the interview composed an odd coincidence for me as the night before I'd dreamed about a rape situation. I was in a house – though mine, it was unfamiliar – and a party of mostly men and at least one woman had rented a bedroom. The door was open and I saw a woman clearly drunk being positioned on the bed. Outraged, I stepped in and confronted them. They protested her willingness and I answered, "you cannot give informed consent if you're intoxicated," and went to call the police.

I awoke with these words in my head: "What is 'violence' but 'making-use-of'?"

The only thing that makes 'class' 'not-violence' is our implied consent. But if our judgment is impaired, we cannot give it. By 'power's own rules, which it will never credit against its own interests, it cannot intentionally impair our judgment. But once we've arrived at the point we can call them on it, they will have already dissolved in the sun of our awakening.

'Force' has been normalized by systematizing 'class'... making it totalitarian – and this in a global sense. The anger we feel when caught in its grip is generally misdirected. Once we step back and view from the vantage of the whole, we can direct it where it belongs, so we can move on.

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