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THE EXPLOITED: JUSTICE OR JUSTIFICATION?[1]

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Research has demonstrated that an exploiter may react in several different ways after injuring another: He may attempt to make restitution, he may justify his harm doing, or he may engage in self-punishment. The victim of exploitation and his sympathizer would undoubtedly prefer that the exploiter's reaction consist of restitution rather than justification.

In this paper we will: (*a*) present a theoretical framework and supporting data which will enable one to specify the conditions under which an exploiter will react by providing restitution to the victim and when he will justify his harmful act instead, (*b*) suggest some techniques by which the exploited individual and his sympathizers can increase the probability that the exploiter will compensate the victim for his suffering and decrease the probability that the exploiter will justify the victim's suffering.

THEORETICAL FORMULATION

In this section we will outline a theoretical framework from which predictions can be made as to whether an exploiter will make reparation to the exploited, or will justify his harm doing, or will seek punishment for his act.

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In attempting to predict how an exploiter will react following the commitment of a harmful act, one should begin by defining what is meant by "harm doing." Previous studies have generally relied on the reader's intuition as to what was meant by this term. In order to provide a usable definition, we will assume that a harm-doing situation is one in which an inequity is produced in the relationship between two individuals. Our discussion, therefore, will draw upon the conceptions of equity in human interaction which have been advanced by Homans (1961) and, most recently, by Adams (1965).

The Equity Formulation

In general terms, an "equitable relationship" has been defined as one in which a person's ratio of outcomes to inputs is equal to the other person's outcome/input ratio (Adams, 1965).[2]

"Inputs," as defined by Adams (1965), are similar to Homan's (1961) investments, and are "what a man perceives as his contributions to the exchange, for which he expects a just return [p. 277]." Inputs, in the employer–employee relationships with which Adams dealt, included such things as skill, financial investments, education, and so on. While these investments often may be "assets" for which the type of "just return" expected are rewards, it would also seem that some inputs could be "liabilities" which the person brings to the interaction and for which the "just return" may be decreased rewards.

[2]For purposes of this paper, it was sufficient to adopt Adams' formula O/I (where I stands for a person's inputs and O stands for his outcomes) for determining when equity did or did not exist in a relationship between people. Adams' formula, which has been utilized chiefly in industrial situations, is adequate so long as the inputs of all participants are positive. His formula is not suitable in social situations, where inputs may be negative as well as positive. For example, a relationship would be calculated as "equitable" if Person A had (Outcomes = −10/Inputs = 5) and Person B (Outcomes = 10/Inputs = −5). Obviously neither Adams nor we would feel such a relationship was, in fact, equitable. A formula suitable for general use is: $O - I/[\,I\,]$, where $[\,I\,]$ designates the absolute value of an individual's inputs.

Let us demonstrate how this formula operates. This measure will be zero if one's Outcomes equal his Inputs. It will be positive if $O > I$, and negative if $O < I$. Thus the sign of this measure indicates how "profitable" the relationship has been to each of the participants. The measure is scaled by the magnitude of the input. For example, an individual who has outcomes of 10 and whose inputs are +5 has a $O - I/[\,I\,]$ value of 1. If his inputs were −5, his $O - I/[\,I\,]$ value would be 3. This formula simply puts the subjects' outcomes in a metric which enables us to compare them.

"Outcomes," as defined by Adams (1965, p. 278), are the individual's "receipts" from a relationship. They may be positive consequences of the individual's relationship with the other person, or they may be negative. We shall, following Homans (1961), refer to positive outcomes as "rewards" and negative outcomes as "costs." The person's total outcome from the relationship we shall define as the rewards he obtains from the relationship minus the costs he incurs.

Given this equity formulation, it is now possible to define the terms we will be using throughout this section.[3] "Harm Doing" shall be defined as the commitment of an act which produces an inequitable relationship between the members, such that the actor's outcome/input (O/I) ratio becomes greater than that of the other member of the relationship. We shall term an act which impairs the equity of a relationship in the above manner as "harmful," the perpetrator of such an act a "harm doer," and the member of the relationship whose O/I ratio has been reduced as a "victim."

We can proceed now from the point at which the harmful act has been committed to a consideration of some of the factors which motivate a harm doer to make some kind of response after doing harm.

Hypothesis I: A harm doer will feel distress upon perceiving that he has committed a harmful act.

Virtually every theorist who has examined the reactions of a harm doer after committing a harmful act has assumed that one feels some kind of distress after injuring another. Various theorists have labeled this distress "guilt," "fear of retaliation," "dissonance," "empathy," "conditioned anxiety," etc. We too propose that a harm doer will experience distress after injuring another. We will emphasize two potential sources for the harm-doer's distress: retaliation distress and self-concept distress.

Because individuals are often punished when they perform harmful acts, we might reasonably expect that to the extent that stimuli in the current harm-doing situation are similar to stimuli previously associated with punishment, the harm doer should feel distress and should anticipate punishment for his behavior. The development of this type of distress has been discussed in great detail by the learning theorists.[4] We shall term "retaliation distress," then, that discomfort which arises from the harm-doer's anticipation that the victim, the victim's

[3]For discussion purposes, we shall assume that prior to the time the harm doer commits the harmful act, the relationship between the harm doer and the victim is equitable.

[4]See, for example, Aronfreed (1969).

sympathizers, legal agencies, or even God, will restore equity to the harm-doer–victim relationship through a lowering of the harm-doer's total outcome and/or through an increase of his inputs.

Harm doing may produce another type of discomfort. In this society, there is an almost universally accepted moral code to the effect that one should be fair and equitable in his dealings with others (cf. Fromm, 1956, for an interesting discussion of the pervasiveness of the "fairness" principle). Doing a harmful act, then, should be inconsistent with a normal individual's ethical principles and with his self-expectations. The distress that arises from such unethical or inconsistent acts has been discussed in great detail by guilt theorists and by cognitive dissonance theorists.[5] We shall term discomfort emanating from this source "self-concept distress."

Although we have differentiated between distress arising from these two sources, we do not assume that they are completely independent. Self-concept distress, as well as retaliation distress, is assumed to have its roots in the socialization process in which individuals are punished for the commitment of inequitable acts.

There is a great deal of experimental, as well as clinical, evidence to support the view that individuals do feel distress following the commitment of harmful acts, and we shall present some of this evidence later in the paper. There is even evidence that people are uncomfortable when another commits an inequitable act which produces an inequity in their favor (cf. Jacques, 1961; Adams & Rosenbaum, 1962; Adams, 1963).

Corollary I-A: The more harm the harm doer perceives he has done, the more distress he will feel.

The greater the inequity a harmful act produces, the more probable it should be that the harm doer should anticipate retaliation, and the more retaliation distress he should experience. In addition, as the amount of inequity produced by an act increases, the easier it should become for the harm doer to recognize that the act is a harmful one. Therefore, self-concept distress should increase as harm doing increases.

Corollary I-B: Distress should result whether the harmful act is deliberate or unintentional.

Many harmful acts are committed without premeditation. The framework we have utilized leads us to argue that even unintentional harm doing should

[5]See, for example, Maher (1966) or Arnold (1960a,b) and Bramel (1969) for an elucidation of these two points of view.

produce some distress. In naturalistic situations, contingencies are often unclear. It is always difficult for a person to know the extent to which his own carelessness or lack of foresight may be the cause of an inequity. Thus, self-concept distress may follow even unintentional acts. It is also difficult for others to assess a harm-doer's intentions, and for this reason, retaliation often follows unintentional acts. Past experience with such situations should produce retaliation distress even in the inadvertent harm doer.

That unintentional harm doing will produce distress has been documented in several experiments. Lerner and Simmons (1966) found, for example, that an individual who merely chooses, by chance, a card that assigns him to a pleasant condition and his partner to an unpleasant condition, will feel distress. Whether unintentional harm doing generally produces less distress than does intentional harm doing is open to investigation, however.

Hypothesis II: The harm doer will attempt to reduce his distress through the restoration of equity to his relationship with the victim.

From the discussion of the antecedents of distress, it is clear that to the extent to which the harm doer can restore equity to his relationship with the victim, distress may be reduced. It also follows that:

Corollary II-A: The greater the magnitude of distress, the stronger will be the harm-doer's attempts to reduce it.

There is some indirect evidence to support this notion: Brock and Buss (1962, 1964) found that the stronger the electric shock subjects administered to a victim, the more they denied responsibility for the decision to administer shock; Lerner and Simmons (1966) found that the more the victim suffered, the more subjects derogated him; Lerner and Matthews (1967) found that the more responsible subjects felt for the victim's suffering, the more they derogated him. If we assume that the more the victim suffers or the more responsible the harm doer is for the inequity, the more distressed the harm doer will be, the finding that more self-justification occurs under such conditions is consistent with our hypotheses.

There are a number of ways by which the harm doer may restore equity:

Corollary II-B: The harm doer may reduce his distress through restoration of "psychological equity" to his relationship with the victim or through restoration of "actual equity."

RESTORATION OF PSYCHOLOGICAL EQUITY

One way a harm doer can "restore equity" to his relationship with the victim is simply by distorting reality and convincing himself that the relationship should, in fact, be perceived as equitable. By distorting his own or the victim's outcomes and inputs, a harm doer can make the harmful act appear to be an equitable one. Such distortions, or "justifications," as we shall label them, can include the following.

Derogation of the Victim

An act which harms another is not inequitable if the victim was deserving of the harm. Thus, one can restore equity to an inequitable relationship by derogating the victim's inputs.[6] That harm doers will often derogate their victims has been demonstrated by Sykes and Matza (1957), Davis and Jones (1960), Berkowitz (1962), Davidson (1964), Glass (1964), and Walster and Prestholdt (1966).

Denial of Responsibility for the Act

If the harm doer can perceive that it was not his behavior, but rather the actions of someone else (the experimenter or fate) that caused the victim's suffering, then his relationship with the victim becomes an equitable one. (That person who is unjustly assigned responsibility for reducing the victim's outcomes will now be perceived as the harm doer, and it will be his relationship with the victim, not the actual harm doer's relationship, that is perceived as inequitable.)

That harm doers will often deny their responsibility for harm doing has been documented by Sykes and Matza (1957) and by Brock and Buss (1962, 1964).

Minimization of the Victim's Suffering

To the extent that the harm doer can deny that the victim was harmed, he will be able to perceive his relationship with the victim as equitable. Minimization of the victim's suffering has been found by Sykes and Matza (1957) and Brock and Buss (1962).

[6] If, for example, both the harm doer and victim had an O/I ratio of 50/50 prior to the harmful act, and if following the act the victim's ratio was reduced to 25/50, by cognitively reducing the inputs the victim has brought to the relationship (e.g., his intelligence, his attractiveness, his "deservingness") to 25, the harm doer can restore equity.

RESTORATION OF ACTUAL EQUITY

The harm doer, of course, may restore actual equity to the relationship by increasing the victim's outcome or by decreasing his own outcome, relative to his inputs, so that a state of equality between the two ratios is restored.

Compensation

When an act is designed primarily to increase the victim's *O/I* ratio, we will speak of compensation. Compensatory acts most often take the form of increasing the victim's total outcome through increasing his rewards and/or reducing his costs. Acts which decrease the victim's inputs are probably rare since one seldom has control over another's inputs.

Despite cynics such as Junius, who commented in his *Letters* that "a death bed repentance seldom reaches to restitution," recent studies have verified the fact that individuals often do make compensation following harm doing. That a harm doer will compensate his victim has been demonstrated by Walster, Walster, Abrahams, and Brown (1966), Walster and Prestholdt (1966), Brock and Becker (1966), Berscheid and Walster (1967), Freedman, Wallington, and Bless (1967), Carlsmith and Gross (1969), and Berscheid, Walster, and Barclay (1969).

Self-Punishment

A harm doer may also restore equity by reducing his *O/I* ratio to the level of the victim's. He can do this either by reducing the rewards or increasing the costs he incurs as a consequence of the relationship, or by increasing his inputs into the relationship. When the harm doer achieves equity by decreasing his own *O/I* ratio, we shall speak of self-punishment.[7]

The anecdotal and clinical literature provides support for the notion that individuals sometimes do react to the commitment of harmful acts by administering punishment to themselves or by seeking punishment from others. Indeed, it has been suggested that ". . . punishment is the only kind of response that is sufficient to reduce the tension of guilt [Sarnoff, 1962, p. 351]." Attempts to

[7]Although self-punitive acts may restore equity to a relationship, restoring equity in this way has a disadvantage: self-punitive acts decrease the overall *O/I* ratio in the relationship, and thereby reduce the amount of satisfaction the harm doer and victim obtain from their interaction with each other.

demonstrate self-punishment in the laboratory have been surprisingly unsuccessful.

Several quite different types of behavior have been classified as self-punitive by various theorists.

Self-Abasement and Self-Injury

After injuring another, individuals often apologize for their wrongdoing and ask for forgiveness. These apologies may be accompanied by self-abasement; the harm doer may elaborate on the fact that his cruelty, thoughtlessness, etc., have shown him to be a worthless individual, and that as a result of committing the harmful act, he has himself experienced much suffering and pain. It is difficult to know if such a response should be classified as a self-punitive or as a compensatory response. To the extent that self-abasement is a dramatic presentation, whose aim is to restore the self-esteem of an insulted victim, such self-derogation should probably be classified as compensatory. If self-abasement or self-injury occurs in private, without the expectation that the victim will feel benefited by one's suffering, the response probably should be classified as self-punitive.

The clinical literature also mentions the fact that on occasion, guilty individuals may actually physically injure themselves and sometimes even be driven to suicide if necessary to "even the score" (e.g., Lindemann, 1944).

Altruism

Several theorists have proposed that after injuring another, individuals will be especially willing to endure costs to perform altruistic acts for the benefit of persons other than the victim. For example, Freedman *et al.* (1967) have hypothesized that:

> Given the opportunity to engage in some extremely unpleasant behavior the guilty person should be more likely to agree than the non-guilty since the former can use this as a form of self-punishment. Similarly, if he is asked to do someone a favor, pleasant or otherwise, the guilty person should be more likely to agree than the non-guilty because the former can view it as his good deed for the day which will make up for the bad deed about which he feels guilty [p. 117].

Freedman *et al.* (1967) and Darlington and Macker (1966) have demonstrated experimentally that a harm doer may be especially likely to perform unpleasant altruistic acts after injuring another. Such altruistic acts do not restore equity directly to the harm-doer–victim relationship. It is possible, however, that the performance of such altruistic acts may be perceived as restoring equity with the "world in general" and, therefore, with the victim indirectly.

We can see that there are a number of techniques, all experimentally documented, by which a harm doer may restore equity to his relationship with the victim. We shall now present two major hypotheses concerning the conditions under which a harm doer may be expected to use one equity-restoring technique rather than another.

Hypothesis III: Other things being equal, the more adequate a harm doer perceives an available equity-restoring technique to be, the greater the probability that he will choose to restore equity by utilizing this technique.

The "adequacy" of a technique is defined as the extent to which use of that technique will exactly restore equity to the relationship.

Corollary III-A: The more adequate a harm doer perceives available compensations to be, the greater the probability that he will restore equity by utilizing this technique.

Given our definition of "adequacy," it is clear that the "adequacy of a compensation" would be defined as the extent to which the compensation would exactly balance the costs the victim has suffered as a consequence of the relationship. Accordingly, an available compensation may lack adequacy for two reasons: it may be insufficient to balance the harm done, or it may be an excessive compensation for the harm done.

Although a victim may prefer an insufficient compensation to no compensation at all, making a partial compensation is, from the harm doer's point of view, an unsatisfactory way to restore equity. A partial compensation cannot by itself completely restore equity since the victim is still left in a deprived state.

Similarly, a compensation which is inadequate because it is excessive cannot, by itself, eliminate the harm doer's distress. An excessive compensation would eliminate one kind of inequity by producing another. The harm doer who compensates his victim excessively does not restore equity. He simply becomes a victim rather than a harm doer.

There is evidence that individuals experience distress (dissonance) when they overbenefit another without sufficient reason for doing so, as well as when they harm him without justification (Walster & Prestholdt, 1966; Jecker & Landy, 1969).

For these reasons it is proposed that one's tendency to compensate his victim will be an increasing function of the adequacy of available compensations. Berscheid and Walster (1967) found support for this hypothesis in an experiment conducted with women's church groups. In this experiment, women were led to

cheat fellow parishioners out of trading stamps in a vain attempt to win additional stamps for themselves. When the women were subsequently given an opportunity to compensate the victim at no cost to themselves, it was found that adequacy of available compensation was crucial in determining whether or not the women would choose to compensate. Women who could compensate with an adequate compensation, exactly restoring the number of books the partner had lost, were much more likely to compensate than were women limited to insufficient compensation (a few stamps) or to excessive compensation (a great many stamp books). This finding was replicated by Berscheid, Walster, and Barclay (1969).

Corollary III-B: The more adequate a harm doer perceives available justifications to be, the greater the probability that he will choose to restore equity by utilizing this technique.

In order for a harm doer to completely restore psychological equity to his relationship with the victim, he must be able to conceive of justifications which he feels are credible and which he feels are sufficient to make his behavior seem entirely equitable. The adequacy of a sufficient justification depends in part, then, on how credible the harm doer judges the justification to be. A great variety of factors necessarily influence how "credible" a given justification will be judged to be by the harm doer himself and how credible he anticipates the same justification will appear to others.

A delightful and extensive account of the factors which determine a justification's credibility is available in Scott and Lyman (1968). We wish to mention specifically only three general points:

1. *Justifications should be more credible (adequate), and thus more readily used, when they require little distortion of reality than when they require a great deal of reality distortion.* The more serious or extensive a distortion of reality which a justification requires, the harder it should be for the harm doer to believe that his justification is a credible one or to believe that others would find it credible, and the less willing the harm doer should be to utilize justifications to restore equity.

Some tangential support for this proposition comes from Rosenberg and Abelson (1960). They provide evidence that individuals prefer to distort reality as little as possible, and demonstrate that even when one does restore cognitive balance by distorting reality, he tries to alter as few cognitions as possible.

2. *The more public a justification must be, the less likely it should be that the harm doer will utilize justifications to restore equity.* If the harm doer has

only himself to please, it should be fairly easy for him to come up with a totally convincing rationalization for almost any behavior: He has only to conceive of some justification that is not contradicted by any other beliefs he has about the victim. However, in many instances, the harm doer will anticipate that his justification must be made publicly, and that as a consequence, its validity may be challenged by unsympathetic and perhaps retaliatory others. When the fact that others will be judging the credibility of one's justifications is salient, the individual would be more critical of the justifications that occur to him and more likely to require that suitable justifications be credible to critical others as well as to himself (cf. Walster *et al.*, 1967). It should, of course, be more difficult for the harm doer to conceive of justifications which are credible to others than to conceive of justifications credible only to himself. For these reasons, a harm doer is probably more likely to restore equity by utilizing justification techniques when his justification must be public than when it can be private.

3. *Justifications which involve distortion of the victim's characteristics should be more credible and thus more readily used, the less contact the harm doer has had (or anticipates having) with the victim.* There are two reasons why distortions of an intimate's characteristics should be less credible than distortions of a stranger's characteristics. First, the more intimate we are with someone, the more likely we are to have realistic information and attitudes concerning him. Thus, distortions of an intimate's characteristics should require more reality distortion and thus should be less credible than are distortions involving a stranger.

Virtually all the cognitive consistency theorists (Cartwright & Harary, 1956; Festinger, 1957; Abelson & Rosenberg, 1958; Rosenberg, 1960; Zajonc, 1960) acknowledge that one is less likely to change a belief which is consistently related to many other cognitions than to change a belief which exists in isolation.

Second, Walster *et al.* (1967) have demonstrated that one is more likely to avoid distortions when future objective evidence could conceivably contradict these distortions than when future evidence will not be forthcoming. Thus, if one expects to continue to associate with the victim, it becomes risky to distort his characteristics. If one engages in a massive distortion of an intimate's character, one must anticipate that it is inevitable that he will soon be embarrassingly confronted with the victim, who may demonstrate that he possesses traits quite different from those one has ascribed to him, and will thus demonstrate that the harm doer's distortions were not credible.

Familiarity with the victim, then, should tend to breed accuracy and to discourage the use of justification as a distress-reducing technique. Data are available to support this hypothesis: Davis and Jones (1960) found that subjects

who expected to see their victim after delivering a negative personal evaluation of him did not derogate him as much as did subjects who did not anticipate subsequent interaction with the victim. Davis and Jones assumed that they secured this result because subjects who anticipated future contact expected to "neutralize their harm doing" by explaining that their negative evaluation did not represent their true feelings. However, since the victim had already suffered by the time neutralization could occur, this explanation is not totally satisfactory. An equally plausible interpretation is that distortion becomes more difficult when future interaction is anticipated.

Data from an experiment designed to test another hypothesis is also relevant: Ross (1965) conducted an ingenious experiment in which students were led to choose to consign their partner to electric shock in order to avoid painful shock themselves. In some conditions, subjects believed they would work with their partner only once. In other cases they believed they would work with her on many tasks. Ross' finding—that when the subjects caused the other to be injured, derogation occurred more often when subsequent contact was not anticipated—is satisfactorily explained by the hypothesis that anticipated intimacy makes justification an unpreferred mode of response.

We must add to adequacy a second determinant of choice of technique:

Hypothesis IV: Other things being equal, the harm doer will use that technique which will yield the highest overall O/I ratio in the harm-doer–victim relationship.

In the analyses to follow, we shall assume that after the commitment of a harmful act, the harm doer is not only motivated by a desire for equity restoration, but also that the harm doer will act in such a way as to achieve the highest possible profit and satisfaction from his relationship with the victim (i.e., so that he and his partner can achieve as high *O/I* ratios as possible).

This hypothesis would appear to be somewhat similar to an assumption made by Adams (1965) that a person ". . . will reduce inequity, insofar as possible, in a manner that will yield him the largest outcomes [p. 284]." Adams presents evidence supporting the validity of his hypothesis (Adams & Rosenbaum, 1962; Adams, 1963). This hypothesis is also supported by the results of an experiment concerning preferences among forms of equity resolution in fictitious work situations recently conducted by Weick and Nesset (1969).

Derivation IV-1: If all three techniques are available and equally adequate, self-punishment will be the least preferred of the three responses.

Since inequitable acts are those which result in the harm-doer's experiencing a higher *O/I* ratio than the victim's, self-punishment (or decreasing one's own

O/I ratio) may restore equity to the relationship. However, such a response requires the harm doer voluntarily to lower the amount of satisfaction both he and the victim receive from their relationship. It directly follows from Hypothesis IV that there should be resistance to such a step.

There is no direct evidence to support this derivation. However, experiments which have demonstrated that individuals are more willing to engage in unpleasant altruistic acts following commitment of a harmful act (e.g., Darlington & Macker, 1966; Freedman *et al.*, 1967) have consistently blocked compensation routes to the harm doer. In addition, the guilt-inducing procedure used in these experiments was such that justifications—denial of responsibility for the harm, denial that the harm was done, or denial that the act was unjust—were difficult, if not impossible, for the subjects to employ. Thus, evidence of self-punishment following harm doing has been restricted to situations in which compensation and justification techniques were almost totally unavailable to restore equity. The frequency with which use of self-punishment would be found, had one or both of the other techniques been available and perceived as adequate, is unanswered.

At this point we wish to consider the reactions of a harm doer when no single equity-restoring technique is totally adequate. Specifically, we wish to consider when the harm doer will use two or more "partially adequate" techniques to totally restore equity and when he will not use the various techniques in concert.

Hypothesis V: The harm doer will tend not to use the justification technique in concert with compensation and self-punishment techniques.

Corollary V-A: In cases in which both compensation and justification techniques are available, but are inadequate, only one technique will be used; they will not be used in concert to reduce distress.

Why do we propose that a harm doer will use predominantly compensation or predominantly justification, rather than a combination of techniques, to restore equity in a given situation? For logical reasons it appears unlikely that a harm doer can restore equity in a given situation by using the compensation and justification techniques in concert.[8] It should be difficult for a harm doer to

[8]Hypothesis V does not exclude the possibility that the harm doer may use compensation and justification techniques in sequence. I.e., a harm doer may attempt to make compensation, find it impossible, and then resort to justification. Or, justification may be attempted, found challenged, and compensation will follow. Hypothesis V only states that when the harm doer is in the process of attempting to compensate, he will not justify; while attempting to justify he will not simultaneously attempt to compensate the victim.

convince himself that the victim was deserving of harm, that the victim has suffered no inequity, or that he was not responsible for the victim's reduced outcomes, at the same time that he is acknowledging the inequity and is exerting himself in an attempt to compensate the victim.

Evidence that there is a negative relationship between one's tendency to compensate for his harm doing and one's tendency to justify his harm doing can be gleaned from several sources: Walster and Prestholdt (1966) conducted an experiment in which social work "trainees" were led to harm their clients by providing misleading information about them to their psychiatrist. Subsequently, trainees were asked to evaluate their injured clients, and were also asked to volunteer their free time to help one of the clients. In this study, the tendency to derogate the victim was negatively related to the amount of time the trainees volunteered to help him. In addition, Lerner and Simmons (1966) have found that observers only derogate a victim when they are powerless to aid him in any way. When it is clear that compensation will occur, no derogation is detected.

Corollary V-B: If the justification technique is inadequate, the harm doer will not use this technique in concert with self-punishment.

For logical reasons, it should be difficult for the harm doer to convince himself that he did not in fact harm the victim at the same time that he is punishing himself (lowering his *O/I* ratio) as a consequence of that "harmless" act.

Corollary V-C: Compensation and self-punishment techniques may be used in concert by the harm doer to reduce distress.

Since both compensation and self-punishment require that the harm doer recognize that an act performed by him created an inequity in his relationship with the victim, there is no logical incompatibility in the simultaneous use of both techniques. Indeed, we have previously mentioned that compensatory acts, which have as their focus the conferring of benefit upon the victim, ordinarily involve cost to the harm doer and, thus, involve one element of self-punishment.

The preceding discussion has focused upon the means by which the harm doer himself may restore equity to his relationship with the victim. It is clear, however, that the harm doer is not the only possible agent of equity restoration. At this point we wish to hypothesize that:

Hypothesis VI: To the extent that external events intervene to produce an equitable relationship between the harm doer and victim, the harm-doer's distress should be reduced and he, therefore, should be less likely to voluntarily use any of the three distress-reducing techniques.

Derivation VI-1: If following commitment of the harmful act, the victim produces equity through retaliation, the probability that the harm doer will engage in either self-punishment, compensation, or justification should decrease.

The victim would probably prefer that a harm doer restore equity to their relationship by using compensatory techniques rather than justificatory ones. Frequently, however, it is obvious to the victim that compensation is unlikely to be forthcoming. In such circumstances, he might anticipate the possibility that justification techniques will be used to restore an equitable relationship. However, the exploiter's justification of his harmful act is potentially dangerous for the victim. It is probable that the harm doer who justifies his harm doing will end up with a distorted and unreal assessment of his own actions. If he distorts the extent to which the victim deserved to be hurt, for example, or minimizes the victim's suffering as a consequence of the act, he may commit further acts based on these distortions (Berscheid, Boye, and Darley, 1968a).

The harm-doer's use of the justification technique, then, is likely to leave the victim in rather sad straits. Not only has he been hurt, but as a result of the harm-doer's justification, the probability that the harm doer will hurt him again has been increased. Thus, from the victim's point of view, it is desirable to have equity restored before the harm doer is tempted to justify what he has done. If the harm doer is unable or unwilling to restore equity through compensation, how may the victim prevent justification? In our culture the phrase "getting even" suggests that equity can be restored by the victim's retaliation against the harm doer.

Berscheid, Boye, and Walster (1968b) conducted an experiment designed to assess the effect that a victim's retaliation will have on the exploiter's tendency to justify the victim's suffering by derogating him. The results of this study indicate that a victim can indeed restore equity through retaliation against the exploiter. In this experiment, individuals were hired to administer severe electric shocks to another person. If the victim could not retaliate against the harm doer, the harm doer subsequently derogated the victim. However, when the exploiter expected retaliation for his harmful act, the derogation process was arrested; the harm doer did not derogate the victim.

It is also interesting that the relationship between retaliation and derogation was diametrically opposed for control subjects who merely observed the victim's suffering; those observers who expected to be hurt by the victim in the future liked him less than did those who did not expect to be hurt.

These results have an interesting implication for the use of retaliation by victims: James Baldwin (1964) in a statement concerning the Negroes' struggle for minority rights in this country, argues, "Neither civilized reason or Chris-

tian love would cause any of these people to treat you as they presumably wanted to be treated; only fear of your power to retaliate will cause them to do that, or seem to do it, which was (and is) good enough [p. 34]." Negro militants have taken an even stronger position. They have argued that widespread Negro violence is necessary to restore the Negro to full citizenship. The variables they discuss sound much like those we have considered. They talk of the "white devil," his guilt, his denial of racial injustices, and the equity-establishing effects of violence. If extrapolation from our findings is relevant, we might suggest that retaliation, or the anticipation of retaliation, will be beneficial only if the recipient of the violence feels that he is in some way directly responsible for the Negroes' suffering. Retaliation against those who feel themselves to be innocent observers of injustices would seem to be a disastrous strategy.

Derivation VI-2: If following commitment of the harmful act, an outside agency requires the harm doer to compensate the victim or if the outside agency punishes the harm doer for his act, the probability that the harm doer will voluntarily use any of the three distress-reducing techniques should be decreased.

There is no direct experimental evidence to support this proposition. Penal theorists (e.g., Spencer, 1866; Del Vecchio, 1959; Schafer, 1960) have assumed that requiring a criminal to make restitution to his victim will prevent him from justifying his harm-doing and thus will promote his rehabilitation. Institutional punishment is generally assumed to have the same effect. The anecdotal evidence they provide is at least consistent with our hypothesis.

One would speculate, however, that coerced compensation should not be as equity restoring, nor as distress reducing, as voluntary compensation. For example, voluntary compensation may eliminate the affront to the victim's pride which is often associated with being victimized. Forced compensation does not eliminate such indignities. In addition, even though the harm doer who is forced to make compensation may have less reason to fear retaliation than he had initially, forced compensation may not completely reduce his self-concept distress.

Derivation VI-3: If following commitment of the harmful act, the victim offers "forgiveness" to the harm doer, the probability that the harm doer will engage in any of the three distress-reducing techniques may decrease.

A common way by which the harm-doer's distress may be reduced following a harmful act is through absolution tendered by the victim and others. Such absolution implies that the relationship between the harm doer and victim has regained equity. Such absolution may reduce an individual's distress by strengthening his self-esteem and reducing his fear of retaliation.

Up to this point we have assumed that the harm doer has not been aware that "forgiveness" could conceivably extricate him from his dilemma and,

further, that he has no skills which could be used to elicit forgiveness from others. Obviously, this is not always the case. Self-punishment, for example, may easily be "faked"; a harm doer may engage in profuse verbalizations of how much personal suffering he has endured as a consequence of his unjust treatment of the victim. The notion that a description of one's remorse and suffering, if convincing, may in fact attenuate the wrath and retaliatory intentions of the victim and others has been supported by an experiment conducted by Bramel, Taub, and Blum (1968). It is for this reason, perhaps, that a commonly used elicitor of forgiveness is the phrase "I'm sorry."

The common television scenario of the careless driver rushing to the hospital room of his victim to express his anguish and remorse becomes explicable through this reasoning. A person not familiar with the common "I'm sorry"–"You're forgiven" sequence might wonder what benefit is conferred upon a dying victim, or what wrong is righted, by such a demonstration of the harm-doer's personal suffering as a consequence of his act. Perhaps the answer is none. It can be hypothesized that the act is performed not for the victim's benefit, but for the harm-doer's benefit. To say "I'm sorry" is to imply personal suffering and to beg for forgiveness to end one's distress.

When apologies and derogation do not elicit "forgiveness," it is interesting that harm doers often switch with ease to another technique, often the incompatible justification technique.

Additional Comments

1. This theoretical framework has taken the nomothetic approach and has attempted to provide a framework to guide prediction of how the average individual will respond following his commitment of a harmful act. In spite of the fact that we have relied entirely on the nomothetic approach, one cannot assume that personality differences are unimportant. Personality characteristics should affect how much distress a harm doer feels after injuring another, and how he will respond to that distress.

For example, in Hypothesis I, we proposed that a normal harm doer would experience distress from two sources after injuring another. (*a*) He would experience self-concept distress, since he had performed a harmful act which should be inconsistent both with his own good opinion of himself and with his moral principles. (*b*) He would experience fear of retaliation distress. One interested in individual differences would be led to the obvious conclusion that harm doers who have high self-esteem and strongly internalized ethical principles should feel more distress after harming another than should individuals with low standards and low self-regard. High self-esteem individuals, then, would be expected to

make a greater effort to restore equity after harming another than would low self-esteem individuals. (Review Corollary II-A.)

There is some experimental evidence to support this derivation. In an experiment by Glass (1964), an individual's self-esteem was experimentally raised or lowered by providing him with authoritative information about his own personality. After harming another, high self-esteem subjects justified their harm doing (by derogating their victims) more than did low self-esteem subjects.

Profitable and interesting attempts to identify some of the individual difference variables which will affect a harm-doer's reaction have been made by Aronfreed (1961) and others. Such studies may be expected to considerably sharpen prediction in individual situations.

2. We should point out that the predictive statements we have made rest to some extent upon the assumption that the harm doer will have some time in which to evaluate the various techniques before being forced to respond. Unfortunately, not all situations afford the harm doer such an opportunity. Often, for example, distress-reduction opportunities present themselves immediately after commitment of the harmful act and decisions concerning whether or not to take advantage of the opportunity must be made with little forethought. Under such circumstances, there is evidence that the predictions we have made concerning choice of distress-reduction technique would not be likely to hold. The effects of time are discussed in greater detail in the experiment by Berscheid, Walster, & Barclay (1969).

ELICITING JUSTICE RATHER THAN JUSTIFICATION

From the theory and data reported in the preceding section, one is led to speculate that a person interested in persuading an exploiter to make voluntary restitution should utilize certain persuasive techniques which will be enumerated in this section.

Finding techniques to elicit voluntary restitution might be more important than one would think. Since it is often difficult to conceive of ways to induce an exploiter to make voluntary restitution, injured individuals often first consider court action designed to force the exploiter to make restitution.

In some cases, legal action might be a very profitable strategy. Often, however, the private individual with limited time and resources might better invest his time in attempting to elicit voluntary restitution than in attempting to extract compensation by legal means.

There is much evidence that court action seldom provides a victim with very much in the way of compensation. At least since republican Roman Law, men have been concerned with developing procedures to insure that victims of crime will be justly compensated.[10] Thus far, legal theorists have been unable to devise a completely adequate system. Schafer (1960) conducted a world-wide survey of the legal means various nations have utilized to provide restitution to exploited individuals. A wide variety of techniques to restore equity have been tried. In places (e.g., Germany, Switzerland, and Mexico), a victim may be awarded a Busse (a compensatory fine) in criminal proceedings; the victim may attempt to attach the harm-doer's prison wages (e.g., in France, Canada, Israel), the victim may apply for state compensation to the victims of criminal violence (e.g., Cuba or Switzerland), etc. It is Schafer's dour conclusion concerning all of these procedures that:

> This general situation involves the victim of crime in more or less hopeless position with regard to his claim for restitution. It has been found in practice that the injured party has very little success in recovering damages because of lack of means of the ordinary criminal and the opportunity which the criminal has to hide or transfer his property before attachment. Frequently the victim despairs of turning to civil procedures or wants to save additional costs. Victims know that most offenders tend to be impecunious and a civil action alone or an award having merely a civil character will probably be worthless to them [p. 107].

Even if the victim does secure a judgment against the harm doer, the bulk of his compensation often must go to pay attorney fees or court costs—both of which have been ruled to have priority over the victim's right to compensation.

In recent years legal theorists have so despaired of providing restitution to exploited individuals under currently established legal procedures that a movement has begun to insure that the state will make adequate restitution to unjustly injured individuals (see Fry, 1959). Fry's proposal is not the first time that the idea of community compensation has been proposed. The code of Hammurabi presents an example of claim insurance in ancient law. Under Sections 22 and 23 of this code, dating perhaps as early as 2270 B.C., when a traveler had been robbed on a highway and the perpetrator escaped, the entire community had to contribute to the compensation of the victim. Since 4000 years has elapsed between the "Code" and Margery Fry's proposal, one might anticipate that there will be some delay in implementing her proposal that the state provide restitution to victims of violence.

[10]Digest 42.2. 1.3; Paul .2 .32 .1; Institutes 4.1 .6, 4.1 .3, and 4.4 .7.

Suggestions for Eliciting Voluntary Restitution

1. In Corollary III-A, it was proposed that "The more adequate a harm doer perceives available compensations to be, the greater the probability that he will restore equity by utilizing this technique." Data supported the proposal that an exploiter becomes more likely to make restitution when he perceives that available compensations can completely balance out the harm he has done, than when the compensations available to him are seen as inadequate.

This finding has interesting implications. Exploited minorities often try to impress on those in a position to make restitution how much they have suffered, in the hope of eliciting increased restitution. It is natural to assume that the better case one makes for his claim, the more likely it is that he will be compensated. The preceding research, however, indicates that in some instances, it might be a more effective strategy for a victim to minimize his suffering than to aggrandize it. Increasing the amount of debt claimed might be an effective way to secure increased benefits if the harm doer can conceivably make a restitution adequate to cover the suffering described. If, however, a victim aggrandizes his suffering to such an extent that it exceeds the highest level of compensation available to the exploiter, the victim may decrease his chances of receiving any compensation at all.

The above argument can be illustrated with a practical example. Most Americans probably feel that no matter how hard they tried they could not make adequate restitution to the Negro for his centuries of exploitation. Negro leaders have argued that citizens should at least take some small steps toward restoring equity. However, the idea of making a small step toward restoring equity, making a small compensation, is not very attractive to many citizens. The effort to make a partial compensation mocks their rationalizations that no harm was done or that the exploited deserved their treatment. If one cannot compensate enough to redress another's grievance, he is perhaps happier sticking to his rationalizations. If we can generalize the preceding findings, we might suggest that additional arousal of guilt may only make it more difficult for the exploited to secure compensation. In view of Hypothesis III, a more effective strategy for deprived minorities may be to minimize their description of their suffering, and to make it clear that if available compensations are extended, it will eliminate the debt owed to them. While this may not be true, it might be effective, and would leave the victim in a better situation than if he were not to employ this strategy.

It is possible that exploited individuals might be unwilling to minimize their descriptions of their suffering because they are less interested in receiving material compensation than in the emotional catharsis that comes from punishing those associated with one's suffering.

At the time of Martin Luther King's death, the University of Wisconsin held a series of interracial seminars. Negro students from neighboring high schools talked to overflowing crowds of white students in many of the classrooms in the Social Science Building. Presumably, these seminars were designed to further racial understanding. The pattern of these meetings was strikingly similar. The white students who attended were generally the most liberal students and the most pro Civil Rights students on campus. The Negro high school students who attended were generally very militant. Everyone was upset by Dr. King's death at the time of the meetings. The first question the white students asked their Negro colleagues was "What can we do?" The answer of the Negro student was "Nothing"; they denounced the white liberals as being so steeped in racism that no hope for rehabilitation was possible—they noted that the whites had such a heritage of racism that even if they devoted their lives to civil rights, they could not atone for their own racism.

While such denunications might provide some degree of emotional satisfaction for Negroes, they probably are unlikely to be effective in eliciting practical restitution for the Negro. Three lines of research would agree that one is very unlikely to induce desired change in an individual by degrading him and telling him he is such a miserable person, his life is beyond repair:

First, commitment research warns us that the more one ties a person publicly to beliefs, the more difficult it is for that person to change his beliefs when faced with new information that these previous beliefs are wrong (see Brehm & Cohen, 1962). Evidence exists that the more committed an individual is to his harm doing, the more likely he is to justify his behavior and the less likely he is to compensate for it. In one experiment (Walster & Prestholdt, 1966), women who were interested in social work were led to misdiagnose their clients' condition, and on the basis of their error, to recommend incorrect therapy for the client. Half of the time the social work trainees' misdiagnoses were public; the other half of the time their errors were private. Trainees then received incontrovertible evidence that their diagnoses were incorrect. Subsequently they were given a chance to compensate for their errors or to justify them. (They could compensate the clients by volunteering free time to help with their therapy or they could justify their misdiagnoses by insisting that the original diagnoses had been correct.) Commitment was found to be an important determinant of whether trainees reacted to their harm doing with justice or with

justification. Those individuals publicly committed to their beliefs tended to justify their own errors more and to compensate the victims less than did uncommitted trainees.

Second, attitude change research indicates that a communicator should never identify the recipient of his communication as an opponent, but should, instead, identify him as a sympathizer, regardless of how far apart their views are in fact. It has been found that by identifying the recipient of the communications as a sympathizer, one makes him more receptive to unpleasant advice than he normally would be (Hovland, Lumsdaine, and Sheffield, 1949).

Finally, as mentioned earlier, stressing that available compensations are inadequate should decrease the individual's willingness to attempt to make any compensation at all.

That exploited individuals react to prolonged frustration by verbally attacking those around them is perfectly understandable. The three lines of research that we have cited suggest that condemning the audience is not a very good strategy to adopt if one is interested in producing attitudinal and behavioral changes. If an individual is interested in securing practical benefits, rather than emotional catharsis, he should make an attempt to control his natural inclinations. He should probably select those individuals most interested in Negro equality, and make it clear to them that specified efforts on their part can result in virtually complete restitution for the exploited for which they feel partially responsible.

2. The theory and research reported in the Theoretical Formulation section of this report generates a second set of suggestions as to how an exploited individual should go about persuading a harm doer to make voluntary restitution.

In Corollary III-B, it was proposed that: "The more adequate a harm doer perceives available justifications to be, the greater the probability that he will choose to restore equity by this technique." In elucidating this hypothesis, we noted: "(3) Justifications which involve distortion of the victim's characteristics should be more credible, and thus more readily used, the less contact the harm doer has had (or anticipates having) with the victim."

Distortions of reality can only be effective in making an exploiter feel like a virtuous citizen if he can think of distortions that are credible to himself and to others. An individual can reduce the distress he feels from violating accepted ethical principles (self-concept distress) only if he believes his justifications himself. He can ward off the retaliation of others (and reduce retaliation distress) only if he can persuade others that his justifications are credible.

If one accepts the proposition that the more difficult it is for the exploiter to think of adequate justifications for his behavior the more likely he will be to compensate instead, then it would seem to be a good strategy for an exploited person to do everything he could to make it difficult for the exploiter to justify his exploitation. It should be more difficult for an individual to conceive of credible justifications for his exploitation if the exploited person is a friend, or if the exploiter expects to have to see him again and again, than if the victim is a soon-to-be-forgotten stranger. There is unpublished as well as published data which support this notion. Since we considered the published support for this proposition earlier, let us now discuss the unpublished research results.

In most experiments, pretest groups are run before the actual experimental sessions begin. At various times, Darley and Berscheid (personal communications) and Ross (1965) all ran cognitive consistency experiments in which the extent to which subjects expected to see a confederate again was varied. Quite a surprising result emerged from various pretest groups and experimental groups in their research. These researchers had predicted that individuals in certain experimental conditions would restore cognitive consistency by derogating others. In pretests, however, it was found that the predicted derogation occurred most clearly, and sometimes only, when subjects believed that they would never actually see their partner again. There seemed to be something about the subject's knowing that he would have to face a person again that prevented him from distorting the other's characteristics. This was true even when the other would never know of the subject's derogation. This kind of unpublished data is of course consistent with the data and the theory reported in the Theoretical Formulation section of this paper.

If we accept the hypothesis that the more contact a harm doer has had or anticipates having with the exploited, the more likely he is to restore justice and the less likely he is to justify his harm doing, some techniques for eliciting restitution emerge: (*a*) A victim interested in securing compensation should make it very clear to the harm doer that they can expect to meet frequently and that the victim, by his presence, will make distortion of the harm-doing situation very difficult. (*b*) The victim should do everything in his power to make it clear to the harm doer that others are unlikely to believe the exploiter's justifications.

Let us consider a concrete example of this last point. The grape growers of California had paid low wages and provided inadequate housing for the migrant workers who worked in their vineyards for many years. Since the grape growers' associates were mostly other grape growers, who also engaged in the same practices, the farmers probably felt little guilt at their treatment of the migrant workers. If they considered the possibility that their behavior was unjust, they

could simply seek out another farmer and assure one another that their behavior was fair and reasonable. Suddenly, however, national attention was focused on the farmers. Reporters came first from educational television and then from national television to interview both the farmers and the striking workers. In the early programs the land owners were quite confident in explaining the justifications underlying their behavior. They explained: "We are not exploiting the migrant workers, actually they are exploiting us. . . . They damage the facilities we provide for them and would not appreciate any improvements that we made. . . . The reason the plumbing doesn't work is that the migrants flush beer cans down the toilets." The reporters quickly provided air time to public health officials and union leaders who disputed the farmers' claims. In broadcasts later in the series, grape growers had moderated the justifications for their behavior to a great extent, possibly in response to their critics. Whether this decrease in justification will eventually result in an increased willingness on the part of farmers to compensate the migrant workers is yet to be seen.

Jane Piliavin (personal communication) has suggested that one function of the "flight to the suburbs" of white majority members is to enable them to avoid acknowledging the suffering which exists in city ghettos. As long as Negroes are geographically and socially segregated, an exploiter can conveniently reduce whatever distress he feels over his exploitation by justifying his behavior. It is very easy for him to maintain that minority members deserve their exploitation ("They are shiftless and lazy and don't want a job") or that they are not really suffering ("A Negro can live better on $1 than a white man can on $5"). Integrated housing and forced association would be expected to make utilization of such rationalizations more difficult. If they were constantly exposed to communications from minority members which belied their justifications of Negro inequality, exploiters would either have to devise some justifications less blatantly opposed by the evidence or would have to be more willing to alter their own behavior.

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