

assume that such an endeavor could succeed without other large-scale measures being put in place to remove or at least restrict the conditions that motivate and encourage violent and cruel behavior. In this respect, Nell is completely correct to stress that we must do what we can to make such behavior less rewarding – a gargantuan task, but one on which the human future depends. Yet I would maintain that peaceful social reconstruction hinges equally on the careful, systemic cultivation of compassion.

NOTES

1. I owe this victims-of-violence point to Fiona Utley.
2. As I trust will become evident, compassion is to be distinguished from, and is much more profound than, the altruism that some theorists explain in terms of evolutionary reproductive strategies, simple reciprocity, prisoner's dilemma gamesmanship, and so forth.

Cruelty: A dispositional or a situational behavior in man?

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Abstract: Presentation of evidence from multiple disciplines is the most impressive feature of Nell's article. I have observations and objections, however, about the following issues: (1) violence as a by-product of cruelty; (2) the equation of animal and human cruelty; (3) social psychological evidence contrary to the biological model; (4) whether prevention of cruelty best arises from predispositional or situational factors.

By presenting admirable, extensive evidence from paleontology, predator ethology, primatology, anthropology, and cognitive and experimental psychology related to motivation and learning, as well as social psychology and cultural evolution, Nell traces the evolutionary origins of cruelty and violence to present-day human beings. Hypothesizing continuity between the behavior of predation in animals and contemporary cruelty in humans, he links a wide range of behaviors into a "pain-blood-death complex," a very important and useful thesis. However, several observations and objections should be stated.

Nell notes that violence is the by-product of cruelty and maintains that if effective prevention is to be applied, such origins must be revealed. But cruelty may also be the by-product of violence; in war, a general climate of violence may lead to cruelty and torture by military personnel on their victims without any previous preparation for it (see, e.g., the Abu Ghraib torturers; Haritos-Fatouros & Zimbardo 2005). Archetypal emotional-motivational processes common to all mammals may well influence human behavior, as Jung has proposed many years ago. But human behavior is also greatly influenced by cognitive processes, and by the resulting situations produced. The Freudian biological model which proposes a destructive, biologically determined, death-seeking force, a human "instinct" that produces aggressive behavior and violence has long been with us and has been repeatedly challenged and largely refuted by experiments as well as field studies.

In particular, torturers do not have to have a certain kind of personality, only exposure to certain kinds of psychological, social, and political conditions, (Haritos-Fatouros 2003). Similarly, gender differences, with greater male violence, and sex-related aggression, and abuse, cannot be attributed mainly to high testosterone and low serotonin in males. Albert Bandura (1973; 1990) and followers of social learning models have shown evidence that aggression is a behavior pattern largely learned through positive or negative reinforcement. Disengagement mechanisms are also used in situations of cruelty, and their importance is indeed acknowledged by Nell in the target article.

Finally, prevention of human cruelty and violence clearly requires more than detecting high and low scorers on any type of questionnaire – Nell proposes a Cruelty Readiness Questionnaire (target article, sect. 6.4) to predict high readiness and pleasurable arousal in situations of potential cruelty. Neither would MRIs' demonstrating individual differences in cerebral pathway involvement to differentiating stimuli predict cruelty, or go far to prevent cruelty from occurring. I certainly agree with the author that cruelty will not be contained through obscurantism and that effective prevention requires that its reinforcers are revealed. However, it is also important not to lose sight of classic works emphasizing cultural and situational factors, for example, Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* (Foucault 1975/1979/1986), Milgram's work on obedience to authority (Milgram 1969/1974), and Zimbardo's Stanford Prison Experiment (Zimbardo 1970).

On the other hand, the target article offers an abundance of possible hypotheses for research. Why certain kinds of behavior confer direct fitness benefits is of interest; Nell informs us that among the Ache, better hunters are more often chosen by the Ache women and have much higher fertility. The basic question remains, however: How far are aggression, violence, and cruelty in humans today the result of predisposition factors, or biological or archetypal processes, and how far are they the result of cognitive/emotional processes evoked by situational factors? To paraphrase Voltaire: I do not agree with you, but I shall do everything within my power to help you express your point of view.

Human–animal connections: Recent findings on the anthrozoology of cruelty

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Abstract: Recent findings in anthrozoology – the study of human–animal interactions – shed light on psychological and social aspects of cruelty. Here we briefly discuss four areas that connect animal cruelty and cruelty directed toward humans: (1) voices of perpetrators and their audiences, (2) gender differences in cruelty, (3) cruelty as play, and (4) the putative relationship between animal abuse and interpersonal violence.

To support his contention that the roots of cruelty lie in predation, Nell invokes findings from psychology, ethology, neurobiology, history, and paleoanthropology. Curiously, given the central importance of inter-specific interactions to his theory, Nell neglects anthrozoology – the study of human–animal relationships. Of special relevance are current findings on animal abuse. Here we briefly raise several findings from this literature that are relevant to understanding cruelty generally.

1. Voices of perpetrators and their audiences. Nell correctly calls for greater understanding of the perspectives of those involved with cruelty, although his idea for doing so seems narrowly psychological. Anthrozoological studies of animal cruelty have examined the mistreatment of animals as it is defined in the course of social interaction in groups. People arrive at shared agreements about what things mean in given situations, and cruelty is no exception, whether this includes conventional groups, such as adolescent males, or unconventional groups of purported abusers, such as "kill-shelter" workers who are considered to be cruel by their "no-kill" peers (Arluke 2006). Second, when studying their voices, the gratifications of perpetrators and their audiences must not be limited to psychological ones such as "escalating arousal." For example, members of