DEHUMANIZATION IN INSTITUTIONAL SETTINGS

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Prepared for:

Office of Naval Research

August 1973

UNCLASSIFIED

Security Classification

DOCUMENT CONTROL DATA - R & D

(Security classification of title, body of abstract and indexing annotation must be entered when the overall report is classified)

1. ORIGINATING ACTIVITY (Corporate author) Office of Naval Research Professor P. G. Zimbardo Stanford University	2a. REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION Unclassified 2b. GROUP N/A

3. REPORT TITLE

Dehumanization in Institutional Settings

4. DESCRIPTIVE NOTES (Type of report and inclusive dates)

Technical Report Z-10

5. AUTHOR(S) (First name, middle initial, last name)

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6. REPORT DATE	7a. TOTAL NO. OF PAGES	7b. NO. OF REFS
August 1973	~~42~~ 44	-15-

8a. CONTRACT OR GRANT NO	9a. ORIGINATOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)
N00014-67-A. 0112-0041 b. PROJECT NO. NR-171-814 c. d.	Technical Report Z-10 9b. OTHER REPORT NO(S) (Any other numbers that may be assigned this report)

10. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT

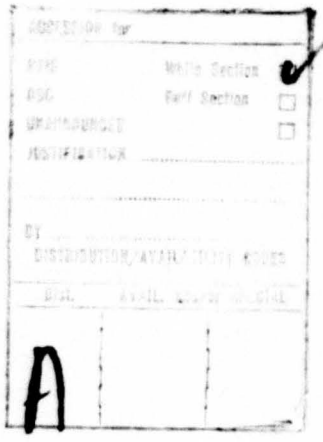
Distribution of this document is unlimited

11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES	12. SPONSORING MILITARY ACTIVITY
None	Office of Naval Research

13. ABSTRACT

This theoretical paper describes the functions and techniques used in the process of dehumanization. The concept is defined and examined as it operates at an intra-individual and also at an institutional level. Professor Maslach then reports on her research which focuses upon dehumanization processes in the social welfare and health professions. Through an exploratory research program utilizing direct observations, she analyzes the protective and the destructive aspects of this kind of "detached concern." Professor Zimbardo addresses himself to the nature of dehumanization as it occurs within the prototypic institutional setting of prison. He constructs four scenarios to reveal the ways in which dehumanization affects guards and prisoners. The materials on which these first-person composites are based come from the simulated prison experiment which Zimbardo conducted at Stanford University, as well as intensive, in-depth interviews with real guards and former inmates. A final scenario outlines the theoretical issues and pragmatic consequences involved in the psychology of imprisonment.

14. KEY WORDS	LINK A		LINK B		LINK C	
	ROLE	WT	ROLE	WT	ROLE	WT
DEHUMANIZATION						
INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIP						
COMPARTMENTALIZATION						
INTERACTIONS						
DEHUMANIZED ORIENTATION						
DETACHED CONCERN						
SITUATIONAL ATTRIBUTION						
DISPOSITIONAL ATTRIBUTION						
"BURN-OUT"						
IMPRISONMENT						
INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE						
ANONYMITY						
BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION						
AUTHORITARIANISM						
WITHDRAWAL						
DEFENSIVE RESPONSE						
PUNISHMENT						
ROLE BEHAVIOR						



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DEHUMANIZATION IN INSTITUTIONAL SETTINGS

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The process of dehumanization is generally defined as one which produces a decreased awareness of the human attributes of others and a loss of humanity in interpersonal interactions. People stop perceiving others as having the same feelings, impulses, thoughts, and purposes in life that they do, and thus psychologically eliminate any human qualities that these others might share with them. This is accomplished through the use of such psychological mechanisms as intellectualization, denial, and isolation of affect. As a result of this process, people are less likely to perceive and respond to the personal identity of other people, and are more likely to treat them as if they were not human beings. "The misperceiving of others ranges from viewing them en bloc as 'subhuman' or 'bad human' (a long familiar component of group prejudice) to viewing them as 'nonhuman,' as though they were inanimate items or 'dispensable supplies'" (Bernard, Ottenberg, & Redl, 1968). In contrast to a humanized relationship (which can be characterized as a subjective, personal, and emotional one), a dehumanized relationship is more objective, analytical, and lacking in emotional or empathic response. To use Martin Buber's terms, the former is an I - Thou relationship while the latter is an I - It one.

In discussing the dehumanization process, most writers have pointed to its adaptive functions. Basically, it protects the individual against any kind of emotion which is painful, overwhelming, debilitating, inhibiting, or which interferes with some necessary, ongoing behavior. For example, in situations involving a major crisis or emergency (e.g. wartime, natural disasters) or those in which some careful, objective work needs to be done (e.g. surgery), a more dehumanized orientation towards the other relevant people can serve as a defense against emotional responses which would normally disturb, disrupt, or incapacitate the individual. Although dehumanization can have these helpful and adaptive consequences, it can also have deleterious ones. By not responding to the human qualities of other persons, it becomes more possible for people to act in anti-social or inhumane ways toward them. It is easier to be callous or rude towards dehumanized people (or "objects"), to ignore their demands and pleas, to use them for one's own purposes, and even to harm or destroy them if they are irritating or frustrating. Furthermore, the person

who dehumanizes others experiences less emotion, less empathy, and fewer personal feelings, and thus dehumanizes him or herself as well. To quote from Buber again, when someone begins to relate to others in the I - It form, the I itself soon changes, producing an It - It relationship between two objects rather than persons.

The Functions of Dehumanization

A more complete understanding of the dehumanization process can be obtained by looking at the conditions under which it occurs, and the functions it serves in each of them. Extending Zimbardo's (1970) initial discussion of this issue, it is possible to identify four classes of situations in which people are more likely to adopt a dehumanized perception of others.

Dehumanization in self-defense

Many health and service professions require that the individual function in situations that ordinarily arouse very intense emotional feelings, elicit painful empathy, and/or involve "taboo" behaviors such as invasion of privacy or violation of the human body. In order to perform efficiently in such situations, the individual may defend against these disruptive emotions through techniques of dehumanization. By treating one's clients or patients in a more objective, detached way, it becomes easier to perform necessary interviews, tests, or operations without experiencing strong psychological discomfort. Within the professions themselves, this process is called "detached concern" (Lief & Fox, 1963), a term which better conveys the difficult (and almost paradoxical) position of having to dehumanize people in order to help or cure them.

Socially imposed dehumanization

Dehumanization can occur in various work situations as a result of the way in which the job is defined by society. Such definitions fall into two major categories: (1) the job requires that the individual dehumanize other people in order to deal with them; and (2) the job itself dehumanizes the worker because it permits no opportunity for expression of either personal feelings or uniquely human abilities. Examples of the first category include situations in which a large number of people have to be processed efficiently -- e.g. college students during registration, subway commuters during rush hour, prisoners or mental patients during the institutional mealtime. In all cases, the "processors" must focus only on certain tasks (e.g. dispensing subway tokens, checking class cards) and not be concerned with the people on a personal, individual basis. The second category of socially imposed dehumanization is perhaps best illustrated by work on the assembly lines. Here, the work is repetitious, does not demand any kind of unique personal input, and does

not make allowances for individual variation in work performance (e.g. getting tired). To the extent that people function as "cogs in the machinery" or, in the new IBM terminology, are part of the "hourly burden" which reduces the profit margin, they are dehumanized parts of the work process.

Dehumanization for self-gratification

Another source of dehumanization stems from purely selfish needs for gratification. Basic to the desire for personal power and/or satifaction of impulses toward lust is the use of others solely for one's own gain, pleasure, or entertainment. No concern or consideration is given to the feelings and thoughts that such "objects" of gratification may have. An example of this process is prostitution, where a person openly buys the privilege of dehumanizing another individual. Parenthetically, the prostitute reciprocates in kind, viewing her "purchaser" as just another "trick" to be turned. Such dehumanization may also occur at a covert level among men for whom sexual intercourse is only a self-gratifying experience, in which the woman is simply the means. This dehumanization of women is obvious in the way men sometimes label them -- e.g. "a piece," "a real dog," "a cow," etc. The depths to which this distortion of human concern and interpersonal sensitivity can go are revealed in news accounts of people taunting a would-be suicide to go through with it for the sheer excitement of seeing him do so.

Dehumanization as a means to an end

There have been many times in history when people have viewed a particular group of others as being obstacles in the achievement of their goals, either because these others oppose them, cause them additional problems, or are simply "in the way." By perceiving such people in a dehumanized manner as "the enemy," "the masses," "a threat to security," "inferior," etc., it becomes less of a problem to take action against them in the name of some greater cause (e.g. peace, victory, liberty, revolution). Thus the suffering, injury, or destruction of these people is justified as a means toward a "noble" end. Many examples of such dehumanization come to mind, including the dropping of the atomic bomb on the residents of Hiroshima in order to "bring peace," the mass killing of Jews by the Nazis because "they are unfit," and the denial of medical treatment to black men with syphilis (the control group in the controversial Tuskegee study) in order to "study the course of the disease." The ease with which people can begin to adopt this dehumanized view of others is chillingly demonstrated by the research of Mansson (1969), in which college students became seriously involved in deciding how to best eliminate the "emotional and mental misfits" in their society.

The Techniques of Dehumanization

Although dehumanization can occur under many conditions and can serve a variety of purposes, the basic psychological techniques that are used to achieve it show a remarkable similarity across situations. In different ways, each of them helps the individual to: (a) perceive the other person(s) as less human; (b) perceive the relationship with the other person(s) in objective, analytical terms; and (c) reduce the amount of experienced affect and emotional arousal.

Language

The use of certain kinds of language is perhaps one of the most visible techniques of dehumanization. As indicated in some of the examples above, a change in the labels or terms used to describe people is one way of making them appear more object-like and less human. Some of these dehumanizing terms are derogatory, denotative ones -- e.g. gooks, slant-eyes, nigger, a real dog. Others are more abstract labels which refer to large, undifferentiated units -- e.g. aliens, the masses, the poor. Another form of dehumanizing language is one which labels people in terms of the functional relationship the individual has with them. For example, social welfare workers often speak of "my caseload" when referring to the people they deal with, while poverty lawyers talk about "my clients" or "my docket." In addition to nouns, verbs can also be used in dehumanizing ways. In general, such verbs have less affect attached to them and are substituted for verbs which carry a lot of emotional meaning. The Vietnam war provided several new instances of this type of verb change; "to kill" a person was usually described as "to waste him" or "to eliminate with extreme prejudice." The general use of sign (as opposed to symbolic) language is another way in which language can be used to control emotional responses. By expressing ideas and describing things as precisely, exactly, and as scientifically as possible, the person is able to divorce them from his or her feelings. This use of language is clearly illustrated in the medical profession, where the inclusion of medical jargon in patient interviews sometimes serves the purpose of distancing the physician from a patient who is emotionally upsetting in some way.

Intellectualization

A related technique of dehumanization is one where the individual recasts the situation in more intellectual and less personal terms. By dealing with the abstract qualities of other people (rather than the more human ones), the individual can "objectify" the situation and can react in a less emotional way. For example, in dealing with a mental patient who is being verbally abusive, a psychiatric nurse may try to stand back and look at the patient's problems more analytically (e.g. "he's

exhibiting a particular delusional syndrome"), so as not to get personally upset. In a similar way, physicians may view their patients in terms of their illness (e.g. "I admitted two coronaries yesterday"), while subway cashiers deal with each commuter on a "tokens and change for cash" basis.

Compartmentalization

To the extent that a particular situation or type of activity can be separated and distinguished from the rest of an individual's life, it becomes easier to detach it from one's personal values and feelings, thus making dehumanization more possible. "Thou shalt not kill" -- except when your country asks you to do so during the special situation of wartime. "Treat women with respect and put them on a pedestal" -- except in the special case when you visit a prostitute. People who work in very stressful occupations find that compartmentalization can be a very effective way of dealing with such strain; by "leaving your job at the office" and not bringing it home with you, the problems and emotional upset are confined to a smaller part of your life.

Withdrawal

Another technique for reducing emotional arousal is to minimize one's involvement in the stressful interaction with others. This can be done in a number of ways: spending less time with the other person, physically distancing oneself (e.g. standing further away from the person, not making eye contact), communicating with the person in more impersonal ways (e.g. superficial generalities, form letters), etc. Rosenhan's (1973) description of how often mental hospital staff stay inside their glass "cages," rather than interact with patients, is an excellent example of this technique at work.

Social techniques

In attempting to deal with strong emotional feelings, an individual will often turn to others for help and support. To the extent that such actions reduce psychological stress and discomfort, they can be used to promote dehumanization. One type of social technique is to get advice and comfort from other people after withdrawing from a difficult situation. Not only does such support help to ease the stress and pain, but it can help the individual to achieve distance from the situation and to intellectualize it. By having other people who say, "It's not so bad," "why don't you look at it this way," etc., the person can more easily achieve detachment. The support of other people can also aid in dehumanization by promoting a perceived diffusion of responsibility. If the individual feels that other people feel the same way and/or are also doing the same thing, he or she may have fewer qualms about engaging in that particular behavior. Another technique which is often

social in nature is the use of humor. Being able to joke and laugh about a stressful event is one way of reducing the tension and anxiety that one may feel. Also, it serves to make the situation less serious, less frightening, and/or less overwhelming. Many observers have noted the "sick" humor of medical students who are dissecting a cadaver for their anatomy class, and have suggested that it serves these purposes (e.g. Lief & Fox, 1963).

The above list of techniques, while not exhaustive, should give some idea of the variety of subtle and not-so-subtle ways in which dehumanization is achieved. Much more thought and concern needs to be given to such techniques, not only to better understand how they work, but to discover the effects of their use on both the subject and the object of dehumanization.

"DETACHED CONCERN" IN HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICE PROFESSIONS

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Introduction

In this section of the paper, the focus will be on the process of "detached concern," with particular reference to its use in certain health and social service professions. This discussion will be based on some preliminary research that my students and I have conducted with social welfare workers, psychiatric nurses, poverty lawyers, and students in anatomy and medicine. The research has consisted of intensive interviews, questionnaires, and observations of these people in their work setting. In all cases, the major goal of the research was to determine the nature of the "detached concern" process -- i.e. what kinds of stressful interactions these professionals had to deal with, how they coped with them, what training (if any) they received for such coping, how they felt about their patients or clients, how they felt about their job, etc. It should be noted that, to date, the institutions where this research has been conducted are only a few in number and thus cannot be regarded as necessarily being representative ones. For example, most of the social workers were in public assistance, rather than more specialized (and higher prestige) programs. Of particular importance is that our sample of psychiatric nurses came from an institution that had good facilities and a fairly high staff-patient ratio -- conditions which are not always found in most mental hospitals, and which may have had some significant effect on their use of "detached concern." Furthermore, the administrative policy at this institution was fairly liberal, progressive, and geared to less dehumanizing staff-patient relations (e.g. use of first names, street clothes). Nevertheless, the responses of these nurses are important as examples of how "detached concern" occurs under more ideal conditions.

In the earlier theoretical discussion, we described the "detached concern" process as "dehumanization in self-defense." Although the latter term may be the more appropriate one in terms of our proposed model, the former is the one we used in discussions with our subjects. The main reason for this is that in everyday usage the word "dehumanization" has acquired an extremely negative connotation. For most people, it refers to something that is brutal and evil. To accuse someone of dehumanizing others is tantamount to accusing them of some awful, sinful act. Because

this word is so emotionally charged in a negative way, it has become useless, and even detrimental, for any communication about the process itself. Although we have chosen to use "dehumanization" in theoretical discussions because it still seems to be the most accurate descriptor of the basic overall phenomenon, we have always used the professions' own term, "detached concern," in discussions with them about this particular aspect of the process. Especially in health and social service professions, where dehumanization is undertaken for the positive goal of helping people, it would be very misleading to use a term which suggested that this interaction between professional and patient/client was invariably a negative one.

"Detached Concern" in Action

Inherent in the concept of "detached concern" is a dynamic tension between its two component parts. Much like oil and water, detachment and concern do not really mix. The notion that someone is concerned about another does not seem to be compatible with the idea that he or she is also detached from them; in fact, it seems to imply that these concepts are opposites. This semantic tension is a perfect reflection of the problems that the professional has in trying to reconcile these two sets of conflicting attitudes and behaviors. In many cases, such a reconciliation is impossible, and the professional must instead move back and forth between the two. It may very well be that this particular kind of personal conflict and the difficulty in dealing with it are related to the higher incidence of job stress and/or personal problems (e.g. higher turnover, more mental illness) that is associated with the health and social service professions.

The development of "detached concern" appears to occur for different reasons in these two types of professions. In those involved with health, this process is recognized as a necessary part of the doctor or nurse's work, and some sort of preparation for it (either implicit or explicit) usually takes place during the course of training. The medical practitioner is expected to be concerned about the whole patient (and not just some specific part) and to provide sensitive, understanding care. However, in order to do so, the practitioner must be sufficiently detached to be able to objectively appraise the problem and rationally apply the necessary medical skills. Thus, there is a clear recognition that emotional feelings and personal biases can arise, and that the practitioner must learn how to neutralize them by a process of detachment.

Like the health professions, those dealing with social services also espouse a philosophy of sensitive, understanding concern for the client's welfare. Unlike the health professions, however, there is no general belief that an objective,

detached approach is the way in which to achieve this goal. Rather, the philosophy is more one of a warm, respectful, personal relationship with those for whom one is providing aid. The detachment part of the process seems to develop later on during the service professional's career as a defensive response to the overwhelming onslaught of poverty, pain, and suffering that he or she attempts to cope with every day. In order to handle the emotional stress and strain of the job, the service professional may begin to cut off or reduce any feelings for the clients, become more detached, and become more involved in administrative (i.e. non-client) tasks. If the detachment becomes too extreme, the service professional experiences "burn-out," a phrase which is used by poverty lawyers to describe the loss of any human feeling for their clients. One former poverty lawyer told us that she realized that she had "burned out" when a woman came to complain that she had no money to buy Christmas presents for her children, and the lawyer began to yell at her, saying that if she wanted any help from her, she should go rob Macy's so that the lawyer could defend her in court on charges of theft.

These differences in the development of "detached concern" are partly related to differences in the functions of these occupations. In the health professions, the goal is to heal and to cure. The assumption is that something is "wrong" with the patient, either physically or mentally, and certain actions must be taken to make things right again. The problem, or at least its symptoms, are often relatively specific and concrete (e.g. the patient has a broken leg, cannot breathe normally, hears voices, will not communicate to people), and there is the strong belief that there is ultimately a solution to the problem, even if it has yet to be discovered by medical science. In contrast, the goal of the social service professions is to provide help of various kinds (e.g. food, clothing, legal aid) to those who are in need. What is "wrong" is usually some very abstract concept, like "the system," "poverty," or "discrimination;" as a result, it is often difficult to believe that there is (or will be) a concrete, clearly-defined solution.

A further difference between the two professions lies in their basic perception of the patient/client's responsibility for their own problems. Although there is some extent to which patients are held responsible for their own well-being (e.g. eating a proper diet, not taking foolish risks, learning to get along with other people), it is more often the case that it is not viewed as the patients' "fault" that they have a problem -- rather, it is due to an accident, aging, a physiological defect, a traumatic event, unloving parents, etc. In the social service professions, on the other hand, the clients are more likely to be seen as responsible for their troubles. Whether this is due to the difficulty in pinpointing the cause in such

elusive concepts as "the system," a carry-over of the Puritan ethic, or some other reason, the poor and the needy are more likely to be considered "at fault" and more likely to be considered responsible for solving their own problems (e.g. "just try a little harder," "don't get into trouble again"). This philosophy of "blaming the victim" has been a very long and consistent one, as illustrated in these two quotations from the field of social work:

> The moment it is understood by the idle and shiftless in a community, such as we find in one of our modern cities, that they can, on the ground of destitution, claim a certain amount of support while still remaining at large and enjoying the sweets of liberty, the door is opened to a perfect flood of pauperism and consequent vice (1892).[1]

> Primitive in ego development, they are quickly overwhelmed by outside pressures and anxieties of the moment, and seek the worker out in their pain and panic . . . Over and over again one senses, beneath a hostile veneer, an oral character; a client who never stops demanding . . . The dependency is pervasive and the client sucks from neighbors, shopkeepers, bartenders, and news vendors as well as family members and social workers (1961).[2]

The pattern that seems to be apparent here is that external attributions are more likely to be made when the source of the problem is located in the patient/client's physical or biological reality. For example, if body malfunctioning or the patient's home environment is identified as the cause, then the responsibility for this state of affairs is seen as being outside of the patient and less under his or her control. On the other hand, if the source of the problem is located in the mental sphere (e.g. motivation, intelligence, attitude), then internal attributions are more likely to be made and the patient/client is held responsible. Extending this attributional analysis even further, we can see that the ease with which the presumed cause can be located and specified is related to whether a situational or dispositional attribution is made. Clearly identified causes with specific boundaries in time and space tend to be viewed in more situational terms and, as a consequence, are more often thought to be changeable (i.e. "something can be done"). Dispositional attributions are more likely to occur when the cause of the problem is obscure, vague, or amorphous. There are no specific variables which can be manipulated or changed to effect a solution, and so the professional tends to be left with the conclusion that "it can't be the situation -- it must be due to the people themselves."

These differences in perception of external or internal responsibility exist not only between professions, but within them as well. In our research, we have found that the practitioner's perception of the patient/client is clearly related to detachment and dehumanization. For example, psychiatric nurses who thought mental illness was due more to internal causes than external ones were more likely to view mental patients

as bizarre and "different." Similarly, social workers who saw internal forces (e.g. destined to be poor, uneducatable) as the reason why people were on welfare, were most likely to "compartmentalize" and make a strong distinction between their job and their personal life. They were also most likely to inhibit the expression of personal feelings while on the job and not make self-revelatory remarks. This belief in internal forces becomes more pronounced, the longer the individual stays in the social welfare profession; "old-timers" were more likely to say that people on welfare were "inherently inferior," rather than "unlucky" or "discriminated against."

The reliance on a philosophy of internal, rather than external, attribution has important implications for the professional's sense of competence and expertise. If internal causes of the problem are the primary ones, then it will be very difficult to effect changes in them through external actions. As an illustration of this point, psychiatric nurses who believed that mental illness was internally caused were less hopeful that patients could ever be helped. If the patient/client cannot be helped or changed, even with professional intervention, then the practitioner has to feel somewhat ineffective, impotent, and even unnecessary. This theme came out repeatedly in our interviews, especially with poverty lawyers and social workers who often felt that nothing they did made much of a difference. Given this viewpoint, it is not too surprising that they began to detach themselves from the "unchanging," "stupid," "unmotivated" clients who appeared to be a major source of their frustration.

Another reason for the social service professionals' sense of ineffectiveness is tied in to the seemingly unlimited nature of their clients' problems. It is simply not possible for any one practitioner to eliminate poverty and prejudice and to set up a productive and happy life for his or her client. Thus, no matter how hard and long a poverty lawyer works on a particular problem (e.g. divorce, consumer fraud, eviction for non-payment of rent) or how successful the outcome is, how much has <u>really</u> changed? In the total scheme of things, how much better off is the client? In most cases, the answer is "not much." Another way of stating this problem is that the social service professional often has specialized skills that can be applied only to certain problems. However, people in need of help often bring <u>all</u> of their problems to the practitioner and don't carefully differentiate between legal ones, medical ones, counseling ones, etc. As a result, the practitioner is often in the position of being asked for a kind of help that he or she cannot provide. The painful strain of being overwhelmed with a client's misfortunes and yet not being able to respond in some way can lead to dehumanization and "burn-out." The previous example of the poverty lawyer and the lady with no Christmas presents is a striking example of the professional's struggle to redefine the problem in terms that he or

she can do something about -- even if, as in this cases, it comes at the expense of basic humanity.

A very clear difference among the various professions which emerged from our research involved the amount and type of job training for "detached concern." The greatest recognition of the problem and the most explicit training for it was found among psychiatric nurses. Many events during the course of medical school training also prepare future physicians to have "detached concern," but this process is a more implicit one which assumes that somehow the student will "pick things up" without being directly taught how to do so. Within the social service professions, there is not a prior recognition of the need for "detached concern" -- rather, it tends to develop as a defensive response. While social workers are given training in various therapy and counseling techniques, they are not specifically trained to deal with their own personal feelings toward their clients. In poverty law, there is no training at all in the personal interaction with the client -- just the legal education.

The greater awareness of the "detached concern" process among psychiatric nurses may reflect the fact that their job involves analyzing, understanding, and effectively dealing with personal problems. As a result of this orientation, they are not only sensitive to the patients' psychological reactions, but also to their own. As a group, they were far more aware of their feelings and actions towards the patients than any of the other professionals we studied. Whenever they were dealing with a patient who was getting them emotionally upset, they would invariably start analyzing their own responses (e.g. "it's my own tension that's making me intolerant of this situation," "I've got some other things on my mind today," "I think it's my own limitation"), as well as those of the patient. This kind of self-evaluation seemed to make it easier for them to control their feelings. This was enhanced by their use of another technique, which was to see the patient's actions as not being directed at them personally. If a patient said something derogatory or swore at them, they would tend to say things like, "it's not because of me that he's doing that -- it's because he's mentally ill."

This personal analysis on the part of psychiatric nurses is in direct contrast to the relative lack of it on the part of social workers. This is particularly interesting because the professional orientation of social workers has also been traditionally a psychotherapeutic one. Nevertheless, there is not very much explicit attention paid to their own feelings and problems as they affect the client. In psychiatric nursing, this kind of critical self-evaluation (and emotional control) is clearly modeled, encouraged, and reinforced. In social work, there seem to be some

general guidelines about overcoming one's personal biases and being objective, but there is no organized training towards this goal. Our research would suggest that this lack of an institutionally sanctioned way to express and work through personal emotions is one reason why the "burn-out" rate is often so high.

The other major difference between our sample of psychiatric nurses and the rest of the professions was that the nurses had an institutionalized structure of social support for their work. Whenever they faced any difficulty in their relationship with the patients, they could often turn to their peers for help, guidance, and emotional support. Getting together with someone else to "hash things out," "bitch a lot," "talk about new things to do," "laugh about it," was the mainstay of the nurses' "detached concern" process, since it encompassed several of the techniques mentioned earlier. Not only did it allow them to withdraw from the interaction with a patient, but it helped them to analyze and intellectualize the situation, gave them a basis for social comparison, and provided an appropriate opportunity for the use of humor. It was also a means for sharing responsibility -- if several nurses agreed on a particular approach, then each one of them felt more comfortable about taking action on it. Another aspect of the social structure on the ward was the fact that many staff were always on duty working with all of the patients and that any one nurse's work routine was somewhat flexible. As a result, it was possible for a nurse to temporarily withdraw from being with patients without seriously disrupting the ongoing activities on the ward. Such "safety valve" withdrawals included taking a coffee break, doing paperwork in the office, and working in the medicine room (thus seeing patients only when they came to get their medication). Additional techniques for "detached concern" were institutionalized as specific rules (e.g. nurses are not to see patients outside of the hospital) or general practices (e.g. supervisors sometimes tell nurses to control their relationship with the patients by setting up specific time limitations, restricting the conversation to certain topics, etc.).

In comparison, the institutional structure at the welfare offices that we studied was not as strong or supportive of the service professional. Although the social workers were also supervised, the content of the supervision focused more on task aspects of the job and less on personal emotions and reactions. We found that most of the social workers felt negatively about their supervisors ("too critical," "conservative") and tended to avoid conferring with them on most problems. However, social workers did make extensive use of the more informal mechanism of talking things over with their peers. In fact, we discovered that those social workers who liked their job and felt they were effective in helping their clients

were most likely to seek support and advice from their fellow workers and were least likely to turn to their supervisors for help. This technique of searching for social support only extends to one's peers on the job; much like the psychiatric nurses, the social workers tended not to talk about their job with family and friends. Some even had explicit agreements with their spouses not to "talk shop." One social worker in child welfare stated that if he did not leave his work at the office, he could hardly stand to face his own children. Likewise, when he was at work he could not think of his family because he would then overidentify and overempathize with his clients and treat their misfortunes as his own -- an emotional experience which he could not handle repeatedly.

The "detached concern" technique of withdrawal was also used by social service professionals, but in several respects it differed from the same techniques used by the psychiatric nurses. First of all, any physical withdrawal of the service professional from interactions with his or her clients always comes at the expense of the client. Since social workers and poverty lawyers do not share their caseloads, it is not possible for someone else to "cover" for them while they are taking a break; rather, the client is left to wait even longer than usual. In contrast, the particular psychiatric ward that we studied not only had a very good staff-patient ratio, but was set up so that all of the staff worked with almost all of the patients. In that setting, a temporary withdrawal by a nurse could be fairly easily accomodated. Unable to withdraw in this manner without feeling some guilt, the social service professional is more likely to feel trapped by his or her total responsibility for the clients. As a result, withdrawals are more likely to take the negative form of "escapes" from the never-ending stream of the needy. Lunch breaks get longer, and people start leaving for home earlier (especially on Fridays). Another escape is to go into administrative work, which is not only more prestigious and better-paying, but which is distinguished by its lack of personal interaction with clients. It is surprising how many social workers return to school to get training for this kind of higher level, "non-client" work (and bitterly ironic that clients should be such "outcasts" in a profession that does not exist without them). Even more surprising, and depressing, is the number of professionals who described their "ideal job" to us as one which involved minimal interaction with other people.

In addition to the desire to go into administration, several social workers indicated that they were returning to school to "renew my idealism." In line with this comment, we observed a dramatic change in social workers' attitudes after they started to work on a regular basis. They began their job with extremely idealistic expectations (many of which had come from their university training) and were not

at all prepared for the reality of actual welfare work. While they rated themselves as highly "idealistic" when first on the job, they soon rated themselves as highly "realistic" -- even more "realistic" than they felt they were in their everyday life. A similar shift in feelings was reported by poverty lawyers. One possible reason behind this sharp clash of ideals and reality may lie in the type of truncated relationship that is established between the social service professional and the client. Basically, clients only see the professional when they have troubles of some kind, and this is the only part of their life they share with him or her. Rarely does the service professional see the client in other than painful and depressing circumstances. For example, few clients tell the professional when some other part of their life is going well, since this might jeopardize their getting assistance. Also, even fewer clients return to see the professional when things start to improve. In contrast, the psychiatric nurses saw their patients in good times and bad; even though there were occasions when their interactions with the patients were frustrating or upsetting, there were also times when they could laugh and joke with the patients, play ping-pong with them, talk with their families, etc. In a sense, they had a more complete, more human view of the patient as a whole (if not necessarily healthy) person.

Conclusions and Implications

The research on which the foregoing comments were based is in such a preliminary stage that it would be premature to draw any firm conclusions from it. However, we feel that we can speculate a bit on the implications of some of our most consistent findings. It is our goal to eventually be in a position where we can formulate programs for training the professional in patient/client interactions. It is clear that far more attention is currently paid to the professional's task skills than social-psychological skills. This imbalance is, we believe, a very serious one which can have negative personal consequences for the patient/client and the professional as well.

Before describing some of our ideas, we should mention that some proposals have been made within the professions to deal with this problem. For example, some poverty law offices have tried to prevent the onset of "burn-out" by establishing a rule that lawyers must leave the office after four years of service. This time estimate was based on the experience of some of the original poverty law offices which saw "burn-out" appearing at about five years (however, some recent information suggests that this imposed time limit is now too long, since "burn-out" is beginning to occur at faster rates). Another proposal for poverty law offices has been to

establish a procedure for an initial intake interview in which the client's problems are categorized (e.g. legal, psychiatric, etc.), and he or she is referred to the lawyer only for specifically legal problems. In this way, the lawyer does not have to spend so much time on extra-legal issues which are often so emotionally draining. While these and other similar types of solutions have been viewed as practical ways of reducing or eliminating the personal stress associated with these occupations, a closer examination of them shows that they fail to deal with the entire problem of "detached concern." Either they try to avoid the problem altogether, or they handle only one aspect of it (such as focusing only on how to achieve greater detachment). Because they are concerned with protecting the professional and therefore neglect the client's viewpoint, such tactics can only exacerbate the problem of dehumanization, rather than solve it. As with most psychological techniques, "detached concern" can be a double-edged sword; while it can allow professionals to do their job efficiently and well, it can also lead to an unfeeling, uncaring, and even brutal treatment of others.

On the basis of our preliminary research, we have begun to develop several proposals for "detached concern." Since these ideas are still in the formative stage, they will be presented in brief outline form rather than in any great detail. What is basic to all of these proposals is the necessity for making them institutional policy, and not just leaving them to personal preference. Without this, they could never be successfully implemented and sustained.

1. Analysis of personal feelings

Since the arousal of strong emotional reactions is a common feature of health and social service occupations, efforts must be made to constructively deal with them and prevent them from being entirely extinguished, as in "burn-out." The relevant institution (such as an agency or hospital) should establish a mechanism for allowing staff to express their feelings, get feedback from others, and develop new perspectives and understanding of their relationship with their patients/clients. Possible techniques include regular encounter group sessions, role-playing, and/or spending some time as a mock "patient" or "client" in a real institution (see Orlando, 1973). Such techniques would also be valuable during training programs, so that new professionals would have a better idea of the dynamics of their future job situation.

2. Positive basis for interaction with patient/client

Particularly in the social service professions, the practitioner only gains access to the negative, "trouble spots" of the client's life. This is currently promoted within the institutions, since too many "good" things about the client can

lead to a denial of aid. This structure needs to be changed so that it rewards (rather than punishes) the clients for sharing with the professional those aspects of their lives about which they are particularly proud or happy (but which are often "irrelevant" for getting a welfare check). Not only would this provide the clients with a more humane and dignified way of presenting themselves to others, but it would allow the professional to know them more as whole people and to be able to interact with them in other than a bureaucratic manner. For example, rather than being just a red-tape processor, the professional could give positive support to the clients in a more friendly manner (e.g. sending personal notes for children's birthdays, Christmas). Also, clients could be encouraged to see the professional after things have improved (such as getting a job, recovering from illness) so that they could both share in this positive event. Another idea would be to get client ratings of the professional's service (much like students rate professors' teaching) and to use this feedback when considering promotions, bonuses, etc. In addition to making professionals more responsive to clients' needs and feelings, it would change the clients' status as "passive pawns" of the institution by giving them an active role and a source of some power.

3. Shared work roles

If more of the work and job responsibilities were shared among professionals (rather than being simply supervised from above), there would be less personal stress on each of them. Working as teams, sharing caseloads, regularly consulting with peers, doing joint interviews and counseling, etc. are all ways in which this might be accomplished.

4. Withdrawal opportunities

It is important that the institution establish mechanisms for allowing temporary "time-outs" on the part of individual staff members, without disrupting the general work routine. Having a sufficiently large number of staff would help achieve this goal, but it would not be enough if there were no means by which such withdrawals could occur without penalty.

Such roughly-drawn ideas for institutional change may strike some people as very piece-meal attempts to deal with a problem that is far more broad and important. According to this critique, the real source of the trouble is the political, social, and economic system which dehumanizes people through discrimination and poverty. Unless this system is changed, dehumanization will always be present, regardless of any attempts to get people to treat other people in more decent ways. Our response to this critique would be to agree -- up to a point. While it is critically important that we continually work towards major change in the system, such change may be

insufficient and too far off in the future to affect the dehumanization of people that occurs now. For us, "the system" is not some giant monolith with a life of its own; rather, "the system" ultimately translates into people, and it is the way in which each of these people interacts with others that can either promote human values or destroy them.

THE DEHUMANIZATION OF IMPRISONMENT

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Introduction

The language and orientation of social science is designed to make objective the subjectivity of experience in order to remove the individual bias of the observer and establish the basis for a consensually validated "reality." However, this analytical process itself is but a biased translation from one to another reality -- from the experiential, emotional to the detached, rational. By describing the experience of becoming dehumanized within a prison setting in the terms appropriate for a social scientific analysis (i.e. variables, factors, processes, interaction effects, and the like), we allow ourselves to gain sufficient distance from the subjective so that we can deal with the phenomena at a more comfortable intellectual level. Thus the very form and structure of our "professional" approach to observing, interpreting, and reporting the experience contributes to the dehumanization we are studying.

Our scientifically motivated "detached concern" for the object of our investigation is akin to that of the college class visit to a mental hospital. As the students walk through the wards, the teacher may point out how the patients are treated, and also how they are mistreated. Despite the apparent concern of the students for the plight of these poor creatures, their guided tour of the facilities invades the privacy of the patients, makes them objects to be examined and maybe pitied. In addition, the physical and social distance the observers maintain from the patients makes this another instance of the dehumanization which the patients are subjected to without their consent.

I have chosen to summarize my observations of how prisons dehumanize people by creating four scenarios in which prison guards and prison inmates tell their story. The contents of these first-person accounts represent composites drawn from hundreds of hours of conversation with: Carlo Prescott, a former inmate for seventeen years; "Snuffy" Smith, who served time for over twenty years; Bill Whitney, a guard at San Quentin for several years; as well as from correspondence with others in corrections on both sides of the bars. I have also synthesized observations, interviews, and diary materials of mock guards and prisoners who were volunteer subjects in the

all-too-realistic simulated prison which I created at Stanford University with the assistance of Craig Haney, Curt Banks, and David Jaffe. (1971) I believe some of the basic processes which give rise to the experience of the dehumanized are intuitively comprehended from such non-analytical presentations of what it means to be a "guard" or a "prisoner." The fifth scenario will be that of the social psychologist abstracting principles from the substance of the prior scenarios.

Scenario I

It's your first day on the yard at San Quentin. You've completed the orientation program, and if you perform satisfactorily during the probation period, you can have a steady life-time job. You wish the "training" program had been longer than four half-days and that you knew how to use restraint gear and were more familiar with the procedure for getting your gun and ammunition when you get assigned to be gunman in the Adjustment Center.

You recall that the Orientation Manual said: "The only way you really get to know San Quentin is through experience and time. Some of us take more time and must go through more experiences than others to accomplish this; some really never do get there." Would you ever get there, or would you get yours first?

You've heard the story ten times already from the old bulls, how that crazy nigger Jackson shot three officers and slit the throats of a couple of trustees before he got his trying to run the wall. That was a crazy thing to do! You wish you could remember more of the names of the other officers, especially the senior ones, but all in good time. What could make somebody murder officers and inmates indiscriminately and then try to jump a 20-foot wall manned by gunmen with their .347 Magnum, 30-30's, and enough fire power to shoot down a jet fighter? Prison sure must get to some of these guys!

You feel pride in sporting your new uniform with the California Correctional Officer's patch neatly sewn on the shoulder and with your C. C. O. badge on your good-looking military styled cap. Hair cut maybe a little too short, you think, as the November breeze sends a chill up your neck. But no aftershave lotion, no sir, no one is going to think I smell like a sissy. Feeling kind of powerful -- my word will be law here with the inmates, not like the grief I have at home getting the kids to clean their room or do their damn homework. Things run like clockwork here. It's a tight ship, if you sail it right.

"Remember," he said, "in case of trouble, blow your whistle and blow it loud." Why should there be any trouble? I intend to be a good guard, to be fair, honest, and

straight in my dealings with inmates. They've made a mistake, gotten caught, and we're here to help them get rehabilitated so it won't happen again. I'll bet a lot of them have a helluva story to tell. I might even get some good ideas for a little novel.

Slowly the cons shuffle in, moving as if they were standing still on a slow, jerky escalator tread invisibly concealed on the ground just in front of the walls. When most of the wall space fills, the others filter into clumps in the center of the yard. No one runs, no sudden movements of any kind, no loud talk, no laughter.

It must feel good for them to have a chance to get out of their cells to stretch, light up, talk to buddies. Wonder what they talk about? I'll walk around and let them get used to seeing me. We're all going to be here for a long time, I hope.

There must be five hundred of them, easy. Say, where are the other guards? That's funny, I'm all alone out here. I don't even see any of the tower guns. Why are they all looking at me like that? Guess they know I'm new here.

"Did I hear you say 'fish bull'?" "No sir, Mr. Correctional Officer." Sneers. Smirks. Icy stares. I feel as if they hate me. How could they hate me? -- they don't even know me yet.

But it couldn't be anything else. I can feel it. I can feel their collective hatred sticking me just as if each one was using his machine-shop tooled shank on me. We need more shake-downs and skin searches; it's too easy for them to conceal a home-made weapon.

Better not to make eye contact with any of them, anyway. Where the hell are those other officers? Did they all go on a coffee break and leave me to take care of the store, all alone? Hmm, not very funny. No gun, no club, nothing but this goddamn little whistle between me and a knife in my back by any one of those nuts. They're all felons, you know, they've been through the mill; that's why they've deadended here at Q.

How can you tell a killer by just looking at him? They all look the same in those baggy vomit-green uniforms and expressionless faces. They walk the same, stand the same, and act the same. Only difference is that there are the whites in one bunch, the blacks over there, and the Chicanos hovering around at the South Wall.

Shit, they all look like hardened killers to me. I wouldn't turn my back on any of these cons for a moment. I'll show them I'm a man. Their stares don't mean a goddamn thing to me, nothing at all. I'm The Man here. I've got enough fire power backing me up to shoot their asses off to kingdom come. They must know that's how that madman Jackson got his head -- Afro and all -- blown off. No filthy con is

going to make me back down.

"Hey, you! Yeah, you over there, Shorty. Come over here. What's your number?"

"A-94375, why?"

"Never mind the backtalk, A-94375, I'm writing you up. You threw away your cigarette wrapper there on the ground. You know there are rules against littering State property."

"Aw, come on."

"Don't give me any lip, punk, or you'll learn what real trouble is. Pick it up and move on."

"Yes sir."

Just then, my senior officer appears. I stand tall and tough, sure he'll be pleased by the way I handled the yard all alone.

"Put Jones -- A-24768 over there -- in restraint gear; he's got a court appearance."

"Yes sir, but . . ."

"Move it out, this is not a tea party, you know."

"Yes sir."

How the hell should I know how to put this mess of chains on a con without any lessons. Why didn't they teach us how? Embarrassed, I have to ask the prisoner for help in putting him in the damn chains. One for their side -- or rather, one for the prisoners, and one for my so-called "fellow" guards, and none for me. If it's every man for himself here, then that's O. K. with me. I'll make it in spite of those senior officers with their fun and games, initiation rites for us newcomers. Everything is set up to see how tough we are, how manly we are, and whether we can handle the hate and the fear. I can take it, and I can dish it out. They'll all see.

Those animals better watch their asses too; they are animals, you know. They have to be, to survive here. They have to rely on primitive animal instincts because only the fittest survive in this jungle. Fortunately, they're caged. Maybe it's not such a good idea for them to be loose so long or so often in the yard. It would be simpler all around if we just kept them in their cells -- they're used to it, probably prefer it. I heard some of these dumdums even call it "home." Imagine, calling a barred, concrete box your "home!" They really get screwy from being here too long.

My neck is really tight -- must be the cold. A good stiff drink when I get home is all I need to make me feel good as new again. God, this is a long day -- can't wait to get home and get cleaned and relax. The place really makes you feel dirty and grimy. Bet the cons don't even notice it.

Scenario II

Hi, kid! I'm Big Joey. I hope you've been enjoying the candies and the paperback I sent over. Sorry I couldn't get a detective story, but they were all out of them at the Commissary. Do you know how to use the headphones? You realize that you "fish," I mean first-timers here at Quentin, don't get no headsets for quite awhile. So you got no music to listen to on the house radio, and it can get awfully quiet and lonely up here in the "fish bowl" before you get put into the general population.

You'd be surprised how much I know about you -- where you come from, your family, your rap, even where you have your appendix scar. Paid a whole carton of Luckies to look over your file, and now that I see you in the flesh, I'm glad I did. You certainly are worth it.

You see, kid, Quentin ain't like no other place you been in before. It's real dangerous here. Lot of racial stuff coming down. Guys get shanked for just looking the wrong way at some dude. Bulls putting the squeeze on to be a snitch. Lot of just plain mental cases running around in here too. You never know where to turn.

Unless, of course, you got yourself a friend. That's why Big Joey came to see you personally. I want to be your friend, because I like you. Nice-looking kid like you is gonna be in real trouble in a place like this -- an awful lot of animals in here. Can't blame them -- some guys been here for most of their lives and never gonna see pussy or moonlight again.

Me? Twelve years, assault with a deadly, Oakland traffic cop, should be getting my date real soon now.

But we're getting off the point. I want you to consider me your friend. I want you should feel I will protect you from any mother here who tries to lay a hand on you. Don't want to brag, but my clique runs the drug action in A-block.

For two more cartons, I can arrange for you to be my cellmate so we can spend a lot of time together getting to know one another real well. What do you say, wanna be Big Joey's kid?

No reason to go get yourself so upset. No rush. Take your time, think it over.

You say you won't? Maybe you don't understand how important it is to have one good friend in here. You know no one escapes from here, not even from those animals in my clique. I can understand where you're coming from -- used to feel the same way once.

It's not a matter of whether or not you will -- it's only a matter of <u>when</u>.

Be seein' ya around, kid!

Scenario III

It's your first day on the yard at the Stanford Jail. Your khaki uniform is just a size too big and there's too much starch in the shirt to make you feel comfortable wearing it. But it does feel good to carry this big police billy club -- must be a yard long and filled with a solid metal core. Bet you could crack someone's head open with one good clout! Of course, we've been told by the Superintendent not to use them as weapons, but carry them merely for "show." I hope the prisoners don't do anything stupid to force us to use them; I sure wouldn't want to get smashed with this thing. It's all just for the show we're putting on.

[Diary entry after learning I've been accepted to be a guard here: "As I am a pacifist and nonaggressive individual, I cannot see a time when I might maltreat other living things."]

[After our first group meeting with the other guards, a few of us went out to pick up the uniforms for the rest. Diary entry reads: "Buying uniforms at the end of the meeting confirms the gamelike atmosphere of this thing. I doubt whether many of us share the expectations of 'seriousness' that the experimenters seem to have."]

Can't get used to wearing these sunglasses indoors, though. They're supposed to make us more anonymous to the prisoners because with the silver reflecting surface it's impossible for anyone to see your eyes or "read" your emotions. The idea was borrowed from the movie, "Cool Hand Luke," where that bad bastard who tormented Paul Newman always wore them (I think even in his sleep). You can imagine how surprised I was when I noticed that the arresting officer from the Palo Alto Police Department was also wearing them, and not because he had to, but because of the effect they created.

Well, here comes the last of the bunch. That makes nine arrested today, booked for violation of Penal Code 459, warned of their rights, then handcuffed and spread-eagled against the squad car, searched, plunked in the back of the car, and whisked off to the station with curious neighbors and relatives gaping at the whole incredible scene.

Police sure did their thing at the station. No rough stuff, mind you, but really efficient: fingerprinting, preparing the information file, hustling the prisoners from place to place, and finally leaving them blindfolded in the detention cell until we transferred them down here to our prison. Whole operation took less than an hour.

"Take those dirty clothes off of him. What filthy hippie hair. This guy is going to infect the whole place with lice. Delouse him real good -- he's not going to get a bath for a long time down here. Be sure to get in there under his balls -- we don't want them to get diseased and drop off, now do we? Take off his blindfold,

so he can see where he's at and look at his scrawny body in the mirror while we fit him for his new prison dress."

"Attention, all prisoners, the warden is here to greet you:"

> As you probably already know, I'm your warden. All of you have shown that you are unable to function outside in the real world for one reason or another -- that somehow you lack the responsibility of good citizens of this great country. We of this prison, your correctional staff, are going to help you learn what your responsibilities as citizens of this country are. Here are the rules. Sometime in the near future there will be a copy of the rules posted in each of the cells. We expect you to know them and to be able to recite them by number. If you follow all of these rules and keep your hands clean, repent for your misdeeds and show a proper attitude of penitence, you and I will get along just fine.

"O. K., here they are. Rule Number One: Prisoners must remain silent during rest periods, after lights are out, during meals and whenever they are outside the prison yard. Two: Prisoners must eat at mealtimes and only at mealtimes. Three: Prisoners must not move, tamper, deface or damage walls, ceilings, windows, doors, or other prison property. . . . Seven: Prisoners must address each other by their ID number only. Eight: Prisoners must address the guards as 'Mr. Correctional Officer'. . Sixteen: Failure to obey any of the above rules may result in punishment."

It's just the three of us and nine of them -- not such good odds, but as long as they behave properly there shouldn't be any trouble. No question about it, I'm the little guy on this shift; those other two guards must be 6'3" at least. Going to have to work a little harder to make myself noticed around here. That's the drag about being small -- the big guys always assume they run the show because they're physically bigger, even if they've got no brains at all. We'll see. In case something breaks out, though, they will come in handy -- better than being paired up with a bunch of weaklings.

Here we go. My turn to do my scene. Feel sure that the prisoners will make fun of my appearance and I evolve my first basic strategy -- mainly not to smile at anything they say or do which would be admitting it's all only a game. At cell 3 I stop, and setting my voice hard and low say to 5486, "What are you smiling at?" "Nothing, Mr. Correctional Officer." "Well, see that you don't." (As I walk off I feel stupid.)

"So, 5704 wants a cigarette, does he? I don't smoke and I think smoking is a filthy habit. Don't you see the sign posted there that there is <u>no</u> smoking without permission? Even if you get a cigarette, you won't get my permission to smoke it, not on this shift. No smokes, no empathy on this shift."

"That goes for you too, 1037 -- wipe that shit-eating grin off your ugly face." I am feeling empathetic toward 1037. He seems like a real nice guy, but I can't let

him know, because it will be more difficult then to play my role convincingly. When it's all over, I can tell him I really like him and I had to act this way because of my role. After all, a guard can't afford to get too friendly with a prisoner -- it's not a fraternity house we're running.

Before we leave for the night, the captain of our shift and I can't resist taunting the prisoners with vivid descriptions of what we are going to do in bed to our girlfriends. They try to act as if we are not getting to them, but we can tell how envious they are.

"Just because we're leaving, don't think we won't be thinking about you guys enjoying yourselves in your grubby little cells. I'm gonna think about nothing else the whole time I'm getting laid. Sleep tight -- good dreams, men. On second thought, don't make them too good -- we don't change the sheets until Wednesday."

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Those ding-dong guards on the morning shift must have been too permissive to allow that rebellion to get started today. None of that would have happened on our shift. I heard a lot of heavy stuff came down; they had to use carbon dioxide fire extinguishers on the ringleaders so they could get them away from the cell doors they had barricaded. Then they really opened up on them -- stripped them naked, stuck them into the hole, no more privileges, all work and no play, toilet-bowl cleaning with their bare hands, the whole trip. No wonder they seem so docile tonight.

That 5704 is the real trouble-maker of the lot. I can't stand him, he doesn't know how to take a joke. During the inspection, I went to cell 2 to mess up a bed which he had made and he grabbed me, screaming that he had just made it, and he wasn't going to let me mess it up. He grabbed my throat, and although he was laughing I was pretty scared. I lashed out with my stick and hit him in the chin (although not very hard), and when I freed myself I became angry. I wanted to get back in the cell and have a go with him, since he attacked me when I was not ready.

The warden asks me to bring 5704 to the counseling office so the psychologist can discuss his negative attitude with him. I am surprised and angry that the psychologist rebukes me for handcuffing and blindfolding the prisoner before leaving the office, and I resentfully reply that it is both necessary security and my business anyway. It's easy for him to give orders from his safe easychair, to play Jesus Christ -- he doesn't have to deal with these guys on their own terms hour after hour.

I am secretly delighted that 5704 does not have any visitors coming tonight. After warning the prisoners not to make any complaints about how we were treating them, unless they wanted the visit terminated fast, we finally bring in the first parents. I make sure I am one of the guards on the yard, because this is my first

chance for the type of manipulative power that I really like -- being a very noticed figure with almost complete control over what is said or not. While the parents and prisoners sit in chairs, I sit on the end of the table dangling my feet and contradicting anything I feel like. This is more like it! This is the first part of this whole prison experiment I am really enjoying.

But this glow doesn't last too long after the last parent and friend leave and we have to get back to the boring routine of bringing the prisoners back and forth to the toilet, seeing that they don't make trouble, feeding them, and listening to their complaints.

I'm getting tired of seeing the prisoners in their rags and smelling the strong odors of their bodies that fill the cells. I watch them with a curious detachment as they tear at each other on orders given by us. They don't see it as an experiment. It is real and they are fighting to keep their identity. But we are always there to show them who's boss. I harass "Sarge" who continues to stubbornly overrespond to all commands. I have singled him out for special abuse both because he begs for it and because I simply don't like him. That 819 is obnoxious too; he bears close surveillance. Although they are buckling under our force, and acting like sheep, or more like "cattle," I still keep thinking to myself, "I have to watch out for them in case they try something."

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Sure enough, today the real trouble starts. We have a new prisoner to replace the ones who were released because they were acting <u>as if</u> they had a nervous breakdown (personally, I think they were faking it and conned the big-shot psychologists). This new prisoner, 416, refuses to eat his sausages. That is a violation of Rule Two: "Prisoners must eat at mealtimes," and we are not going to have any of that kind of shit, not now when we have everything working so smoothly. He's so scrawny and scraggly, you'd think he'd be begging for seconds instead of refusing to eat any food. Obviously we have a trouble-maker on our hands.

If that's the way he wants it, that's the way he gets it. We throw him into the Hole ordering him to hold sausages in each hand. After an hour, he still refuses. We punish his cellmates -- they get no dinner or more food until 416 eats his sausage. They ask him to be reasonable, but he's too selfish to think of anyone else. We have a crisis of authority; this rebellious conduct potentially undermines the complete control we have over the others. We decide to play upon prisoner solidarity and tell the new one that all the others will be deprived of visitors if he does not eat his dinner. Prisoner 3096 gets furious -- he has been hanging on all week waiting for the ten minute visit he could have with his girlfriend. He blows up -- at 416 -- screaming

at him, cursing him for being so selfish and making trouble for everyone. Still 416 refuses. We don't want to cut off visiting hours, but what can we do? I walk by and slam my stick into the Hole door. I am very angry at this prisoner for causing discomfort and trouble for the others. I decide to force-feed him, but he won't eat. I let the food slide down his face. I don't believe it is me doing it. I hate myself for making him eat, but I hate him more for not eating.

Just then, "John Wayne," the leader of our guard shift, comes up with the right idea. He has a way of knowing how to break the prisoners without resorting to too much physical stuff -- making them hate one another instead. I especially liked it when a prisoner requested permission to sing "Happy Birthday" to a fellow prisoner, and our John Wayne was only too glad to have the whole cell block join in the singing -- at the top of their lungs, forty-three times over and over until they hated the guy for having a birthday even more than the guy who had asked for the favor. Little things like that make me glad he's on my side.

We line up the prisoners and tell them that the fate of 416 is up to them. The guards do not want to be unreasonable. The prisoners are going to have to decide what should be done about this "problem" and we will abide by their decision. Should 416 be allowed to come out of solitary confinement or stay in that dark, cramped closet all night long? Those who wish to vote for him to come out, even if he doesn't eat his sausages, will cast their vote by giving up their blankets and sleeping on the bare mattresses. Those who freely choose to teach the selfish bastard a lesson and have him stay in solitary all night can keep their blankets and call out loud and clear, so 416 can hear it, that they vote instead to leave him in solitary.

As you might expect, the majority vote to punish that asshole trouble-maker. It's the only thing they do this whole week that staff can respect. They are on their way to becoming good prisoners! We are doing our job of rehabilitation real well.

Scenario IV

I don't understand it, any of it! Nothing makes sense in here and no one is concerned that nothing makes sense. It's as if they all accept that this is how it has to be; that this is the only way it can be. Everybody has gone mad in this place and they don't know it. No one person sees the change in him because the place and all the others are all mad in the same way he is. Whatever craziness he feels or engages in seems appropriate -- it fits. As long as it fits, it doesn't have to be

rational, doesn't have to make sense.

No one asks "why." No one questions arbitrary, inane institutional rules, such as "You have to eat at mealtimes," even if you are not hungry or do not want to, or "No talking allowed during meals," or any of a score of other rules. I can't tell whether the guards are more into this insanity than the prisoners or if it's the other way around. If you don't smile when that black-haired guard tells a dirty joke, you get punished. When he repeats it and you do smile, you get punished again for overreacting. I've noticed that you can't even predict whether a guard will give you a straight answer or ridicule you when you ask a question. Sometimes he'll make you do push-ups with someone stepping on your back, or maybe force you to ask the same question a hundred times over until the words themselves sound strange and lose their meaning.

My buddies are acting like robots -- servile, conforming, obedient robots -- doing whatever they are asked to, even anticipating what will be demanded and doing it before the order comes. "Sarge" is really in deep -- he thinks he's beating the system by being the ultra-good, model prisoner, doing more than he has to. It's clear the guards dislike him for being so obedient and for seeming to enjoy their harrassment. The other prisoners are even more down on him for being such a nut. Whenever he overdoes something, that becomes the new standard for all the rest. I feel sorry for "Sarge" -- he's trying to be what he thinks they want him to be and instead he is becoming a negative particle.

Perhaps I'm reacting so adversely to this prison set-up because I'm new. The others have gradually adjusted to the escalating level of aggression, to the degradation, to the mental and physical abuse, and now they don't notice how far they've come. That 5704 was supposedly the ring leader of a rebellion they had here the other day. I can't believe it; the guards have him behaving like a trained seal, doing anything they ask, however servile or obscene -- for a lousy cigarette. They discovered he's a cigarette addict and they've used that to turn him into their toady. My cellmates talk about the "him" who was their rebel leader as if it were a different person from the "him" I see now as a brown-nosed prisoner trustee. Maybe the rebellion itself is a collective fantasy trip all of the prisoners are on. You must need some fantasies to survive in here -- there sure isn't any reality to hang your hat on.

My cellmates whispered to me during the morning work break that this was a "real" prison, that you couldn't get out unless you were sick. They must be sick to think that way. We are human beings with human rights -- inalienable rights. They can't be taken away, even in a real prison -- can they?

Because I'm the new prisoner, I've really been getting incredible shit from

all sides. The guards have been making me work like a slave, and when I complain, the prisoners urge me not to make trouble because the next guard shift is better and things will ease up then. When I try to make a joke to cheer up the other guys while we are moving the same boxes back and forth between two closets for hours on end, no one laughs. They just nod-- yes, they heard the joke, please don't require them to respond any further. Things ain't so funny in here.

The only faint trace of emotion I detect is prisoner 819 down in cell 1, who in a rage smashed a hole in the wall. He says he needs a doctor and refuses to leave his bed. When he is taken out to the warden's office, it's clear to all of us that he is very agitated. The guards line us up and we chant, again and again and again in single-voiced unison, "819 is a bad prisoner," "because of what 819 did we must all suffer," "819 tampered, defaced, and destroyed prison property." We realize 819 must be overhearing this, but what difference does it make -- we never see him again anyway.

I evolve my first basic strategy to get out of this looney bin. I will refuse to eat any of their food, pretend to get sick from lack of nourishment, and force them to release me. It's tough to do because I'm hungry already, but it's the only way out. Not one taste of their food, not one drop of water, no matter what.

The guards are really going out of their skulls now, just because I don't want to eat their lousy, greasy sausages. They don't care about me -- why should they care whether or not I eat? They can't handle it -- they start cursing, screaming at me, yelling that they're gonna cram the sausages up my ass. Into the Hole, sausages in each hand, out of the Hole, sausages still in each hand. I now find new strength in my resolution not to eat their food. I do not need their food to live, only their anger. As long as I choose to refuse to eat, I am free, I am still my own man. I am not imprisoned.

It hurts me, however, when the other prisoners start putting me down. I can understand why they're upset but it's not my fault -- it's the stupid rules of the guards. What does my eating a sausage have to do with their visitors not being allowed in, as long as they have obeyed all the rules? It doesn't make sense to me but it seems to make perfect sense to all of them.

I don't mind the darkness of solitary -- in fact, it's comforting. I doze off from time to time, awakened only by the deafening echoes of a big billy club cracking down on the door to the Hole. I'm beginning to feel a little nauseous. The strategy is working. I'll be sick by tomorrow.

What's that they're saying? The prisoners have voted to keep me in here all night? I don't believe it! The rule says that no prisoner will be kept in solitary

confinement for more than one hour. "Violation of the rules." "You can't do that to me." "Violation of Prison Rules . . ."

John Wayne's strained Texas drawl interrupts. "The guards aren't doing anything to you -- you're doing it to yourself. You started it and your friends have voted in a true democratic election to finish it. So just get used to it -- you're gonna be in there for a long time."

A crack of light filters through the darkness; a bead of perspiration falls on my sausage. My reflection grows as I look closely at the drop of water. What am I doing here? What have I done to be in such a place? What am I doing to myself to get out? Despite all the threats, abuse, noise, pushing around, I was never really frightened until this moment. As I look deeper into the watery reflection, I don't see me looking back any more. I don't recognize the person in the reflection at all. He isn't me -- or to be more precise, I am not him. The person I call "Calvin," the person who put me into this place, the person who volunteered to go into this prison -- because it is a prison, it's a prison run by psychologists and not by the State -- is distant from me, is remote. I am not that person, I am prisoner 416 -- I am really my number. Now 416 is going to have to decide what to do because Calvin's not here and would never want to even visit here. I don't blame him -- nothing makes sense in this prison and he likes to live in a world where everything is sane and secure and respectable. It's better if he doesn't even know what 416 is going through -- he wouldn't understand and it would hurt him too much. 416 can handle it all alone; he has to! He just needs a little time to learn not to need food or friends or explanations -- but most of all, not to get emotional. Emotions really don't make sense in a prison. They just don't fit.

Scenario V

The dehumanization of imprisonment occurs at many levels in many ways. It begins at the political level where presidents, governors, and other politicians may elect to use prisons as a means to gain votes. They can easily get tough on the prisoners whenever there is public concern over a rising crime rate (putting more people in prison, keeping them in longer, and returning parolees faster by more frequent parole revocations). Since prisoners have no lobby and are not a legitimized constituency, they are convenient pawns in political and economic power plays that take place in various state and federal bureaucracies.

Moreover, since the position of prison guard is not held in sufficiently high esteem by the general public, the guards themselves become expendable when it is

their lives versus "face-saving" of politicians and corrections administrators. This is, I believe, one of the saddest lessons of the tragedy of Attica. Would the order to fire upon the prisoners have been given if their hostages were a group of senators, Wall Street brokers, Daughters of the American Revolution, or the Governor's family -- instead of just an anonymous bunch of Attica Prison correctional officers? Unlikely, right?

The dehumanization process is fostered also by the indifference of the average citizen toward the whole issue of corrections. "Lock them up, throw away the key, and don't make it cost too much" is the extent of the concern of many people towards the rehabilitation of persons convicted of crimes. The idea of even being taxed to support these prison "country clubs" becomes a further source of irritation when there are not enough tax funds for decent housing, schools, hospitals, and other necessities.

Legislators whose personal values might lead them to champion the cause of promoting human rights of prisoners and guards often shy away from doing so because they fear a negative reaction from their voting constituency. The apathy toward prisons, however, becomes an agitated furor when there is a proposal to locate a prison or even a half-way house within the community, rather than in some remote, inaccessible, rural, desert, or island locale.

To what extent are decisions about prisons, prisoners, and guards made not in the interest of the society in which they are located, come from, and return to, but largely for vested private interests? We have recently learned that considerable pressure is put on politicians to resist termination of antiquated prison facilities, encourage building of monolithic prisons to house large populations, and to maintain the status quo. This political pressure comes from the many businesses that profit from the existence of prisons -- the building trades, food services, trucking, and especially private companies and States which rely upon the cheap, virtually slave, labor of the prisoners to pick cotton, make institutional furniture, auto license plates, and so forth. Prisons, to many entrepreneurs, are a business enterprise, and prisoners are there to be exploited without benefit of unions, arbitration, or even federal protection under minimum wage laws.

In focusing down upon the social-psychological level at which dehumanization occurs in prisons, let us identify and outline seven of the more insidious facets of this process: ecological features; anonymity; rules; emotional expression; image, role and identity; time distortion; and choice.

1. Ecology of dehumanization

The physical structure of the prison conveys a very direct, immediate, and

constantly repeated message to all within its walls. This place is different from all others you have lived in, and from where respectable, trustworthy people live. Rows of steel gates, locks, high walls, barbed wire, gun towers on the outside and gun tiers on the inside, windowless cells all convey the invincibility of the law and the need to isolate and segregate those inside from those outside.

But once this much is established, the design of the prison furthers the dehumanization process by minimizing the possibility for any privacy, except in solitary confinement. Mass eating in cafeterias, mass exercise in the yard or corridors, cells with bars instead of doors, animal cage cells which can be looked in from all sides, mean the prisoner has lost the right of privacy, solitude, and individual treatment. Prisoners must begin to psychologically detach themselves, to daydream or fantasize privacy in order to be alone in a crowd, or to be unseen, though constantly watched by guards and other prisoners.

The long corridors, barren cells, drab-colored walls provide minimal sensory variation and contribute to a dulling of the senses, as does the monotony of daily routines of being processed for meals, for work, for recreation, for everything.

2. Anonymity

A growing body of literature in social psychology clearly indicates that conditions which reduce an individual's sense of uniqueness, of individuality, promote anti-social behaviors, such as aggression, vandalism, stealing, cheating, rudeness, as well as a general loss of concern for others (Zimbardo, 1970). Conversely, pro-social behaviors are encouraged by environmental and interpersonal conditions which enhance one's sense of social recognition and self-identity.

Prisons are designed to maximize anonymity. They do so by putting everyone in uniforms which categorize individuals as "guards" or "prisoners." Numbers may replace names or become more administratively important than names. Uniqueness is reduced by having hair shaved off of new prisoners, by insisting on standard hair lengths for prisoners and guards, and by having standard meals in standard plates and glasses eaten with standard silverware at standard times. Loss of individuality is furthered by restrictions on personal possessions and personalizing one's cell (in many prisons), and by unannounced cell and body searches. There are reported cases of inmates being punished for putting too much starch in their uniforms, for trying to look too good or too sharp or too different.

To some extent, the individual guard gains reflected strength from his immediate group identification as "guard" and may prefer the anonymity which conceals his personal fears and anxieties. It is curious that the silver reflecting sunglasses which we used in our mock prison as part of an anonymity manipulation were similarly

worn by both the arresting city policeman and the captain of the troopers at Attica -- out of personal preference.

The need for uniqueness in an anonymity-enveloping environment forces prisoners to define their world into "mine" and "not mine." Since they have so little personal territory, they must defend it (often with their lives) if they are to have any situational identity at all. A prisoner's bar of soap, or towel, or pencil become precious possessions he is willing to fight for if they are ripped off by anyone else. They are his -- and in a world of much that is not, what is his must be defended. Such a need may underlie the arguments that typically occur in mental hospitals because one patient will sit or rest against another patient's bed. When your bed is your only territory, even though it looks like all the others on the ward, it becomes unique to you.

Thus prisoners learn not to share, and to associate material possessions with their personal identity and integrity. It is obvious how such an orientation can lead to problems when the prisoners are paroled and return to a family environment where the unit of ownership of food, soap, toothpaste, etc. is the family, and not the individual.

3. Rules

"If you follow all of these rules . . . you and I will get along just fine." If you do not, the final rule always describes how you will be punished.

We have learned that rules are the backbone of all institutionalized approaches to managing people. Institutions vary only in how many rules they have, and how explicit and detailed they are -- never in whether or not they have rules.

Rules impose an impersonal, externalized structure on interpersonal relationships. They remove ambiguity from social interaction. They make human conduct more predictable by reducing idiosyncratic reactions and individualized interpretations of how to behave. Rules obviate the need for personal explanations or justifications for any desired course of action. "It's the rule" is sufficient reason. Rules proliferate in institutional settings. They come to have a life of their own, continuing to be enforced even after they are obsolete and their original purpose can no longer be remembered by the rule-enforcers.

Coercive rules automatically force power relationships upon people; somebody must have the power to enforce the rules, and somebody must have to obey them. Those who obey often come to expect, and even respect, the structure which a rule-governed environment provides.

In response to my question, "what are the characteristics of a good guard," many prisoners I am corresponding with answered: the guy who goes by the book, the one

who is fair and who is a real "professional" because he doesn't make exceptions. He can be counted on, and his behavior is predictable by the prisoners, because he too is controlled and dominated by the rules.

One unnoticed feature of rule control in prisons (as well as in everyday life outside) is the consequences of conforming to rules and of breaking the rules. Since rules are statements of expected behaviors or norms of standard conduct, you are simply doing what you are expected to do when you follow the rules -- and your behavior goes unnoticed (and unrewarded). Mike Middleton, a former Texas convict, says that, "The only way to make it with the bosses is to withdraw into yourself, both mentally and physically -- literally making yourself as small as possible. It's another way they dehumanize you. They want you to make no waves in prison and they want you to make no waves when you get out."

If rule observance is expected and thus not rewarded, rule violation is always noticed and gets punished. The severity of the punishment varies with institutional sanctions, individual preferences of the controlling agent, and the extent to which the target of the punishment is already perceived in a dehumanized way. Thus the existence of many explicit rules reduces the probability that behavior modification will be shaped by reinforcers, while increasing the likelihood of the use of punishment strategies.

Punishment is therefore likely to be both a consequence of a prevailing state of dehumanization and a contributor to that state. We are reminded of Eric Hoffer's admonition that, "Our sense of power is more vivid when we break a man's spirit than when we win his heart."

4. Emotional expression and suppression

When people lose the capacity to experience emotions, or when their emotional expression is flattened, that is taken as a sign of major psychological disturbance, as in autism or schizophrenia. Without emotions there is little basis for empathy, for attachment to others, for love, for caring, for fear of the consequences to oneself of one's actions. A person without emotions becomes a robot, an automaton, an animal, and potentially the most dangerous enemy of mankind.

Instead of promoting a fuller, more normal expression of emotions among the inmates, prisons do exactly the reverse by creating conditions that distort, inhibit, and suppress emotions. Emotions in institutional settings must be contained to the extent that they represent spontaneous, impulsive, often unpredictable, individual reactions. In institutions charged with the management of deviant individuals, such emotional expression is seen as a source of potential danger and must be held in check.

George Jackson's Soledad Brother letters proclaim, "I have made some giant steps

toward acquiring the things I personally will need if I can be successful in my plans . . . I have repressed all emotion." A long-time prisoner at Rhode Island Adult Correctional Institution told me that he "beat the system" by learning how to turn off all emotions so that he now no longer feels anything for anybody. There is nothing more <u>they</u> can do to him, he claimed, nothing that will get to him or will in any way disturb him. He learned this lesson in "self-control" after being in the hole for several years in a Maryland prison. He expects to be able to turn his emotions on again when he gets out. I doubt if he can.

Prisoners who show their emotions publically reveal a sensitive weakness, and become more likely candidates for an "informer" role by the guards or the female role in forced sexual encounters initiated by other prisoners. Also, the more strongly you feel about other people, the more open you are to being hurt when they are punished or when they leave, die, or betray you. In a prison environment, where you have so little control over the nature of your interpersonal relations with other people, such tender emotions are probably going to result in more pain than pleasure, and so are better dispensed with altogether.

For the guards, emotional control begins with having to conceal their fear of working in a situation where their lives are literally on the line at every moment. The denial of their fear goes beyond "whistling a happy tune" to constantly affirming their fearlessness and toughness. A guard who is afraid is a threat to every other guard, because he cannot be counted upon in an emergency -- and it is that eventuality for which the guards are always preparing. Moreover, a guard who shows any warmth or positive emotional regard toward the prisoners is suspected of being "wired up" by them, of taking graft, or of being controlled by them.

It is not surprising, then, that the basic advice given to "fish bulls" by the captain of the guards at San Quentin is to be "firm and fair but not friendly" in dealing with the cons. But it is not enough for the guards to conceal their emotions only from the inmates; they must also conceal them from each other. There is an implicit norm among many correctional officers not to even discuss their emotions among themselves, and certainly not for the new men to tell the old bulls how they feel. This bottling-up of their intensely felt emotions can be expected to be displaced onto family and friends, and also expressed in the disguised, introverted form of psychosomatic illnesses. We are beginning to accumulate evidence that this is indeed the case. There is considerable "silent suffering" occurring among correctional officers who have not yet learned how to completely detach their cognitive self from the affective.

Since no one in the system is willing to acknowledge that such a problem exists

(let alone provide any assistance), its pervasiveness can only be guessed, but informed guesses of the percentages were pretty high. Here is another instance of the reciprocity of dehumanization: both the guards and the inmates suffering from denial of their own humanness.

5. Image, role, and identity

In an all-male world of male inmates and male guards, one's survival often depends on projecting an image of toughness. The basis for power and control is physical superiority by virtue of muscle and strength, by weapons, by the odds in your favor. It doesn't matter what you feel -- only what you show. If you don't hang tough, then you just get hung.

Once you create an image, then you have to stand behind it and back it with deeds. Claude Brown (in Manchild in the Promised Land) recounts how he got a reputation as being a tough little guy by smashing a bigger boy in the face with a Coke bottle. After that, he had to take on bigger and stronger boys and deal with them in ever more extreme terms.

I once asked a former leader of a big prisoner clique what he would do to frighten me into doing something I did not want to do. "I never tried to frighten anyone," he said, "because that would show you were unsure of yourself and had to go around threatening people. I would only ask. If you refused, I'd break your ankle or your knee. Next time when I asked, you'd agree. No threats, just simple logic."

In the prison environment, much as in a military, fraternity, or prep school setting, everyone gets a toughness rating, a manliness rating by everyone else. You can get it by taking on the guys who have a reputation already, by being a deviant who refuses to obey orders and rules, or by appearing not to be affected by punishment. Strangely, a prisoner in many penitentiaries becomes most feared when he is considered by the others to be an "animal" -- powerful, fearless, emotionless, and concerned only about gratification of his appetites. One such ex-con still has a ring of pride in his voice when he recounts how he earned the title of "the animal."

But for every man who is genuinely tough and strong, there are scores who are just children playing grown-up -- scared and defenseless. They, too, must play the game of standing tall, never backing down, willing to sacrifice life and limb over a trivial point of masculine pride.

Acting out one's assigned role in a given occupation or profession is the ultimate self-deception procedure. It allows you to: assert a difference between the "real" you and the role-playing you; to engage in behaviors which are contrary to your private values; to degrade, brutalize, and dehumanize other human beings; and

to abdicate personal responsibility for your role-instigated behavior. Thus we may hide behind our roles while getting perverse satisfaction from doing what is appropriate to that role in a given situation -- being a tough, sadistic guard or a hardened, incorrigible prisoner. Since role behaviors tend toward stereotypes, individual variability is reduced, and that also engenders a loss of individuality and a more dehumanized atmosphere.

The torment experienced by one of our own mock guards (the one who was most liked by the prisoners, and whose empathy and emotional pain was the greatest of any of the guards) is revealed in his reflections upon the role he was forced to play in the game of imprisonment:

> What made the experience most depressing for me was the fact that we were continually called upon to act in a way that just was contrary to what I really feel inside. I don't feel like I'm the type of person that would be a guard, just constantly giving out shit and forcing people to do things, and pushing and lying -- it just didn't seem like me, and to continually keep up and put on a face like that is just really one of the most oppressive things you can do. It's almost like a prison that you create yourself -- you get into it, and it's just, it becomes almost this definition you make of yourself, it almost becomes like walls, and you want to break out and you want just to be able to tell everyone that "this isn't really me at all, and I'm not the person that's confined in there -- I'm a person who wants to get out and show you that I am free, and I do have my own will, and I'm not the sadistic type of person that enjoys this kind of thing."

In institutions such as prison where sexual identity is continually violated and human sexuality is denied, sex becomes an obsession. The gang rapes and sexual assaults (made into graphic cliches in recent films about prison life) occur with numbing regularity in adult prisons and juvenile facilities (see Davis' documented accounts of sexual abuse in the Philadelphia jails and even in the sheriff's vans taking still unconvicted men to court, 1968). Are these rapes the result of extreme sexual deprivation? In part yes, but that is a necessary, but not sufficient condition. One function of enforced sexuality is as an assertion of masculinity, as a means of showing who is top banana among the prisoners.

To be masculine is to be assertive, independent, autonomous, dominant, and aggressive. All these traits are antithetical to controlling individual behavior and rendering prisoners docile, submissive, and resigned to their need to be "rehabilitated." Thus the system operates to destroy such a masculine identity through techniques of dependency, obedience to rigid and ridiculous rules, through forms of address ("boy," "punk," obscenities, and pet names). In our own mock prison, we were more direct; we put men in dresses without underclothes, and in a short time they began to assume positions and movements which were more feminine than masculine.

Among prisoners, an inverted code of sexual mores has developed in which the victim of a rape is the "punk," the "queer," while his attacker becomes a "jocker," a "stud," -- a man. Said "Big Joey" in an interview with me, "my partners would have thought I was queer or something if I didn't have my stable of young white boys, since it was clear I was in a position to afford them." Perhaps we might feel similarly about sultans who did not have a harem in cultures where it was deemed acceptable if they could afford it.

The most extreme version of this imposed structure of masculine identity upon prisoners by other prisoners can be seen in Polish prisons, as reported in a recent unpublished paper by Adam Podgorecki (1973). He describes the "double life" of prisoners, in which every newcomer is put on a probation for a period of time while he is judged by his peers. On the initiation night, he is either labelled "man" or "slave." If man, then he has many prerogatives; if slave, he has none and must submit to any homosexual desires of the "men." Within this dichotomy, there are several gradations, ranging from untouchables (who can never rise out of the "slave" class) to "real men" who administer the convicts' code of behavior. The imposed dehumanization of the prison system is thereby extended and made inescapable by the prisoners themselves. To be the one who dehumanizes another provides a false sense of power which may help to ease the blows you are getting from above.

Interestingly, in our own mock prison, the only personality trait which was related to behavioral differences was that of authoritarianism. Those prisoners who adjusted best to the prison, who remained longest, were significantly higher on the F-scale of authoritarianism than those who broke down and had to be released early. It may be that authoritarian personalities "fit" with the authoritarian structure of a prison, but there is another explanation. Authoritarians believe that power underlies all human relationships. Sometimes they have more power than others and are on top; sometimes they have less and are lower down in the pecking order hierarchy. They can better take the harassment of prison life because they are resigned to (and expect) the type of treatment they would administer if the power tables were turned. Those with a more democratic orientation reject power as the basis for human relations and cannot accept the injustice of power domination under any circumstances.

Ultimately, the force that destroys human integrity and the fabric of social trust and mutual understanding is the need for power over other people -- a need which is limitless and which leads to the wanton desregard of law and justice, even by those individuals appointed to uphold justice and enforce the law. The national disgrace of Watergate is the best recent example of the dehumanizing effect of power striving in the service of the male ego.

6. Time distortion

Prisons are time machines -- they distort and play tricks with the human conception of time. In doing so, they dehumanize those people whose temporal perspective becomes altered as they try to cope with their new life of imprisonment.

In order to develop and sustain a perception of one's self-identity, it is necessary to have a sense of continuity of behavior over time and situations. The "you" in the present must be anchored to the "you" in the past and must be projectable, without major changes, to the "you" that will be functioning in the future. A balanced temporal perspective is vital for establishing not only the concepts of personality and history, but also for giving meaning to one's life and to the concepts of obligation, commitment, responsibility, and delayed gratification. It is the operation of such a conceptual orientation which is the major deterrent to a life of anti-social, ego-centered, criminalistic behavior. Events in our lives assume significance by being "time-tagged" in memory, being assigned a temporal location in our information retrieval system. Thus, thinking about that time period helps recall the event, or thinking about the event facilitates recall of that period of time in one's life.

However, imprisonment breaks the continuity of life by separating the imprisoned from their past, distancing the future (especially with an "indeterminate sentence"), and by imposing as the dominant temporal frame of reference a limited, immediate present. The endless routines and undifferentiated daily activities create a seeming circularity of time; it flows not in discriminable, meaningful units, but like an ant's journey along the Mobius strip of life. It does not matter who you are or where you've been, or even where you are going. All that matters is how much protection and power you have <u>now</u>. In an atmosphere where survival is paramount, the future is a luxury one cannot afford. Similarly, the past is a dangerous place to return to too often -- you might not want to come back to the ugly present, or you might not be vigilant and prepared for an ever-present assault upon your person.

Where there is fear, limited resources, power relationships, and no exit, one's survival depends upon sensitivity to all potentially important cues. No event is trivial until proven so. Every action may have a counteraction, unless it does not. Every prisoner and guard becomes an instant personality diagnostician under such circumstances, since a false positive diagnosis of misplaced trust may cost them dearly.

This immediate present time focus necessitated by a perception of the survival nature of imprisonment also causes men to lose their perspective on life -- to overreact to minor stimuli and to fail to plan for major events, such as what to

do after the parole date finally comes. Also, where the events of your life have little significance once it is determined that they are not dangerous, then much of the energy of this vigilance is wasted and these experienced events are not even worthy of a place in memory.

The subtle manipulation of one's time sense in prison alters in irreversible ways fundamental aspects of thinking, feeling, and social interaction, and saps meaning from the life of the imprisoned. "The time slips away from me . . . There is no rest from it even at night . . . The days, even the weeks, lapse into each other, endlessly into one another. Each day that comes and goes is exactly like the one that went before" (George Jackson, Soledad Brother).

7. Choice

The potential of the human condition can be achieved only when individuals are free to choose. It is precisely because man and woman can exercise choice that they are free to control their destinies and not be controlled. Sartre (1957) elevates choice to the status of indispensable attribute for humanity: "Man makes himself;" "through his choice he involves all mankind;" "I am creating a certain image of man of my own choosing. In choosing myself, I choose man."

Prisons deny the exercise of the individual will and the freedom of choice; in so doing, they undercut the basic ingredient of human nature. This is the most devastating facet of the dehumanization of imprisonment. When the negation of choice operates in a total environment, actors become reactors, and individuals become passive processors of environmental inputs. Such people lose the capacity for self-direction, as well as the cognitive ability to alter the impact of external, aversive forces impinging on them.

My research and that of my colleagues on the cognitive control of motivation (Zimbardo, 1969) demonstrates that perceiving you have freedom of choice and that you are behaving from intrinsic, rather than extrinsic, justification, leads to the creation of an autonomous, responsible spirit which can overcome pain, fear, anxiety, and deprivation states. Related research (Ferrari, 1962) has shown that conditions which deprive elderly women of their freedom of choice in whether or not to enter an old age home are likely to result in the womens' premature death.

"In a free society a citizen has the power to choose, and bears responsibility for the choices he makes" (Merryman, 1966). In a prison society, the inmate loses his rights as a citizen, and thus his power to choose and the responsibility for his/her choices. In systematically depriving the imprisoned of the opportunity for even trivial choices, prisons trivialize and render meaningless the lives of the inmates. That is the final act of dehumanization. "Beggars can't be choosers," we remind the poor -- and all the others we have imprisoned.

FOOTNOTES AND REFERENCES

*The research by Professor Maslach was sponsored by a Biomedical Sciences Support Grant at the University of California at Berkeley. Professor Zimbardo's research was funded by an Office of Naval Research Contract.

[1]James O. S. Huntington, "Philanthropy -- its Success and Failure," in Philanthropy and Social Progress (New York: Thomas Y. Cowell, 1892), p. 102.

[2]David Soyer, "Reaching Problem Families Through Settlement-Based Casework," Social Work, 6(2), July, 1961, 36.

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