

Conclusion

This essay has described the Buberian dialogue as being created from the manner of turning towards the other, as well as from a way of being that involves the whole human being, that chooses at any moment its manner of relating. This choice is not obvious, man is faced with the two-faced nature of his options of relation, the 'I-It' and the 'I-Thou' modes of relation, while fears of a lack of control, helplessness, defences, escaping from existential demands, temptations and different counter-forces that all stir within him and influence his ability to choose, together with his way of relating. In addition to the basic ontological dynamics of moving between the two types of relation, the choice becomes increasingly complex and difficult in the technological era, which particularly encourages, according to Buber, the 'I-It' relation and its subjugating forces.

So, someone who tries to relate in a dialogical manner to his world and to the other, is someone who confronts in a mental-existential arena, fighting forces and obstacles that are anchored in his/her ontology, and that are intensified by technology. The conclusion is therefore that, in order to promote a true dialogical relation in various areas in life, and the educational field in particular, it is important to better understand the processes that enable us to face the dynamics of internal and external forces, the difficulties, temptations, obstacles and threats, and yet to choose the dialogical way, in spite of these. It is therefore vital to identify and indicate relational-personality training processes, which are required for training and establishing the teacher as a 'dialogical struggler', who is capable of choosing the dialogical relation and maintaining it in his/her life, as well as when facing his/her students.

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Tribal Morality and the Ethical Other: The Tension Between Modern Moral Aspirations and Evolved Moral Dispositions

Charles Wright

Scholars concerned with dialogical understanding and the negotiation of fundamental ethical disagreement in pluralistic modern societies have drawn attention to the intimate relationship among dialogue, perspective taking and mutual understanding. However, while these capacities endure as modern moral ideals, evolutionary biological accounts of social cooperation and social scientific investigations of human behaviour both suggest that humankind's ideals may have outstripped its evolved moral sensibilities. While these sensibilities are well suited to maintaining co-operative relations among members of the same social group, in the case of outsiders, the propensity is instead to withdraw moral recognition and to treat the outsider as a thing.

This essay first considers twentieth and twenty-first century scholars' attention to the relationships among dialogue, perspective taking and mutual understanding, noting this work's trajectory towards a robust endorsement of perspective taking as an essential feature of dialogical and intercultural understanding. It then turns to the work of evolutionary biologists and social scientists, whose research into the tribal character of human morality explains why dialogue with, and taking the perspective of, members of different groups is so hard. The essay finishes by reviewing findings from a particular research tradition in social psychology: intergroup contact theory. This has identified the conditions under which people's evolved propensity to show favouritism towards their group members and to discriminate against outsiders may be overridden.

Keywords: Dialogue, Perspective taking, Tribal morality, Evolved moral dispositions, In-group/out-group, Intergroup contact hypothesis.

The role of dialogue as a means for reaching mutual understanding has received scholarly attention since at least the time of Plato. Similarly, possibly since the Golden Rule was first articulated (Wattles 1996) people have been aware that perspective taking is a fundamental root of moral regard for others. Given the deep roots that dialogue and perspective taking have in the ethical life of human beings, it should come as no surprise that modern scholars from a wide variety of disciplines have endorsed their significance. During the last century, theorists concerned with dialogical understanding and the negotiation of fundamental ethical disagreement in pluralistic modern societies have drawn attention to the intimate relationships

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among dialogue, perspective taking and mutual understanding. However, while these capacities endure as modern moral ideals, evolutionary biological accounts of social cooperation suggest that humankind's ideals may have outstripped humankind's evolved moral sensibilities. These sensibilities, as we will see, are well suited to maintaining cooperative relations among members of the same social unit, be it a village, clan or tribe. However, with regard to the outsider, the stranger, the ethical other, the opposite propensity has evolved, a propensity to refrain from efforts to reach dialogical understanding and to withhold efforts to engage in perspective taking; to withdraw moral recognition and to treat the ethical other as a thing. This disposition towards those different from oneself is well enough known through casual observation of human affairs, but it is also something predicted by evolutionary theory and amply documented by social scientific research.

In what follows I will briefly trace a development to be observed among twentieth and early twenty first century scholars of dialogical, hermeneutic, and intercultural understanding in which an early but underdeveloped acknowledgement of an intimate relationship between dialogue, perspective taking and mutual understanding evolves into a consistent endorsement of perspective taking as an essential feature of successful intercultural dialogue, understanding, and conflict resolution. Then I will turn to the work of evolutionary biologists, whose theories predict, and the work of social scientists, whose research confirms, that human beings have evolved in such a way as to selectively extend such forms of moral recognition to members of their own social group. After this discussion of why dialogue with and taking the perspective of members of different groups is so hard, I'll finish by reviewing findings from a particular research tradition in social psychology, intergroup contact theory, that has identified the conditions under which people's evolved propensity to show favouritism towards their group members and to discriminate against outsiders might be overridden.

An Evolving Recognition of the Relation Between Dialogue and Perspective-Taking

Let us start with one of the Twentieth Century's definitive religious and philosophical advocates of the 'life of dialogue,' Martin Buber. His conception of dialogue (Buber 1947, 1965) was developed in response to prevailing historical and intellectual trends of his day, e.g., logical positivism and German idealism, which, he thought, tended to overlook or misunderstand the nature of genuine human encounter. He also resisted the idea that the increasing displacement of traditional communities in the modern world and the rise of bureaucratic institutions, dominated by the roles of the employee, the worker, the manager, and the government official, eliminates the social space for dialogue. Buber replies that with a genuine opening and turning to the other, a worker 'can experience even his relation to the machine

as one of dialogue' (1947, 43) and the manager of a great enterprise can encounter a subordinate in such a way as to be 'aware of him...not as a number with a human mask but as a person.' (1947, 44)

The turning towards another that defines dialogue for Buber, need not take place through words or conversation (1947, 3 and 115). It can consist in as little as 'a creative glance' that flies up 'from one working place to another, from desk to desk, a sober and brotherly glance which guarantees the reality of creation which is happening.' (1947, 42) Rather than being a form of *speech*, dialogue consists in a stance of fundamental moral regard for another, a moral regard that acknowledges the other as just the particular, concrete, culturally and historically situated person that s/he is, a regard that demands that the other be encountered with resolute directness: 'The chief presupposition for the rise of genuine dialogue is that each should regard his partner as the very one he is. I become aware of him, aware that he is different, essentially different from myself, in the definite, unique way which is peculiar to him, and I accept whom I thus see, so that in full earnestness I can direct what I say to him as the person he is.' (1965, 79) It is in his discussion of the educator that Buber makes the dimension of perspective taking that is involved in dialogue most evident. The key concept is *inclusion*, a process he identifies as including three elements: a relation between two persons, an event experienced by them in common, and 'one person, without forfeiting anything of the felt reality of his activity, at the same time liv[ing] through the common event from the standpoint of the other.' (1947, 115) Every relation between persons that bears the form of inclusion, Buber asserts, 'may be termed a dialogical relation.' The fundamental moral regard comprising dialogue is, on this account, woven together with the capacity to experience the world from the standpoint of another.

Sharing with Buber a common scholarly source in Wilhelm Dilthey (Kepnes 1988), it will come as no surprise to us to find a similar *DenkFigur* in Hans Georg Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics. In *Truth and Method*, a text that exercised a decisive influence in 20th century philosophy, Gadamer (1989) incorporated the idea of dialogue into his conception of the hermeneutic encounter with a text that, as a result of cultural and historical distance, is 'other' to the interpreter. While Plato's dialogues were an important formative influence for Gadamer's thinking, he also construes of the relation between an interpreter and a text on the model of Buber's I-Thou. Hermeneutical experience, he tells us, approaches tradition as a language, something that 'expresses itself as a Thou. A 'Thou' is not an object; it relates itself to us.' (1989, 358) The interpreter who approaches tradition as an object, relying on method to maintain distance between the investigator and the text so that all subjective biases can be excluded, establishes an I-It relation with the text and fails to engage tradition as a genuine partner in dialogue. Just as a person

who reflectively removes himself out of the mutual regard of the I-Thou relation transforms it and abandons the moral bond it creates, so one who removes himself from an open, receptive engagement with tradition also destroys the opportunity to encounter tradition as a meaningful human reality. In hermeneutical experience, 'I must allow tradition's claim to validity, not in the sense of simply acknowledging the past in its otherness, but in such a way that it has something to say to me.' (1989, 361)

Like Buber, Gadamer also understands the dialogic encounter as involving a moment of perspective taking. This is made clear in Section I of Part III of *Truth and Method*, 'Language as the Medium of Hermeneutic Experience.' Here, Gadamer emphasises the relationship between conversation and coming to an understanding. He again develops his perspective through an analogy between a conversation between two people and a conversation between an interpreter and a text. Between people 'it belongs to every true conversation that each person opens himself to the other, truly accepts his point of view as valid and transposes himself into the other to such an extent that he understands not the particular individual but what he says.' (1989, 385) This transposition is not to be understood in terms of the Romantic model of *Einfühlung*, which both Gadamer and Buber repudiate. Transposing oneself into the other, as Gadamer understands it, does not entail a relinquishing of one's own subjectivity, an abandonment of self, so that all that remains is a vivid experience of the imaginatively reconstructed individual subjectivity of the other. Rather, the interlocutor grasps the point of view of the other in order to bring it into relation with his own perspective: in Gadamer's words, 'if we put ourselves in someone else's shoes... then we will understand him – i.e., become aware of the otherness, the indissoluble individuality of the other person – by putting *ourselves* in his position.' (1989, 305)

Gadamer acknowledges that the conversation between interpreter and text involves asymmetries that keep it from being identical to a conversation between two people. Nonetheless, at the same time, he insists that it is appropriate to speak of a *hermeneutic conversation* that, like an ordinary conversation, aims to find a common language and a shared understanding of a subject matter. Similarly to a conversation between people, the encounter between interpreter and text also involves a *transposition* in which the interpreter brings his/her horizon of understanding into relation with the horizon emerging from the text. This meeting of horizons aims to rise 'to a higher universality that overcomes not only our own particularity but also that of the other.' (1989, 305) This process is described as a 'fusion of horizons' in which the interpreter allows the truth of tradition to test the prejudices s/he brings to his/her encounter with the text. In this back and forth between interpreter and text s/he considers the truth of her/his own prejudices from the perspective of the understanding that emerges from her encounter.

While we can see that both Buber and Gadamer recognised the intimate relation between dialogue and perspective taking, their conceptions of the relation remain undeveloped. While, for them, dialogue remained the preeminent model of an authentic moral relation between humans, as well as between humans and the rest of the world, the relation between dialogue and perspective taking remained implicit in their respective philosophical projects, an undercurrent that shaped their thinking but which seldom received explicit attention.

In the case of Jürgen Habermas's work, by contrast, we encounter a model of dialogue, which he calls 'communicative action,' that explicitly incorporates a conception of mutual perspective-taking. Like Gadamer, Habermas was concerned to specify the conditions under which mutual understanding between participants in a conversation might be achieved. Like both Buber and Gadamer, he also supposed that the fundamental model of human morality was in some sense to be found in dialogical encounters between subjects, but Habermas developed his thinking on the basis of different theoretical traditions than Buber and Gadamer, traditions that highlighted formal structures of communicative interaction.

In his theory of communicative action, Habermas (1984, 1987) creatively appropriates Anglo-American speech act theory, particularly as found in the work of John Searle (1969) and J. L. Austin (1962). Habermas suggests on the basis of this philosophical conception of linguistic interaction that the possibility of human co-operation is to be explained via a model of communicative interaction. Speech is the means by which one actor reaches understanding with another about something in the world so that the two might consensually co-ordinate their respective efforts to act in the world. The core claim is that co-operation is made possible when the person who is spoken to accepts the speaker's saying on the strength of the speaker's implicit guarantee that, if requested, s/he can provide good reasons in support of each of a series of 'validity claims,' assumptions about the speaker's intentions, the moral acceptability of the action under consideration, and the way the world actually is, that are embedded in the speaker's statements. The readiness to engage in a dialogical give and take of such reasons, Habermas argues, is the cement that holds together co-operative social relations and that forms the foundation of more complex social institutions.

Habermas considers moral dialogue, 'moral-practical discourses' in his lexicon, to be a kind of hermeneutic repair practice that becomes necessary when assumptions about the moral acceptability of a plan of action are called into question. Under such circumstances, speakers set aside their everyday communicative orientation (the attitude of *getting things done*, one might say) and engage in a dialogue in which a condition for the possibility of everyday co-operation, in this case, moral agreement, becomes the subject of discussion. (Habermas calls this 'communicative action in

a reflexive attitude.’ (1990, 67) This conception of discourse, as a conversation aimed at resolving conflicts, uncertainties and disagreements that impede everyday co-operation, is a defining feature of moral dialogue, as Habermas understands it.

While Buber and Gadamer acknowledge the interdependence of dialogue and perspective taking, as we have seen above, Habermas investigates this relationship in greater depth. This is especially evident in his efforts to weave Lawrence Kohlberg’s theory of moral development with his own model of language use (see, especially, Habermas 1990). For our purposes, the relationship between dialogue and perspective taking can be seen most clearly in the idea that mutual understanding and reasoned agreement are to be reached through a process of reciprocal perspective-taking. In this model, each participant ‘project[s] himself into the perspectives of all others’ (Habermas 1993, 52) in an effort to reach an understanding of their shared normative obligations, that is, that are equally acceptable to all concerned. Habermas borrows this idea from Kohlberg’s conception of post-conventional moral judgment, which the latter understands as a role taking procedure that can be expected to produce a fully reversible judgment, one where each participant ‘must be willing to live with [her] judgment or decision when [she] trade[s] places with others in the situation being judged.’ (Kohlberg 1981, 199) However, while Kohlberg supposed that this role-taking was conducted privately in the mind of each social actor, Habermas concedes that it must be a public procedure involving explicit spoken dialogue.

The theoretical tools that Habermas uses to develop his model of dialogical interaction, as well as his scholarly standing as a *political* theorist, can obscure the affinities his work has with Buber and Gadamer. For this reason it may be worthwhile to pause for a moment to attend a little more closely to a few of their shared concerns. In the case of Buber and Habermas, for instance, we should note that both direct their attention to the same basic phenomena. The fundamental event of concern for Habermas is the attempt by two or more people to use language to establish a co-operative working relation with one another, the most mundane sort of human action, but one that is dependent on a dialogically mediated meeting of minds. Buber, in addition, insists that his understanding of dialogue is rooted in the mundane: ‘I am concerned with the turbid, the repressed, the pedestrian, with toil and dull contrariness – and with the breakthrough...into nothing exalted, heroic or holy...only into this tiny strictness and grace of every day...’ (1947, 41) Like Habermas, Buber imagines the origin of language to rest in a situation of shared labour, where unanticipated developments may arise that require one to direct a meaningful utterance to the other, where ‘one man turns to the other in order to lead him to take notice of something existing or happening.’ (1965, 117)

In his early engagement with Gadamer's hermeneutics, Habermas was largely concerned with what he perceived to be the culturally conservative implications of the method (Apel, 1971). However, in his later theory of communication he came to rely on a conception of a lifeworld that is rooted in the same hermeneutic and phenomenological traditions from which Gadamer's work emerged. For Habermas, the lifeworld represents a 'culturally transmitted and linguistically organized stock of interpretive patterns,' 'a reservoir of taken-for-granted, of unshaken convictions that participants in communication draw upon in co-operative processes of interpretation.' (1987, 124) In other words, Habermas accepts Gadamer's insight that 'all understanding inevitably involves some prejudice,' (1989, 270) where *prejudice* refers to the 'fore-structure of understanding' that people necessarily bring to a situation when trying to reach understanding with one another, or with a text. There is a striking parallel between Habermas's and Gadamer's thinking when it concerns the failures of understanding that can arise as a result of this fore-structure. For Gadamer, the mark of hermeneutically trained consciousness is its awareness of its own bias and its sensitivity to a text's resistance to the fore-meanings that the interpreter brings to it. For Habermas, it is when the fore-meanings that people bring to a situation impede rather than enable their efforts to co-ordinate their action via a shared understanding that it becomes necessary for them to engage in some kind of discourse, the patient process of reasoned dialogue by which understanding might be restored, a process that bears a striking resemblance, despite the equally striking differences in language, to what Buber calls *genuine dialogue*.

While Buber, Gadamer, and Habermas are obviously not the only significant thinkers in the twentieth century to have investigated the role of dialogical communication in human affairs, they are important for our purposes because of their recognition of the intimate relationship between dialogue and perspective taking. For this reason, we will frequently have occasion to return to their ideas in the discussion that follows, but their work also anticipates later scholarly investigations that tend to highlight the essential role of reciprocal perspective taking in processes of political and cross cultural dialogue. In the next few paragraphs I briefly review these developments in an effort to further motivate this inquiry.

In one instance, recent accounts of cosmopolitan understanding and deliberative democratic decision making have emphasised the idea that perspective taking will be a necessary feature of dialogues aimed at resolving disagreements among groups with differing conceptions of the good in pluralistic societies. The political theorists Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson (1996, 2004) have proposed that deliberative democratic governance requires citizens and their representatives to cultivate what they call 'civic integrity' and 'civic magnanimity,' an ensemble of moral dispositions that, among other things, requires parties to a moral disagreement to acknowledge

and recognise the reasonableness, as well as the merits of positions, with which they disagree, a practice that could scarcely go forward in the absence of reciprocal perspective taking (Wright 2009). Similarly, Habermas (1996, 1998) proposed a model of deliberative democracy in which the deliberations of both elected representatives and members of the judiciary are expected to take the perspectives of the various parties to an issue into account so as to best ensure the justice of legally enacted statutes and the impartiality of judicial rulings.

Scholars of intercultural communication and conflict resolution are similarly concerned with the question of how individuals from different cultural backgrounds might negotiate incompatible social and ethical expectations. In some accounts, perspective taking serves as a vehicle that makes cross-cultural communication and the development of interethnic identities possible. Milton J. Bennett (1993, 1998), a leading theorist in this field, has proposed a developmental model which places increasingly sophisticated forms of perspective taking at the heart of advanced stages of 'intercultural sensitivity'. At the most developed stages of intercultural awareness, an individual is capable of moving freely between a variety of internalised cultural perspectives while deliberating about an appropriate response to a particular situation. Similarly, in his examination of ethical issues arising in contexts of intercultural communication, the philosopher Richard Evanoff (2004) advances a constructivist theory of ethical judgment that is built around dialogical principles of mutual agreement and reciprocal perspective-taking. He also investigates the process of integration by which individuals are able to 'transcend their own cultures and internalize perspectives gained from a different culture' (2006, 426) as a result of repeated intercultural encounters. Finally, in describing the conditions that facilitate the resolution of ethnic conflicts, Wsevolod W. Isajiw (2000) argues on behalf of a principle of identity recognition, according to which opposing parties in an ethnic conflict will only be able to achieve the mutual understanding necessary to resolve their disagreements when they are prepared to engage in a kind of reciprocal learning of the basic assumptions of each other's cultural perspective.

This work differs from that of Buber, Gadamer and Habermas (prior to his turn to the political) in that it seems less concerned with investigating the defining characteristics of dialogue in itself, and more interested in illuminating the function of perspective taking as being a necessary condition for the success of certain kinds of dialogue. In either case, we see a consistent affirmation that dialogue and perspective taking are intimately connected to one another. Despite the readiness of this broad community of scholars to affirm the close relation of dialogue and perspective taking, this affirmation has not been accompanied by careful consideration of how well equipped ordinary human beings might or might not be to engage in these processes. As it happens, though, even as philosophers of dialogue, moral and

political theorists, and scholars of intercultural communication have incorporated the idea that there is an intimate relationship between dialogue, perspective taking and mutual understanding into their theories, scholars in other disciplines have developed theoretical perspectives and obtained empirical insights that offer far reaching insight into how unprepared human beings may be to engage in dialogue with, or to take the perspective of people from different ethnic, cultural or religious backgrounds. In other words, extending such moral concern to people from groups that differ in these ways isn't something that comes naturally to human beings.

In what follows, I shall review the biological theory and social-scientific research that bear on this issue. We start with explanations of the development of social co-operation based on the theory of evolution by natural selection. These theoretical accounts will together suggest that human beings should be expected to possess a basic, innate disposition *against* engaging in dialogically mediated perspective taking with members of ethnically, culturally, or religiously different groups. Following this review of evolutionary theory, we will then briefly consider some empirical findings from the social sciences, predominantly social psychology, where theorists have paid close attention to intergroup relations, dialogue and perspective taking. Together, I shall suggest, these two bodies of research show that philosophical and social scientific theories that are built around the expectation that one group of people will take the perspective of people from different ethnic, cultural or religious groups, *out-group members*, in the lexicon of these disciplines, in effect, they ask human beings to conduct themselves in a manner contrary to species-wide evolved dispositions. However, while requiring citizens to engage in perspective taking is requiring them to do something that comes only with difficulty, it is not, I shall finally suggest, to ask the impossible. In the last section of the essay I will briefly consider research into the conditions under which humankind's evolved propensities might be counteracted, but before I turn to a review of explanations for the origin of social co-operation, it will help if I clarify what I mean by the term 'perspective taking'.

Perspective Taking

There are a variety of cognitive and affective capacities that have, at various times and places, been discussed under the rubric of perspective (or 'role-') taking. When considering capacity as a matter of information processing, moral psychologists have distinguished between three different forms of perspective taking: visual (or spatial), cognitive (or communicative), and affective (Eisenberg et al 1991, Strayer 1987). These consist, respectively, in the abilities to infer what another person who is situated differently than oneself will, or will not, have in her visual field, to infer the beliefs and intentions of another person, and to infer another person's emotional states. We should note here that people can, and routinely do, exercise

such cognitive and affective perspective taking capacities in relation to members of out-groups, but not necessarily in pursuit of mutual understanding. American Christian soldiers at Abu Ghraib Prison in Iraq, for instance, were exercising these capacities when they inferred that desecrating copies of the Qur'an would outrage and demoralise their Muslim captives.

This example points towards the affective capacities of empathy and sympathy, the first of which is often also included under the general heading of perspective taking. A conception of empathy that is widely accepted by moral psychologists holds it to be an affective state in one person that is elicited by, and that is congruent with, an affective state experienced by another (Eisenberg, et. al. 1991; Strayer 1987). Sympathy, in contrast, while also being an affective state in one person that is elicited by the feelings or condition of another, is distinguished by sorrow for, or concern on behalf of, the other (Wispe 1986, 1987). It was these dimensions of perspective taking that were, presumably, absent in Abu Ghraib, in particular, as well as in most instances of violence against others.

Distinguishing between these cognitive and affective dimensions of perspective taking enables me to specify with more precision the disposition with which I am concerned. The capacity in question can be specified as being: *empathetic responses to members of out-groups that are mediated by culturally informed cognitive and affective perspective taking*. The claim I shall be advancing below is that, given the social environment in which the cognitive and affective dispositions of humankind evolved, it is plausible to suppose that people possess an innate disposition *not* to engage in perspective taking so understood.

The discussion of evolutionary biological and social scientific research that follows will focus on perspective taking as it has just been defined. Dialogue on the other hand, will tend to recede into the background in these sections, though we will return to it towards the end of the essay. This shift in emphasis arises because in much of the scholarly literature that I will be considering below, the question that has occupied researchers concerns the origin of the capacities that are involved in reciprocal perspective taking. For evolutionary biologists, such capacities are generally assumed to have evolved prior to linguistic capability. In a similar vein, the social scientists whose work we will consider take the capacity for speech as being a background condition, while investigating the conditions under which people do, or do not, engage in perspective taking.

However, this shift in emphasis should not be taken to mean that the discussion no longer concerns dialogue. This is because a conversation between members of different groups that includes an empathetic response to one another that is mediated by culturally informed cognitive and affective perspective taking will satisfy the

conditions for genuine dialogue (or: hermeneutic consciousness, or moral-practical discourse), not because perspective taking is identical to such dialogue, but because such dialogue *cannot be carried out in separation* from perspective taking.

In support of this claim, consider the following. We have just seen above that, when understood simply as a *cognitive operation*, the capacity to take the perspective of another can be put to malevolent purposes. The perspective taking with which I am concerned, by contrast, is marked by an indelible dimension of empathetic concern for the other. Similarly, not all dialogue is a genuine turning to the other, or a sincere effort to reach understanding. Buber distinguished among monologue (self-centered conversation), technical dialogue (information-centered communication) and genuine dialogue (Arnett 1986). Gadamer contrasted an encounter with the text where ‘the tyranny of hidden prejudices ... makes us deaf to what speaks to us in tradition,’ with one where a ‘hermeneutically trained consciousness’ is aware of its own bias ‘so that the text can present itself in all its otherness and thus assert its own truth against one’s own fore-meanings.’ (1989, 269-270) Similarly, Habermas distinguished between strategic communication (intended solely to influence others), communicative action (that facilitated everyday co-operation) and discourse proper. All three thinkers recognise, more or less explicitly, that genuine dialogue (or: hermeneutic consciousness, or: moral-practical discourse) is inseparable from empathetic responsiveness to another that is mediated by culturally informed cognitive and affective perspective taking.

Insofar as we have reason to suppose that humans possess an innate disposition *not* to engage in such perspective taking with out-group members, we have equal reason to suppose that we will possess an innate disposition to refrain from engaging in genuine dialogue with such people also. To see what these reasons are, let us now turn to evolutionary accounts of human social co-operation.

Evolutionary Biological Explanations of Social Cooperation

William Hamilton and Inclusive Fitness

The first account to which we shall turn is William Hamilton’s (1964) theory of inclusive fitness (also known as ‘kin selection’), which was developed in an effort to explain altruistic behaviour observed among social animals, warning calls among certain species of birds and ground squirrels, for instance. Hamilton’s account suggested that what matters is not how many offspring any particular *organism* leaves behind, but how many copies of a particular bit of DNA are left behind. Genes are just replicators whose function is to generate more copies of themselves. For theoretical purposes, all the physical and behavioural traits that are characteristic of living organisms can be regarded as being so many devices and

strategies that have evolved to allow genes to replicate more efficiently, an idea most successfully popularised by the writings of Richard Dawkins. Reproductive success thus depends not so much on how many offspring survive to reproductive age, but rather on how many of an organism's siblings, nieces and nephews and *their* offspring survive and reproduce as well. From the perspective of genes, it is a matter of indifference whether two direct offspring or four nieces and nephews survive to reproductive age. The number of gene copies in the two instances will, on average, be the same. What Hamilton's insight boils down to is the idea that if an organism possesses a behavioural trait that benefits sufficiently close relatives, the probability is that the organisms benefitted will also possess the genes that hold the code for that particular trait. If the inclusive fitness benefits that are associated with the trait outweigh the costs, it will spread through the population.

For our purposes, the salient feature of Hamilton's theory is that it will account only for co-operative behaviour that is directed towards members of an extended family network. This outcome has been highlighted by a currently influential hypothesis (Brockway 2003; Hrdy 2008), which suggests that cognitive and affective perspective taking are information processing capacities that conferred fitness enhancing benefits on mothers and infants in populations of co-operatively breeding primates by allowing mothers to better interpret and respond to infants' vocal and gestural signals and enabling infants and juveniles to better interpret and predict their caretakers' responses.

If these hypotheses are correct, we should expect that the perspective taking capacities that evolved through the processes of kin-selection would be preferentially directed towards close kin and not towards members of out-groups. In other words, explanations for the origin of human social co-operation that are built on Hamilton's model of inclusive fitness predict a *nepotistic pattern* of empathetic responses to others informed by cognitive and affective capacities for perspective taking. However, Hamilton's model is not all there is to the story, so let us turn now to the next.

Robert Trivers and Reciprocal Altruism

While Hamilton's model of inclusive fitness successfully predicts co-operative behaviour among closely related organisms, it was Robert Trivers (1971) who offered a convincing theoretical model for co-operation among unrelated organisms. He hypothesised that under certain conditions the propensity to engage in simple reciprocal exchanges with unrelated organisms could evolve. In the first instance, the fitness cost to the helping individual would have to be small in comparison to the fitness value of the benefit offered to another. A small price to the helper, in other words, for providing a comparatively larger benefit to the recipient. Further

conditions consisted of many opportunities for reciprocal exchanges, repeated interaction with a limited number of individuals, and symmetrically structured reciprocal situations, that is to say, when interacting pairs can offer one another roughly similar benefits at roughly similar costs. In terms of the biological characteristics of organisms, these conditions translate to such features as a relatively long lifespan, a low rate of dispersal, a high degree of mutual dependence, a relatively weak dominance hierarchy, and the availability of benefits that are made possible only through coalition formation.

Trivers also hypothesised that under such conditions networks of reciprocal relations would most likely be stabilised and sustained through a psychological system built around certain basic emotional responses, such as liking and disliking, moralistic aggression, gratitude, sympathy, guilt and reparative altruism. (1971, 48-51) According to this account, people do not punish cheats, make amends for misdeeds, and prefer to associate with trustworthy individuals because of some conscious or rational calculation of the fitness advantages of such behaviour. Rather, such reactive emotional dispositions evolved simply because getting angry with people who do wrong, feeling guilty about one's own wrongdoing, and being particularly nice to one's friends happened to stabilise networks of reciprocal relations, which, in turn, ultimately provided a fitness advantage for individuals possessing such dispositions. Evidence from the social dynamics of primates (DeWaal 1996, 2005), from the archaeological record (Aiello and Dunbar 1993; Dunbar 1996), as well as from existing foraging societies (Boehm 1999), all support Trivers' suggestion that humankind's early hominid ancestors lived in tightly knit social networks in which behaviour was regulated by moral emotions such as guilt, anger, empathy, gratitude and a sense of fairness.

From Hamilton's (1964) theory of inclusive fitness we learned that the capacities for cognitive and affective perspective taking may have originated as kin selected traits. This would lead us to expect that humans would possess an evolved propensity to exercise these capacities in relation to close relatives, but not members of out-groups. From Trivers' (1971) theory we now see that networks of reciprocal exchange represent another dimension of the social environment exercising selective pressure in favour of developing these capacities. There would be clear fitness benefits for individuals better able to understand the plans and intentions, and better able to predict the choices, emotional responses, and actions of their partners in reciprocal interaction. The so-called Machiavellian intelligence hypothesis (Whiten 1997, 1998) has proposed that humanity's capacities for social cognition evolved for just these kinds of reasons. Trivers' model would thus seem to yield conclusions similar to Hamilton's. We can expect that humans will possess an evolved disposition to engage in perspective taking with others who live in close proximity to themselves,

and with whom they interact on a regular basis, but not with out-group members.

Richard Alexander and Indirect Reciprocity

Trivers' model explained the conditions under which *pairwise* interactions could be expected to evolve. His model received elaboration by Richard Alexander (1985, 1987), whose concept of *indirect* reciprocity extended Trivers' model by incorporating social observation and reputation formation, factors enabling stable networks of exchange to develop among relatively larger groups of individuals. Direct reciprocity takes place when an individual who provides a benefit to another receives a benefit in return from the same individual, whereas indirect reciprocity arises when the individual who provides the initial benefit receives repayment from individuals *other* than the one initially benefitted. One person helps a neighbour to repair damage to his dwelling, for example, and then later receives assistance with a broken tool from the neighbour's brother, where the subsequent assistance is forthcoming only because of the initial offer of assistance. Such patterns are intuitively familiar to us because they are so intimately woven into the fabric of the everyday social life of humans.

Reputation enters into the equation because social observation ensures that an individual's propensity to co-operate, or not, will be known to a wider community. There will be clear fitness benefits for any individual known among members of his immediate community to be a reliable partner in co-operation, as well as costs for those known to be unreliable. Alexander thinks that the fitness benefits accruing to an individual who is generally known to be a generous and reliable person can explain the propensity for what he calls indiscriminate social investment in human communities. By this he means a 'willingness to risk relatively small expenses in certain kinds of social donations to whomever may be needy, partly because of the prevalence and keenness of observation and [partly because of] the use of such acts by others to identify individuals appropriate for later reciprocal interactions.' (1987, 97 and 100) In other words, people's readiness to offer low cost assistance to almost any member of their local community, charitable contributions, for instance, can be explained by the fitness benefits that accrue *indirectly* to people with reputations for such helpful dispositions.

The same conclusions that are reached in relation to Trivers' model of reciprocity can be seen to proceed fairly directly from Alexander's model of indirect reciprocity also. Social observation and reputation formation allow for the development of more extended face to face communities of reciprocal cooperators. However, the evolved psychological dispositions that ensure the extension of moral concern to members of an individual's own community cannot be expected to move that same individual to show comparable concern to persons outside her community.

Alexander (1985) suggests that this difference in attitude towards familiars and strangers can be observed in large urban settings, where the sheer number of inhabitants impedes effective social observation and where the resulting anonymity impedes the successful functioning of reputation formation. The model of indirect reciprocity predicts that under such conditions deviant behaviour would increase, a prediction that seems to receive straightforward support in the problems of social order facing large cities.

In sum, widely accepted evolutionary biological explanations for the origin of social co-operation together suggest that the capacity for empathic response that is mediated by cognitive and affective perspective taking would have evolved because of the selective advantage it offered in an environment marked by prolonged infant dependence, co-operative breeding, and frequent social interaction accompanied by social observation and reputation formation. None of these theories supposes there to have been selective pressure *favouring* the development of a disposition to engage this kind of perspective taking with members of out-groups. In the next section, we shall see that there are compelling reasons to suppose that the social environment of evolutionary adaptation would have exercised selective pressure *against* the evolution of such a disposition.

Intergroup Conflict and the Evolution of Social Co-operation

Let us now turn to the matter of intergroup competition. This feature of the social environment of evolutionary adaptation, I want to claim, would have ensured that natural selection would favour the evolution of an innate psychological propensity that is *opposed* to taking the perspective of out-group members. Paraphrasing the social psychologist Jonathan Haidt, from an evolutionary perspective it would indeed be strange if humankind's evolved social dispositions encouraged people periodically to side with their community's enemies and against their relatives, friends and neighbors (2001, 821).

To find a thinker who is convinced that dispositions supporting social co-operation evolved in response to the selective pressure exercised by intergroup competition, we need look no farther than Darwin himself. In *The Descent of Man* he articulates this hypothesis with admirable clarity:

When two tribes of primeval man, living in the same country, came into competition, if the one tribe included (other circumstances being equal) a greater number of courageous, sympathetic and faithful members, who were always ready to warn each other of danger, to aid and defend each other, this tribe would without doubt succeed best and conquer the other...Selfish

and contentious people will not cohere, and without coherence nothing can be effected. A tribe possessing the above qualities in a high degree would spread and be victorious over other tribes; but in the course of time it would, judging from all past history, be in its turn overcome by some other and still more highly endowed tribe. Thus the social and moral qualities would tend slowly to advance and be diffused throughout the world. (1981/1871, 162-163)

Alexander puts it more bluntly:

Most of the evolution of human social life, and I will argue the evolution of the human psyche, has occurred in the context of within- and between-group competition, the former resulting from the latter...so far as we know, in no other species do social groups have as their main jeopardy other social groups of the same species – therefore, the unending selective race toward greater social complexity, intelligence, and cleverness in dealing with one another. (1987, 79-80)

Social co-operation and morality evolved, in other words, because it gave one group an edge in its competition with others. The ‘more moral’ groups vanquished the less moral. As a result, Alexander (1985) suggests, the evolutionary function of morality *opposes* the moral teachings of modern universal and egalitarian moral philosophies.

More recently, the economist Samuel Bowles (2007, 2009) has developed mathematical models that explore the possibility that ‘parochial altruism’, the propensity of individuals to benefit other members of their group by risking injury and death in hostile encounters with other groups, may have co-evolved with warfare. While acknowledging both the fragmentary nature of existing archaeological and anthropological evidence, as well as the provisional nature of his models, Bowles argues that ‘taking all of the evidence into account, it seems likely that, for many groups and for substantial periods of human prehistory, lethal group conflict may have been frequent enough to support the proliferation of quite costly forms of altruism.’ (2009, 1297) Or, as the philosopher and neuroscientist Joshua Greene (2013) recently put it, ‘morality did not evolve to promote universal cooperation. On the contrary, it evolved as a device for successful intergroup competition.’ (2013, 26)

These evolutionary perspectives on the development of human co-operation all suggest, more or less, that human psychology evolved to regulate networks of co-operative interaction among close kin and small face to face communities of friends and neighbours. They suggest also that the propensity to show empathetic concern is mediated by the cognitive and affective perspective taking that has evolved in this environment. Now if, as Darwin and Alexander suggest, competition between

groups formed a persistent feature of the ancestral social environment, and if, as I am suggesting, this would have fostered the development of a disposition against engaging in perspective taking with members of out-groups, we should expect to find evidence consistent with this evolutionary story.

Early Evidence in the Social Sciences

Let me start with a few classics from the social scientific literature. During the 1950s the sociologist Muzafer Sherif and his colleagues reported on the ease with which prepubescent boys with no prior social contact could be induced to form in-groups with differentiated status positions and reciprocal role expectations. In one remarkable experiment they found that just the opportunity to participate in engaging activities over the period of one week fostered in-group cohesion, and that mere knowledge of the existence of another group in the area elicited strong desires for competitive interaction. When on site counsellors arranged for a series of intergroup contests, agonistic relations quickly developed, leading to such behaviour as name-calling, the stereotyping of out-group members, the destruction of out-group property and raids on out-group living quarters (Sherif et al 1961). During the 1970s Henri Tajfel demonstrated experimentally that people categorised into groups on the basis of factors as trivial as visual judgments or aesthetic preferences were then disposed, when given the opportunity, to behave preferentially towards members of their perceived 'in-group' (Billig and Tajfel 1973; Tajfel et al 1971). These authors emphasise that this tendency to favour the in-group was not, in all circumstances, accompanied by hostility towards the out-group. Such hostility required the presence of additional factors. Philip Zimbardo's Stanford Prison Experiment is a dramatic case in point. In an experimental setting, ordinary young college-age males were induced to adopt the roles, attitudes and self-concepts of authoritarian guards and subjugated prisoners. By being placed in a simulated prison environment and assigned specific roles as guards or prisoners, participants' self-identification with these roles became so complete that the experiment had to be ended early due to concern for the participants' wellbeing. For the authors it was the student-guards' self-perceived gains in power, social status and in-group identification was particularly striking (Haney et al. 1973).

As a final example, let us turn now to Gordon Allport's *The Nature of Prejudice* (Allport 1954), one of this earlier era's definitive explorations of intergroup relations. Universally acknowledged by social psychologists as a foundational work in their discipline (Dovidio et al 2005), this work introduced a series of pioneering insights that, in a way, anticipated Gadamer's own reflections on the role of prejudice in human understanding. Like Gadamer, in defining the concept of *prejudice* Allport attended to the Latin root of the word (*praejudicium*) which meant *precedent*. However, Allport also took into consideration the subsequent English usage, which

meant a preliminary judgment based on incomplete consideration of evidence, as well as the recent vernacular meaning, which attributes positive or negative emotional colouring of such a pre-judgment. For this reason, Allport distinguishes between *prejudgment* and *prejudice*, stating that 'prejudgments become prejudices only if they are not reversible when exposed to new knowledge.' (1954, 9) Both thinkers agree that people unavoidably and necessarily bring fore-meanings or pre-conceptions to their encounters with another, but while Gadamer calls such fore-meanings prejudices, Allport prefers to call them prejudgments. Prejudice, as Allport understands it, 'is an antipathy based upon a faulty and inflexible generalization.' (1954, 9) He emphasises that the prejudgments that form the basis for prejudice, as he understands it, arise as a result of normal and necessary processes of human categorisation, when the human propensity to engage in 'over-categorisation' combines with people's ubiquitous tendency to form their personal identities on the basis of in-group identifications (Allport 1954 Chs. 2 and 3; Fiske 2005).

While there are thus some surprising affinities between Gadamer's and Allport's conceptions of prejudice, their terminological differences may lead to dissonance for readers who accept Gadamer's rehabilitation of the concept of prejudice. Allport's use, which persists in a more or less modified form among researchers who have followed his lead, would seem merely to reinforce the Enlightenment prejudice against prejudice that Gadamer so carefully deconstructs, when, in fact, he is cognisant of the same processes of understanding that prompted Gadamer's reflections. In an effort to minimise the dissonance arising from these two different concepts of prejudice, in what follows, wherever it is stylistically feasible, Allport's notion of prejudice will be rendered as a *prejudiced attitude*.

For our purposes, though, Allport's essential contribution was what has come to be known as the *intergroup contact hypothesis*, a statement of the conditions under which interaction between members of differing groups is likely to result in a reduction of prejudiced attitudes. In relation to this hypothesis, it is worth noting here not just that there are further affinities between Allport and Gadamer's thinking, but also that we can see a connection with Habermas's work too.. In relation to Gadamer's notion of hermeneutic consciousness we might say that the intergroup contact hypothesis identifies the conditions under which one group's sensitivity to the resistance offered by the being of another to the fore-meanings they have brought to a social encounter may be enhanced, and as a result of this people may be brought to an awareness of the inadequacies of those fore-meanings to disclose the meaning of the others as they really are. For Habermas, the intergroup contact hypothesis can be seen to specify the conditions under which people from different groups can become aware of how the fore-meanings they bring from their inherited lifeworld to the social encounter impede, rather than enable, efforts to co-ordinate

their action in pursuit of a common goal. It is precisely in such circumstances, according to his theory of communication, that people may be prepared to engage in the deliberative processes by which mutual understanding may be fostered. These brief observations suggest that the insights into intergroup relations that emerge from the tradition of research launched by Allport's work are likely to have direct relevance for philosophers of dialogical and intercultural understanding.

Below I will consider how findings that are related to this hypothesis have a bearing on the problem of taking the perspective of outgroup members, but before moving to avenues through which the problem of prejudiced attitudes may be managed, I would like first to review recent social psychological research findings that build on his legacy and that are consistent with the predictions emerging from evolutionary perspectives on the development of human co-operation.

Recent Evidence in the Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations

To begin, in an extensive discussion of the literature examining intergroup bias, Davido and Gaertner (2010) review the work of scores of researchers who have found that intergroup dynamics affect social cognition in a variety of ways. For instance, once in- and out-group membership has been established, people tend mostly to favour those in-group members who fit the group prototype. Further, in-group members are believed to be more capable of expressing uniquely human emotions than are out-group members. In addition, when provided with information about in-group and out-group members, people tend to process information about in-group members more deeply than that about out-group members. Researchers also report that information about in-group members is also retained with more detail than that about out-group members. Further, people tend to remember better how in-group members are similar to themselves and how out-group members are different than themselves. Finally, people tend to remember less positive information about out-group members. All of these findings are consistent with the hypothesis that human moral dispositions evolved to secure in-group co-operation in an environment marked by intergroup conflict.

This feature of the evolutionary account leads to the further prediction that the level of threat a person experiences in relation to a particular out-group will be related to their readiness to take on the perspective of out-group members and to respond to them with empathy. Research outcomes relevant to this prediction are found in a widely cited publication (Stephan and Stephan, 2000) that introduces an *integrated threat theory of prejudice*. With this theory, Walter G. Stephan and Cookie W. Stephan seek to develop a systematic explanation of the relationship between in-group members' perception of threat from an out-group and the likelihood

that in-group members will express a prejudiced attitude towards the out-group. They weave the efforts of over a dozen different investigators into a theoretical model that is constructed around four different dimensions of out-group threat: *realistic threats* to the in-group's political or economic power; *symbolic threats* to the in-group's religious beliefs, cultural values or social norms; *intergroup anxiety* arising from feelings of personal threat experienced during interactions with out-group members; and *negative stereotypes* which, because they create expectations of aversive interaction with out-group members, tend to elicit experiences that foster anxiety and reinforce perceived threats. The authors review a series of studies investigating the relationships between these four components of threat and the attitudes of participants' from a variety of cultures towards various out-groups. In every case, for at least three of the four threat components, and frequently for all four, statistically significant relationships were found amongst participants' reported levels of threat and the likelihood that they would endorse prejudiced attitudes towards out-groups.

This evidence is indirect, of course. A propensity to favour one's in-group in a variety of ways while harbouring prejudiced attitudes towards out-groups is not the same as refusing to engage in genuine dialogue with members of that group. An association between perceived threat and the likelihood that a person will endorse stereotypical and prejudiced attitudes towards out-groups is different from a refusal to engage in perspective taking by the members of such groups. Nonetheless, the relations among these propensities are intuitively plausible. It is hard to imagine that prejudiced attitudes towards others would *not* impede dialogue with them. It is equally implausible to suppose that perceiving others to be a threat would not obstruct a person's capacity to respond to them empathetically. Consistent with these intuitions, Cikara and Van Bavel (2014) review recent behavioural and neuroscience research that has found people to show lower (and sometimes no) empathetic response to the physical and emotional pain of out-group members, if compared to their responses to in-group members.

The Intergroup Contact Hypothesis

Allport (1954) hypothesised that intergroup contact that took place when four conditions were satisfied was likely to lead to reductions in prejudiced attitudes and stereotyping. Those conditions were a) equal status between the groups, b) common goals, c) intergroup cooperation, and, d) authoritative sanction for the contact. Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) recently demonstrated, through an exhaustive and methodologically sophisticated meta-analysis of 713 independent samples from 513 studies, that when Allport's conditions were satisfied by the research model, robust and statistically significant decreases in prejudiced attitudes occurred among participants. In further analyses of the same dataset, Pettigrew and Tropp

(2008) and Tropp and Pettigrew (2005) determined that reductions in anxiety and the exercise of empathy and perspective taking were the factors most responsible for these decreases.

This finding brings us back to the central concerns of this essay, the intimate relation that dialogue has with perspective taking and humankind's evolved propensity to withhold these forms of moral recognition from members of out-groups. Here, we should remember that while empathy can consist of a kind of feeling, it can also consist of an imaginative placing of oneself in the other's situation and the experiencing of the world from that vantage point. While Pettigrew and Tropp (2005, 2008) show that empathy and perspective taking are important factors in leading to reductions in prejudiced attitudes, their analyses do not distinguish cognitive and affective forms of empathy. By contrast, C. Daniel Batson et al (1997) do keep these forms of empathy distinct in a series of experiments that investigated whether engaging in cognitive empathy (i.e., perspective taking) would affect people's *felt* empathy towards members of stigmatised groups. They found that when participants were instructed to imagine how out-group members feel when recounting the difficulties they experienced as a result of their marginal status (i.e., to engage in perspective taking), they were more likely to report empathetic feeling in relation to these individuals than those participants who received instructions to listen to the same accounts 'objectively'.

The experimental design of Batson's research disentangles perspective taking from face to face dialogue. Given the close relation that Buber, Gadamer, and Habermas all suggest is to be found between dialogue and perspective taking, we would expect to find that intergroup contact that consisted of face to face dialogue would also significantly reduce the incidence of prejudiced attitudes towards out-group members. One clear indicator of such contact would be friendship. Buber, we should remind ourselves, considered friendship to be the preeminent form of dialogical relation: 'the true inclusion of one another by human souls' (1947, 119). Tropp and Pettigrew (2005) review the findings of a number of researchers which indicate that cross-group friendships were 'consistently and negatively associated with prejudice' and that 'feelings of closeness to individual out-group members correspond with less prejudice towards the out-group as a whole' (2005, 1146). Consistent with these findings, Aberson et al (2004) disentangle the effects of *explicit* and *implicit* biases while also controlling for social desirability bias. Their findings show that while explicit reports of out-group bias did not appear to be strongly related to participants' reported cross-group friendships, implicit measures of unconscious bias clearly showed reduced incidences of prejudiced attitudes towards out-group members among participants who reported cross-group friendships.

In their monograph *Improving Intergroup Relations*, W.G. Stephan and C.W. Stephan (2001) review a wide variety of strategies that are thought to reduce prejudiced attitudes, stereotyping and discriminatory behaviour, and the results of research that was aimed at measuring their effects. Space constraints rule out a detailed review, so I will consider here just the two most closely connected to the concerns of this essay. The first is dialogues between groups with a history of tension or conflict. Such *intergroup dialogues* involve trained leaders and clearly established rules for conversation. Consistent with Buber's (1947, Ch. 1) insistence that genuine dialogical encounters depend upon unreserved engagement, participants in intergroup dialogues are encouraged to express their thoughts and feelings honestly and openly. Stephan and Stephan (2001, Ch. 5) report that such dialogues typically satisfy the conditions Allport (1954) identified this as being necessary for successful intergroup contact, and that one outcome frequently documented by researchers is an increase in participants' ability to take the perspective of out-group members and to empathise with their feelings.

A second strategy relates to Buber's (1947, Ch. 3) thoughts on education. Stephan and Stephan (2001, Ch. 7) discuss *co-operative learning groups*, an educational technique in which students are placed in learning groups of four to six individuals, are assigned a task which requires face to face interaction and the successful completion of this task fosters interdependent relations among the students. Research shows that this educational strategy achieves superior academic outcomes if compared to traditional, individualised, and competitive approaches to teaching. Further, students in co-operative learning groups not only report more positive feelings towards racial and ethnic out-groups, but also tend to form significantly more cross-group friendships than do students in comparison groups.

The research literature on intergroup contact is quite large and is marked by a variety of competing theoretical perspectives and explanatory frameworks. For our purposes, the rich diversity of perspectives and divergences among them need not concern us. In relation to the themes that motivate this essay, what this research tradition shows, firstly, is that humans are capable of taking the perspective of, and responding empathetically to, members of out-groups, but it also confirms that the development and exercise of these capacities requires very specific conditions that, typically, must be carefully and intentionally cultivated. Both intergroup dialogue and co-operative learning groups, for example, require *trained leadership* and *robust institutional support* (Stephan and Stephan 2001) if the desired goals are to be the result.

Concluding Observation

To draw these reflections to a close, let us pause for a moment with the following observation: the social-scientific research we have reviewed shows that the conditions under which people seem to be willing to show empathetic responses to members of out-groups, and that are mediated by culturally informed perspective taking, bear a close structural similarity to the conditions for which these capacities originally evolved. Let us recall that from the evolutionary accounts of the origin of social cooperation we learned that this nexus of mental capacities evolved because of the selective advantage it offered members of social groups who depended on each other for child rearing, the exchange of benefits that were valuable for ensuring subsistence, and defence against both human enemies and animal predators. Within such groups we can see that all four of the conditions for Allport's intergroup contact hypothesis are satisfied: relatively equal status among group members, common goals, co-operative pursuit of those goals, and an authoritative sanction for such co-operation (which would never be lacking *within* the group). Similarly, in Sharif et al.'s (1961) Robbers' Cave Experiment, mutual antagonism between the two groups of boys was only reduced and replaced by co-operative attitudes when the boys were encouraged to engage in the pursuit of intrinsically desirable goals, the achievement of which required the co-operation of both groups. Consider, finally, the quotidian function to which Buber and Habermas attribute the origin of language and dialogue, one person drawing another's attention to some feature of a situation, a shared understanding of which will allow them to achieve a jointly desired goal. What social psychological experimenters seem to have done is to find ways to insert people from different groups, each of which harbours certain prejudiced attitudes towards the other, into situations that encourage them simply to *work together* at some task that is meaningful and valuable to all parties concerned. Authentic dialogue and the mutual perspective taking this entails, it would seem, rest on a foundation of shared endeavour undertaken in an environment that encourages mutual understanding.

The far reaching ramifications of this insight are vividly illustrated in Ashutosh Varshney's (2001) study 'Interethnic Conflict and Civil Society,' which seeks to answer a straightforward question: during times of inter-ethnic crisis in India, why do some cities experience convulsive violence between Hindu and Muslim groups, while other cities with similar populations of these two groups do not? The answer Varshney offers is remarkable in its simplicity. Cities with traditions of interethnic engagement structured by formal associations of workers, tradespeople, businessmen, and educated professionals (such as teachers, doctors and lawyers) were able to regulate inflammatory rumours spread by local news organisations and opportunistic politicians, whereas in cities that lacked such organisations, these factors led to an escalation in conflict and violence. Writing as a political scientist,

Varshney has emphasised that these organisations have constituted an interethnic *civil society* but, for our purposes, the salient feature of these organisations is the extent to which they also satisfy the conditions specified by Allport's intergroup contact hypothesis. It is plain to see that members of such associations participate as equals who co-operate with one another in the pursuit of common goals. The nature of the 'authoritative sanction' for the contact is more complex, involving, as it undoubtedly does, the social and political status of the organisations themselves, the market advantages they offer, as well as local history and cultural tradition.

The example of the urban civic associations that Varshney investigates also provides indirect evidence. He does not describe the social interaction within these groups in sufficiently fine grained detail to allow us to know whether genuine dialogue, hermeneutic consciousness or moral-practical discourses are taking place in them. At the same time, by virtue of knowing that they tend to satisfy the conditions specified by the intergroup contact hypothesis, the kind of research we have considered above allows us to predict with some confidence that members of such associations probably do engage in the kind of perspective taking characteristics of such forms of conversation.

The conclusion to which these considerations point is that while humans are innately disposed to avoiding engagement in the perspective taking characteristics of genuine dialogue, hermeneutic consciousness, and moral-practical discourses, this disposition can be overridden. We have good reasons to suppose that formally structured patterns of interaction: experimental, academic, and civic, that encourage and reward social interaction between members of different groups can foster such perspective taking. Natural selection need not be destiny, but resisting our evolved heritage takes no small amount of time, effort, and ingenuity.

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