

## Chapter 6

### BLEEDING HEARTS AND BLOODY MINDS REASON IN ACTION IN ALTRUISTIC BENEVOLENCE

#### Introduction

Kant argued that instrumental rationality was not the only foundation for conduct. Quite the reverse. Charitable acts were examples of a moral, rational logic, a logic of practical reason focussed on a hope for a moral world in which all humans would be treated as ends and not as means only. Clearly such charitable acts, assuming even that they exist in reality, are not what is meant by a charitable act governed by the heart. The self legislation to undertake a dutiful act in the conduct towards another resulting in practical laws of the head is not to be confused with the law of the heart that dictates other-directed behaviour. The latter is based on affects and not rational self-legislation under a universal law of reason or even rational deliberation.

Nor are charitable acts dictated by the heart to be confused with ethical conduct towards another with whom you share the same impulses. For example, when Fichte in Book III of *The Vocation of Man* advocates furthering the goals of others to the “utmost of thy power” and to honour their freedom and take up their purposes as thine own, this conduct is dictated neither by the head or the heart, but by impulses and the will. Further, they are only directed at those beings who belong to one’s own Volk and who have the same impulses. That is why those others are treated as free and independent. But acts of self-giving to one’s own kith and kin are only marginally altruistic, if they are altruistic at all.

Hegel in the section of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*<sup>1</sup> dealing with “The law of the heart and the frenzy of self-conceit,” is concerned with affect motivated conduct which is seen to be rational because it is governed, not by impulses which dictate the will and then conceptualized by reason, nor a self-legislated law of reason where reason dictates the will and reason’s goal is to express and realize a moral end. Hegel is concerned with charitable acts towards others dictated by a feeling towards the other, a feeling which is universalized.

In this chapter I want to make two sets of claims. Both sets of claims concur in the conviction that Hegel got it right. Both say that the situation Hegel depicts in the phenomenology of experience is actually found in experience. The first set of claims are about perceptions and understanding and has two parts. First, my account of what Hegel depicts represents what Hegel depicts. Second, the kind of activity Hegel depicts is actually found in experience. The second set relate to the dynamics of that experience, the “logic” of its development, the dynamic of what happens. Again, one part of the claim is that the logic of the process I describe represents the dialectical process in the *Phenomenology*.<sup>2</sup> Secondly, for those who have participated in the experience of humanitarian organizations or who have studied their behaviour, Hegel’s account makes sense of that experience. We become self-conscious

about what happens in humanitarian activities. Though the account does not explain the dynamics in any causal sense, our sense of humanitarian activities is forever altered.

## **Humanitarianism in the World**

The humanitarian acts that Hegel is concerned with are acts in which the individual, through humanitarian communities, offers aid to the needy. Now those familiar with the work of humanitarian organizations are very impressed with their dedication and amazing work in what are often arduous circumstances. But one also comes to know how competitive that world is, how, for, example, with the publicity on the “million” Hutu refugees who crossed into Goma in Zaire in July of 1994 fleeing from Rwanda, over 200 agencies flocked to the Zairean refugee camps to assist the refugees, how they did so oblivious to the fact that 10-20% of these “refugees” were genocidal killers, how the more sophisticated of them vied to get a location next to the camp entrance so they would be more likely to get publicity from the hordes of arriving TV crews, how they exaggerated the numbers they served, and how they self-righteously criticize international agencies, international peace forces, and local governments according to their own moral principles but seemed incapable or largely blind to understanding the values and norms that govern the conduct of government and international agencies and organizations.

Let me begin offer a midrash to illustrate this loose generalization. I got off the train at Kingston in April of 1995 and was met by a soldier who was to drive me to the military base in Kingston to interview an army officer. He was young, hardly out of his teens, if not still a teenager. I asked him if he had ever served abroad. He told me that he had. “Where?” I asked. “Rwanda” came the answer. From a casual interest in filling the air with conversation in the long drive to the military base, my attention suddenly increased fivefold. After some preliminary explorations of what he did there and what he saw, I asked him what was the most important lesson he learned from serving in Rwanda. “I’ll never give another dollar to any overseas charity again,” he answered. I was surprised. He had witnessed the greatest failure in the UN history since Palestine was partitioned, he had watched UN peacekeepers turn tail and abandon a country just when a genocide of a million people was beginning, and what he had learned was not to give money to charity. “Why?” I asked, though when I heard the answer I was no longer as surprised as I was when the answer seemed so divorced from my own preoccupations about Rwanda.

“We were living in crowded barracks, living on meagre rations because the UN had not yet sent over funds for us. We were working in all our spare time in orphanages and helping the Rwandese kids. In contrast, the guys working in the international charities were living in big houses that they rented and which increased the rents for the locals. They drove jeeps with all the bells and whistles. They ate in the local restaurants all the time. They were always suspicious of us UN peacekeepers. Even worse, they were snobs; they wouldn’t even give us soldiers the time of day. But what was the worst, they could not get along. They are supposed to care about people, care about serving people. I drove my commander to the weekly briefings when they came to General Dallaire’s headquarters. As far as I am

concerned, from what I saw, they were only interested in glory for themselves and their own charity. They fought with each other like cats and dogs. They couldn't even cooperate with each other to organize their work. Most of the energy was used up in fighting with the government, with us, with the UN representatives, and, most of all, with each other. If they were in the army, they would have been shot or .....[He said something else but I did not recognize the army slang.] They should have all been sent home."

Giving due allowance for the exaggerations involved in the account, what he described was recognizable. Here are charities committed to helping others in a remote setting, where cooperation is critical to ensure the delivery of food and shelter, sanitation and health services to those displaced by the civil war, yet personal egos and the concern with the status of one's own charity often undercut the good work in which these charities were engaged.

Individuals of good will who have a genuine sympathy for the people they help, people who need clothes and food, need roofs over their head and inoculations to prevent ravages like cholera, these individuals who serve on the front lines of crises to deliver these services and who save the lives of millions every year, are also competitive and conflictual if not downright petty and catty. In my experience, the politics of humanitarianism makes university politics look like child's play.<sup>3</sup>

Is there any connection between the motives driving the humanitarian service and the frenzy that occurs among competing humanitarian agencies? What is the relationship between the seeking of publicity and humanitarianism? Is it just a matter of being the only way to get the money to keep the charitable work going? Why are "facts" so easily deformed if they might interfere with the enhancement of humanitarian service?

Does a phenomenological account allow us to "understand" this apparent contradiction between the good will and sympathetic concern for those served and what appears to be the bad will and unsympathetic attitude to others from different charities or from the local government or representing UN agencies? More specifically, does Hegel's phenomenological account in the section of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, the section entitled "The law of the heart and the frenzy of self-conceit," allow us to "understand" this phenomenon in some sense?

### **Differentiating Humanitarianism**

There are various types of humanitarianism. For example, there are "rescuers", individuals who take great risks to save others from certain death, as in genocide, not because they were related or because they knew those who they saved before they acted. In the empirical study of rescuers, they do not go through any reflection to determine whether such an act should be governed by a personal maxim that could become a universal moral law for all mankind. In fact, they do not seem to act out of any sense of external duty to a principle. In spite of the vast amount of counter evidence, they believe that anyone would [NOTE, not should] do what they did. They almost inevitably claim that what they

did was nothing special or heroic, a statement that does not seem to be made out of false modesty.<sup>4</sup>

Further, rather than their acts being an expression of an act of freedom, there seems to be a necessity to their actions. They almost always say that they had no choice. They had to do what they did. So it does not seem to be a rational principle, nor an impulse of the moment that dictates their action. The risk taken to save another does not seem to be either the act of a rational or an impulsive will. They seem to be genuine acts of the heart to help another in a situation in which there is often great risk to themselves.

Though such humanitarian actions bear a resemblance to the ones Hegel is concerned with in the section on the law of the heart, acts of heroic rescue in which one takes a genuine risk of one's own life for the sake of another are different. Humanitarian heroism is not to be confused with humanitarian service. The latter usually involves very little risk. More importantly, humanitarian heroism is the exception, while humanitarian service is the norm. Self risk for another is relatively rare in spite of the beliefs of those undertaking the action. Most importantly, acts of rescue at risk to oneself are almost always acts of individuals; no communal sympathy is involved. Precisely because of its exceptionalism and its individualism, heroic humanitarianism if it is to be examined phenomenologically, belongs to the phenomenological examination of an individual self-conscious individual who is sure of him or herself, and not to the phenomenological account of reason in general.

Thus, the phenomenological account of humanitarian service is not intended to be an account of all humanitarian acts, nor even of all acts that can be universalized under reason, but only those dictated by the heart rather than the will or "pure" reason.

### **Adam Smith and the Scottish Sentimentalists**

Whether Hegel had the Scottish sentimentalists in mind is a matter of debate, but they seem to fit the role.<sup>5</sup> For example, in Adam Smith there are two foundations for benefiting others. One is where an individual governs his behaviour only from his self interest and their own advantages, but through the law of the invisible hand of economics, that self interest turns into the benefit of all.

It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard from their own interest. We address ourselves not to their humanity but to their self-love, and never talk to them of necessities, but of their advantage. (Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, New York: Kelley, 1966 (1759), p. 47.

But another motive governed human action towards another. For "there are some principles in his nature which interest him in the fortunes of others, and render their happiness necessary to him, though he derives nothing from it except the pleasure of seeing it. Of this kind is pity or compassion, the emotion which we feel for the misery of others." (Op. Cit.) The humane feel this emotion with the most "exquisite sensibility" but it is common to all of humanity.

There are two feelings and one rational product that results from such motives. The first feeling is pity, what we ourselves feel when we observe another in trouble. Compassion is our fellow feeling for another human being, what we feel when we put ourselves in the position of another human being who is in trouble. This benevolence is the same for every human being, though experienced to different degrees, and is a product of the logic of the situation rather than an empathetic identification with the sufferer. We do not enter into the feelings of the other, but into the situation in which the other finds him or herself.

From this pity and compassion alone we do not get the sympathy that produces humanitarianism.<sup>6</sup> That requires a community of sentiments, of sharing the same feelings of pity and compassion with others. That shared sentiment based on feelings of pity and compassion leads to action, normally referred to as humanitarianism. The logic of the situation of both the victim **and** the rescuer, and the communication among them all, determine whether there is a shared sentiment. This shared sentiment is the prime, though not the exclusive, motive governing the actions of those involved in NGOs serving refugees abroad or the dispossessed and displaced generally. When it is difficult to put oneself in another's shoes, then the sympathy evoked is bound to be quite weak. This is the law of the heart, that our pity and compassion will be felt in direct proportion to the familiarity with the pain and pleasure felt and in inverse proportion to the difficulty of identifying with the pain of suffering or the pleasure of relief.

That is why this feeling of sentiment which unites our actions is not an individualistic response. It is a self-conscious one in that we are required to go through a rational exercise to determine the degree of sympathy based on the sentiments of pity and compassion evoked. The response is governed by the logic of the situation which necessarily results in the sentimental response. Though different individuals may feel the pity and compassion to different degrees, the logic of the situation necessitates that we all experience that same pity and compassion. Further, self-consciousness is now operating on a communal rather than an individual level. Thirdly, the language of humanitarianism is categorical - the situation and the common sympathy evoked demand our response.

### **Relationship of the Law of the Heart to Pleasure and Necessity**

In Hegel's account of the "law of the heart and the frenzy of self-conceit", the preceding section of the phenomenology is entitled "pleasure and necessity". The divided, self-alienated world of the individual who seeks to remake himself by immersing himself in the world of pleasure, is concretized by the professor who abandons his books and the isolation of his study for the fleshpots of the world and the pleasures of the flesh. It is Faust in his encounter with Gretchen and Gretchen with him.

This section of the phenomenology is followed by its ostensible opposite. From self seeking hedonism of romantic love, the phenomenological account turns to the giving of the self in service to another. How did the hedonistic search for pleasure in the world end up, not simply in nihilism and the annihilation of the self, but in serving others?

In the hedonistic search for oneself in the life of pleasure, one found that pleasure in another self-conscious human being - in the search for sexual satisfaction, for example, or in the search for finding the imaginary mate as one's true love. The latter self seeks to find himself in another with whom there will be a shared oneness. But because a person only sought pleasure for himself or sought to find the realization of an ideal in pleasure, all that is achieved is ephemeral. The pleasure was momentary and evaporated. This was true not only for Faust seeking hedonistic pleasure, but for Gretchen, who wanted pleasure in the unity of two as one. Individual self-satisfaction and the search for the identity of two as one, sex and love, are at odds. The necessary conflict of sex versus love leads, not to the end of uniting two as one, but to the sundering not only of the relationship, but of the sense of oneself altogether. One is shattered by the collapse.

But this is only one half of the trajectory. The other half is that sex naturally (and often, at least before birth control) results in pregnancy. The two are united as one in the body of another, a child. So instead of the personal self satisfaction of sex that Faust seeks, instead of the personal self satisfaction of love that Gretchen seeks, Faust finds death and Gretchen finds a new life to which she can serve and which serves as the archetype of identification with and service to others.

So instead of seeking a unity of the self with another as the goal, in the section on "the law of the heart and the frenzy of self-conceit", we begin to act where we already feel that unity, where that unity is the starting point not the goal, where feelings produce the unity, but the unity is not dependent on the feelings but on the logic of a certain situation. The pursuit of pleasure for oneself in and through another will turn into the pleasure one gets in serving another.

### **The Law of the Heart**

In humanitarian service, in the pleasure one obtains in serving another, one's actions are not determined by choice but by necessity. We go to serve where natural disasters or human wars demand we go. We are servants of necessity rather than exemplifications of personal freedom. Further, this necessity is not simply a contingently external one. It is a categorical internal necessity. When I go into humanitarian service, it is because I am commanded to do it. My heart dictates that I must go. The ancient Egyptians said of their slaves that they had no hearts because, as for many peoples, the heart signifies the personality itself. For inhumanitarians, "This discovery, which is as positive as a law of physics, authorizes him (the Egyptian) to treat the serf like an inanimate object." <sup>7</sup> The law of the heart in humanitarianism dictates that we offer service to any human in need.

There are three sides to this internal necessity in the law of the heart. The law is universal in applying to all humans; every human is identified as having a heart and, therefore, worthy of heartfelt service. The law is necessary in that the feeling of response is said to be in all humans, though the feeling may, in actuality, be experienced to different degrees depending on the situation and the responder's identification with the situation. Thirdly, the law of the heart is universal not only in being universal in its application, not only in being universal in those who experience it, but it is universal in characterizing

what in essence it means to be human. The law of the heart has ethical ontological status. The law of the heart defines who a human being is in essence, someone who has sympathy for every human being and who expresses that sympathy in action.

This means that every human being not only experiences this sympathy, but the law demands not only that we target those for whom the sympathy is felt, but we try to actualize ourselves as sympathetic human beings. We do so by trying to act upon our sympathies. And we do so in a real world in which our hearts bleed precisely in situations in which bloody mindedness is so extant, in situations governed seemingly by heartlessness, in situations where refugees, the displaced, the unwanted, are persecuted, neglected and treated as having no hearts, as being not human.

Immediately, a contradiction is encountered between the universal presumptions of the law of the heart and the situations attended to by the actions dictated by the law of the heart. There, the law of the heart will be enormously challenged by the situations it meets. Superheart encounters reality, “a reality which is the opposite of what is to be realized”. (Hegel, 369) The reality contradicts the law and the rational assertion about the universal character of humanity because the reality reveals humans as heartless, uncaring towards those close to them never mind distant strangers. The law of the jungle seems to prevail wherein life is experienced as “nasty, brutish and short.” It seems to be a heartless, dog-eat-dog world.

Against the positive presumption that all humans have a heart is the demonstration of heartlessness as well as the presumption by the heartless that those who are the victims are worthy of that victimization because they lack a heart, lack a human personality. But in the negativity of the victimizers, they seem to share the same presumption, that humans consists of those who share common sentiments, differing only in those entitled to enter into membership in the human club, that is, in whether its membership is restrictive or all inclusive. The humanitarians, thus, have a twofold task, to give witness to the law of the heart by treating the victims as part of humanity and relieving their suffering. At the same time they must, like Christian missionaries, convince those who inflict that cruelty that they and their victims share a common humanity. If they do not succeed in the latter task, the presumption that all humans are dictated by the law of the heart will be undermined. Further, in caring for the suffering and appealing to the victimizers, they must always deal with those who inflict cruelty as if they had a heart and potentially could care for their victims. Thus, Africa Watch appealed to President Habyarimana of Rwanda, the head of the regime whose actions had already been labelled genocidal by an international human rights commission in January of 1993, to ensure these abuses stopped. It was akin to appealing to the head of the mafia to ask him to prevent criminal activity. But what else could the bleeding hearts do since the use of coercive force to counter the abuses was ruled out by definition.

In this activity, both in caring for the victims and in the form of address to the victimizers, the humanitarians express “the earnestness of a high purpose which seeks its pleasure in displaying the *excellence* of its own nature, and in promoting the welfare of mankind.” (Hegel 370) In contrast to the levity of the hedonist who seeks pleasure as an individual, the humanitarians try to demonstrate in their

actions “the universal pleasure of all hearts,” in which the pleasure is to be found in following the law of the heart, and doubled when following the law of the heart leads to the relief of suffering.

### **The Encounter with Heartlessness**

But the action is *undisciplined*. The humanitarians revel in voluntarism, celebrate individualism as the mode through which the essence of all of us as heartfelt will be demonstrated. Reality is otherwise inclined. For the law of the jungle demonstrates a contrary inclination, but without any self-consciousness. There is no intention on the part of those inflicting cruelty to make the law they live by universal. It is just what they accept as the given. They do not even revel in transgressing the law of the heart because they have no real consciousness of the law of the heart as a contending order. They inflict cruelty simply because that is the way of the world, but without that way being even thought about or reflected upon.

So how do the victimizers cope with the do-gooders. By treating them as irrelevant, a mere cover for other self-enhancing goals. The humanitarians and their activities are not real, but illusionary. They provide no counter-authority to challenge the victimizers’ view of the world. In fact, the cruel exploiters will often pay lip service to caring humanitarianism and human rights, cooperating with the humanitarian agencies as they cynically exploit them to suck foreign aid into the country and to ensure these agencies provide another source of exploitation through robbery, fraud and lucrative contracts, such as those for trucking aid supplies to the homeless in camps. Thus, the victimizers, even when they superficially conform to the law of the heart, demonstrate its falsity as a universal, because their satisfaction is not obtained in conforming with the law but in the use of the law for self-interested purposes. Rather than revealing by this conformity that they are in essence full of heart, the victimizers seem to demonstrate the reverse.

But in following appearances, they encounter those for whom the law of the heart is the essence of who they are. And the victimizers at the very least become self-conscious that the law of the jungle does not seem to govern everyone. The victimizers witness genuine dedication, deep and sustained caring for the suffering of others, and a sense of identification with victims rather than victimizers.

If there is some degree of small victory with the victimizers, it does not come free of cost to the humanitarians. For in the victimizers coming to recognize that the law of the heart governs the actions of at least some people, the humanitarians also accept that the victimizers are not governed by the law. But even if the law of the heart counters contradictions, the humanitarians carry on in spite of that reality with a determination to establish the law of the heart by their actions even if the law is not a description of reality. The humanitarian “carries out the law of *his* (my emphasis) heart,” (Hegel 372) and does so *as if* it were universal, experiencing satisfaction and pleasure in giving him or herself over to the authority of that law.

### **The Alienation of the Law from the Heart**



That has its costs. For instead of being a descriptive law of the character of pity and compassion in all humans translated into action based on sentiment, the law is not a law of the heart at all, but an external norm dictating to the individual what ought to be the case. Further, what the heart feels is now a matter of indifference since the action is no longer based on a law of the *heart*. Thus, qua ordinance, the law is no longer *his* ordinance; only the responsibility for realization is his. Does he obey the law of the jungle or the law of sentiment which is no longer the law of his heart? He now has a choice, and, thereby, even for him, the law of sentiment has lost the universality of its obligatory force. What was once ethically required was also demanded by his nature. Now it is merely a matter of choice.

There is also a benefit. In freeing himself from the necessity of the law, by making the law depend entirely on his choice and commitment in carrying it out, he is no longer just a particular expression of the law. Quite the reverse. The law becoming a universal now depends on him. He in turn is raised to a universal through expressing the law. Instead of a necessary particular, the humanitarian has become a free universality. His essential character is no longer acting true to his feelings, but acting so his own feelings become the norm. The humanitarian has posited himself as free, and reality as an open possibility. Hence, he **and** reality are no longer governed by necessity but, rather are essentially free.

But if he now suborns himself to the universal, it has only been by making himself a particular opposed to the universal. For before, every heart was supposed to feel the same way, and the actions based on those feelings were supposed to be what anyone would do. Now, however, the action is what he has chosen to do; “only the heart of *this* individual has placed its reality in its deed, which expresses for him *his-being-for-self or his pleasure*.” (Hegel 373) The effect on the victimizers or the victims is clear. Others who are not humanitarian have no need to see themselves as carrying out what was once called the law of the heart. Quite the reverse, since the humanitarian defines reality in his own way, as an order dictated by *his* sentiment, so they find that their passions and feelings, directed towards exploiting those who they can, is as valid a position as that of any feely.

It is the effect on the humanitarian that is critical. Whereas before, he believed that the victimizers were essentially good and governed by the same feelings of pity and compassion as he, now he finds their behaviour, and whatever is in their hearts that govern their actions, detestable. Everything he formerly believed that governed the humanitarian is now alien to him. The law is **not** universal in applying to all humans, so why should every human be worthy of heartfelt service? The emotional response to the same situation is **not** universal. Thirdly, the law of the heart is **not** universal in characterizing what in essence it means to be human. The whole foundation of the humanitarian’s world view as the basis for his actions has crumbled in its encounter with reality and the effort to ensure that the law actually governed all of reality.

The situation is even worse for him than he knows. For once his beliefs were based on the

immediacy of his feelings and the belief that those feelings were held by everyone and were applicable to everyone. Now the belief is simply a postulated feeling, but with no basis in universality, and the humanitarian bleeding heart has not yet recognized the postulate as an ethical maxim that can be raised to a universal by the power of his reason. So the relevance of his particular feeling is lost without being replaced by a universal thought or idea. The humanitarian is *burnt out*. He is dead to himself and merely acts out the feelings of compassion, but his heart is no longer in his work. Instead, he now believes that compassion depends upon belief, not the universality of feelings, depends upon an ordinance but given vital motion by an individual passionately committed to it. But the burnt out humanitarian no longer sees himself as exemplifying that passion.

In this way self-consciousness is related to a twofold antithetic essence; it is in its own self a contradiction, and is distraught in its inmost being. The law of *this* particular heart is alone that in which self-consciousness recognizes itself; but the universally valid order has, through the realizing of that law, equally become for self-consciousness its own essential being and its own reality. Thus, what contradicts itself in its consciousness has for it in each case the form of essence and its own reality. (Hegel 375)

The alienation is experienced in duplicate. On one side, the humanitarian feels oneness with all mankind, but if he is now to carry out that feeling, he can only do so by accepting his feelings as simply belonging to him. On the other hand, what he now feels is not the pleasure and satisfaction brought by his work based on that feeling, but the despair with reality and with his own lack of pleasure from his work. And if that is now his essential feeling, then what is projected on the world as a universal is a universal order of despair. That is enough to make anyone deranged. For your feelings of immediate oneness in the world as your basis for giving yourself in service to that world is now irrelevant to the workings of the world, an initial naive fantasy without any reality whatsoever.

The word derangement is not used loosely. One has become fundamentally schizophrenic, but not in the clinical sense. For in this self-alienation, the madness is projected onto the world. For if what is now posited as objectively essential to the unity of the world, though no longer experienced immediately as the real, is a sympathy of one human being for another, as the empty form of what was immediately felt with such great passion and urgency. What is experienced is precisely the opposite of this fellow feeling, a despair at the cruelty of the world and at one's own alienation from the immediate feeling that brought one into the service of humanity. The humanitarian now wallows in the nothingness of himself while professing the positivity and unity of the world of sentiment. And his essence is to hold both to be true - the unity of the world in feeling, and his despair with himself and the possibility of having any such feeling. And that is just the way the world is. He is not crazy. The world is just a mad place.

### **The Frenzy of Self-Conceit**

When the bleeding heart reaches this point, he has usually become the head of a mission and attends the meetings and consultations where decisions are made. And that is almost exactly the time

when the immediacy of feeling with all humanity has now passed into the ‘ravings of an insane self-conceit.’ (Hegel 377) The feely now furiously tries to preserve himself from falling apart by declaring the mad world of cruelty to be based precisely on the indifference and despair he finds now within himself. The world is not based on universal fellow feeling and sentiment, but on indifference, cynicism and surrender of any immediate care for the world. Those who exploit humanity whom he formerly believed to share in a fellow feeling to which he once appealed, is now seen as experiencing emptiness, coldness and cruelty, precisely the Hobbesian law his law of the human heart first encountered as an alien proposition. The exploiters exploit others because they feel so self degraded themselves. This is the universal psychological law that governs the world, not the universality of fellow feeling.

Like its original, it is a law of the heart, but of a perverted and twisted heart which tries to make reality conform to its own inner turmoil and degradation. It is not a law as a given, but a law which it tries to enforce on the world. Hence, it is not an existing valid law. Nor could it be a universal law for its enactment would entail mutual annihilation. So what the heart now feels or what, more importantly, is now said to characterize the heart of the world, is both unreal, since it is a mere projection, and unrealizable.

It is in the context of this realization that the bleeding hearts who have now become possessed of this self-conceit enter into the frenzy and hysteria of cooperating with other players in the situation and with one another. Someone proposes a solution to a problem. Another replies, “What’s wrong with the way we do it now?” Without fellow feeling and the unity of sentiment, all each individual can do is attempt to keep from flying apart by seeing everyone else as an exemplification of the process of indifference, cruelty and self-seeking. The humanitarians wrangle over the smallest minutiae as if the existence of the world depended upon it, for in their own experience, their own lives do depend on it. Unless they hang onto something as the basis for order, they will fall apart. But they no longer have any foundation for establishing any order, for universal order rested on their feelings, feelings which no longer identify everyone as sharing the same sentiment, but rather identify each individual as pursuing his or her own agenda. What is more, they are without the experience of the self-interested sector who have come to recognize that out of the pursuit of their own self-interest, something will emerge for the betterment of them all, so that all that is necessary is the negotiation of the rules of the competitive game. However, among humanitarians, the game was supposed to be an interest in the benevolence of the other which united them all, and what they now experience is that everyone is just pursuing their own agenda but, unlike the self-interested possessive individualist, professing that their own particular agenda represents the good of all. Moreover, they profess it as if their life depends on its realization “so that even when they complain about this ordinance as if it went against their own inner law, and maintain against it the opinions of the heart, they cling to it with their hearts, as being their essential being.” (Hegel 378) If they lose, they experience the loss as a loss of their whole being, for public order seems to depend on the projection of what they feel to be the case.

The situation was made to breed conflict over everything and to make any solution unsatisfactory to everyone else except the one who proposed it. And not superficially unsatisfactory,

but as threatening the very foundations of the world. So the only universal at work is “a universal resistance and struggle of all against one another, in which each claims validity for its own individuality, but at the same time does not succeed in his efforts, because each meets with the same resistance from the others, and is nullified in their reciprocal resistance.” (Hegel 379) The wonder is that anything is accomplished at all.

Instead of ‘you go your way, I’ll go mine,’ the perverted law of the heart demands universality and objectification of the conclusions of the different feelings since the feelings themselves no longer have a given status as universals. And the humanitarian now fights for his proposals as adamantly as he once gave himself over in the service to others. What began as the counter to Hobbes’ universal state of war has turned into something even worse, for even that war depended only on a limited area of conflict, conflict over the protection of one’s person and property from the other. But now the conflict is over the individual’s very being.

What started as the counter to the way of the world by presupposing that conflict was not the way of the world, becomes the demonstration that it is the way of the world that seems to be the universal. And the foundation of that world is individuality. If the way of the world as war is to be overcome, it will now have to come as the expense of individuality per se, for it is the assertion of individuality that seems to be the basis for the conflict.

## **Conclusion**

Clearly, what Hegel describes as the extreme competition between individuals and the humanitarian organizations they represent is found in experience, in fact is found so frequently in the evaluations of humanitarian service delivery that one is surprised if anyone would be surprised by such an empirical finding. What makes Hegel’s phenomenological analysis interesting, however, is not his naming of what happens as the opposite of what it first appears to be, but his depiction of the “logic” behind what happens and, therefore his account of why the experience of good will and fellow feeling turns in practice to a competition that makes Bay Street or Wall Street look like a paradigm of order.

## ENDNOTES

1. All reference are to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, tr. A.V. Miller, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977. The citations are by paragraph number rather than the page.

2. Jean Hyppolite (*Genesis and Structure of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1974) claims that this section is still about desire for pleasure, but a desire which has internalized the 'idea of law'. Instead of the Scottish sentimentalists, the model is seen to be Rousseau, Goethe's *Werther* [though H.S. Harris contends that Werther's attitude does not seem to be lawlike - *Hegel's Ladder II: The Odyssey of Spirit*, Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997, p. 33] and Karl Moor in Schiller's play *The Robbers* [and even in the latter case, Karl Moor, following Royce, is seen by Harris only as the exemplification of the frenzy of self-conceit..] The law dictates that we follow our natural inclinations which are good as long as they are socially uncontaminated. It is about original impulses. "The first impulse is always good." Opposed to the law of the heart is a world of meaningless necessity which "crushes individualities that avidly desire to enjoy their specificity." (p. 285) Hyppolite claims that the dynamic process of self realization is an internal one only, as the gap between the goal and the actualization is realized. As Hyppolite says, "No sooner is it (the law of the heart) actualized than it escapes the particular heart that gave it life." (p. 286)

There are many problems with Hyppolite's explication of the text, but a few notes will suffice to indicate why I believe his account of what Hegel depicts is far fetched. First, Hegel is not talking about a Fichtean "original impulse" but about feelings, a law of the heart not of the will. Second, Hegel speaks explicitly of an "earnestness of purpose" governing the law of the heart, in which pleasure is to be obtained in carrying out that purpose; the quest and end is not pleasure itself. Thirdly, Hyppolite describes the opposing reality to the law of the heart as "meaningless necessity", empty formal rules that constrain the expression of individuality, but Hegel describes the order as one of actual violence and not simply formal meaningless constraints. Finally, the actualization of the law of the heart does not come to self realization immediately on trying to be actualized but in an actual encounter with the way the world works and its violence. Hyppolite ignores the dialectical development that occurs in that world as that world tries to deal with the "feelies" and, in turn, the repercussions on the feelies of that alteration. In fact, Hyppolite skates over the surface and misses most of the steps in the dialectical development of spirit at this stage.

Harris, on the other hand, sees the law of the heart as the exemplification of Faust's Earth-Spirit, as the spirit of all natural life whereby the quest is "to live happily according to nature." The "embodied Gestalt of the 'law of the heart' is Rousseau," (p. 34) in particular, the "Creed of Savoyard Vicar", specifically in the reference to listening "to what God says in the heart of man," but this interpretation is only accomplished by knowingly and deliberately ignoring both the Vicar's original sense of self-alienation and the fact that the Vicar only sees the possibility of overcoming that alienation in the next world when he is "freed from the fetters of the body". Thus, if Hyppolite equates the law of the heart with impulse, Harris initially equates it with "a natural instinct." Certainly, in *Emile*, Rousseau writes: "Liberty is not to be found in any form of government. It is in the heart of the free man." (London: William Heinemann, 1956, p. 165) So unlike Hyppolite, Harris finds the law of the heart rooted in natural feeling, rather than either the impulse to pleasure that Hyppolite believes it to be or the natural feelings of pity and compassion which I identify.

However, the opposition to the law of the heart in Harris is not simply the same as Hyppolite contends it is, the constraints of conventions and customs in a society. For the formal order is maintained by violence (p. 36), but that violence is not expressed in the actual violations of the law of the heart with respect to pity and compassion where I locate it. "Excellence, thus, does not consist in loving everyone, in desiring the happiness (or well-being) of all," (Harris, 38) but in alleviating pain and suffering, a far more modest task, but even that one becomes impossible to achieve. And Harris himself (I think contradictorily) asserts that, "If I am sensitive to human suffering (and that sensitivity is what 'the law of the heart' arises out of) my heart will 'bleed' every day about the decisions I must make in pursuit of my ideal...The bleeding heart is part of the human lot." (Harris, 39) Here Harris is correct; the "philanthropic soul" is at the heart of the human lot, and not Rousseau's natural free spirit. After all, the emotion aroused by human suffering in Rousseau was personal, individual pain at the suffering of others, but not compassion for the sufferer.

Further, as for what is opposed to that law, I have difficulty in seeing how custom and convention are characterized as necessary by definition. Of course, since the reality encountered is characterized as the opposite of what is intended to be realized, the interpretation of what is intended to be realized will directly colour how this reality is characterized. Hegel, contra-Hyppolite, explicitly describes that reality as “a violent ordering of the world which contradicts the law of the heart, a humanity suffering under that ordering.” (369) Now it is hard to see how custom and convention, though not expressing the law of the heart, inherently and of necessity violate it. More importantly, most customs and conventions do not order the world violently, and do not make humanity suffer.

So the issue will be what the law of the heart has to be for violence and suffering to contradict that law. And both Rousseau’s natural feeling of a free man and Hume and Adam Smith’s feeling for their fellow man could both theoretically be candidates. But not in practice. For in my scenario, the violation of any one violates the law of the heart. The violation of another does not affect the free man of nature if he is on a desert island or able to escape the laws of civilization. Further, positive law is generally not that violent in practice, though such laws may violate the feelings of a natural free spirit. Finally, Hegel (371) says that, “Humanity which is bound by this law (which opposes the law of the heart) does not live in the blessed unity of the law with the heart.” Now positive law, custom and convention are never binding on all humanity. Hegel cannot be referring to the restrictions of local customs, conventions and laws, but to a law which is applicable to all humans in opposition to the law of the heart. I just do not understand Harris’ claim (38) that this refers to a reality in which, “The World...is governed by a positive law.”

Finally, the sense of Reason gone mad in the end is for Harris exemplified “by the standard of sanity,” whereas in my depiction, reason has gone mad when the original law of the heart is inverted and the “feelies” begin to be the ones who exemplify a war of all against all. The madness is substantive and not simply to be found in insane empty and meaningless rules of society. Harris himself says that the madness is set off when the bleeding heart finds himself “living in a world of hard hearts” (Harris, 40) when the hard hearts confront the feelies about their selectivity to some causes and indifference to others. But the hard hearts, in Hegel, are not self-conscious critics, but users and abusers, including users and abusers of the sentiments of the feelies. Further, Harris suggests that the feelies begin to go mad when they confront one another from opposite standpoints - the anti-abortionists and the pro-abortionists - each claiming to sympathize with suffering, one with the murdered foetus, the other with the coerced pregnant woman. This certainly has plausibility and is consistent with my own thesis that the feelies come into conflict with one another, but they do not even have to take opposite positions. They come into conflict on every single issue of means because they believe that once you know the end in your heart - the relief of suffering - then you know the means, but each individual somehow manages to discover a different means. Otherwise, the scenario Harris describes about the course of that madness corresponds to my own, except, as indicated earlier, the governing principle behind it is not a search for the pure Good, but the relief of the suffering of others, and the opposition is not simply one which identifies with any existing order. “(T)he heart itself goes mad when it asserts that the actual order supported by other hearts is morally perverse.” (Harris, 470)

3. Cf. Volume I of *The International Response to Conflict and Genocide: Lessons for the Rwanda Experience*, Copenhagen: DANIDA, 1996.

4.

5. For accounts of the influence of David Hume and Adam Smith on Hegel, see Norbert Waszek, “Hume, Hegel and History,” *Clio* 14: 1985, 379-392, and his book *The Scottish Enlightenment and Hegel’s Account of Civil Society*, Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1988.

6. This differentiates Smith’s sentimental theory from David Hume’s for whom the sentiment is a direct product of the sentiments of others who may feel different than we do. (Cf. *A Treatise on Human Nature*, II,I, XI. See also T.D. Campbell, *Adam Smith’s Science of Morals*, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1971, pp. 94-103.

7. *The Torah: A Modern Commentary*, ed. Rabbi Gunther Plaut, New York:HUAC, 1981, p. 386; the observation is credited to A. Neher.

