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Thomas S. Kubarych

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SELF-DECEPTION AND PECK'S ANALYSIS OF EVIL

THOMAS S. KUBARYCH

PPP

ABSTRACT: M. Scott Peck's proposed "evil" subtype of narcissistic personality disorder is distinguished from psychopathy by the use of self-deception to keep the emotional consequences of his or her crimes out of conscious awareness. A true psychopath, who does not have a conscience and does not accept morality, has no need of self-deception. Group evil, in Peck's analysis, is related to, and has much in common with, individual evil, including self-deception. There are many models of self-deception, but Davidson's model seems directly relevant to the psychology of evil as described by Peck. This is illustrated with examples from personal experience, Gitta Sereny's biography of Albert Speer and Alexander Solzhenitsyn's account of the Soviet Gulag.

KEYWORDS: narcissism, psychopathy, personality disorder, will

THERE HAVE BEEN a number of calls for serious scientific study of the psychology of evil (e.g., Baumeister 1996; Klose 1995; Lifton 1986; Peck 1983). The 1983 call by Peck included several specific proposals for empirical study, including research on the relationship between individual and group evil and inclusion in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM) of an "evil" subtype of the narcissistic personality disorder.

Peck (1983) believes that malignant narcissism is the result of an unsubmitted will.

All moral people subordinate their personal desires to something more universal and important than their individual desire. When there is a conflict between what is right and what they want, moral people do what is right; when there is a conflict between the truth and what they want to believe, moral people accept the truth. For the malignant narcissist, it is the other way around: they do what they want, regardless of what is right or wrong; if there is a conflict between their fantasies and reality, it is reality that must give.

Among malignant narcissists, the subset comprising the variant of narcissistic personality disorder Peck proposes as "evil" are characterized by "militant ignorance" (Peck 1993). If merely doing evil things made a person evil, all people would be evil; there would be no point in proposing a separate diagnostic category for the evil among us. What distinguishes people with evil personalities is being so unwilling to tolerate the discomfort of honest self-evaluation and criticism that, faced with a threat of narcissistic injury—in the form of evidence that what they want to be true about themselves or their group might not be true, or that their ideology might not be true—they exterminate the evidence. This leads to a pervasive pattern of destructiveness, scapegoating, self-deception, other-deception, denial, bizarre thinking patterns, and excessive concern with issues such as power, image, and status.

A parallel and interrelated account is offered to explain group evil, which Peck asserts is far more common than individual evil and both similar to and different from individual evil. Peck uses the MyLai massacre as an illustrative example. Although undoubtedly very few of the members of Task Force Barker were evil individuals, they still massacred between five and six hundred unarmed civilians. They were enabled to participate in the massacres by various psychological mechanisms and defenses, including "psychic numbing" and diffusion of conscience through the group. For long the massacre went unreported because individuals feared the consequences of speaking out.

Peck's account of evil is consistent with a long tradition that, directly or indirectly, evil usually (perhaps always?) involves lies. It is also compatible with Kant's analysis of the human will (Kant 1934/1796; Ward 2002), which concluded that the difference between good and evil people lies in the order of subordination of their wills: is it to the moral law or personal incentive? The evil person subordinates the demands of the moral law to his or her desire.

One interesting consequence of this definition of evil is that it distinguishes an "evil" personality from the psychopath, who on this view remains outside of evil (Klose 1995). According to Fingarette, we hold as morally responsible only those who accept morality. *Psychopathy*—the notion of an individual who theoretically has no conscience (Hare 1993) and accepts no morality—is fundamentally the absence of morality (Klose 1995). Evil is rather a perversion of morality; evil comes about in the effort to escape responsibility and guilt, not in the absence of it. Because it is painful self-examination that is being avoided at all costs, the deception involved must extend to self-deception. This leads to a criticism of Peck's account: self-deception is one of the most difficult and controversial problems in philosophical psychology.

Can one really lie to oneself? In a direct sense, no, but deception can take many forms, and lies and their motivations are not always direct or simple. There are many accounts of self-deception, many of which may be able to contribute a great deal to our understanding of evil. The present article does not attempt a comprehensive account of self-deception or evil. The far more modest purpose here is to focus on an account of self-deception that is directly relevant to Peck's account of evil and see what it can contribute to understanding evil.

Davidson's Model of Self-Deception

According to Davidson:

An agent A is self-deceived with respect to the proposition p under the following condition. A has evidence on the basis of which he believes that p is more apt to be true than its negation; the thought that p, or the thought that he ought rationally to believe p, motivates A to act in such a way as to cause himself to believe the negation of p. The action involved may be no more than an intentional directing of attention away from the evidence in favour of p; or it may involve the active search for evidence against p. All that self-deception demands of the action is that the motive originates in a belief that p is true (or recognition that the evidence makes it more likely to be true than not), and that the action be done with the intention of producing a belief in the negation of p. Finally, and it is especially this that makes self-deception a problem, the state that motivates self-deception and the state it produces coexist; in the strongest case, the belief that p not only causes a belief in the negation of p, but also sustains it. Self-deception is thus a form of self-induced weakness of the warrant, where the motive for inducing a belief is a contradictory belief (or what is deemed to be sufficient evidence in favour of the contradictory belief). In some, but not all, cases, the motive springs from the fact that the agent wishes that the proposition, a belief in which he induces, were true, or a fear that it might not be. So self-deception often involves wishful thinking as well. (1985, 88–89)

The agent's desire that the induced belief be true, or fear that it might not be, addresses the central issue of Peck's account of evil: the willingness to confront the truth even when it may cause narcissistic injury. By "weakness of the warrant", Davidson means rejecting a hypothesis that the available evidence suggests is probably true. This violates Hempel and Carnap's requirement of total evidence for inductive reasoning: when deciding among mutually exclusive hypotheses, ac-

cept the one most supported by all available relevant evidence. Weakness of the warrant is a cognitive error analogous to, and with the same logical structure as, *weakness of the will*: acting intentionally, or intending to act, on the basis of less than all relevant reasons. Conflict is necessary for both, and may cause lapses in reason, but does not necessitate its failure. In *weakness of the warrant,* an irrational belief is in conflict with the best or sum of the evidence; in weakness of will, an irrational intention is in conflict with one's values. Weakness of the warrant, like self-deception, is more than simply overlooking evidence or not realizing that things one knows contradict a belief. To be guilty of self-deception or weakness of the warrant, one must consider a hypothesis and reject it in spite of evidence to the contrary. There can be no failure of inductive reasoning unless evidence is taken to be evidence (Davidson, 1985).

Like weakness of the warrant, self-deception is also similar but not identical to weakness of the will. Both occur in the context of a conflict. Weakness of the will, however, is an evaluative phenomenon whose outcome is an intention; self-deception is, like weakness of the warrant, a cognitive phenomenon whose outcome is a belief. The two often reinforce each-other and violate the normative principle that one should not act or intend to act against one's best judgment, i.e. perform or intend to perform an act even though one believes that a better alternative is available. (Davidson, 1985)

According to Davidson (1985), self-deception includes weakness of the warrant, but goes further in that there is a reason for the weakness of the warrant, which plays a part in bringing it about. Weakness of the warrant always has a cause, but weakness of the warrant in self-deception is self-induced. Motivation and intervention by the subject are not necessary in weakness of either the will or warrant, but are necessary for self-deception. Self-deception may also involve wishful thinking, but not all wishful thinking is self-deception.

So, in Davidson's view, one belief can be the cause of another, contradictory belief. This does not mean that one can straightforwardly and consciously hold two contradictory beliefs. What it means is, as in Sackheim and Gur's (1979) criteria for self-deception, that one must hold two contradictory beliefs simultaneously, be unaware of holding one of the beliefs, and that the act of keeping one of the beliefs out of conscious awareness must be motivated. Is this possible? Does it occur? Let us seek some examples.

The case of "Joe"

A vice president—call him "Joe"—of a firm I once worked for had a terrible reputation as a pathological liar who had risen to his position by stabbing many people in the back. At staff meetings he sometimes spoke on neurolinguistic programming techniques for changing thoughts, perceptions, beliefs, and behaviors, which he frankly used to twist reality to suit his wishes. When he took charge of our division, morale plummeted and employees left the company in droves. Clearly, something was amiss. Further, the company's biggest customer complained that the high turnover rate was affecting work on important projects we were doing for them, and the corporate front office wanted to know why so many people were leaving the company.

Joe ordered his second in command, Bob, to call a meeting of my department, where morale was especially low and there had been several resignations recently. Bob was to find out what the employees were unhappy about, and report back to Joe. Fourteen out of 16 people at this meeting said that Joe had lied to them and was the cause of the unhappiness. When Bob reported this to Joe, Joe became furious, screamed that Bob should know better and ordered Bob to go back and find out the "real" reason for employee unhappiness.

Joe had good reason to believe that morale was low and turnover high because he had lied to and hurt so many people. This thought presumably motivated Joe to order his lieutenant to find alternative reasons for the unrest, presuming the lieutenant knew that it was dangerous and foolish to tell Joe "it's because of you" and that low raises, cuts in benefits, and the high work load conveniently provided other answers. So Joe's

self-induced weakness of the warrant originated in a belief that a proposition *p* was likely to be true, acted in such a way as to find evidence to bring about the contradictory belief, and both states coexisted. Further, Joe's use of his position of power to threaten Bob seems to be an attempt to exterminate evidence *qua* Peck's evil personality.

There is nothing in Joe's behavior that disconfirms the Davidson model of self-deception. Proof would require verification that Joe actually succeeded in producing the desired belief. This, of course, we cannot do. This is, however, a general problem for the constructs of cognitive psychology, such as schemas: They cannot be directly observed. Such constructs are usually regarded as acceptable if they provide parsimonious explanations of behavior and have explanatory value. One case does not a science make, but perhaps Davidson's model of self-deception deserves consideration as a parsimonious construct with explanatory power in explaining human evil.

This kind of self-deception both differs from and is similar to lying. In both, the deceiver intends to produce a belief he or she does not, at that time, believe to be true. The liar, however, may or may not intend the victim to believe what he or she says, or intend the victim to believe that the liar believes what he or she says. If the liar thinks the intended victim will reason "so-and-so is a liar, so whatever he or she says, the opposite must be true," the liar may say the opposite of what he or she wants the victim to believe. A liar must intend only to represent him- or herself as believing what he or she does not, and to keep his or her intentions hidden. This kind of deceit—the insincere representation of one's beliefs—cannot be practiced on oneself, because it requires that the intention not be recognized by the intender.

The Case of Albert Speer

Albert Speer was surely one of the most talented figures of the Third Reich, as well as one of the most ambiguous. Originally Hitler's architect, Speer eventually became Armaments Minister and the second most powerful person in Nazi Germany. He was almost single-handedly respon-

sible for preventing Hitler's scorched earth policy at the end of the war. He protected employees in his ministry with "racial and political defects." He took risks that few took in expressing disagreements with Hitler and asking for help and clemency for people he knew who were imprisoned in concentration camps and their families, even sending them packages with food, clothing, and medicine. He was also responsible for the use of slave labor, and worked feverishly to prolong a war he admitted he knew was already lost, in spite of increasingly recognizing Hitler's goals as evil. Many considered it an outrage that the man (Fritz Sauckel) who recruited the slave labor Speer needed and demanded for the armaments industry was hanged at Nuremberg, while Speer escaped the death penalty by denying direct knowledge of Nazi atrocities, claiming that he was trying to save the German people from Hitler's intention to leave them nothing if the war was lost, and gaining sympathy through formal acceptance of responsibility and appealing to the anti-communist sentiments of the Western powers (Sereny 1996).

Speer claimed that he did not notice the *Kristallnacht* and was not present during Himmler's speech of October 6, 1943, in which the true "final solution to the Jewish problem" was revealed. Although Viktor Brack testified at Nuremberg that by March 1941 the intention to exterminate the Jews was no secret in party higher circles, and in the course of his daily drives to his office Speer saw crowds of Jews being evacuated from Berlin, he continued to deny that he knew the Jews were being exterminated right up to his death in 1981. He did not deny, however, that he was blind by choice, not ignorant. He said that he had a suspicion of what was happening to the Jews. He admitted he had noticed the obvious destruction of the *Kristallnacht,* and that Jews were evicted from their homes, but had not sought to know the reasons. Speer said that he considered himself morally responsible for this failure from the moment when his friend Karl Hanke advised him never, under any circumstances, to accept an invitation to visit Auschwitz:

He had seen something there which he was not permitted to describe and moreover could not describe. I

did not query him. I did not query Himmler, I did not query Hitler, I did not speak with personal friends. *I did not investigate—for I did not want to know what was happening there. . . .* From that moment on, I was inescapably contaminated morally; *from fear of discovering something which might have made me turn from my course, I had closed my eyes.* (Sereny 1996, 463; my emphasis)

This also appears to be self-deception on the Davidson model. There is evidence, but not proof, that crimes are being committed, and Speer avoids evidence that would confirm or prove his suspicions. It is more accurate to say that Speer wanted to not know than merely that he did not want to know, and this desire not to know was the motivation for not investigating further. In addition to Speer's own admissions, there are reports of knowledgeable others. On the testimony of those closest to him, Speer characteristically refused to know about things he found unpleasant (Sereny 1996). His secretary, Annemarie Kempf, said "I think he felt that what he didn't know didn't exist" (Sereny 1996, 148).

Both Speer and his biographer Gitta Sereny (1996) cited his feelings for Hitler as one motive for his self-deception. Speer could not bear to cease to believe in Hitler because there was nothing else in his life. Speer insisted that there was one additional factor: fear. When asked how, even after he knew the war was lost, and in spite of all the horrors going on about him, he could continue to work so diligently for Hitler, he replied:

You cannot understand. You simply cannot understand what it is to live in a dictatorship; you can't understand the game of danger, but above all you cannot understand the fear on which the whole thing is based. Nor, I suppose, have you any concept of the charisma of a man such as Hitler. (Sereny 1996, 553)

Thus far, Speer's behavior seems well accounted for by Davidson's model of self-deception. In Speer's case, however, there are other things to consider. His secretary Kempf said:

I suppose one could say . . . he didn't see anything he didn't want to see, but really I don't think it was that simple. In fact, I think he would have been glad to have the capacity to see—certainly he was glad whenever we could help people. But he didn't have that

capacity; though, in that respect too, there was a change in him after Spandau. (Sereny 1996, 152)

Why didn't he have the capacity to see? When Sereny asked why what he saw in Russia did not open his eyes, Speer replied: "I didn't see or think of them as human beings, as individuals" (Sereny, 1996, 338). Here something beyond what is described by Davidson enabled Speer to continue to participate in evil even when he could not avoid the evidence: the lack of empathy characteristic of narcissistic personalities.

Although his lack of empathy gave him the capacity to continue to commit evil even when confronted with evidence, Speer was apparently not without a conscience and therefore not completely unaffected by participating in evil. At the beginning of his 20-year sentence, Speer asked the chaplain of Spandau prison, the French minister Georges Casalis, to help him become a better man. Casalis was frank with Speer that he considered him the most guilty of the six Nazi inmates at Spandau, yet agreed. Together they tried to create a rhythm of working, thinking, and living that would lead to Speer becoming a better man. Casalis saw his task as helping Speer to confront the truth and deal with it while remaining alive. Speer's feelings of guilt were so intense that this was extremely difficult. So difficult that, though Casalis knew that Speer was sometimes lying, he did not condemn him for those lies; without them the truth would have been too much for Speer:

all prisoners- are always an ambivalent entity; one lives with them in a perpetual state of half-truths or half-reality. . . . In a way it is the defence of their id: they can't give it up, even to someone they come to trust; if they did, it would destroy whatever "self" they have retained. So, you see, it isn't deliberate or even unconsciously dishonest. It is an instinctive self-protection process, so everything they show is always only partly really open, really true (Sereny, 1996, 612).

After 3 years Casalis left to pursue his doctorate. He later realized that this was disastrous as far as Speer's efforts to become a different man were concerned. After a period of apathy and depression, Speer reverted from his difficult spiritual search to his narcissistic concentration on

himself, and used the rhythm to he had developed to work toward obtaining his freedom. The result was an adapted version of the old Speer: still narcissistic and avoiding the terrible truth, but with a conviction that life had a wider meaning beyond what he was capable of grasping because of his narcissism. The Benedictine monk Father Athanasius, who observed Speer in retreats that Speer attended once or twice a year for 10 years, said that he had never known a man as acutely aware of his deficiencies as Albert Speer.

Speer's inner feelings of guilt were genuine, proof that he did not lack a conscience. He often quoted Jaspers: "Evil will rule unless I confront it at all times in myself and others" (Sereny, 1996, 632). But there were limits to how much truth he could stand. The topics omitted in Speer's writings and conversations are those that show he is in a position to know things he claimed not to know. When asked tough questions, Speer often used the evasive technique of generalizing about specifics and admitting a little to deny a lot. This way of presenting the story is another kind of self-deception, a way of hiding unavowed knowledge and genuine guilt that he simply could not live with, and also deserves consideration as a form of self-deception that can facilitate evil.

In Speer's case, we see self-deception of the kind described by Davidson facilitating evil. Lack of empathy is also a factor. We perhaps also see other kinds of self-deception, such as presenting the story in such as way as to minimize one's guilt. There is no doubt that Speer lied about many things. The more he tried to explain away awkward facts—how he could not have known about the fate of the Jews or the conditions in slave labor camps, and his relationship with Hitler—the clearer it became that he was avoiding the truth. But, as Sereny says, "to say that he was lying is too simple. Lies and their motivations are not like that. Speer's reflected his need to schematize his life into an alignment of feelings and fears he could live with" (Sereny, 1996, 407). Speer had taken Nietzsche's (1957) advice to avoid truths that were so terrible one could not acknowledge them and live. His will to live was stronger than his need to atone. Most of us are the same.

Hitler and Forbidden Knowledge

The popular conception of Hitler is as a bloodthirsty vampire. According to both Speer and long-time Hitler adjutant Nicolaus von Below, however, Hitler avoided both physical and visual contact with violence, and experienced guilt at ordering Röhm's murder. Hitler absolutely refused to listen to bad news, hated being tackled on anything unpleasant, and literally closed his eyes if forced to see the consequences of his orders. His valet, Hans Junge, asserts that he had the ability to hypnotize people: that Generals would go to meetings with Hitler fully prepared to tell him the truth, and that disaster was imminent, but leave having been overwhelmed and unable to do so (Sereny 1996, 250). When hypnosis failed, there were more drastic measures. Speer states:

One was constantly walking a tightrope between telling him the truth and risking not just being thrown out (which could have been a blessing) but shot, or else going along with his fantasies in the hope of saving *something* for the German people. (Sereny 1996, 300)

Henrietta von Schirach, daughter of the Reich Youth Leader and Gauleiter of Vienna, says she was forbidden access to the Berghof, where she had virtually grown up, after asking Hitler if he knew how Jews were being treated in Holland. Inevitably, this extensive self-deception meant that Hitler could not accurately perceive reality. Theo Hupfauer, one of the Nazi party's most important administrators and Speer's right hand man in the last years of the war (and who himself blocked from his mind what he saw in Russia, blaming it on administrative stupidity), asserts that, after Ribbentrop said he did not believe Britain would honor its pledge to Poland, Hitler was incapable of realizing that she would. "This blindness was his doom" (Sereny, 1996, 210).

At least some of Hitler's self-deception would thus seem to fit Davidson's model. Like Speer, however, Hitler may have used more than one kind of self-deception. According to Robert Jay Lifton (1986), division of the self into two functioning selves, each of which acts as an entire self, or "doubling," is a self-deceptive psycholog-

ical process that enables one to adapt to evil environments. Sereny says that, after knowing many of the people who lived around Hitler, she has no doubt that Hitler led a double life. All those who lived around Hitler were keenly aware of his exceptional capacity for "compartmentalization." The decisions and life he led with Himmler, Goebbels, his Generals, and staff he kept strictly separate from his small, private circle. He also required compartmentalization of others, ordering them to think of nothing except their own sphere of activity. A notice on every wall read: "Every man need only know what is going on in his own domain." Albert Speer states:

Hitler required us not only to compartmentalise our activities but also our thinking. He insisted that each man should only think about his task and not be concerned about that of his neighbour. Carried to its logical conclusion, and linked with his secrecy order, this meant much more than his wanting people to concentrate their minds—it meant it was dangerous not to. (Sereny, 1996, 184)

GROUP EVIL IN NAZI GERMANY

Ordinary Germans also seem to have practiced the kind of self-deception described by Davidson in the Nazi era. Gitta Sereny says that the astonishing thing about Germany under Hitler was not that the German people accepted that wrong was right—they did not—but that they accepted the legitimacy of forbidden knowledge. They knew that knowledge could be dangerous, so even when it lurked in their minds, it was suppressed. Carola von Poser, a long time Nazi sympathizer, put it this way:

One 'sensed' that there was something wrong. But you see, sensing isn't knowing. One hears things which make one feel uncomfortable, without being able to put one's finger on anything specific. It's almost an atmosphere—a way people talk, their conduct, or perhaps their gestures or even just their tone of voice. It is so subtle. How can one explain it to anyone who hasn't experienced that time, those small first doubts, that kind of unease, for want of a better word? We couldn't have found words to explain what we felt was wrong. *But to find out, to look for an explanation for that . . . that 'hunch', well, that would have been very dangerous . . . One did know very early on that there were dangers in knowledge.* (Sereny 1996, 458; my emphasis)

Or take the confession of Speer's legal counsel at Nuremberg, Dr. Hans Flaechsner:

One knew it was miserable to be a Jew in Hitler's Germany, but one didn't know it was a catastrophe; one didn't know what happened to them. Until a day in 1943, when a client of mine who was a medic in Russia came back with photographs of executions of Jews, I knew absolutely nothing of this. I told him to burn or bury the photographs and to tell no one what he had seen. And I didn't tell anybody either, not even my wife. *I know that it wasn't right, but it was prudent. One wanted to survive—it was most unsafe to have seen such photographs.* I don't think it was any secret that people were being executed; what we didn't know was that they were being systematically mass-murdered. (Sereny 1996, 581; my emphasis)

THE GULAG ARCHIPELAGO

The self-deceptions discussed so far insulated the subjects from guilt for the evil being done to others. In *The Gulag Archipelago* (Solzhenitsyn 1975), one finds cases where even the victims protected themselves from evidence that their cherished ideology was flawed. One such example was Olga Petrovna Matronina, one of Solzhenitsyn's supervisors during his imprisonment. Matronina was an orthodox communist. When her husband was shot during Stalin's reign of terror, she was sentenced to 8 years in the Gulag merely for being his wife.

Matronina refused to accept such blatant injustices, even when directed against herself, as evidence for the failure of her beloved communist ideology and party. She insisted that she did not resent her husband's execution or her own imprisonment. Injustices such as these were due to the henchmen of Beria's predecessors Yagoda and Yezhov (who by this time had been made scapegoats for the excesses of the security organs by Stalin). Under Beria, all arrests had been just; she served the party whether in freedom or prison. Her reaction to anyone who mentioned her own arrest was this: "Those who arrested me can now see the proof of my orthodoxy" and "My long sentence has not broken my will in the struggle for the Soviet government, for Soviet industry" (Solzhenitsyn 1975, 181).

While denying any resentment for her own imprisonment, Matronina brutally mistreated

those who worked under her. She sometimes left orders for prisoners to be left out all night (in Siberia). When ordered to double the output of her section, she placed Solzhenitsyn in charge of achieving this impossible goal. When Solzhenitsyn suggested that he did not have the expertise, she became furious and gave orders to guards to "Put him to work with a crowbar and don't take your eyes off him! Make him load six cars a shift! Make him *sweat!*" (Solzhenitsyn 1975, 182). When asked if the prisoners might not be allowed one Sunday of rest, she replied: "What right have we to a Sunday? The construction project in Moscow[1] is being held up because there are no bricks" (Solzhenitsyn 1975, 181). Matronina's self-induced weakness of the warrant enabled her to hold on to her faith in communism, but at a terrible cost.

In another example, Solzhenitsyn (1975) relates how he and a friend amused themselves with an orthodox communist while being transported to a camp. Despite overwhelming evidence of the failings of the Soviet system, this academic economist remained militantly ignorant of the failure of his ideology, even as one of its victims:

"Look over there: how poverty-stricken our villages are—straw thatch, crooked huts."

"An inheritance from the Tsarist regime."

"Well, but we've already had thirty Soviet years."

"That's an insignificant period, historically."

"Its terrible that the collective farmers are starving."

"But have you looked in *all* their ovens."

"Just ask any collective farmer in our compartment."

"Everyone in jail is embittered and prejudiced."

"But I've seen collective farms myself."

"That means they were uncharacteristic."

(The goatee had never been in any of them—that way it was simpler.)

"Just ask the old folks: under the Tsar they were well fed, well clothed, and they used to have so many holidays."

"I'm not even going to ask. It's a subjective trait of human memory to praise everything about the past. The cow that died is the one that gave twice the milk. [Sometimes he even cited proverbs!] And our people don't like holidays. They like to work."

"But why is there a shortage of bread in many cities?"

"When?"

"Right before the war, for example."

"Not true! Before the war, in fact, everything had been worked out."

"Listen, at that time in all the cities on the Volga there were queues of thousands of people . . . "

"Some local failure in supply. But more likely your memory is failing you."

"But there's a shortage now."

"Old wives' tales. We have from seven to eight poods of grain."

"And the grain itself is rotten."

"Not at all. We have been successful in developing new varieties of grain."

"But in many shops the shelves are empty."

"Inefficient distribution in local areas."

"Yes, and the prices are high. The workers have to do without many things."

"Our prices are more scientifically based than anywhere else."

"That means wages are low."

"And the wages, too, are scientifically based."

"That means they're based in such a way that the worker works for the state for free the greater part of his time."

"You don't know anything about economics. What is your profession?"

"Engineer."

"And I am an economist. Don't argue. Surplus value is even impossible here." (Solzhenitsyn, 1975 338–340)

Conclusion

We cannot directly verify that subjects in purported cases of self-deception do or do not succeed in producing self-deceptive beliefs. This is the well-known problem of knowledge of other minds (Bolton and Hill 1996). One approach to this problem has been to exclude the mind from psychological science. This approach was taken by behaviorism. Cognitive psychology, by contrast, has not shied away from many constructs, such as schemas and scripts, which cannot be directly observed. Self-deception should therefore be considered just as acceptable as schemas and other cognitive constructs.

These cases suggest that Davidson's model of self-deception describes one type of self-deception that often occurs in a choice for evil. It

should go without saying that not all cases of this or any other kind of self-deception involve a choice for evil. It may be adaptive for patients with incurable cancer to believe they are not as sick as they really are. In some cases, these examples go one step further than Davidson-model self-deception by not merely directing attention away from evidence in favor of *p*, or searching for evidence against *p*, but in exterminating evidence in favor of *p*. Speer, for example, at least in the cases described, merely avoided knowing. He did more than just not want to know—he wanted to not know—but he did not kill those who told him what he wanted to not know, as Hitler did. There may be important differences between people who merely avoid unwanted evidence and people who destroy it.

On the basis of this discussion, perhaps the dichotomy "known/unknown" may be better (that is, more useful and less questionable) for depth psychology than the dichotomy "conscious/unconscious" that has been extensively criticized. What self-deception often comes down to is a desire to not know something. Usually, something is not known for certain until after some investigation has taken place. One does not suspect in a vacuum; one suspects because one has evidence. This evidence may point to the truth of a proposition that the subject either fears, or desires to be false. In some cases of self-deception the subject intentionally does not initiate exploratory behavior. To the contrary, he or she avoids or disregards evidence for its truth, seeks evidence favoring its negation, and in some cases exterminates the evidence.

NOTE

1. By which she meant the construction of a new, socialist society.

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