

mindful

Journal of Ethics, Society, and Law

Trinity College, University of Toronto



Interview: Professor Shahrzad Mojab
Shainiya Balachandran
& *Zoe Hountalas*

Representing Africa:
The Case of the Congo
Simone Akyianu

The Ethics of Refugee Limbo
Nadia Zaman

Vicarious Traumatization
in the Context of the CCVT
Zach Davidson

Interview: Professor Derek Allen
Sofia Brondino Zavalla

m i n d f u l

JOURNAL OF ETHICS, SOCIETY, AND LAW
TRINITY COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

SHAINIYA BALACHANDRAN

SENIOR EDITOR

RUSSELL HOY

EDITORIAL BOARD

BEN WALMSLEY

NIALL CASSELMAN

SOFIA BRONDINO ZAVALLA

ZOE HOUNTALAS

COVER DESIGN

RUSSELL HOY

IMAGES

CARMELIA LINTA

To make a submission to the next issue of *Mindful* as well as to inquire about positions on the editorial board, please email: mindful.ethics@utoronto.ca

Copyright © 2013. All rights remain with the individual authors and artists.

m i n d f u l

CONTENTS

ISSUE 5, AUTUMN 2013

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION Shainiya Balachandran	1
AN INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR SHAHRZAD MOJAB Shainiya Balachandran and Zoe Hountalas	3
REPRESENTING AFRICA: THE CASE OF THE CONGO Simone Akyianu	16
THE ETHICS OF REFUGEE LIMBO Nadia Zaman	37
VICARIOUS TRAUMATIZATION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CCVT Zach Davidson	73
AN INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR DEREK ALLEN Sofia Brondino Zavalla	122
BIOGRAPHIES	127

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

This fifth edition of *Mindful* is proud to continue its role as a reflection of the Ethics, Society, and Law (ES&L) program at Trinity College, University of Toronto. The ES&L program is unique, allowing students the freedom to not only engage in academic debate surrounding current ethical issues, but also to recognize how to respond to the ethical challenges we face as individuals in an ever changing society. *Mindful* is meant to showcase the heart of the ES&L program by showcasing high quality undergraduate papers that discuss these challenges within a theoretical and practical intersection.

The issue opens with Professor Shahrzad Mojab, who takes us through her return to Iran during a period of revolution. Professor Mojab was able to provide us with an interdisciplinary perspective on struggle and how that struggle has a place in various historical, cultural, and social settings. We set the tone of undergraduate papers with “Representing Africa: The Case of the Congo” where Simone Akyianu demonstrates current issues surrounding the Democratic Republic of the Congo, some of which address Canada’s role in the Congo. Nadia Zaman continues this narrative of how Canada engages with international issues in “The Ethics of Refugee Limbo” with a discussion of the nation’s ethical responsibility for the duty of care and protection of refugees in limbo. Zach Davidson brings the focus back to Canada with “Vicarious Traumatization in the Context of the CCVT” where he looks at the lasting impact working with refugees has on front-line workers. This year, as a 25th anniversary tribute, *Mindful* closes with an interview with Professor Derek Allen to discuss the evolution and future of Ethics, Society, and Law.

I would like to take a moment to thank those who ensured that *Mindful* could be completed to share these undergraduate works with you. To our contributors, thank you for giving us an opportunity to share your compelling and timely ideas with our readers. To our interviewees, Professor Mojab and Professor Allen, we appreciate the time you set aside to sit down with *Mindful* to share these important stories with our readers. Russell Hoy, who joined the *Mindful* team two years ago, was responsible for designing the cover and contributed not only support to keep the journal on track, but many editorial insights. Zoe Hountalas and Sofia Brondino Zavalla, who will be responsible for *Mindful*’s next edition, did a wonderful job with the interviews in this edition and in the editorial process. Ben Walmsley and Niall Casselman’s role as new editorial members gave the team a fresh perspective for this edition. Finally, a very special thank you must be given to our faculty advisor, Professor John Duncan, for his belief in the journal and help throughout the process, from the call for submissions, to the distribution of *Mindful*.

We hope that *Mindful* will continue to grow alongside the Ethics, Society, and Law program, but most importantly, we hope that *Mindful* inspires you to start your own dialogue when faced with ethical dilemmas in your daily life. Thank you for taking the time to start that dialogue with us.

Shainiya Balachandran
Mindful, Editor-in-Chief



“When I was twelve, I was interviewed by a doctoral candidate in education and asked what I wanted to be when I grew up. I said that I either wanted to be a philosopher or a clown, and I understood then, I think, that much depended on whether or not I found the world worth philosophizing about, and what the price of seriousness might be.”

-Judith Butler

AN INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR SHAHRZAD MOJAB

Professor Mojab is a professor in the department of Leadership, Higher, and Adult Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto. She has served as the Interim Principal of New College, and Director of the Women and Gender Studies Institute. She is the past-President of the Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education. She is known for her work on the impact of war, displacement, and violence on women's learning and education.

In the spring of 2012, Mindful's Shainiya Balachandran and Zoe Hountalas conducted an interview with Professor Mojab to discuss women as refugees and political prisoners in relation to the current political regime in Iran.

Shainiya Balachandran: Thank you for joining us today, Professor Mojab. I was reading your biography, and saw that you are originally from Shiraz, Iran. After completing your BA in Iran, you undertook graduate studies in America. You returned to Iran, though, in 1979 for the Iranian revolution. What prompted you to return to Iran for this historic period?

Shahrzad Mojab: That was a very important historical moment, not only in the history of Iranian society and politics, but also in the global struggle of students, women, and workers—in a sense the continuation of diverse social movements including the Civil Rights movement, and the radical Black movement in the U.S. A country like Iran reaching the historical moment of challenging and questioning the influence of U.S. imperialism, but also initiating and leading truly democratic social change was a remarkable moment, something that any person with a vision of justice and democracy would have liked to be a part of. Thousands of Iranian students who were active against the Shah's regime and his close economic and political ties to Western imperialist powers were organized in the World Confederation of Iranian Students. This was a large and radical student movement in North America and Europe, and was well connected to other progressive movements. Therefore, the rise of anti-Shah protest in Iran was a revolutionary moment for all of us and something that we all aspired to join. In a way, the revolution was the embodiment of our hopes and dreams, thousands of us went back to join the revolution, to be part of the rebuilding of society. I was one of the thousands of Iranian students who went back to become part of this dream of building a new society.

Zoe Hountalas: You then applied for political refugee status in Canada in 1983, is that correct?

SM: No, after being in Iran for almost four years post-revolution and being active in the women's movement and the autonomist movement of the Kurds in Iran, I had to leave the country. I was forced into exile as a political dissident and therefore I had to leave in August 1983 and went back to the United States to finish my doctorate. Then, it was in 1986 that I came to Canada as a political refugee.

ZH: As someone who has written extensively on nationality and issues surrounding nationality, what was your experience coming to Canada under the category "political refugee"?

SM: The entire process of leaving Iran and then being forced into exile is something that even nearly 30 years later I am not reconciled with. Not that I am a nationalist, in fact I feel quite a strong affinity for Canada and I have lived in Toronto more than any other city in the world, but I most identify with the struggle of people—with those who are struggling for democratic rights, for social justice. In the context of Canada, there are many terrains of struggle including the rights of Aboriginal Peoples or the anti-racist struggles of the people of colour. This continuity in struggle is the same connection and continuity of my dreams and hopes for Iran during and post-revolution.

SB: What nation would you now identify with? Would you consider yourself Canadian or Iranian or a hybrid between the two? Do you identify with one particular nation or see yourself as bicultural?

SM: I consider myself an internationalist. Legally, I consider myself a Canadian of Iranian origins, but that is a matter of the legality of one's status. In terms of identifying myself, I really consider myself an internationalist. I believe most of the borders around the world are the outcome of colonial or imperialist wars; I don't recognize them because

they are, historically speaking, obsolete. I identify with people and their lives, dreams, imagination for building a better world, wherever they are.

SB: Could you expand a little bit on what you consider to be “internationalist”? Or how would you define the term “internationalist”?

SM: Wherever there is a struggle, wherever there are people working collectively towards a just society, there is my home and that is my nation. Wherever women are struggling for their rights I feel part of that nation, that culture. So, it does not matter if that struggle is taking place in Quebec, in Afghanistan, or on the border of US-Mexico.

ZH: Going with that train of thought, what do you see as the biggest issues facing refugees arriving in Canada? What obstacles do they encounter once they arrive in Canada?

SM: I have looked carefully at this issue for a long time and I think that the number one issue is that by naming and giving a person the identity of “refugee” the person-as-a-whole disappears behind a ‘legal/formal’ identity. ‘Refugee’ is a status, a relationship between the person and the state. But who is that person? The history of that person, her background, knowledge, or her experience disappears; the body and the mind of the person is evaded when she is identified as a refugee. I think that this is a struggle that a lot of refugees face when arriving in Canada. No matter how much we hear the discourse of leaving for a ‘better future’, or a ‘better dream’ it takes a lot out of that person to go through this process of ‘de-rooting’ and it is a very long and arduous process to go through the process of ‘re-rooting’, and especially for women this is a huge burden and undertaking. So, I think that the most important difficulty a refugee faces is the lack of recognition of her as a full human being with a history, knowledge, experience, as well as passion, anger, frustration, or fear.

ZH: When you speak of how it is especially trying for women being a refugee and having that status, what sort of things do you think women have to deal with specifically that men do not?

SM: The entire burden of responsibilities and care for children and family falls on women's shoulders pre/during/post migration processes. Women are expected to fill in the vacuum of the extended support system, to be larger than a mother, daughter, or sister. All these demands fall on women under a very difficult precarious condition of resettling. I really think that, for example, if we start assessing and evaluating the life achievement of refugee women differently, we will be able to see a different person with differently articulated skills and knowledge. Let us, for example, consider refugee women's lives as life in transition, where they move from refugee camps to refugee camps across borders, and consider the way they organize, manage, work, volunteer, and negotiate all sorts of power dynamics, injustices, resist and survive all odds before arriving in Canada, then we can develop a different appreciation for their courage, capability, and power. If we start translating all that experience and knowledge in their CVs, you can see that they can easily be a community organizer, a teacher, or a manager of a workplace. But we do not look at them as such and therefore fail to really bring the best out of them in order to assist them with the process of resettling.

SB: A topic that has received much attention in terms of a clash of cultures concerns the issue of "honour killing." You were called on Dec. 5, 2011, as an expert witness in the Shafia trial. Currently, a trial is underway in Britain in the case of Shafiea Ahmed who was also the victim of an honour killing. I was wondering: could you provide a brief introduction for our readers on the topic of honour killings and their supposed rationale.

SM: Human Rights Watch proposed the following definition of 'honour killing' (2008)

Honor crimes are acts of violence, usually murder, committed by male family members against female family members, who are held to have brought dishonor upon the family. A woman can be targeted by (individuals within) her family for a variety of reasons, including: refusal to enter into an arranged marriage, being the victim of sexual assault, seeking a divorce—even from an abusive husband—or (allegedly) committing adultery. The mere perception that a woman has

behaved in a way that 'dishonors' her family is sufficient to trigger an attack on her life.

Honour killing is a particular form of the universal phenomenon of violence against women, and can be clearly distinguished from other forms of violence, most significantly, domestic violence. It is perpetrated in diverse cultures and sanctioned by different religions; in other words, honour killing is not the essential or primordial feature of any culture. Honour killing is premeditated, planned, and executed by usually more than one family member and is a group action. A female's violation of the codes of honour affects all members of the family, male and female, and young and old. Cleansing dishonour is, therefore, the responsibility of all members of the family. Quite often females participate, usually as accomplices, in the murder. Even when an individual male person commits the murder, he usually enjoys the support of other family members.

Finally, honour killing is a social relationship. Unlike domestic violence, which males commit, quite often, without pressure from family, kin, or community, honour killing aims at satisfying a demand or expectation from the community—cleansing shame and restoring honour. This is the case because loss of honour demotes the status or rank of a family in the hierarchy of social relations. In fact, the immediate community acts as if it indicts the family and invites it to restore the lost honour.

ZH: Would it be fair to say that honour killings are only one more example of a practice employed to control and regulate female sexuality?

SM: 'Honour'-centered norms of propriety, although rooted in the male control of women's body and female sexuality, are not limited to the regulation of sexual relations. 'Honour' is, rather, a complex social institution; a collective and communal act which is crucial for the (re)production of patriarchal social relations. The practice of 'honour killing' varies according to context, that is, class, socio-economic formation, religion, education, and ethnicity. 'Honour' relates to control of women's body and sexuality, and women's disobedience and the violation of cultural norms of sexual conduct tarnishes the name of the family. Cleansing the family of this shame requires bloodshed.

SB: What do you view as the most effective route to try to do away with practices that try to control and regulate female sexuality?

SM: Based on the cases of ‘honour’ killing, which I have studied closely, I suggest a few ideas about developing early warning indicators to anticipate and prevent killing. These are ideas in the making, and need more input, dialogue, and insight, especially from activists.

We need multi-dimensional, multi-disciplinary, and radical approaches. This intervention is necessarily a planned or conscious undertaking. It implies cooperation among many facets of society: teachers, social workers, school counsellors, police forces, politicians, and legal services.

A most urgent initiative is to promote the ‘right to live’, the ‘right to choice’ as a value in education, arts, media, literature, and popular culture. Individuals should realize that no one has the right to take anyone’s life. Citizenship education should be given priority, especially the idea that citizens are denied the right to take the administration of justice into their hands.

In order to achieve the goal of *eliminating* ‘honour killing’, we need to move out of the prevalent range of debate, which reduces violence against women to questions of culture, religion, psychology, ignorance, practice, and law-breaking. One alternative is to see patriarchy as a *system* of gender relations. It produces male domination, and uses culture, language, religion, education, economy and every other social space in order to reproduce itself. Violence is one means of reproducing male rule.

In a long-term effort, which must begin now and never stop, we need a major confrontation with patriarchy in the realm of education. We need to promote knowledge about equity and equality, especially about male violence, in schools, universities, religious establishments, government, mass media and popular culture. This requires

prioritization; this project requires the allocation of enormous economic and financial resources, although it will succeed only if it turns into a social movement; it should be an intellectual, cultural and political movement.

In Canada, we should raise demands such as: 1) the promotion of the idea of the right to live and the right to choice for women, and its actualization through law and law enforcement; 2) women's equality of education in all levels of schooling; 3) adoption of the Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, and we should legally mandate the elimination of crimes against women committed in the name of honour *without reservation*; 4) launching publicly supported information campaigns, access to support services and; 5) financing the establishment of women's advocacy groups, especially shelters.

ZH: A lot of sabre rattling has been taking place on behalf of the West toward Iran. What are your views on the current political regime in Iran and its motivations? Is Iran as hostile and nuclear-driven as the Western mainstream media makes it out to be?

SM: The first thing that I should point out is the separation of the people of Iran from the government of Iran. The view of the majority of Iranians is that this government is a disgrace to humanity. The Islamic regime has been a major obstacle to the achievement of democracy, freedom, or women's rights in Iran. It is hard to witness a nation with more than a hundred years of struggle for democracy and freedom being governed with the iron fist of a theocratic regime. Western states have a sort of uneven or politically calculated relationship with the Islamic regime. On the one hand, Western powers, led by the United States, have a particular plan for the entire Middle East and North Africa. The plan is to create theocratic states throughout the region to ensure the continuity of some political stability. In this process, the goal is to soften the politics of those states which are considered 'Fundamentalist' or 'radical Islamists' such as the regime in Iran, Afghanistan, or elements of the regime in Iraq. Turkey is being considered the ideal model of a 'moderate' Islamic regime: an economically powerful state totally committed

to the neoliberal economic project, rapidly moving towards a project of de-secularizing society by restructuring of the educational system, and introducing new laws affecting the rights of women, including abortion law, and violating the rights of Kurds. Iran is a major power to reckon with in this process. This means that the West requires the cooperation of Iran in this larger Middle East project as a way of dealing with the rise of radical Islamists in Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan.

The people of Iran demand freedom, democracy, and an end to the rule of the theocratic regime. The majority of people, in particular women and youth, are not interested in reforming the regime, that is, the creation of a 'moderate' Islamic power instead of a 'totalitarian' one; they are demanding the total separation of state and religion. This demand should be recognized and respected and should not be negotiated in the interest of the Western powers.

SB: You stated that you view the government as an obstacle, especially considering the status of women. So how would you view the status of women in Iran today in comparison to the past? Is it improving or do you find that you cannot consider it improved?

SM: It's very complicated because Iranian women are a social force in Iran and have unceasingly struggled in different forms against the Islamic regime since its inception. Some groups of women demand reform within the framework of Sharia law and Islam; others are totally dedicated to the gender project of the regime and therefore work within the framework of the state, and yet others try to reform it by reducing the violent edge of the government's policy of gender apartheid—the absolute separation of genders in society.

Despite more than 30 years of the suppression of their rights and turning them into second-class citizens, Iranian women continue to resist and live a dynamic life. Today, more than ever before, we are witnessing the rise of women novelists, filmmakers, artists, activists, and the appearance of women in all professional sectors of society, including

higher education where the majority of students are women. And so what we see is a very intense dynamism, in terms of women's resistance which makes demands on and pushes the state. Have they gained much? I would argue, maybe very little. But what is remarkable is that they haven't been stopped or intimidated by the violence and hostility of the regime toward them; they continue to resist and fight back.

SB: Do you find that the resistance is getting stronger or is it starting to falter? Do you see it as starting to falter or continually growing until there are larger gains?

SM: As I said, the struggle of women is a continuous and uninterrupted phenomenon. However, there are periods where there are spikes in terms of the resistance, and there are periods where it is quiet because of the massive suppression by the state. For example, within the first decade of the rule of the Islamic regime, that is in the 1980s, when women were resisting the introduction of Islamic laws as a violation of their rights, hundreds and thousands were imprisoned. In the years 1981-1988, close to 3000 women political prisoners were executed. I have tried to document this atrocity. My research on political prisoners clearly shows the ways women resisted the regime and it is also important to note that following the 2009 rigged elections, again hundreds of women and men were arrested and were subjected to unspeakable forms of torture, including rape. This indicates that as long as this regime continues the suppression of women and other citizens, the struggle continues though, with ebbs and flows.

SB: There are more females who are political prisoners because they are the more active in trying to combat the government. Do you think this is deterring women or motivating them further?

SM: Again, after the rigged elections of 2009, thousands of women were arrested, tortured, and raped. And, in fact, this has become the government's systemic approach in creating a culture of fear, a culture of intimidation, and threat as a method of silencing dissent. So, I would say that right now, in the post 2009 period, Iran is in a period of ebb in open activism and confronting the state. There is also another factor for us to consider,

that is the impact of the economic sanctions on Iran. The sanctions have made life difficult for most Iranians, especially women, very difficult. There is a high rate of unemployment, poverty is increasing, the class gap is widening, and we are witnessing the rise of prostitution, addiction, and the deterioration of health. In other words, a harsher life—politically, culturally and economically—has really affected the resistance movement.

ZH: One of our articles in this edition of *Mindful* is about political prisoners in Iran. What motivated you to dedicate a website specifically to women political prisoners in Iran, instead of political prisoners in a more general sense?

SM: Two reasons: First of all, I'm trying to argue against the dominant image of women of Iran as veiled, passive, submissive, and 'Muslim', and argue that the use of veil is imposed by the theocratic regime. Women, as I have pointed out, have resisted it since it was introduced in 1979. Women were and continue to be imprisoned and tortured because they resist the codes of behaviour of this regime. Understanding and documenting this resistance will help us in changing the image of Iranian women and create a possibility for building solidarity around a project for emancipation of women from patriarchal rule. Second, former political prisoners have spoken up about the atrocities committed against them in the last two decades. Political prisoners have been 'speaking up' mainly in the form of writing memoirs in Farsi, documenting their experience in other forms, including seminars, conferences, websites, or by the creation of special journals and periodicals. Unfortunately, since most of these documents are available only in Farsi, they are neglected and remain inaccessible to a wider audience. Therefore, I have created a website to archive the literature available, to bring it to the attention of the wider audience, and especially to researchers and activists who address the plight of political prisoners in Iran. Since I started this project, I've realized that the plight of political prisoners in the wider Middle East is also very important. So if you look at the website, there is a lot of information and links and materials related to the cause of political prisoners in the rest of the Middle East, especially Palestinian, Moroccan, and Tunisian women. And, lastly, I really think the memory and memoirs of

political prisoners is a very important genre of literature. It lends itself to a lot of interdisciplinary studies, from autobiography to studies of memories and cultures, as well as the whole issue of women and commemoration. So this is a very credible body of knowledge and literature that needs to enter our curricula and our analytical ideas about women's struggle and resistance in the Middle East.

SB: As a follow up to this idea of a political autobiography, do you think it has an impact because it is so personal, as opposed to an essay regarding the situation? When you are trying to reach the public, do you think people who have read a political autobiography connect more, feel more, and empathize more than if they were to read an article in a newspaper, or do you view it as another way of telling the story?

SM: It's another way of telling the story but it has its own power because it is very personal and it is based on personal experience. It is also contested because one may ask whose memory and whose truth? So there are a lot of debates on the power and validity of autobiographies and memoirs. It is interesting in the literature that we see that these genres are differentiated. A memoir is not a biography. It is not necessarily an autobiography. Nonetheless, these are very important pieces of social history, so we have to read them. For example, I am tracing two themes in the memoirs of former political prisoners. One theme is on the question of sexuality. How women are being punished and tortured in Islamic prisons, taking into consideration the way Islam has constructed and treated women's body and sexuality. The other theme is the issue of Islam as the ideology of the state. In prison, women are not only being tortured because of opposing the state outside prison, but inside the prison they are being forced to become something else, that is, pious Muslim women. So this whole idea of making and unmaking a person is also a very important process that we can only learn and read about in the memoirs of the political prisoners.

ZH: If you have to correct one misconception that the mainstream media makes about Iran—political, about its people, its values, etc.—what misconception would you want to correct and why?

SM: The people of Iran are quite diverse in terms of class, ethnicity, religion, language, and culture, but they are constructed in the media by reference to religion only: they are Muslims. The media rarely depict Iranians as seculars, atheists, socialists, feminists, queers, etc. Part of this misrepresentation is denying them any history of democratic experience. However, the ideas of democracy and liberty are Iranian, Middle Eastern, and Arab ideas too, and should not be treated as foreign to these peoples. In fact, the claim that these are Western ideas and values is used by the theocratic regime as a means to suppress Iranians and divide the peoples of East and West. The people of Iran had the first and one of the most important democratic revolutions in 1906-1911, and in 1951, they elected a government with a nationalist and democratic tendency, which was overthrown in a CIA coup. Western powers, especially the U.S., Britain and France, have consistently interfered in the political affairs of Iran and have turned the democratic tide made real by the sacrifices of thousands of Iranian people against those same people by supporting or generating dictatorial regimes, including Khomeini's. This is the history that the Western media do not tell us. As we have discussed, even today, despite all the rhetoric against Iran, the Western powers support keeping in place a reformed and a moderate Islamic regime. But, as I have tried to show, this is not something that is desired by the people of Iran, who demand the dismantling of the entire Islamic theocracy to replace it with a secular and democratic state.



“Justice demands integrity. It’s to have a moral universe — not only know what is right or wrong but to put things in perspective, weigh things. Justice is different from violence and retribution; it requires complex accounting.”

-bell hooks

REPRESENTING AFRICA: THE CASE OF THE CONGO

Simone Akyianu

ABSTRACT. According to Sherene Razack, a commitment to ethical representation requires both acknowledgment of human pain, and a deep engagement with the socio-economic and geopolitical roots that structure such suffering. An opinion series written by renowned New York Times journalist Nicholas Kristof is analysed to examine the depth of ethical reporting on the conflict in the Congo, and the coverage of issues on the African continent more generally. Failing to meet Razack's two criteria provides support for the claim that media representation of Africa is part of a Western economic and political agenda.

INTRODUCTION

A host of Africanist and other literatures lay out the argument for the inaccurate and dehumanizing nature of mass media reporting on Africa. There is a wealth of literature that suggests that mainstream media perpetuate profoundly negative stereotypes and imagery of Africa as a whole, and Africans more specifically. As early as 1970, independent journalists were making claims that reporting on Africa was overwhelmingly preoccupied with a racist narrative of tribalism that omitted contextual information.¹ This narrative also positioned Africans as inherently inferior, “backwards” and “uncivilized”, compared to their White, “civilized” Euro-American counterparts.² Scholars such as Susan Carruthers and Sherene Razack explain that Africa has long been used as a psychosocial and material arena from which to shape “Western” self-conceptions and reinforce arbitrary dichotomies of the “enlightened” North and the “barbaric” South.³

¹ Artis, W. (1970). “The tribal fixation.” *Columbia Journalism Review*, 9 (3), 48-49.

² Ibid

³ Carruthers, S. (2004). “Tribalism and tribulation: Media constructions of ‘African savagery’ and ‘Western humanitarianism’ in the 1990s.” In S. Allan & B. Zelizer (Eds.), *Reporting war: Journalism in wartime* (155-173). New York, NY: Routledge. Razack, S. (2003). “Those who ‘witness the evil’.” *Hypatia*, 18 (1), 204- 211. The terms “North” and “South” will be used to denote the interdependent geopolitical locales of the economically elite “core” and the racialized “periphery” respectively.

Many scholars, including Toyin Fabola and Hetty ter Haar⁴, Heike Harting⁵, Eugene McNamee⁶, and Melissa Tully⁷ have argued that essentialist portrayals of Africans are profoundly apolitical, and effectively uphold unequal economic relations and Western hegemony.

While journalists may display instances of ethical reporting, mass media coverage that is largely United States driven, often fails to implicate the socio-political systems and processes that incite human conflict and pain in the first place. By ethical reporting, I draw upon Sherene Razack's two dimensions of ethical representation that requires first acknowledging human suffering, then critically engaging with the socio-political power relations that produce it.⁸

An opinion series on the Democratic Republic of the Congo (D.R.C.)⁹ written by renowned journalist Nicholas Kristof for *The New York Times* will be used as a case study to examine the ethical nature of decontextualized reporting on Africa more generally. Kristof's reporting on the Congo is largely silent on the political and economic context, which structures the mass suffering. As such, his representation cannot be characterized as entirely ethical. This paper will also discuss whether decontextualized

⁴ Falola, T. & ter Haar, H. (2010). "Introduction: Narrating war and peace in Africa." In T. Falola & H. ter Haar (Eds.), *Narrating war and peace in Africa* (1-20). Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press.

⁵ Harting, H. (2008). "Global humanitarianism, race, and the spectacle of the African corpse in current Western representations of the Rwandan genocide." *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 28 (1), 61-77.

⁶ McNamee, E. (2007). "Writing the Rwandan Genocide: The justice and politics of witnessing after the event." *Law Critique*, 18, 309- 330.

⁷ Tully, M. (2010). "All's well in the colony: Newspaper coverage of the Mau Mau movement, 1952- 56." In T. Falola & H. ter Haar (Eds.), *Narrating war and peace in Africa* (44-55). Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press.

⁸ Razack, S. (2007). "Stealing the pain of others: Reflections on Canadian humanitarian responses." *The Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies*, 29, 375- 394.

⁹ The terms "D.R.C." and "the Congo" will be used interchangeably to refer to the present day Congo.

reporting on Africa, exemplified by Kristof's coverage, is a product of media¹⁰ spin or a particular political and economic agenda.

THE CONGO: HISTORICALLY SITUATED

It is important to begin by providing a brief historical background for what is currently known as the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the conflict that disrupted the region between 1996 and 2002. The Congo represents one of the largest countries in Africa, geographically speaking, and has a population of over 60 million people. It is a land with varied cultures, languages, and vast natural resources of gold, copper, diamonds, and coltan. The latter metal is essential for the production of electronic products such as laptops, video game consoles and cellphones.¹¹ Despite this vast cultural and mineral wealth, the majority of the Congolese population has long endured significant poverty, malnutrition, preventable death, and disease.¹²

The Congo is characterized by a deeply colonial trajectory that begins in earnest with the rule of King Leopold II. The Berlin Conference of 1884-1885, organized by Leopold II, then ruler of Belgium, enabled European statesmen to "divide" Africa into arbitrary sections that would become European colonies.¹³ Between 1885 and 1908, Leopold II, effectively the owner of the Congo, authorized the forced labour,

¹⁰ For the purpose of this paper, mass media will be broadly defined as "Western media or...English language journalism of primarily the U.S. and UK and their respective global news organizations" (Carruthers, 2004, p. 169) that is "read regularly by political elites, and policymakers" and the public at large (Mody, 2010, p. 49).

¹¹ Pepper, J. (2008). "Snap of the whip/ crossroads of shame: Flogging, photography, and the representation of atrocity in the Congo reform campaign." *Visual Anthropology Review*, 24 (1), 55-77. Smith, J. (2011). "Tantalus in the digital age: Coltan ore, temporal dispossession, and "movement" in the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo." *American Ethnologist*, 38 (1), 17-35.

¹² Friends of the Congo. (2011). *Crisis in the Congo: Uncovering the truth*. Washington, D.C. Retrieved from <http://www.friendsofthecongo.org/films-a-videos.html>

¹³ Ismi, A. (2001). "The Western heart of darkness." *The Monitor*. Retrieved from <http://www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/monitor/october-2001-western-heart-darkness>

dismemberment, and murder of 10 million Congolese men, women, and children, in order to exploit the country's immense resources of wild rubber.¹⁴ It is estimated that Leopold II made about U.S. \$1 billion in profits.¹⁵

In 1908, Belgium established formal state control over the Congo. Poor treatment and violent colonial rule persisted until the Congolese gained independence.¹⁶ 1960 marked the election of the Congo's first democratically supported President, Patrice Lumumba. By 1961, however, he was assassinated with U.S. and Belgium support.¹⁷ In 1965, Mobutu Sese Seko was installed as President. It is widely documented that until 1997, Mobutu exploited the Congolese state economy, enriching himself at the expense of the wellbeing of the population as a whole.¹⁸ Some scholars note that the U.S. heavily subsidized Mobutu's reign, providing over \$400 million in military training, arms and financial assistance.¹⁹

THE CIVIL WAR AND PRESENT SITUATION

The widespread conflict in the D.R.C. was initially provoked by an armed takeover in 1996 by Congolese General Laurent Kabila, along with Rwandan and Ugandan allies.

¹⁴ Hochschild, A. (1999). *King Leopold's ghost: A story of greed, terror, and heroism in colonial Africa*. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Company. Ismi, A. (2001). "The Western heart of darkness." *The Monitor*. Retrieved from <http://www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/monitor/october-2001-western-heart-darkness>

¹⁵ Ismi, A. (2001). "The Western heart of darkness." *The Monitor*. Retrieved from <http://www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/monitor/october-2001-western-heart-darkness> Friends of the Congo. (2011). *Crisis in the Congo: Uncovering the truth*. Washington, D.C. Retrieved from <http://www.friendsofthecongo.org/films-a-videos.html>

¹⁶ Pfeffer, J. (2008). "Snap of the whip/ crossroads of shame: Flogging, photography, and the representation of atrocity in the Congo reform campaign." *Visual Anthropology Review*, 24 (1), 55-77.

¹⁷ Friends of the Congo. (2011). *Crisis in the Congo: Uncovering the truth*. Washington, D.C. Retrieved from <http://www.friendsofthecongo.org/films-a-videos.html> Ismi, A. (2001). "The Western heart of darkness." *The Monitor*. Retrieved from <http://www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/monitor/october-2001-western-heart-darkness>

¹⁸ Friends of the Congo. (2011). *Crisis in the Congo: Uncovering the truth*. Washington, D.C. Retrieved from <http://www.friendsofthecongo.org/films-a-videos.html>

¹⁹ Ibid

By 1997, these forces gained control over the capital city of Kinshasa, and thereafter Kabila became President. In 1998, there was a second invasion led by forces based in Rwanda and Uganda. The resulting civil war involved former Congolese troops, rebel groups, and paramilitary forces from several neighbouring countries. While many of the combatant parties signed a peace deal in 2002, fighting unofficially continued in the eastern region of Congo. It is estimated that since 1996, over 5 million men, women, and children have died as a result of fighting and war-related displacement, disease, and malnutrition.²⁰

During the war, a large number of North American and European extraction companies were established throughout the Congo, carrying out a number of mining and other economic “development” activities.²¹ Some scholars have documented the adverse effects on subsistence farming and local artisanal mining.²² Artisanal mining, for instance, on which almost 16% of the Congolese population depends, has largely been displaced by large-scale mining activities.²³ In “Tantalus in the Digital Age,” James Smith further explains that Congolese communities, particularly in the mineral-rich, eastern provinces of North and South Kivu, have endured “violent displacement and dispossession” as a result of the mining activities of European and North American corporations.²⁴ Smith notes that a significant proportion of the population has had to flee their homes, experienced the death of a family member or been subjected to a form of

²⁰ Ibid Smith, J. (2011). “Tantalus in the digital age: Coltan ore, temporal dispossession, and “movement” in the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo.” *American Ethnologist*, 38 (1), 17-35.

²¹ Ibid, Quotations added by Author

²² Ibid Perks, R. (2011). “Can I go? Exiting the artisanal mining sector in the Democratic Republic of Congo.” *Journal of International Development*, 23, 1115-1127.

²³ Perks, R. (2011). “Can I go? Exiting the artisanal mining sector in the Democratic Republic of Congo.” *Journal of International Development*, 23, 1115-1127

²⁴ Smith, J. (2011). “Tantalus in the digital age: Coltan ore, temporal dispossession, and “movement” in the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo.” *American Ethnologist*, 38 (1), 18.

sexual violence.²⁵ Smith and Perks, among other scholars, concede this has amounted to a situation of widespread economic and health vulnerability.²⁶

THE RISE OF COMPASSIONATE MEDIA REPORTING

The increasing globalization of the international community over the past decade has been characterized by the growth of various communication forums such as virtual libraries and online newspaper databases that have made human suffering nearly impossible to ignore.²⁷ The 1990s marked the rise of international news reporting characterized by “mobilizing conscience” journalism and an increasing empathy towards human suffering.²⁸ In *Geopolitics of Representation: Explaining Darfur*, Bella Mody describes the notion of “mobilizing conscience” journalism as an obligation to present human phenomena in a way that “challenges citizens and their officials to acknowledge the reality of human suffering and to recognize their moral duty to act”.²⁹ It refers largely to a personal duty that is adopted by individual journalists in the reporting of foreign news and is linked to the moral task of enabling audiences to empathize with those enduring pain in faraway locales.

Herein lies the interest in examining the work of renowned journalist, Nicholas Kristof. In June and July of 2007, *The New York Times* published a series of Kristof’s articles documenting human suffering in the Congo and neighbouring Central African countries. According to a February 2010 *Now on PBS* special, Kristof is known for

²⁵ Ibid

²⁶ Ibid Perks, R. (2011). “Can I go? Exiting the artisanal mining sector in the Democratic Republic of Congo.” *Journal of International Development*, 23, 1115-1127.

²⁷ Mody, B. (2010). *The geopolitics of representation: Explaining Darfur*. Lanham, MA: Lexington Books.

²⁸ Ibid, 46.

²⁹ Ibid

showing audiences the situation of communities suffering grave death, poverty, exploitation, and other atrocities, such as the humanitarian crisis in Darfur, Sudan.³⁰ Examining the aim and content of Kristof's coverage of the conflict in the Congo provides insight into what kinds of media representation can be considered deeply ethical.

MADNESS BEHIND THE METHOD

In an October 2012 *Independent Lens* PBS feature, Kristof, speaking about sex work in Cambodia, stresses that “victims are voiceless,” and that platforms in which the voices of women and children can be heard are essential. Kristof maintains that he, as an individual journalist, has the power to stimulate genuine empathy for “victims” on the part of American and other audiences. In a February 2010 *Now on PBS* interview with Eric Metzgar, who is the director of a documentary that features Nicholas Kristof gathering information for his articles in the Congo, viewers learn that Kristof searches for an individual whose lived experience is so emotionally inspiring, it motivates people to care.³¹ Metzgar agrees that finding and writing about one individual's plight is the only way to elicit compassion on the part of American readers. He also maintains that it is not simply that Kristof wishes for Americans to care about one single individual, but rather he wishes to inspire them to become emotionally invested in the plight of the Congolese people as a whole.³²

³⁰ Brancaccio, D. (Host). (2010, February 12). “Caring about Congo” [Television series episode]. In J. Sicheloff (Producer), *Now on PBS*. New York, NY: JumpStart Productions. Retrieved from <http://www.pbs.org/now/shows/607/index.html>

³¹ Ibid

³² Ibid

WHAT'S IN THE OPINION SERIES

To further understand Kristof's reporting on the Congo, it is important to examine the actual content of his coverage. In "Africa's World War," the first in the opinion series, Kristof features the story of Speciose Kabagwira, a woman who lost her baby, as well as miscarried several other pregnancies.³³ Giving additional information, Kristof acknowledges that poverty is a major factor in the social devastation in the Congo. Yet, he does not further engage with the question of the displacement of Congolese communities' livelihoods. Kristof introduces the conflict in the Congo as the product of ancient "ethnic tensions" and the aftermath of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. He explains that there has been much displacement as a result of "tribal violence."³⁴ His focus remains on internal, long standing culturally charged relations, without looking at how ethnic groupings have been historically labelled and categorized by colonial patrons. Providing some geopolitical considerations, he maintains there has been "vast human cost when we in the West allow conflicts to fester in forgotten parts of the world."³⁵ It can be noted however, that he does not ask why the "West" would stand by and support such tensions. He suggests that the West should consider providing significant military support to help in the establishment of a stable government and army. Still, Kristof does not inquire about whether the U.S. has ever provided support in the form of arms or training in the context of this or other wars in the Central African region, nor does he ask about what the potential economic motivation for this kind of support would be.

³³ Kristof, N. (2007, June 14). "Africa's world war." *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/06/14/opinion/14kristof.html>

³⁴ Ibid

³⁵ Ibid

Continuing with the portrayal of pain, in “A Painful Way to Die,” the stories of Angella Mapendo and Cecilie Nyirahabinana are featured; the former, a survivor of rape, and the latter, a mother whose children were killed.³⁶ In an attempt to provide information about their suffering, he attributes the mass rapes and killings that were taking place in the Congo to a defective national army and rebel army leaders such as General Laurent Kabila. At the same time, to address the Western world’s responsibility,³⁷ Kristof acknowledges that “This war staggers on in part because the suffering hasn’t registered on the international conscience and because it has been allowed to fester and continue.”³⁸ Kristof also makes a brief comment about then Governor Barack Obama and Sam Brownback as two political representatives who have recognized the atrocities in the Congo. He adds, “a visit from Condoleezza Rice would help put the crisis on the map.”³⁹ He does not however, probe this political responsibility further. Kristof’s focus appears to be on the indignity of letting the war continue, and does not provide insight on the determinants or root causes of the sexual violence and death inflicted upon Angella, Cecilie, and other Congolese individuals and families.

In “Dinner With A Warlord,” Kristof explains that he is covering the situation in the Congo because the plight of Congolese communities has been profoundly unreported, and has not been adopted as a global priority.⁴⁰ In the article, Kristof acknowledges the Congo’s brutal colonial history and urges the international community to recognize the dire situation in which many Congolese communities live. Kristof maintains, “there is no

³⁶ Kristof, N. (2007, June 25). “A ‘painful way to die’.” *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/06/25/opinion/25kristof.html>

³⁷ Ibid

³⁸ Ibid

³⁹ Ibid

⁴⁰ Kristof, N. (2007, June 18). “Dinner with a warlord.” *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/06/18/opinion/18kristof.html>

authority to rein in the ultimate boss in the third world.”⁴¹ Kristof attempts to provide some colonial background to the conflict. Generally, the war is presented as a product of government instability, long-standing competition for resources, and African “tribalism.” These explanations omit the complex geostrategic and political dimensions of the violence. Kristof also stresses that the government has no power over the eastern region. Readers do not, however, get a sense of the resources this mineral rich region has or the potential economic processes of destabilization.

In “Africa: Land of Hope,” Kristof takes a look at the socio-economic state of neighbouring Rwanda. He explains, “Rwanda reflects the continent’s potential when there is both stability and good governance.”⁴² He raises a key point about the African continent as a whole. According to Kristof, many regions of Africa have been disturbed by wars, and African states are “terribly governed.”⁴³ His focus appears to rest on issues of internal governance, and fails to discuss influential, external forces of destabilization. There is also no mention of the involvement of Rwandan forces in the conflict in the Congo.

Throughout the series of articles, Kristof offers a number of solutions for helping to bring an end to the violence. Some of these include: making the crisis an international priority, providing military aid and training, supporting the African Union in their security operations, encouraging reform of the Congolese army, and stopping the trade of mineral resources that support rebel groups. Kristof does not question the economic

⁴¹ Ibid

⁴² Kristof, N. (2007, July 5). “Africa: Land of hope.” *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/07/05/opinion/05kristof.html>

⁴³ Ibid

activities and profits generated by mining and other companies that have been established in the Congo in the midst of the civil war.

EVALUATING REPRESENTATIONS OF HUMAN SUFFERING

In “Stealing the Pain of Others: Reflections on Canadian Humanitarian Responses,” Canadian academic Sherene Razack engages with media representations of African human suffering. Her discussion centers on the cultural production of images of suffering in the aftermath of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. More generally, Razack discusses the portrayal of Africans in mass media during periods of humanitarian crises.⁴⁴ Implicitly, Razack evaluates the ethical nature of representation according to two dimensions: first, through the basic acknowledgment of human suffering and, second, through the critical engagement of the socio-political dynamics, including personal and state-sanctioned complicity in mass suffering. Such an evaluation can be applied to the case of Kristof’s reporting on the Congo, the former demonstrated by his general aim, and the latter demonstrated by the substantive content of his articles.

First, Kristof’s approach is wholly consistent with the mobilizing conscience rationale. Mody also characterizes Kristof’s reporting as an example of moral conscience raising journalism.⁴⁵ According to the interviews given by Kristof himself, his wider aim demonstrates an attempt to encourage in the public at large a moral imperative to care. It appears that this aim is a profoundly ethical endeavour because it explicitly acknowledges the pain and suffering of those social, cultural, and geographically distant

⁴⁴ Razack, S. (2007). “Stealing the pain of others: Reflections on Canadian humanitarian responses.” *The Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies*, 29, 375- 394.

⁴⁵ Mody, B. (2010). *The geopolitics of representation: Explaining Darfur*. Lanham, MA: Lexington Books.

“Others”.⁴⁶ Many of Kristof’s statements, particularly the calls to pay attention to the brutal colonial history and the suffering of the Congolese at the hands of a deficient government, have significant ethical undertones. Kristof presumes that his reporting will instil a lasting ethic of compassion and responsibility in the public and policymakers alike, and he demonstrates at least some commitment to provide a platform for the stories of those enduring severe pain. As a whole, Kristof’s general aim and explicit references to the pain of individuals and families demonstrate significant concern for the life and wellbeing of the Congolese. By demonstrating what appears to be genuine concern for the plight of the Congolese as whole, Kristof’s reporting can thus be said to succeed on at least one ethical account.

Meeting the first ethical threshold does not, however, erase the fact that Kristof’s reporting on the Congo fails on account of its substantive content. A point to consider is that Kristof writes an opinion article, a form of news which is often short and lacking in detail.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, insofar as Kristof claims to be committed and concerned with alleviating the suffering of the Congolese, there is a sense of moral duty to properly contextualize events.⁴⁸ Thus, although Kristof attempts to provide some background to the conflict, he leaves out the most crucial aspects of the situation in the Congo. In particular, he fails to address the root causes of the war, including the political and economic processes and structures that influence the conflict.

It may be that Kristof was not aware of the socio-economic dynamics of power and privilege at work. This is unlikely considering that a number of news sources, reports and

⁴⁶ Razack, S. (2007). “Stealing the pain of others: Reflections on Canadian humanitarian responses.” *The Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies*, 29, 375- 394.

⁴⁷ Mody, B. (2010). *The geopolitics of representation: Explaining Darfur*. Lanham, MA: Lexington Books.

⁴⁸ Razack, S. (2007). “Stealing the pain of others: Reflections on Canadian humanitarian responses.” *The Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies*, 29, 375- 394.

articles dating back to 2001, document the role of the U.S., Belgium, and private multinational corporations (MNCs) in provoking and maintaining the conflict in the Central African region. Amad Ismi (2001), among others, maintains there have been particular American economic interests at work. A January 2008 *Democracy Now* Interview featuring Maurice Carney (of Friends of the Congo) and Nita Evele (of Congo Global Action) implicates the U.S.'s long-standing policy of imperialism. The interview also points to a report by the U.N. Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the D.R.C. that explicitly names many of the MNCs based in the U.S., Canada and Belgium, and involved in perpetuating the conflict to gain access to the country's mineral wealth.⁴⁹ In addition, testimony from former congresswoman Cynthia McKinney, as documented in the minutes of a 2001 Congressional Hearing, confirms the responsibility of the U.S. in providing direct military support to Rwandan and Ugandan paramilitary forces in the Congo.⁵⁰ The transcripts from the Congressional Hearing also suggest that Canadian mining company Barrick Gold, whose advisory board has included former President George H.W. Bush, assisted the rebel group, Rally for Congolese Democracy (RCD) in consolidating authority over the mineral rich eastern region of Goma, Congo.⁵¹ Similarly, the news source *The Dominion* published a two-part series on the Congo in May 2007. The series connects the U.S. government to the training of warring factions, and the use of these

⁴⁹ Goodman, A. (Interviewer), Carney, M. & Evele, N. (Interviewees). (2008). "Corporations reaping millions as Congo suffers deadliest conflict since World War II" [Interview transcript]. Retrieved from *Democracy Now*!:

http://www.democracynow.org/2008/1/23/corporations_reaping_millions_as_congo_suffers

⁵⁰ Chavarria, M. (2007). "The West fuels the conflicts in Africa". *La VanGuardia*. Retrieved from <http://www.allthingscynthiamckinney.com/node/66>

⁵¹ Committee on International Relations. (2001). *Suffering and despair, Humanitarian crisis in the Congo*: Hearing before the Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights, of the Committee on International Relations, 107th Cong. 1. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

groups as proxies for Euro-American interests. It appears that scholars and journalists who provide fuller descriptions of the civil war agree that U.S. state and non-state actors have played a central role in the plundering of Congolese mineral resources and the ensuing social devastation.⁵²

Despite the alternative reports and literature that situate Euro-American interests at the center of the atrocities, Kristof does not acknowledge the political and economic factors underlying the destabilization of the Congo. Worse, he fails to cast a critical gaze on the U.S.'s complicity in Congolese suffering. Anthropologist Paul Farmer, mentioned in one of Kristof's articles, writes "to explain suffering, one must embed individual biography in the larger matrix of culture, history and political economy."⁵³ Farmer is clear in his argument that the processes whereby people are made sick and useless in their own locales,⁵⁴ as in the case of large-scale corporations displacing artisanal mining, are specific sources of structural violence. According to Farmer, structural violence has historical, ideological, economic and political dimensions that must be questioned when considering and commenting on individual narratives of suffering. He makes a broader claim that writing about and acknowledging the suffering of others requires making a meaningful effort to interpret the underlying political and economic dynamics, otherwise that suffering is likely to become further entrenched.

⁵² Dent, G. (2007, May 14). "Canada in the Congo war: Role of Mining, resource extraction has been neglected." *The Dominion*, 45. Retrieved from <http://www.dominionpaper.ca/articles/1177> Dent, G. (2007, May 26). "Mining the Congo." *The Dominion*, 46. Retrieved from <http://www.dominionpaper.ca/articles/1195>

⁵³ Farmer, P. (2002). "On suffering and structural violence: A view from below." In J. Vincent (Ed.), *The anthropology of politics: A reader in ethnography, theory and critique* (424-437). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers. 6.

⁵⁴ The notion of people becoming useless is taken from Gerald Sider's (2006) *The Production of Race, Locality, and State: An Anthropology* in his discussion about the economic policies and structures that force people to be rendered socially insignificant, and then to either migrate from their present locale or die.

Similarly, Razack suggests that it is fundamentally unjust and unethical to write about the pain of others in a way that enables readers to empathize with suffering, yet disregard their own complicity in that pain.⁵⁵ Razack argues that identifying with the pain of others without properly implicating the powerful and personal dynamics that structure such suffering, amounts to “stealing the pain of others”.⁵⁶ For Razack, this becomes a kind of passive empathy that inhibits the pursuit of a more socially just world. Moreover, because the pain tends to uphold conceptions of Canadians as moral, audiences experience a moral pleasure from it that works to dehumanize the sufferer.⁵⁷ Elsewhere, Razack maintains: “Without history and social context, each encounter between unequal groups becomes a fresh one, where the participants start from zero...each innocent of the subordination of others.”⁵⁸

Both Farmer and Razack’s arguments are at the core of why Kristof’s reporting on the Congo cannot be characterized as fully ethical. Insofar as writers fail to name the sources of personal and structural violence that ensure the suffering of millions of people, one cannot entirely name such reporting ethical. To be truly ethical would require “identifying the forces conspiring to promote suffering.”⁵⁹ A decontextualized, apolitical explanation of events obscures the geopolitical and other socio-economic realities, which

⁵⁵ Razack, S. (2007). “Stealing the pain of others: Reflections on Canadian humanitarian responses.” *The Review of Education, Pedagogy, and -Cultural Studies*, 29, 375- 394.

⁵⁶ Ibid

⁵⁷ Razack, S. (2007). “Stealing the pain of others: Reflections on Canadian humanitarian responses.” *The Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies*, 29, 375- 394.

⁵⁸ Razack, S. (1998). *Looking white people in the eye: Gender, race, and culture in courtrooms and classrooms*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press. 8.

⁵⁹ Farmer, P. (2002). “On suffering and structural violence: A view from below.” In J. Vincent (Ed.), *The anthropology of politics: A reader in ethnography, theory and critique* (424-437). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers. 9.

are the true sources of widespread human death, illness, and poverty.⁶⁰ Furthermore, failing to meaningfully engage with the political dimensions of war absolves the U.S., among other vested interests, of their moral and other responsibilities to refrain from causing, and exploiting from, the misery of others.

MEDIA SPIN OR POLITICAL AGENDA

Kristof's case study explores a kind of journalism that purports to be, and, to some extent is, ethical. Yet, it follows the same narrow, decontextualized discourse as the essentialist, "tribal-focused" media representations that have been the source of much literature. *The Globe and Mail*, among other sources, has published articles that display similar concern for human life, yet, largely fail to engage with broader political questions.⁶¹ An extensive content analysis of mainstream news sources would be required to make a definitive conclusion about such narrow forms of reporting. Kristof's reporting on the Congo provides some insight as to the extent to which decontextualized reporting on Africa more generally is a product of media spin or a wider political agenda.

While some scholars adhere to notions of journalism as a largely objective realm of knowledge production vulnerable to the "danger of taking sides,"⁶² others have made

⁶⁰ Ibid Carruthers, S. (2004). "Tribalism and tribulation: Media constructions of 'African savagery' and 'Western humanitarianism' in the 1990s." In S. Allan & B. Zelizer (Eds.), *Reporting war: Journalism in wartime* (155-173). New York, NY: Routledge. Mody, B. (2010). *The geopolitics of representation: Explaining Darfur*. Lanham, MA: Lexington Books. Razack, S. (2007). "Stealing the pain of others: Reflections on Canadian humanitarian responses." *The Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies*, 29, 375- 394.

⁶¹ Caplan, G. (2012, August 3). "Peacekeepers gone wild: How much more abuse will the UN ignore in Congo." *The Globe and Mail*. Retrieved from <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/second-reading/peacekeepers-gone-wild-how-much-more-abuse-will-the-un-ignore-in-congo/article4462151/> Yorke, G. (2010, March 26). "The bleak calculus of Congo's war without end." *The Globe and Mail*. Retrieved from <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/the-bleak-calculus-of-congos-war-without-end/article4318421/>

⁶² Power, S. (2004). "Reporting atrocity: War, neutrality, and the danger of taking sides." *Press/ Politics*, 9 (3), 3-11.

more nuanced arguments for the case that particular news representations are a result of media “frame” or “spin”⁶³ Media spin is characterized as a “kind of claim-making that is shaped and constrained by the desire to achieve certain specific kinds of effects.”⁶⁴ Neil Manson explains that spin is centered on structuring audience’s perceptions of an action, policy, or phenomenon in a manner that serves a particular set of interests.⁶⁵ While media spin may not involve “explicit lies,” it “may mislead or deceive.”⁶⁶ Manson explains that the objective of media spin may be to elicit a particular emotion, ethic or way of feeling in an audience.⁶⁷ According to Manson, the existence and extent of spin depends upon a number of factors, namely the effect of the spin and the communicator’s intent. Intent, for instance, ranges from “deception,” to “maintaining ignorance,” to “not intending to induce.”⁶⁸ Kristof and other journalists’ omission of the political circumstances of war may be a result of this journalistic tool. In this regard, Kristof’s representation of the Congo is merely a product of being “selective with the truth,” or being selective about which aspects of human phenomena to convey to audiences.⁶⁹ This also means that decontextualized representation of Africa, more generally, need not be part of a particular ideological or political program.

In contrast, Baffour Ankomah argues that “Western” media sources have long represented the region of Africa, and Africans, according to national concerns and

⁶³ Entman, R. (2007). “Framing bias: Media in the distribution of power.” *Journal of Communication*, 57, 163- 173. Manson, N. (2012). “Making sense of media spin.” *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, 29 (3), 200-213.

⁶⁴ Manson, N. (2012). “Making sense of media spin.” *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, 29 (3), 200- 213.

⁶⁵ Ibid

⁶⁶ Ibid

⁶⁷ Ibid

⁶⁸ Ibid, 209

⁶⁹ Ibid, 203

interests⁷⁰. In “Reporting Africa,” Ankomah (2008) engages with the issue of mass media coverage, stressing that there is a tendency to “follow the flag,” essentially to explain events in such a way that supports Euro-American political and economic interests. Mody agrees, stating, “the one single factor that has been found to be consistently predictive of the nature of the representation... is national interests.”⁷¹ In other words, the simplistic, decontextualized reporting of African human suffering is pursued and accepted as part of a national agenda. Ankomah (2008) adds that the media is part and parcel of the state apparatus used to pacify and placate the public. Manson (2012) alludes to this notion of “maintaining ignorance” in explaining media spin, which Ankomah engages with in his article.⁷² Ankomah characterizes such decontextualized reporting on Africa as reporting in the service of geopolitical and security interests. He describes the media’s role as explicitly strategic and designed to “prevent the masses from knowing all the facts.”⁷³

I have always believed that the average European is a very fair person, provided he or she is given all the facts on both sides of a debate. If they knew what their governments did and still do, in their name abroad, they would always be in the streets, demonstrating. That is what the establishment wants to avoid.⁷⁴

Ankomah makes a strong argument for the case that Kristof’s reporting on the Congo reflects a particular political agenda. Journalist and filmmaker, John Pilger presents a similar, meaningful argument. In an article titled “The Real First Casualty Of War,” Pilger describes the extent to which media, particularly in the case of reporting on geographically distant countries, omit crucial political and economic determinants of

⁷⁰ Ankomah, B. (2008, June). “Reporting Africa.” *New African*. Retrieved from <http://www.exacteditions.com/read/new-african/june-2008-3860>.

⁷¹ Mody, B. (2010). *The geopolitics of representation: Explaining Darfur*. Lanham, MA: Lexington Books. 26.

⁷² Manson, N. (2012). “Making sense of media spin.” *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, 29 (3), 200- 213.

⁷³ Ibid

⁷⁴ Ibid

human phenomena.⁷⁵ Pilger claims journalists adopt and exploit a particular discourse of concern that validates unjust state and non-state actions. He adds:

The oldest cliché is that truth is the first casualty of war. I disagree. Journalism is the first casualty. Not only that: it has become a weapon of war, a virulent censorship that goes unrecognized in the U.S., Britain and other democracies, censorship by omission, whose power is such that, in war, it can mean the difference between life and death for people in faraway countries...⁷⁶

Pilger makes the argument that reporting that involves “censorship by omission” cannot be regarded as media spin. There is an aspect of his reasoning that is quite compelling, and relates largely to the arguments noted above by Razack. The argument being that to reduce the omission of the root causes of human suffering to mere media spin is to maintain the illusion that U.S., Canada and other states are not connected to the persistent suffering of racialized individuals and families.

For Razack, the cultural production and portrayal of African suffering has both moral and material implications.⁷⁷ Discussing the genocide in Rwanda, Razack maintains that these material implications are linked to the reality from which we profit on a daily and systematic basis from the South’s resources. In *Looking White People in the Eye*, Razack explains that we in the North ought to recognize the extent to which representations of marginalized groups have been socially constructed in order to maintain unequal hierarchies of economic wealth and political power.⁷⁸ Razack argues that the current global order is characterized by a kind of neo-colonialism, in which states in the global North continue to exploit and dominate those in the global South, in terms of

⁷⁵ Pilger, J. (2006, April 24). “The real first casualty of war.” Retrieved from <http://johnpilger.com/articles/the-real-first-casualty-of-war>.

⁷⁶ Ibid

⁷⁷ Razack, S. (2007). “Stealing the pain of others: Reflections on Canadian humanitarian responses.” *The Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies*, 29, 375- 394.

⁷⁸ Razack, S. (1998). *Looking white people in the eye: Gender, race, and culture in courtrooms and classrooms*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

economic and military control. This dynamic of “Northern hegemony” is achievable because of the persistent oversimplified and decontextualized nature of “Western” reporting on humanitarian crises and other issues in the context of the African continent. Razack urges Canadians, as audiences of these decontextualized narratives, to give up this racialized and material power because ultimately “we are implicated in the West’s power over the non-West.”⁷⁹

It becomes clear that such narrow representations not only absolve states of their accountability, but that they also work to maintain particular power dynamics that ensure the racialized “South”, and in this case the Congo, continues to provide material benefits to Euro-Americans. In this instance, the material benefits signify the Congo’s natural resources and the resulting profits borne by Euro-American extraction companies. Kristof’s reporting can, thus, be considered part of a larger strategy to preserve Euro-American companies’ access to mineral wealth, and to consolidate power that derives from this plundering. Moreover, by omitting crucial political and economic facts, Kristof prepares citizens in the North to accept this inequity, thereby normalizing unequal power relations between the global North and the South. It follows that decontextualized reporting on Africa is an aspect of managing the unequal distribution of economic and political power, a well-documented and profoundly systematic political agenda.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Kristof’s method of writing about an individual’s pain and his commitment to inspire in audiences a conscience that demands alleviating that misery, satisfy the basic

⁷⁹ Razack, S. (2007). “Stealing the pain of others: Reflections on Canadian humanitarian responses.” *The Review of Education, Pedagogy, and -Cultural Studies*, 29, 390.

ethical requirement of acknowledging and empathizing with human suffering. However, Kristof fails to engage with the underlying systems and structures that produce and sustain mass human death. Insofar as Kristof leaves out the crucial determinants of the war in the Congo, including U.S. state and corporate complicity in so-called distant “Third World” suffering, such coverage does not meet the ultimate standard of ethical reporting. Moreover, this confirms the collusion of media in managing the consciousness of Euro-American audiences such that they fail to develop a critical consciousness about their own responsibility, and that of the social and geopolitical locale in which they live. Providing a decontextualized narrative of human suffering reflects a particular political program of sustaining, rather than fundamentally challenging the unequal distribution of economic wealth and power. Let us not forget that it also maintains the unequal burden of death, illness, and poverty carried by the global South about which journalists so often purport to be concerned.

THE ETHICS OF REFUGEE LIMBO

Nadia Zaman

ABSTRACT. The discourse of refugees in limbo has been fraught with misconceptions. In this paper, I argue for ethical obligations on the part of nations towards refugees in limbo. In section 1, I describe who refugees in limbo are. In section 2, I argue that nations have an ethical obligation for the duty of care and protection for refugees in limbo, which may vary depending on the category of the refugee in limbo as well as the particular case. In section 3, I discuss some general policy options to improve the situation for refugees in limbo. We have the perfect duty to provide refugees with protection and the imperfect duty to provide them with a fair and reasonable refugee determination process.

INTRODUCTION

Despite the vast research done on refugees, little is known about refugees in limbo. Refugees in limbo are those individuals waiting to hear about their refugee status, or those who, upon being granted their refugee status, are waiting to be landed. Essentially, they remain in a state of uncertainty, deadlock, and delay. In the first section of this paper, I will describe who refugees in limbo are, first by defining asylum-seekers and refugees and then by explaining the concept of limbo. In the second section, I will argue that there is an ethical obligation for the duty of care and protection for refugees in limbo on the part of nations. This obligation may vary depending on the category of the refugee in limbo, the particular case, and the resources of the nation seeking to help. In the third section, I will briefly outline some general policy options to discuss what can be done for refugees in limbo. These policy options are merely suggestions and further research is required to determine specific policy proposals to improve the situation for refugees in limbo.

I. WHO ARE REFUGEES IN LIMBO?

In the first section of the paper, I will describe who is classified as a refugee in limbo. I will define asylum-seekers and refugees, then I will define limbo in a general sense. Finally, I will discuss limbo in the context of refugees.

Asylum-seekers and Refugees

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) defines an asylum-seeker as:

an individual who has sought international protection and whose claim for refugee status has not been determined yet. As part of its obligation to protect refugees on its territory, the country of asylum is normally responsible for determining whether an asylum-seeker is a refugee or not. This responsibility is often incorporated in national legislation of the country and, for State Parties, is derived from the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees.¹

Thus, “[a]sylum seekers at the border are entitled to make a refugee claim”.²

“According to the 1951 Convention, as amended by the 1967 Protocol, a refugee is a person who:

owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.”³

The reasons for persecution must be because of at least one of the five grounds listed in the Refugee Convention; “[p]ersecution based on any other ground will not be considered”.⁴

¹ “Asylum Levels and Trends in Industrialized Countries.” UNHCR. Web. 2011. <<http://www.unhcr.org/4e9beaa19.html>>.

² Macklin, Audrey, “Disappearing Refugees: Reflections on the Canada-US Safe Third Country Agreement.” *Columbia Human Rights Law Review*, Vol. 36, 2005: 366.

³ Macklin, Audrey, “The Value(s) of the Canada-US Safe Third Country Agreement.” *The Caledon Institute of Social Policy*. 2003: 1.

⁴ “Refugees and Displaced Persons.” Human Rights Education Associates. n.d. Web. Mar. 2012. <http://www.hrea.org/index.php?doc_id=418>.

The term “refugees” can be misunderstood and confused with “economic migrants”, people migrating for economic reasons, and “internally displaced persons”, persecuted groups who remain within their own country and do not cross an international border.⁵ Refugees can be contrasted with other migrants: “the former are compelled to migrate to escape a threat to life or liberty, whereas the latter choose to migrate for an array of non-urgent reasons”.⁶ For example, “[a] refugee is different from an immigrant, in that an immigrant is a person who chooses to settle permanently in another country. Refugees are forced to flee”.⁷ Yet, many immigrants may emigrate because they have strong reasons to do so, such as bad economic conditions. For refugees, the difference may lie in the fact that the reasons for migration are coercive.⁸

Limbo

“Limbo is a term coming from the Latin *limbus* meaning hem, edge, margin or border”.⁹ The origin of the Latin noun “*limbus*,” is “obscure”.¹⁰ In colloquial terms, limbo is defined as any in-between place, state, or condition of neglect or oblivion that results in an unresolved status, delay, or deadlock. According to the Oxford dictionary, persons or things are consigned to this condition of neglect or oblivion “when regarded as no longer of use”.¹¹ Moreover, “[m]iddle Eastern literature defines limbo as an intermediate abode between hell and heaven where people are desperately waiting for

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Macklin, “Disappearing Refugees” 366.

⁷ “The refugee system in Canada.” Citizenship and Immigration Canada. 21 June 2011. Web. Feb. 2011. <<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/canada.asp>>.

⁸ Professor Boyle, in communication.

⁹ Mossallanejad, Ezat. *Torture in the Age of Fear*. Seraphim Editions, 2005.

¹⁰ Palacios, Miguel A. *Islam and the Divine Comedy*. Frank Cass and Company Limited, 2006: 81.

¹¹ Creal, Michael. “Refugees in Limbo.” Mar. 2002: 3.

The Latin noun “*limbus*” is “used by classical writers, such as Virgil, Ovid, and Statius, with the meaning of “fringe or border adorning the lower part of a garment” (Palacios 81). “In the sixth century it is used with the meaning of “coast” (81).

their settlement. Such people live in a state of permanent wandering and bear the tremendous agony of oblivion and neglect”.¹² This particular understanding of the concept of limbo is similar to the way it is understood in religion.

The concept of limbo is prevalent in theology, whether it is Christianity, Islam, or Hinduism. It can be seen as an existential problem, or as a form of religious punishment.¹³ According to Roman Catholic theology, limbo arises in the afterlife; it is the place of existence for those who deserve neither heaven nor hell.¹⁴ Indeed, “in classical theology, limbo identified the abode of souls excluded from human fulfillment, or, in theological terms, permanently excluded from the full experience of the “beatific vision””.¹⁵ Thus, limbo seems to be a state of depravation.

The concept of limbo appears in Islam as well. According to the Koran, the only suffering that is “inflicted on the inhabitants of the Moslem limbo is a vain longing to enter paradise: “They cannot enter for all their longing””.¹⁶ The good that they have done is balanced by their sins. Therefore, they are granted neither heaven nor hell: “they neither sink into hell nor rise to heaven, but remain in suspense between the two”.¹⁷ Placed in between heaven and hell, “they are acquainted and converse with both the blessed and the damned”.¹⁸ This idea is also the core thought among Christians and applies to the situation of refugees in limbo.

¹² Mossallanejad, Ezat. *Torture in the Age of Fear*. Seraphim Editions, 2005.

¹³ Mossallanejad, in communication.

¹⁴ Slick, Matt. “Catholic Terminology.” Christian Apologetics & Research Ministry. n.d. Web. Nov. 2011. <<http://carm.org/catholic-terminology>>.

¹⁵ Creal 3.

¹⁶ Palacios 84.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

The term limbo has been used in various connected ways throughout history. For example, limbo is “sometimes used to explain the situation of captivity, incarceration, or segregation, and occasionally is taken to illustrate jail or jail conditions”.¹⁹ I interviewed a person who has been in limbo for years, and due to issues of confidentiality, I have given him the pseudonym Fred. As Fred stated, “I thought that being out of jail in society, it was [still] the same jail, just bigger. People looked at me differently” (See Appendix A). Today, the connotations of this term’s common use are that the person is in a condition that is unsettled, and not final.²⁰ Limbo is an idea of an unsatisfactory state without a terminal end to it, and thus the concept of it reflects an unacceptable state of affairs.

Refugees in Limbo

Ezat Mossallanejad describes limbo as “a state of contradiction”:

You are confused, uncertain and unstable about everything. You cannot evaluate your situation and cannot understand where you stand. Being in limbo, you feel lost about who you are and what will happen to you. Limbo is a place for people who are forgotten and cast aside for an indefinite term. Thus, people in limbo feel totally out of time, out of place and out of themselves.²¹

This understanding of limbo corresponds with the state in which refugees in limbo often find themselves. Regarding limbo, Fred stated, “Even today, I do not know how my future is going to be”; “I am scared of the future. I don’t know what’s going to happen”; “I felt a rope around my neck all the time. They put a limit around me. I was not free” (See Appendix A). Yet, this is not surprising, because “in the context of refugees in the

¹⁹ Mossallanejad, Ezat. *Torture in the Age of Fear*. Seraphim Editions, 2005.

²⁰ Professor Boyle, in communication.

²¹ Mossallanejad, Ezat. *Torture in the Age of Fear*. Seraphim Editions, 2005.

modern nation state system...limbo is a condition where a person has been deprived of legal status, where a person has no rights under the law”.²² “Refugees and refugee claimants in limbo are persons effectively stripped of legal status”.²³ Thus, limbo is not simply being in an unsettled state; it is a condition of significant deprivation of status.²⁴

Refugees who are in limbo are not all in limbo for the same reasons.²⁵ Refugees in limbo in Canada can be put into three broad categories: 1) “people who have been accepted as Convention refugees by the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) but have not been landed”;²⁶ 2) asylum-seekers “who have been turned down as Convention refugees, gone through the various “appeal” procedures without success but who are still in Canada”,²⁷ and 3) “those who have failed to pass security checks”.²⁸

II. ETHICAL OBLIGATIONS: THE DUTY OF CARE AND PROTECTION TOWARDS REFUGEES

In the second section, I will argue that there is an ethical obligation for the duty of care and protection towards refugees. On plain and simple humanitarian grounds, there needs to be a kind of decent regard for refugees in limbo. There is a need for a fair refugee determination system that does not allow or encourage abuse of the refugee system against the interests of other refugees and legitimate immigrants, a point that the Canadian government has recently made. The government’s reliance on this rhetoric however, implies a large number of unfounded refugee claims, which is problematic as it

²² Creal 3.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Professor Boyle, in communication.

²⁵ Professor Carens, in communication.

²⁶ Creal 4.

²⁷ Creal 3.

²⁸ Creal 11.

seems to put refugee claimants into one category, namely the easy refusal cases: those who do not have valid claims and want to abuse the system. There is this assumption that asylum seekers inflict themselves on us.²⁹ As a country however, Canada voluntarily signed onto conventions such as the Refugee Convention. Thus, it is not a matter of refugees inflicting themselves on us; rather, we voluntarily took it upon ourselves. Indeed, if we as a society want to promote the idea of fairness, we must be careful with the ways in which we deal with refugees in limbo.

Canada is generally known as a compassionate and tolerant nation. The number of asylum seekers arriving in Canada varies from year to year.³⁰ In 2009, Canada received more than 33,200 asylum seekers.³¹ The Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRB) is an “independent administrative tribunal that makes decisions on immigration and refugee matters” and, thus, is responsible for deciding who is a Convention refugee or a person in need of protection.³² Citizenship and Immigration Canada portrays the refugee determination process as a balance between the needs of the refugee claimants and the needs of the government, the political community, and other potential immigrants and refugees: “Finding who is in need of Canada’s protection is a process that must take into consideration the responsibility of helping those in genuine need while protecting the system against those who seek to abuse it. The health and safety of Canadians must also be ensured”.³³ With the situation of refugees in limbo however,³⁴ it seems that the balance should be tipped in favour of the responsibility of helping those who are in

²⁹ Professor Macklin, in communication.

³⁰ “The refugee system in Canada.” Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

³¹ Ibid.

³² “Refugee claims in Canada - Who can apply.” Citizenship and Immigration Canada. 9 Sept. 2011. Web. Feb. 2011. <<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/inside/apply-who.asp>>.

³³ “The refugee system in Canada.” Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

³⁴ This applies especially to case 1: those who have been accepted as Convention refugees but have not been landed. The different cases of refugees in limbo will be elaborated upon in the next section.

genuine need: they are stuck in a state of uncertainty and are not able to get on with their lives.

Framing the issue as a “balancing act” allows the nation state to exaggerate the amount of unfounded claims and then justify a stricter refugee determination system. For example, several of the world’s richest countries have, in recent years, reduced the number of refugees they allow into the country, because 1) air travel has become cheaper with more refugees from developing countries wanting to enter developed countries, and 2) “the world economic downturn has reduced the need for large workforces”.³⁵ Thus, those refugees who used to previously come as migrant workers now have to apply for refugee status.³⁶ Western states have responded to the increase in the number of asylum seekers in recent years “by making their determination systems more restrictive”.³⁷ Indeed, there has been an “overall decline in acceptance rates across the board in Western countries” achieved through methods such as “the narrow application of the Convention/Protocol definition of refugee”.³⁸ Justifying the restrictions on refugees is not overly difficult. Developed countries often argue that refugees simply want a better standard of living and are not victims of oppression.³⁹ This rhetoric seems to make the general population skeptical of the validity of refugee claims.

First, I will discuss rights and duties in the context of the ethical obligation to protect refugees. Then, I will discuss the different cases of refugees in limbo and show that the ethical obligation to help and protect refugee claimants and refugees may vary

³⁵ “Information About Refugees.” HREA’s Online Human Rights Education Library. n.d. Web. Mar. 2012. <http://www.hrea.org/erc/Library/display_doc.php?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.hrea.org%2Ferc%2FLibrary%2Frefugee-roleplay.html&external=N>.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

depending on the category of the refugee in limbo as well as the particular case. In each case, however, refugee limbo is a serious problem and something must be done to allow people with this status to move on with their lives.

Perfect and Imperfect Duties

The distinction between perfect and imperfect duties will help illustrate the duty of care and protection towards refugees. A perfect duty “obliges one to do (or refrain from doing) a particular act and it is determinate in terms of who must carry it out and when it must be done; [it] specifies what is required by the agent”.⁴⁰ Thus, “[i]f I am to fulfill my obligation, there is some specific thing I must not do and this specific thing is articulated by the duty itself”.⁴¹ The Kantian view of perfect duties involves negative obligations: do not do X. Thus, Kant’s idea of a perfect duty applies only when there is a prohibition. Kant’s paradigm example of a perfect duty is the duty not to make a lying promise; “we ought to make all of our promises in good faith on every occasion”.⁴² On the other hand, in fulfilling imperfect duties, “the agent has latitude in deciding how [to do so],” which means that “while she is obligated to adopt an end, she is not obligated to act so as to fulfill this end in any particular way”.⁴³ Imperfect duties involve doing something, but not anything in particular. For example, “no particular helpful act is required for one to remain committed to helping needy persons, just as no particular intellectual pursuit is required for one to remain committed to developing her intellect”.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Ignieski, Violetta. "Perfect and Imperfect Duties to Aid", *Journal of Social Theory and Practice*, Vol. 32, No. 3, 2006: 444.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ignieski 443.

⁴³ Ignieski 444.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

One is not obligated to give money to homeless people in particular, but one does have an obligation to help others in need. Thus, “perfect duties are duties to do particular acts and imperfect duties are duties to adopt ends”.⁴⁵

Protecting Refugees as a Human Rights Issue

The obligation to protect refugees can be seen as an issue of human rights. “Human rights are those practices, immunities, goods, and expectations to which people are entitled simply because they are human”.⁴⁶ Human rights should apply regardless of nationality. A “right” is an “entitlement to a good of some sort”.⁴⁷ Person A has a right to X, if person B has an obligation to provide A with it and it is rooted in A’s interest.⁴⁸ In the refugee context, refugees can be seen as having a right to protection by states that have signed onto the Refugee Convention. Indeed, “there is a duty to aid a person whose agency or basic needs are threatened”.⁴⁹ “[T]he right-holder may make a claim based upon the right and use the power it provides or not as she pleases”.⁵⁰ Indeed, “a claim-to some freedom or benefit and a claim-against some agent to act so as to make available that freedom or benefit” must be distinguished.⁵¹ “With regard to human rights, we must ask who accepts the imperfect duty to realize these rights as a perfect duty”.⁵² While

⁴⁵ Ignieski 445.

⁴⁶ Clohesy, William W. "Interrogating Human Rights: What Purpose? Whose Duty?" *Business and Society Review* 109.1, 2004: 43.

⁴⁷ Clohesy 50.

⁴⁸ Raz, Joseph. "Individualistic Freedom: Liberty and Rights." *The Morality of Freedom*. Oxford University Press, 1988.

⁴⁹ Ignieski 445.

⁵⁰ Clohesy 50.

⁵¹ Nickel, James W. "How Human Rights Generate Duties to Protect and Provide." *Human Rights Quarterly* 15.1, 1993: 78.

⁵² Clohesy 53.

“[n]egative duties to refrain fall on everyone; positive duties to protect fall on governments”.⁵³

Rights and Duties: Two Sides of the Same Coin

Clohesy examines who ought to accept the duty to realize rights, and argues that “[i]t is only against the background of duty that ‘right’ first takes on meaning”.⁵⁴ “Rights...are most effectively understood as morally significant, and often ideal, social practices that are coordinated with duties. When we speak of someone possessing a right, we necessarily presuppose as well someone with a duty to respond to that right”.⁵⁵ For example, everyone has the right “not to be pointlessly harmed by anyone” and children have the right “to a decent upbringing by their parents”.⁵⁶ This means that everyone has the perfect duty not to pointlessly harm anyone and parents have the perfect duty to provide a decent upbringing to their children. “The duty is perfect in that both the beneficiary and the one obligated are determinate”.⁵⁷ Yet, this is not like the paradigm cases of perfect duties where a very definite action is usually to be taken or avoided, such as no killing, or no lying promises.⁵⁸ Raz defines a right very usefully as follows: a person has a right to X if somebody else, other persons or communities included, has a duty to provide X based on the interest of the right holder. Thus, rights and duties can be viewed as two sides of the same coin.

⁵³ Nickel 81.

⁵⁴ Clohesy 44.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Professor Boyle, in communication.

Refugees' Right to Protection—But Whose Duty?

In the refugee context, refugees' right to protection is an abandoned right "until someone—either an individual or an institution—accepts the responsibility of caring for [them]".⁵⁹ It remains unspecified however, as to who this refers to. Thus, the right in question might be seen as unspecified or incomplete; in other words, not fully determinate. According to Feinberg, a "justified right" is the "union of a justified claim-to and a justified claim-against".⁶⁰ In other words, a person's right to X can be successfully justified by "(1) justifying that person's claim-to X, and (2) justifying a claim-against some addressee to act in ways that will make X available to that person".⁶¹ For justifying a person's claim-to X, generally "the great moral importance of that person's having X" needs to be shown.⁶² In the context of refugees in limbo, a refugee in limbo can successfully justify her claim-to protection due to the great moral importance of her having protection, but she can also justify her claim-to a fair and reasonable refugee determination process that does not put her in years of limbo.

"If rights, in general, are to be more than rhetoric, persons and institutions must accept the duties that establish those rights as the entitlements of specified persons to some good from those accepting a duty to provide them".⁶³ By voluntarily signing onto the Refugee Convention, Canada has accepted the duty to protect refugees. Although there is a duty, "in some situations the duty has the structure of a perfect duty and in

⁵⁹ Clohesy 44-45.

Clohesy uses the following example: "A street kid has no one whose duty it is to care for her; therefore, she can claim no right for care because there is no one to whom that claim can be addressed. Although everyone can recognize that the child needs care, no one has a perfect duty to provide it" (44).

⁶⁰ Nickel 78.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Clohesy 45.

others it is imperfect”.⁶⁴ The important ethical question that must be asked is: Do state parties have a perfect or imperfect duty to protect refugees? As Ignieski argues:

[T]here are certain instances in which a particular act is required of a person if we are to understand that person as being committed in the right way. When a situation is morally determinate, the agent has no latitude to decide how she should act to fulfill her duty, so here we should understand the duty as a perfect duty.⁶⁵

“A situation is morally determinate from the agent’s perspective if it specifies: (1) an act the agent must perform to address the need; and (2) when (or by when) the act must be performed”.⁶⁶ Thus, it needs to be determined whether the duty to provide refugees in limbo with protection and a fair and reasonable refugee determination process is perfect or imperfect, or if the character of the duty perhaps differs depending on particular circumstances of the case.

Perfect or Imperfect Duty?

“[A]ll major western nations are signatories to the 1951 U.N. Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees”.⁶⁷ The acceptance creates a perfect duty toward the refugees who now have a right to protection from the state party. One of the things done by conventions such as the Refugee Convention is to considerably restrict the latitude and discretion a country has about providing help.⁶⁸ Once a person is in Canada, the government has a perfect duty to provide them with adequate protection if they need it. We do not necessarily have the perfect duty to keep them here; we can send them to a third country. We have a perfect duty to not send them to a place where they are at risk of

⁶⁴ Ignieski 445.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 444.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 445.

⁶⁷ Macklin, “Disappearing Refugees” 365.

⁶⁸ Professor Boyle, in communication.

being tortured.⁶⁹ Likewise, according to the Refugee Convention, “a state party must not refole a person who has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion”.⁷⁰ Non-refoulement means that “[r]efugees within the country cannot be deported; [they] merit protection”.⁷¹ A migrant is accorded status by the Refugee Convention “based on the reasons for the individual’s flight from a country”.⁷² Thus, state parties have a perfect duty not to refole such persons.

Treaties comprise one of the “three important institutional ways in which duties are recognized and accepted so as to realize human rights.”⁷³ “Human rights will be realized only if there is widespread acceptance of the perfect duty to uphold them.”⁷⁴ However, “we cannot simply presume governments will accept the duty, for this is not a long tradition for many of them, nor is it always practicably feasible.”⁷⁵ Thus, “[o]nce plausible addresses for the right are identified, one must next show that these addresses can successfully bear the burdens that the right would impose on them or in other words, one must examine the issue of “feasibility””.⁷⁶ “The enforcement of rights...depends on the *sustainable* capacity to respect and uphold the right.”⁷⁷ “Judging whether a system of burdens is sustainable involves estimating whether a capacity will endure over time, and

⁶⁹ Refugee lawyer, in communication.

⁷⁰ Macklin, “Disappearing Refugees” 366.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Clohesy 54.

The other two institutional ways are non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and multinational corporations (Clohesy).

⁷⁴ Clohesy 53.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Nickel 81.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

this involves extremely difficult predictions”.⁷⁸ “It makes sense to think that considerations of efficiency and personal preference will play a role in the agent’s decision-making”.⁷⁹ Yet, it must be remembered that even developing countries are accepting refugees in large numbers. For example, “Pakistan had the largest number of refugees in relation to its economic capacity, hosting 710 refugees per 1 USD Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (PPP) per capita”.⁸⁰ Still, an account can be given of “the kinds of reasons that have greater weight”.⁸¹ Thus, it is morally relevant to consider the different cases of refugees in limbo separately, and it will be helpful in understanding the ethical obligations of the duty of care and protection towards them.

Cases of Refugees in Limbo

Case 1: Accepted as Convention Refugees, but Not Landed

The first category of refugees in limbo consists of those individuals who are currently in Canada, who have been accepted as Convention refugees, but have not been landed (i.e., have not received permanent residency). Creal asks:

Why are there such a large number of convention refugees in limbo in this country? If in the normal course of events it takes less than a year to process cases for landing, (in fact [a] CIC person ... indicated that six months is the time it takes to land a relatively straightforward case) why do refugees remain in limbo year after year?⁸²

Indeed, he states that he “put this question to the people in the refugee branch of [Citizenship and Immigration Canada]”.⁸³

⁷⁸ Nickel 81-82.

⁷⁹ Ignieski 446.

⁸⁰ “UNHCR Statistical Yearbook 2010: Table of Contents, Main Findings, Introduction.” UNHCR. n.d. Web. Mar. 2010: 9. <<http://www.unhcr.org/4ef9c8d10.html>>.

⁸¹ Ignieski 446.

⁸² Creal 6.

⁸³ Creal 7.

Although these individuals have been accepted as Convention refugees, they do not have permanent residency status. This first category of refugees in limbo seems to be the easiest case to agree upon in terms of getting government support to treat such cases expeditiously and in a fair and reasonable manner. If we have acknowledged these individuals to be refugees, why are we not going to make life better for them?⁸⁴ With this group of individuals, there is no dispute in terms of whether they are refugees or not: they have been accepted as Convention refugees. The government has a perfect duty to provide protection to those who have been accepted as Convention refugees; refugees cannot be refouled to a place of danger. Yet, those who have been accepted as Convention refugees are simply awaiting their landing status. The question remains as to what exactly the government's duty is towards refugees. Keeping them in limbo is cruel treatment, especially given their background history and experiences in the country they have fled from.

Yet, we need to consider the feasibility of expediting such cases. For instance, it might be argued that the amount of time it takes to resolve the situation of limbo will have an influence on how serious a problem people consider this to be. For example, if it takes a couple of months, the issue may not be seen as serious; but if it takes years, then something definitely needs to be done and it should be on the agenda of the government to expedite such cases. Some data on the number of people who have been accepted as Convention refugees but have not been landed is presented in Appendix B.⁸⁵ These data show that there are many persons who, although accepted as Convention refugees by the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, are not landed for years; the period of limbo

⁸⁴ Professor Carens, in communication.

⁸⁵ This data was collected from Creal's paper on Refugees in Limbo; they originally came from Government sources that he had received from Andrew Brouwer.

they endure is not simply a short period of time. The reason for the amount of time it takes to land so many of those who have already been accepted as Convention refugees is unclear. Creal states that “[i]t could be argued that the machinery of landing is simply grinding along more slowly or it could be that more cases are deliberately held up for reasons known only to [Citizenship and Immigration Canada]”.⁸⁶

No matter what the reason for the delay, clearly the process needs to be expedited. Convention refugees who are not yet permanent residents have no formal legal status in Canada.⁸⁷ Citizenship and Immigration Canada itself has acknowledged the problems faced by recognized refugees who are not yet landed:

Convention refugees who do not become permanent residents in Canada remain without legal status; they are not visitors and cannot be issued Minister’s permits except in limited circumstances. They enjoy only limited protection: they have a right not to be returned to the country where they fear persecution, but they do not have the right to return to Canada once they leave.... Refugees who are not permanent residents may legally take employment only if they are in possession of an employment authorization.... It is ... important that they initiate the landing process as early as possible ... in order to entitle them to privileges and services that are acquired with full legal status.⁸⁸

Being denied the access to permanent resident status has negative effects including:

denial or delay of family reunion; limited access to postsecondary education; denial of Convention Travel Documents and guaranteed re-entry to Canada, contrary to Article 28 and the Schedule to the 1951 Convention; and restrictions on freedom to take employment, contrary to Articles 3 and 17.⁸⁹

Yet, these are the very problems that the 1951 Refugee Convention “sought” to avoid.⁹⁰

One of the problems is the need for “satisfactory identity documents” for landing status.⁹¹ If identity documents are issued to recognized refugees, and are then accepted as

⁸⁶ Creal 6.

⁸⁷ Goodwin-Gill, Guy S. and Kumin, Judith. “Refugees in Limbo and Canada’s International Obligations.” The Caledon Institute of Social Policy. 2000: 10.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 11.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

“satisfactory identity documents for landing,” then the situation of refugee limbo can be improved upon. Moreover, it might help to have a presumption of permanent residency after being granted the status of a refugee.⁹² This essentially means that upon recognition by the Immigration and Refugee Board, refugees could be landed immediately; this is analogous with “refugees resettled by Canada from overseas and who are ‘landed’ immediately upon arrival”.⁹³

Case 2: Not Accepted as Convention Refugees, but Still in Canada

The second category of refugees in limbo consists of those individuals who have not been accepted as Convention refugees, but are still in Canada. This category consists of individuals who have been denied refugee status, but cannot be sent back. They are de facto refugees.⁹⁴ There are difficulties in the technical definition of “refugee” in the Convention. For example, one could fear persecution but not fit into any of the social groups mentioned in the Convention. Yet, these individuals often cannot be sent back because they are at risk. There are different reasons for asylum seekers being denied their refugee status even though they cannot be sent back to their home country, and we need to distinguish between these different cases. The risk could be contingent on something that is temporary, or it could be something that is more deep-rooted. For example, it might not be possible to send someone back to his or her country, due to the current circumstances in his or her home country (e.g. natural disaster, political violence). Such

⁹¹ Goodwin-Gill and Kumin.

⁹² Refugee lawyer, in communication.

⁹³ Goodwin-Gill and Kumin 16.

⁹⁴ While de jure refers to what the law actually states, de facto refers to what happens in practice but is not necessarily stated by the law.

problems may be temporary and, thus, these people will remain in limbo temporarily, at least in principle. Yet, we need to have ways of regularizing their situation.

Creal argues that:

A relatively small number of such people, if they have a sufficiently compelling story (but not sufficiently compelling to persuade Canadian authorities in the normal refugee determination process) may get support from church groups or religious organizations or other community organizations and if such efforts of support are successful, they may obtain a Minister's Certificate giving them a conditional right to stay in Canada and/or they may eventually get landed on humanitarian grounds.⁹⁵

However, "a very large number who are denied refugee status simply go underground".⁹⁶

Indeed, "the numbers of those deported are far less than the total number rejected by the [Immigration and Refugee Board]".⁹⁷ This fact makes it quite obvious that instead of getting deported or voluntarily moving out of Canada, a large number of people who are denied refugee status go underground.⁹⁸ Creal guesses that "[Citizenship and Immigration Canada] wouldn't even want to ascertain the number who go underground and remain in Canada because it would reflect negatively on their enforcement branch and cause yet another public outcry about the country being over-run by hordes of "illegals"". ⁹⁹

In case 2, the government may not have a perfect duty towards these people. They have not been accepted as Convention refugees and, thus, it might be assumed that the government can rid itself of its duty to provide them with protection or a fair and reasonable refugee determination process. Given that they cannot be sent back to their home country even though they are not accepted as Convention refugees, on

⁹⁵ Creal 3-4.

⁹⁶ Creal 4.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Deportation would remove the problem of limbo (Professor Heath, in communication). But obviously, they cannot (and should not) be sent back to a country where their life is in danger. Not being deported is of course a good thing, yet this does not mean that they should then be forgotten and have to remain in a period of limbo for years.

⁹⁹ Creal 4.

humanitarian grounds they should still be treated well and their cases should still be dealt with in an expeditious way, not forgotten. There is still an imperfect duty on the government to help those in need, which means that what the government needs to do to fulfill its obligations is not exactly prescribed. This does not mean however, that the ethical obligation to help those in need ceases to exist. Moreover, for those who do not voluntarily leave the country even after their refugee claims have been rejected, the reality that so many of them go underground should caution the government that something needs to be done so that these people can get on with their lives. Regularization strategies should be implemented for such de facto refugees.

The Final Act of the 1961 Convention links “de facto statelessness” to the notion of effective nationality when it recommends that “persons who are stateless de facto should as far as possible be treated as stateless de jure to enable them to acquire an effective nationality”.¹⁰⁰ Thus, the Convention urges nations to treat such refugees, as far as possible, as persons with a rightful claim to their refugee status, so that they can obtain an “effective nationality”. This recommendation emphasizes the problem of statelessness and highlights the importance of allowing de facto refugees to be regularized. As Article 34 of the Refugee Convention states regarding refugees unlawfully in the country of refuge, the “Contracting States shall as far as possible facilitate the assimilation and naturalization of refugees. They shall in particular make every effort to expedite naturalization proceedings and to reduce as far as possible the charges and costs of such

¹⁰⁰ “Expert Meeting - The Concept of Stateless Persons under International Law.” UNHCR. May 2010: 6. Web. <<http://www.unhcr.org/4cb2fe326.html>>.

This recommendation in the Final Act of the Convention “does not apply to all de facto stateless persons, but only to those who are de facto stateless because they are considered as having valid reasons for renouncing the protection of the State of which they are a national” (8). One of the problems is that “[w]hile de facto stateless persons are covered by international human rights law, there is no specific treaty regime addressing the international protection needs of those who do not fall within the universal and regional refugee protection instruments” (8).

proceedings”.¹⁰¹ For those whose naturalization and assimilation proceedings cannot be completed, they should be given adequate assistance to receive refuge in a third country: Article 31 of the Refugee Convention states that the “Contracting States shall allow...refugees [unlawfully in the country of refuge] a reasonable period and all the necessary facilities to obtain admission into another country”.¹⁰²

Case 3: Failed to Pass Security Checks

The third category of refugees in limbo consists of those individuals who have failed to pass the security checks. Since 9/11 onwards, security concerns have grown, and as Creal notes, “there are a very large number of people who have been blocked from landing because, in the view of Canadian immigration authorities, they lack proper identity documents”.¹⁰³ If the lack of proper identity documents is an issue in various cases, we need to genuinely ask why it is so important to have valid identity documents, and assess the plausibility of the reason critically.¹⁰⁴ Often it is assumed that refugee claimants destroy their identity papers and then claim refugee status. This understanding generally makes the general population far less sympathetic towards this group of refugees in limbo than the first two categories of refugees in limbo mentioned previously. The Conservative party in power right now is clearly informed by this national security paradigm; the measures the government have taken which are anti-refugee and anti-

¹⁰¹ “Convention relating to the Status of Refugees.” OHCHR. n.d. Web.
<<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/refugees.htm>>.

¹⁰² Ibid. Although this may raise new problems, it is an option that refugees in limbo should be properly provided with.

¹⁰³ Creal 7.

¹⁰⁴ Professor Carens, in communication.

immigrant have prioritized minimizing potential security threats over the wellbeing of refugees and act as a means to cloak xenophobia.¹⁰⁵

“With respect to people currently refused or held up for security reasons, the current figure commonly cited is 400 but half of those are overseas. Of those in Canada, about 150 are refugee claimants and the remaining 50 are presumably refugees...”¹⁰⁶

Security clearance procedures and provisions are subject to criticism as they may complicate the situation for some refugees. Section 19 of the Immigration Act states:

No person shall be admitted who is a member of the following classes: persons who there are reasonable grounds to believe are or were members of an organization that there are reasonable grounds to believe is or was engaged in terrorism, except persons who have satisfied the Minister that their admission would not be detrimental to the national interest.

However, “there is ambiguity about the meaning of “membership” and about what actually constitutes “terrorist organization””.¹⁰⁷ Moreover, as Creal argues:

The question of security clearance is further complicated by allegations which have taken the form of sworn affidavits that some refugees facing security clearance have been offered a kind of quid pro quo¹⁰⁸ by CSIS officials. If you will co-operate (i.e. become an informant) we will give you security clearance. If there is no co-operation, one can infer, there may be the kind of indefinite delay that Joseph K faced in Kafka’s novel *The Trial*...¹⁰⁹

Thus, the problem of refugee limbo is more than what meets the eye (See Appendix A, question 9).

Creal refers to two cases in which “there was a special SIRC¹¹⁰ tribunal set up to review the cases” to ensure the persons did not pose security threats.¹¹¹ The tribunal’s

¹⁰⁵ Refugee lawyer, in communication.

¹⁰⁶ Creal 7.

¹⁰⁷ Creal 11-12.

¹⁰⁸ i.e. one thing in return for another

¹⁰⁹ Creal 12.

¹¹⁰ The Security Intelligence Review Committee (SIRC or the Committee) is an independent, external review body which reports to the Parliament of Canada on the operations of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS or the Service). (<http://www.sirc-csars.gc.ca/index-eng.html>)

“unequivocal recommendation...was that both persons be landed, that neither represented a security threat to Canada”.¹¹² In a third case, the SIRC’s recommendation was the same.¹¹³ Importantly, although the recommendation was that the persons be landed and that they did not represent a security threat to Canada, as of the date Creal wrote his research paper (March 2002), “close to a year after the report was completed, the persons concerned remain in limbo”.¹¹⁴ Thus, “[a]rbitrary authority seems to prevail”.¹¹⁵ Indeed, such “cases...raise very troubling questions about security clearance procedures. And deeply flawed procedures and practices in the area of security clearance have devastating consequences in the lives of persons in limbo here in Canada”.¹¹⁶ Even if we assume that these individuals do not have an intrinsic claim to protection as a refugee, we cannot make them stay in limbo day in and day out. Given the negative effects of remaining in limbo, it would not be right to keep such persons in limbo indefinitely.

A lot of people actually do not think of refugee limbo as a technical issue. Rather, it is about incentive structures: how many people will try to and successfully come into Canada, if the measures are not strict?¹¹⁷ Often it is argued that if we are not strict enough with our procedures in the refugee determination system, an incentive structure will be built up for abusing this system. Such assumptions reflect the “us vs. them” mentality and illustrate the process of “othering” foreigners. Moreover, the fixed label of “the bad guy” needs to be altered: those who are deemed to pose a threat to the country, or are assumed to be dangerous, should be re-examined after a given period of time and as long as they

¹¹¹ Creal 12.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Professor Carens, in communication.

meet certain conditions, such as remaining crime-free during the given period of time, they should be granted status. It must be remembered that even those who are later found to be innocent carry the stigma of being negatively labelled, which haunts them throughout their lives (See Appendix A).

III. WHAT CAN BE DONE ABOUT REFUGEES IN LIMBO?

What is a fair and humane way to deal with refugee claimants and refugees who are in limbo? What can be reasonably done by the public actors involved in order to make refugee limbo less of a hardship for them? The agent must ask himself or herself: what should I do? or how should I act?¹¹⁸ As Ignieski notes, “you know of the peril, there is a determinate act you can perform that will alleviate the peril, and if you do not help it forecloses the possibility of the victim being helped”.¹¹⁹ I will discuss some of the general policy developments that may potentially help improve the situation for refugees in limbo. These are only suggestions and further research is needed in order to determine specific policy proposals that can be implemented to expedite the process and reduce the period of limbo for refugees.

One of the problems is that refugees in limbo have been lumped together in one category. There are different reasons however, as to why people might be in limbo; their claims and problems may, thus, be different.¹²⁰ A starting point might be to distinguish between refugees in limbo, instead of superficially grouping all refugees in limbo into one group, making most of them seem like the easy refusal cases (i.e., the claims of those who seemingly abuse the system). Moreover, there is a need for clear legal criteria for

¹¹⁸ Ignieski 446.

¹¹⁹ 447.

¹²⁰ Professor Carens, in communication.

refugee protection.¹²¹ The qualifications of the decision makers need to be improved, especially given the broad discretion they have.¹²² In terms of policy options for the particular categories of refugees in limbo: practical steps need to be taken for getting refugees landed status as soon as they are accepted as Convention refugees (category 1); a regularization process is needed to allow those who have not been accepted as Convention refugees but are still in Canada to get on with their lives (category 2); and a case re-examination is needed after a given period of time for those in limbo as a result of having failed to pass security checks (category 3).

More generally, a three-step approach to reform can be implemented to improve the situation of refugees in limbo: 1) implement policies that do not violate international human rights conventions; 2) pave the way for legalization for all migrants currently in the country; 3) align migrant entry policies with the reality of globalization.¹²³ Step 1 involves having a refugee and immigration policy with a human rights vision, which means that Canadian refugee policy should be aligned with human rights standards.¹²⁴ For example, everyone should have the following rights: the right to form a family, the right to due process (Charter), freedom from discrimination, freedom from arbitrary detention (Charter) and the right to not experience cruel or unusual punishment (Charter). Step 2 consists of paving the way for legalization through permanent residency and naturalization, and accepting that no human being is illegal.¹²⁵ Step 3 involves aligning

¹²¹ Refugee lawyer, in communication.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Boza, Tanya. "Immigration Nation? Raids, Detentions, and Deportations in Post-9/11 America." 17 Oct. 2011. Web. Slide 30. <<http://immigrationnationafter911.blogspot.com/>>.

This is the blog for the book *Immigration Nation: Raids, Detentions, and Deportations in Post-9/11 America* by Tanya Boza.

¹²⁴ Boza. Slide 31.

¹²⁵ Boza. Slide 32-33.

entry policies with the reality of globalization.¹²⁶ “If people had the right to mobility, then states would have to provide compelling reasons to deny anyone the right to enter their territories”.¹²⁷ “A discussion of the right to mobility is an ethical and moral debate, but also must be based on social scientific evidence of the inevitability and consequences of emigration to create effective policy”.¹²⁸ Further research is needed in order to determine specific policy proposals that can be implemented to expedite the refugee determination process and reduce the period of limbo for refugees.

CONCLUSION

Refugees who are in limbo are prevented from continuing with their lives. The sooner they are considered landed, the sooner they can start to not only build a meaningful life for themselves, but also to become productive members of our society. Society as a whole does not gain anything from keeping refugees in limbo indefinitely. There is an ethical obligation for the duty of care and protection towards refugees and refugee claimants, which may vary depending on the category of the refugee in limbo as well as the particular case. Refugees who are in limbo are not all in limbo for the same reasons. Here in Canada, they can be put into three broad categories: 1) accepted as Convention refugees by the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) but not landed; 2) rejected as Convention refugees, but still in Canada; and 3) those who have failed to pass security checks.¹²⁹ Yet, in each case, there is a duty to provide protection as well as a fair and reasonable refugee determination process. In terms of policy options for the

¹²⁶ Boza. Slide 34.

¹²⁷ Boza. Slide 34.

¹²⁸ Boza. Slide 36.

¹²⁹ Creal 11.

particular categories of refugees in limbo: practical steps need to be taken for getting refugees landed status as soon as they are accepted as Convention refugees (category 1); a regularization process is needed to allow those who have not been accepted as Convention refugees but are still in Canada to get on with their lives (category 2); and a case re-examination is needed after a given period of time for those in limbo as a result of having failed to pass security checks (category 3). On plain and simple humanitarian grounds, there needs to be a kind of decent regard for refugees in limbo. We have the perfect duty to provide refugees with protection and the imperfect duty to provide them with a fair and reasonable refugee determination process. The assumption that asylum seekers inflict themselves on us is one that should no longer dominate the discourse of refugees in limbo.

Appendix

A) Interviews

Interview with a Refugee in Limbo

(Pseudonym given to the interviewee: Fred. A translator was present during the interview.)

1) Did you experience being in limbo?

When I got here, I spent 2 years in jail right away, because back in my home country, it was really complicated. I was involved with a group of people who were anti-government, and here [in Canada], that group is believed to be a terrorist organization. It took me 2 years to prove that I am innocent. It was very hard, especially because I do not

speak English. Every period was different. When I got out of jail, I was happy to be free. But with the new rules imposed on me, my life was still being affected. I now had a background of crime.

I thought that being out of jail in society, it was [still] the same jail, just bigger. People looked at me differently. After coming out of jail, I had to go to the immigration office every 2 weeks. After a month and a half, this was changed to every month. Now, it is every 6 months. After spending 10 years here in Canada, I still have to go to the immigration office and sign forms.

Even today, I do not know how my future is going to be. Every time I wanted to get married, people would judge me thinking that I wanted to get married because of the Canadian passport. I cannot make any long-term plans because I do not know what is going to happen. I was told that I am violent because I was participating with that organization, and they think that organization is violent. The people from Parliament, those who work with the government, they have a good relationship with those who are in high positions in the organization.

I have been here for 10 years and I did not commit any crime, but I am still being judged.

Canada is a really good country for people who have citizenship. I didn't get any answers so far. The message was basically: because you are violent, we will not give you citizenship. Also, I cannot go back to my home country because I am in danger there. The message from the government is: you can stay here, you can work, but you are not a citizen; you are not a part of this country.

I am scared of the future. I don't know what's going to happen. I cannot see my family; cannot invite them over. I'm going to make money, but at the end of the day I cannot do anything. I do not belong anywhere. I have no citizenship here, and I cannot go back to my own country. Because I am not a citizen, people get the benefit of that. For example, if I go to work and they don't pay me, I cannot complain about that. I cannot call the police, because they will say you are violent, you have no citizenship, you were in jail for 2 years. I do not have the protection I need to have. People take advantage of my situation.

A lot of times, since the last 10 years, sometimes I had such a hard time that when I spent the time in jail, I had a better time in jail than in society being ignored. When I was in jail, I had to live with criminals, drug dealers, and murderers. I thought when I get out, I'll live with normal people. But I felt a rope around my neck all the time. They put a limit around me. I was not free.

The society labelled me. There was a label on my forehead that said: terrorist. Sometimes I needed help; somebody to say something or sign something. But people are scared because they think they will be associated with me and seen badly. There is democracy, but a lot of people still feel this way and society does not know about it. The government treats them badly and nobody says anything, because people are afraid of facing the truth.

2) How long did it last?

I came here 12 years ago.

3) How did you feel? Did your feelings change over time?

I had to get used to it. I got used to the situation. I am trying to live a normal life, but I can't. There are still problems. When I came, I got arrested right away. I never thought that's going happen to me. I heard a lot of good things about Canada. I thought they will question me for 2-3 days. I thought they will protect me. I thought I would get immigration.

4) How did you cope with the feeling of being in limbo? Did the way in which you coped with refugee limbo change over time?

I did not have a normal life ever. Before I came here, I got involved in political stuff. There has always been this up and down thing. After I got out of jail, I was trying to be anti-social. I could not communicate. I felt insecure. But not anymore. Now I am trying to get friends; friends who have families. I am trying to be a part of this society. I try to volunteer. I try to help. That's how I want to get involved with society.

5) What were your concerns while you were in limbo?

Even though I am not going to become a citizen, I just want to visit my father and sisters. My mom passed away and I did not get to see her. So I really want to see my dad. That is the only thing I want to do for now.

6) Did you ask anyone regarding this or did you get any response from the government?

I talked to my social support worker about it, and he said it is impossible. It is really hard to get VISA.

7) What impact did being in limbo have on your daily life?

One thing that bothers me is that I wanted to get married 2 years ago. But when the girl's family found out that I do not have citizenship, they stopped her from seeing me. This other time I really liked a girl and we were dating, but she had issues because she said we would not be able to travel anywhere. The worst part is that when people ask me "why aren't you a citizen?", I have to tell them that I spent 2 years in jail. Then people judge me; that fact changes others' mentality about me.

Because I spent a couple of years in jail before I arrived in Canada, I was tortured there and so I have back pain. So I can't really work hard. But I work part time; I get the job from friends, from people I know.

I go to the pool once in a while and go swimming. I spend time with my dear friend.

8) What do you think should be done? What would make your process easier?

I was expecting open-minded people. I could have lied about the things I told them. Sometimes I think 'why didn't I lie?', but then I think that I didn't commit a crime, so why would I lie?

9) What do you think about being judged based on your affiliation with the political group?

I got here after 9/11, which affected my case really badly. After 9/11, they started to consider that organization as a political organization. That organization is Muslim, against the Iranian government, and it has been around for 45 years. In Europe,

they do not consider this political organization as a terrorist organization. In North America they do.

The parliament of US has to give a good reason [as to] why they consider this to be terrorist organization. [If they can't], they have to delete them off list. At the end of this month, things will be clear. The main office of the political organization was in Iraq, but was told by US to move it from Iraq (moving them in different countries now, and the UN will interview them). [It is] not clear whether they will keep calling it a terrorist organization. US and Canada [are] copying each other, [so if the US deletes it off of their list as a terrorist organization], Canada will delete it too.

10) What do you think can be done (or do you feel like you're stuck)?

I think that as a human, they should look at my life--the past 10 years that I have spent here, that I did not commit a crime, and not judge me again. I believe in fate and I hope that things will get better. That how I survived all the bad times I had. I want them to judge me again as a human being.

Sometimes I think that the government of Canada has the right to be like that...that people have a right to be safe and I feel safe here. But it's so bad to see people with that eye all the time and judge them; that if you are a criminal you are still considered bad.

I love Canada because they told me I am a criminal and a terrorist, but they did not send me back. They gave me benefits like financial help. When I think about the good stuff and the bad stuff, I can't judge Canada. I still think of Canada as a good country.

One time I was talking to a friend and he asked me, “if there was a war, would you support Canada?”, and I said, “I would be in the front row. I am in this country, and I would be better [as a support] than the citizens themselves”.

11) What are the benefits you think Canada has provided you with?

I had health issues when I came here. They gave me a health card and they gave me financial assistance.

12) Anything else?

Other Interviews Conducted

Professor Carens, UofT Political Science

Professor Audrey Macklin, UofT Faculty of Law

A Refugee Lawyer (wishes to remain anonymous)

B) Tables¹³⁰

*Note: Accepted before a certain date means that the acceptance could have occurred many years before that date.

¹³⁰ Creal, Michael. “Refugees in Limbo.” Mar. 2002.

1

ACCEPTED AS REFUGEES PRIOR TO DEC. 1, 1996, NOT LANDED AS OF JAN. 26, 2000			
	Male	Female	Total
Somalia	1112	1408	2520
Sri Lanka	363	309	672
Iran	188	75	263
India	129	27	156
Afghanistan	83	57	140
Other			1484
Total			5235

2

ACCEPTED AS REFUGEES PRIOR TO MAY 1, 1998, NOT LANDED AS OF JAN. 26, 2000			
	Male	Female	Total
Somalia	1413	1899	3202
Sri Lanka	655	533	1188
Iran	317	158	475
India	179	43	222
Afghanistan	145	107	252
Other			3045
Total			8384

Accepted as refugees prior to May 1, 1998, but not landed 6 months later (Nov. 1, 1998): 13,025

“Slightly more than a year later, 8381 of those cases had still not been landed”.

C) Options for Refused Applicants¹³¹

For those who are in Canada, who have had either a refugee claim or a permanent resident application refused, they have a few options:

- 1) Pre-removal risk assessment (PRRA)
- 2) Apply to the Federal Court of Canada for judicial review
- 3) Humanitarian and compassionate grounds

It is quite difficult, however, to be able to utilize these options effectively. For example, with the PRAA, most people have already been before the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB); they only look at new evidence at PRAA hearings, which can complicate things.¹³² For example, when a refugee claimant had to prove that he worked for his employer, the letter (the most important piece of evidence) was not formally submitted by his lawyer, so the judge dismissed the case. When he appeared in front of PRAA with the formal submission of the letter, the judge then said that the letter could not be used because it was not “new” evidence.¹³³ This case shows that plain and simple administrative issues can aggravate the problem of refugee limbo. As Ezat Mossallanejad

¹³¹ “Refugee claims in Canada—Options for refused applicants.” Citizenship and Immigration Canada. 31 Mar. 2007. Web. Feb. 2011. <<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/inside/refusals.asp>>.

¹³² Refugee lawyer, in communication.

¹³³ Ibid.

argues, the remedy of Ministerial Relief given by the Minister of Public Safety should be used.

VICARIOUS TRAUMATIZATION IN THE CONTEXT OF CCVT

Zach Davidson

ABSTRACT. In this paper, I examine vicarious traumatization in the context of the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture (CCVT). The paper is divided into four main sections. The first section of the paper introduces the CCVT. The second section of the paper clarifies two key concepts related to primary or first-hand trauma, namely, torture and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The third section of the paper focuses on vicarious traumatization. The fourth section of the paper examines vicarious traumatization in the context of the CCVT. Here, I discuss the results of two questionnaires that I distributed to eight CCVT counsellors, six of whom responded. My results suggest that none of the CCVT counsellors who participated in my research are suffering from vicarious traumatization. I recommend that the CCVT conducts a self-study in order to try to ascertain how CCVT counsellors have avoided experiencing vicarious traumatization. The results of such a self-study would not only be useful to the CCVT, but they could potentially be useful to other organizations whose employees are susceptible to experiencing vicarious traumatization.

INTRODUCTION

An essential service that the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture (CCVT) provides to survivors of torture and war is counselling. As the CCVT website states: “The supportive counselling provided by CCVT staff play a major role in the process of healing the traumatic effects and improving the mental health of the survivors.”¹ Through offering counselling to survivors of torture and war, staff members of the CCVT are confronted with several pressing ethical issues. One such issue concerns the counsellor’s empathic engagement with the client. A vital component of effective counselling is to engage empathically with the client; the CCVT website acknowledges this fact, stating that “empathy” is required on behalf of the counsellor in order for him or her to achieve a positive connection with the client.² Although necessary for effective counselling, such empathic engagement comes with risks. For instance, Leo Sexton, a psychologist at the

¹ CCVT: *Mental Health*. Retrieved January 9, 2011 from <http://ccvt.org/programs/mental-health/>.

² Ibid.

Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture in Australia, critically reviewed the literature on therapists' reactions to clients' traumatic material and found that empathic engagement leaves the therapist "vulnerable to the detrimental effects of vicarious traumatization."³ Saakvitne and Pearlman define vicarious traumatization as "the transformation of the therapist's or helper's inner experience as a result of empathic engagement with survivor clients and their trauma material."⁴ Studies have found vicarious traumatization to threaten the healthy functioning of the individual helper, the client, and also the organization as a whole.⁵ Accordingly, CCVT counsellors therefore face a clear, ethical dilemma. On the one hand, empathic engagement is necessary for a counsellor to do his or her job effectively. On the other hand, empathic engagement puts a counsellor, a client, and an organization at risk of harm via vicarious traumatization.

In this paper, I examine vicarious traumatization in the context of the CCVT. The paper is divided into four sections. The first section of the paper introduces the CCVT. As the general public may be largely unaware of what the CCVT is and what kind of work the CCVT does, it is therefore important to offer a description of the CCVT and its mission in order to familiarize readers with the organization. In this section, I discuss the history of the CCVT as well as the initiatives that the Centre has taken in order to assist

³ Leo Sexton, "Vicarious Traumatization of Counsellors and Effects on Their Workplaces," *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 27, no. 3, (1999): 393-403, p. 393, accessed January 5, 2011, from <http://www.informaworld.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/smpp/content~db=all~content=a782612580~frm=titlelink?words=vicarious,traumatization,counsellors, effects,their,workplaces>.

⁴ Karen W. Saakvitne and Laurie Anne Pearlman, *Transforming the Pain: A Workbook on Vicarious Traumatization*. (New York: Norton, 1996), 25.

⁵ See Brian E. Bride, "The Impact of Providing Psychosocial Services to Traumatized Populations," *Stress, Trauma, and Crisis: An International Journal*, 7 no. 1, (2004): 29-46; Doukessa Lerias and Mitchell K. Byrne, "Vicarious Traumatization: Symptoms and Predictors," *Stress and Health*, 19, (2003): 129-138; Angelika Birck, "Secondary Traumatization and Burnout in Professionals Working with Torture Survivors," *Traumatology*, 7, no. 2, (2002): 85-90, accessed January 10, 2011, from <http://tmt.sagepub.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/content/7/2/85.full.pdf+html>; Enrique, Bustos, "Dealing with the Unbearable: Reactions of Therapists and Therapeutic Institutions to Survivors of Torture," in P. Suedfeld (Ed.), *Psychology and Torture*, (New York: Hemisphere Publishing Corporation, 1990) 143-163.

survivors overcome the toll of torture and war. I also offer a brief description of the CCVT's current mental health program.

The second section of the paper clarifies a couple of key concepts related to primary or first-hand trauma, namely, the concepts of torture and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Before we can understand vicarious traumatization and its effects, it is important that we have a grasp of trauma at a primary level – that is, a grasp of the experience of first-hand trauma survivors. By recognizing the experiences of survivors of torture and war, we enhance our awareness of the experiences of CCVT counsellors who are regularly exposed to the traumatic tales of these survivors in the course of their counselling sessions. Moreover, studies have found that counsellors who work with individuals experiencing PTSD are vulnerable to suffer from similar symptoms. This section of the paper therefore deepens our understanding of both the experiences of first-hand trauma survivors as well as those of the counsellors who work with these survivors.

The third section of the paper focuses on vicarious traumatization. Within this section, I define vicarious traumatization and distinguish it from other terms that are frequently interchanged with it – terms such as burnout, countertransference, and secondary traumatization or compassion fatigue. Furthermore, I discuss the effects of vicarious traumatization on the counsellor, the client, and the organization as a whole. I also examine the risk factors for vicarious traumatization as well as potential strategies for coping with it. Finally, within this section I explore a variety of ethical concerns that are apposite to the issue of vicarious traumatization.

The fourth section of the paper examines vicarious traumatization in the context of the CCVT. Here, I discuss the results of two questionnaires that I distributed to eight

CCVT counsellors, six of whom responded. These six counsellors were found to derive a generally high level of satisfaction from their trauma work, and to experience generally low levels of burnout and secondary traumatic stress. My results therefore suggest that none of the CCVT counsellors who participated in my research are suffering from vicarious traumatization. For these six counsellors, empathic engagement with clients does not appear to pose an ethical dilemma. Indeed, it would appear that these six CCVT counsellors are able to do their jobs effectively *and* in doing their jobs effectively they are not thereby experiencing the harmful effects of vicarious traumatization. Within this section, I recommend that the CCVT conducts a self-study in order to try to ascertain how CCVT counsellors have avoided experiencing vicarious traumatization.⁶ The results of such a self-study would not only be useful to the CCVT, but they could potentially be useful to other organizations whose employees are susceptible to experiencing vicarious traumatization.

II: THE CANADIAN CENTRE FOR VICTIMS OF TORTURE

One community research partner of the University of Toronto's Centre for Ethics is the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture (CCVT). Aiming to give "hope after the horror," the CCVT is a leader in the rehabilitation and integration into Canadian society of survivors of torture and war.⁷ The CCVT recognizes that survivors of torture and war

⁶ It is possible that not all CCVT counsellors have avoided experiencing vicarious traumatization. Nevertheless, a self-study would still be worthwhile in order to attempt to discern how those CCVT counsellors who have avoided experiencing vicarious traumatization managed to do so. Such a self-study, moreover, might reveal organizational practices that could be improved.

⁷ Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture, "CCVT: History," accessed January 9, 2011 from http://ccvt.org/about_us/history/.

are often among society's least powerful persons while also being among those who are most in need of assistance. The CCVT was founded by a group of Toronto doctors, lawyers, and social workers who were mainly affiliated with Amnesty International.⁸ Starting in 1977, and before receiving official recognition as an institution, these individuals worked together in order to help survivors of torture.⁹ These individuals recognized that a coordinated effort would be necessary in order to provide survivors with the services that they so seriously required. Pooling together the skills that each person individually possessed, the Canadian Centre for the Investigation and Prevention of Torture was established in 1983.¹⁰ In 1988, the Centre changed its name to its current title in order to more accurately reflect its mission.¹¹ The difference between the Centre's current name and its previous one reflects the CCVT's emphasis on directly working with and advocating on behalf of actual victims of torture, as opposed to investigating and preventing torture from a distance.

At the time of the CCVT's official establishment, it was only the second such centre in the world. Since its foundation, the CCVT has aided approximately 14,000 survivors of torture from 136 different countries.¹² To provide "aid" to a survivor of torture requires, at a minimum, to have a consultation with a survivor and to open an official file on that survivor. With the CCVT providing aid to so many survivors, each of whom pose unique challenges, it is critical that the CCVT is equipped to handle such an extensive and varied clientele. The fact that the CCVT staff is comprised of a diverse

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

body of people bodes well for the Centre's inclusive and hands-on approach to survivors of torture and war.

The CCVT helps survivors overcome the toll of torture and war through several different yet related strategies. Firstly, the CCVT works with the community to successfully integrate survivors into Canadian society.¹³ The CCVT is aware of the challenges that refugees to Canada typically encounter, and by working with its community partners, the CCVT tries to reduce these obstacles, making what can be an exceedingly rough transition for survivors into a smoother one. The CCVT also works for the “protection and integrity” of survivors.¹⁴ According to Ezat Mossallanejad, researcher and policy analyst at the CCVT, the concept of “protection” requires assisting survivors attain refugee status from the Canadian government in order to ensure that they will not be forced to return to conditions of torture. Moreover, protecting survivors entails helping them overcome physical and mental ailments. The notion of achieving “integrity” involves helping survivors learn to respect themselves and thereby gain self-esteem – to prevent, in Mossallanejad's words, “self-alienation.” In other words, achieving the “integrity” of survivors can be construed as survivors arriving at a sense of confidence, wholeness, and authenticity. A third aim of the CCVT is to increase the public's awareness of the impact of torture and war on survivors and their families.¹⁵ Through community events such as its *First Light* Celebration, the CCVT is able to not only raise the public's awareness of how persons are affected by torture and war, but also to fundraise and recognize community leaders in the area of human rights.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

The three main initiatives of the CCVT are closely connected. For example, if the Canadian public is uninformed about the challenges that survivors of torture and war face, then this ignorance will hinder survivors' prospects for being integrated into Canadian society because they will not be received in a manner that is most conducive to their success, which, it might be added, is also the success of the community at-large. Moreover, if the public is unaware of the trauma that these survivors have endured, their protection and integrity will likely be adversely affected because one group's harmless gesture may be perceived as a threat by another group. The success of any one of these three initiatives therefore bears on the success of the others – to neglect any one of them is to hurt the chances of all of them.

The CCVT's mental health initiative is a concrete example of a program that the Centre implements in order to help realize its objectives. The mental health initiative at the CCVT uses counselling, support groups, crisis intervention, and coordinated professional groups as a means to help survivors overcome the trauma of torture and war while also easing their transition into Canadian society.

In their quest to assist the recovery of survivors, CCVT counsellors open themselves up to the trauma material of survivors and, in so doing, these counsellors become vulnerable to suffering the effects of vicarious traumatization. According to Mossallanejad, the CCVT currently has no policy in place to deal with the phenomenon of vicarious traumatization. Indeed, Mossallanejad mentioned that one counsellor who previously worked for the CCVT had to take a leave of absence due to feeling the effects

of what may well have been vicarious traumatization.¹⁶ It is therefore crucial that deeper insight is acquired into the phenomenon of vicarious traumatization as it pertains to the CCVT. This research project aims to gain such insight in the hopes of helping the CCVT deal with the issue of vicarious traumatization in an effective and ethically responsible manner.

III: PRIMARY TRAUMA: TORTURE & PTSD

Before one can understand vicarious traumatization and its effects, it is important that one has a grasp of trauma at a primary level, – that is, a grasp of the experience of first-hand trauma survivors. By recognizing the experiences of survivors of torture and war, one becomes more alert to the experiences of CCVT counsellors who are regularly exposed to the trauma material of these survivors in the course of their counselling sessions. Torture is a far-reaching concept, as Article 1 of the UN Declaration Against Torture states:

[...] torture means any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted by or at the instigation of a public official on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or confession, punishing him for an act he has committed, or intimidating him or other persons.¹⁷

From this definition it is clear that torture takes various forms. Furthermore, it would be empirically inaccurate to assume that torture is restricted to any particular group. The

¹⁶ Mossallanejad said that the counsellor's leave of absence was due to burnout; burnout and vicarious traumatization, however, are terms that are frequently (albeit misleadingly) used interchangeably. Thus, it is possible that the counsellor's leave of absence was indeed the result of vicarious traumatization.

¹⁷ United Nations, "United Nations Declaration Against Torture," accessed January 10, 2011, from <http://www.hrweb.org/legal/cat.html>.

range of persons who are affected by torture – from young to old, male or female, single or married, etc. – is extensive. From April 2004 to March 2005, for example, 34% of the clients of the CCVT had a post-secondary education while 17% of their clients had a primary education or less.¹⁸

According to Barclay, “Victims of torture and trauma experience a disconnection from the foundational belief in human life as hopeful and meaningful.”¹⁹ She distinguishes accidental trauma (e.g., floods) from deliberate trauma (e.g., torture). Unlike accidental trauma, in cases of deliberate trauma the victim experiences trauma as a result of both the terror of the event itself and also as a result of the sensation that someone is attempting to deliberately gain and preserve power over him or her.²⁰ Barclay recognizes that torture disempowers not only individuals, but also entire communities. That is to say, the fear of torture, as well as its harsh reality, has the ability to paralyze communities because individuals become afraid to act due to a fear of being tortured.

Survivors of trauma and torture frequently suffer from symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).²¹ Indeed, Mossallanejad notes that many clients of the CCVT struggle with PTSD symptoms. According to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*,

The characteristic [PTSD] symptoms resulting from the exposure to the extreme trauma include persistent reexperiencing of the traumatic event [e.g., flashbacks or nightmares], persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma and numbing of general responsiveness [e.g., denial], and persistent symptoms of increased arousal [e.g., extreme irritability].²²

¹⁸ Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture, “CCVT: 2004-2005 Statistics,” accessed January 9, 2011 from http://www.ccvvt.org/pdfs/2004_statistics.pdf.

¹⁹ H. H. Barclay, “Torture and Trauma Victims,” *Encyclopedia of Canadian Social Work*, (Toronto: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2005), 401-403.

²⁰ Idem, p. 401.

²¹ Ibid.

²² “Posttraumatic Stress Disorder,” *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 4th rev. ed. (Washington, DC: American Psychiatry Association, 2000).

In order for a person to be diagnosed with PTSD, the symptoms must be present for more than one month and they have to result in serious impairment to everyday functioning.²³

Barclay notes that one does not have to be an actual physical victim of torture and trauma to experience these symptoms. For example, a father whose child is a victim of torture can suffer from PTSD himself. Opportune intervention is critical to the recovery of torture and trauma survivors.²⁴ In order to effectively cope with and prevent instances of deliberate trauma, it is important that there is an increased awareness of the experiences of torture and trauma survivors within society; moreover, greater resources need to be allocated to assist these survivors in their ongoing recovery.²⁵

Not only is it important to recognize and understand PTSD for the purpose of providing better treatment to survivors of torture and war, but studies have also found that counsellors who work with individuals suffering from PTSD are vulnerable to similar symptoms.²⁶ Hesse states, that counsellors who work with trauma victims are prone to suffer “the equivalent of PTSD.”²⁷ Figley, who prefers the term secondary traumatic

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Barclay.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ See Amy R. Hesse, “Secondary Trauma: How Working with Trauma Survivors Affects Therapists,” *Clinical Social Work Journal*, 30, no. 3, (2002): 293-310, accessed January 5, 2011, from <http://www.informaworld.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/smpp/content~db=all~content=a715030176~frm=titlelink?words=hesse> accessed January 5, 2011, from <http://www.informaworld.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/smpp/content~db=all~content=a715030176~frm=titlelink?words=hesse>; L. Meldrum, R. King, and D. Spooner, “Secondary Traumatic Stress in Case Managers Working in Community Mental Health Services,” in C. R. Figley (Ed.), *Treating Compassion Fatigue*, (New York: Brunner-Routledge, 2002) 85–106; Marla J. Arvay and Max R. Uhlemann, “Counsellor Stress in the Field of Trauma: A Preliminary Study,” *Canadian Journal of Counselling*, 30, no. 3, (1996): 193–210; Charles R. Figley, “Compassion Fatigue as Secondary Traumatic Stress Disorder: An Overview,” in C.R. Figley (Ed.), *Compassion Fatigue: Coping with Secondary Traumatic Stress Disorder in Those Who Treat the Traumatized*, (New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1995), 1-20.

²⁷ Hesse, p. 296.

stress disorder (STSD) to vicarious traumatization,²⁸ maintains that there is a deep overlap in symptoms between STSD and PTSD. According to Figley, “STSD is a syndrome of symptoms nearly identical to PTSD, except that exposure to knowledge about a traumatizing event experienced by a significant other is associated with the set of STSD symptoms, and PTSD symptoms are directly connected to the sufferer, the person experiencing primary traumatic stress disorder.”²⁹ In other words, Figley distinguishes STSD from PTSD on the grounds that sufferers of STSD are one step further removed from the traumatizing event as compared to sufferers of PTSD, who experience the traumatizing event first-hand. By increasing one’s awareness of PTSD, one’s understanding of the effects of trauma is therefore deepened on both a primary and secondary level.

IV: VICARIOUS TRAUMATIZATION

A. Vicarious Traumatization: Defined and Distinguished

The concept of vicarious traumatization was first articulated in the literature in 1990.³⁰ Saakvitne and Pearlman define vicarious traumatization as “the transformation of the therapist’s or helper’s inner experience as a result of empathic engagement with survivor clients and their trauma material.”³¹ According to Baird and Kracen, vicarious

²⁸ Figley, unfortunately, does not elaborate on his reasons for this preference; rather, he focuses on distinguishing STSD from “countertransference” and “burnout,” the two terms that he describes as being “most frequently cited” within the literature (p. 9).

²⁹ Idem, p. 8.

³⁰ Lisa McCann and Laurie Anne Pearlman, “Vicarious Traumatization: A Framework for Understanding the Psychological Effects of Working with Victims,” *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 3, no. 1 (1990): 131-149, accessed January 13, 2011, from <http://journals1.scholarsportal.info.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/tmp/17046027957233312971.pdf>.

³¹ Saakvitne and Pearlman, p. 25.

traumatization “refers to harmful changes that occur in professionals’ views of themselves, others, and the world as a result of exposure to graphic and/or traumatic material.”³² Vicarious traumatization, therefore, impacts trauma workers on a deeply personal level, affecting not only their sense of self, but also their sense of others as well as their view of the larger world in which they exist.

The concept of vicarious traumatization is based on cognitive self-developmental theory (CSDT).³³ CSDT describes the aspects of the self that are affected by traumatic events. According to CSDT, adaptations to events constitute symptoms.³⁴ That is, CSDT “assumes that ‘irrational’ or distorted beliefs reflect an attempt to protect oneself and one’s meaning system from the harm that the trauma threatens.”³⁵ CSDT identifies five components of the self that are affected by vicarious traumatization. The first component is frame of reference. A person’s frame of reference establishes her outlook on life; it shapes her “perception of herself, her world, her relationships and her experiences.”³⁶

The second component of the self that is affected by vicarious traumatization is self-capacities. Self-capacities specifically refer to capacities “(a) to manage strong feelings, (b) to feel entitled to be alive and deserving of love, and (c) to hold onto an inner awareness of caring others.”³⁷ A person’s sense of inner stability requires the healthy functioning of these self-capacities; if any one of these capacities were to be negatively affected, a person’s ability to cope would be hindered.

³² Idem, p. 182.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Idem, p. 27.

³⁶ Idem, p. 28.

³⁷ Idem, p. 29.

The third component of the self that is affected by vicarious traumatization is ego resources, which refer to “the individual’s abilities to negotiate interpersonal situations and to make good decisions.”³⁸ An example of an ego resource is the ability to anticipate the consequences of particular actions, such as the recognition that name-calling tends to be hurtful. An insensitive person, according to CSDT, would be someone whose ego resources are “less available.”³⁹

The fourth component of the self that is affected by vicarious traumatization is psychological needs and cognitive schemas. CSDT identifies five main psychological needs that are vulnerable to traumatic events, namely, trust (or dependence), esteem, safety, intimacy, and control.⁴⁰ A person’s beliefs or schemas about himself and others, such as his feelings of self-control and his feelings of intimacy with others, reflect whether or not his psychological needs are being satisfied.

The fifth component of the self is memory and perception. CSDT acknowledges “that memory and perception are complex and multimodal.”⁴¹ That is, according to Saakvitne and Pearlman, any one of our experiences is processed and remembered through several modalities; these modalities include the cognitive (i.e., narrative), affective (i.e., emotional), interpersonal (i.e., behavioural), somatic and sensory, and visual.⁴² Whereas a complete, whole memory draws on all of these features, a traumatic memory tends to be fragmented – a flashback, for example, recalls the image without the narrative context.⁴³

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Idem, p. 30.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Idem, p. 31.

McKenzie-Mohr notes that the concept of vicarious traumatization is still in the process of being defined, as there remains a lack of agreement regarding either its symptoms or its applicability. Kadambi and Ennis, for example, conducted a review of the literature on vicarious traumatization and they determined that the concept has several limitations, both empirically and theoretically. They found, for instance, that “vicarious trauma has proven to be difficult to operationalize and measure, and support for the construct as a pervasive experience that is unique to trauma professionals has been inconsistent.”⁴⁴ In terms of its conceptual shortcomings, Kadambi and Ennis found that the evidence gathered by several empirical studies “contradicts the notion that vicarious trauma is cumulative in nature,” for these studies indicated that more experienced trauma therapists are not as prone to vicarious traumatization as compared to those with less experience.⁴⁵ Whether or not vicarious traumatization is inevitable is another source of disagreement within the literature. For instance, whereas Saakvitne and Pearlman argue that vicarious traumatization is “an inescapable effect of trauma work,”⁴⁶ Clemans argues that it “can be prevented.”⁴⁷ Dunkley and Whelan, like Kadambi and Ennis, maintain that “the CSDT fails to recognise the full range of effects of trauma counselling,” such as the

⁴⁴ Michaela A. Kadambi and Liam Ennis, “Reconsidering Vicarious Trauma – a Review of the Literature and Its’ Limitations,” *Journal of Trauma Practice*, 3, no. 2, (2005): 1-21, p. 16, accessed January 13, 2011, from <http://www.informaworld.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/smpp/content~db=all~content=a904211096~frm=titlelink?words=vicarious,trauma>.

⁴⁵ Idem, p. 16.

⁴⁶ Saakvitne and Pearlman, p. 25.

⁴⁷ Shantih E. Clemans, “Recognizing Vicarious Traumatization: A Single Session Group Model for Trauma Workers,” *Social Work With Groups*, 27, no. 2, (2005): 55-74, p. 56, accessed January 12, 2011, from <http://www.informaworld.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/smpp/content~db=all~content=a902249989~frm=titlelink?words=vicarious,trauma>.

positive changes that a counsellor can experience through working with trauma clients.⁴⁸ Some researchers have termed this positive experience “compassion satisfaction.”⁴⁹

Although it is clear that the concept of vicarious traumatization is continuing to evolve and requires further refinement, it has nonetheless gained wide currency within the literature and also among trauma professionals as a useful, albeit imperfect, concept. In order to better understand the concept of vicarious traumatization itself, and also why it has gained such prevalence, it is worthwhile to distinguish it from related terms, terms such as burnout, countertransference, and secondary traumatization or compassion fatigue. Subtle differences exist among these terms. Thus, for the sake of clarity and accuracy, it is important to identify and articulate these differences.⁵⁰

Pines and Aronson define burnout as “a state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion caused by long-term involvement in emotionally demanding situations.”⁵¹ Symptoms of burnout include cynicism, boredom, discouragement, loss of compassion, and depression.⁵² These symptoms have also been associated with vicarious traumatization; indeed, according to McCann and Pearlman, “symptoms of burnout may

⁴⁸ Jane Dunkley and Thomas A. Whelan, “Vicarious Traumatization: Current Status and Future Direction,” *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 34, no. 1, (2006): 107-116, accessed January 5, 2011, from <http://www.informaworld.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/smpp/content~db=all~content=a741575120~frm=titlelink?words=dunkley,whelan>.

⁴⁹ S. McKenzie-Mohr, “Vicarious Trauma,” *Encyclopedia of Canadian Social Work*. (Toronto: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2005), 430-432, p. 431.

⁵⁰ See Beth Hudnall Stamm, *The Concise ProQOL Manual*, 2nd ed, (2010), accessed January 11, 2011, from http://www.proqol.org/uploads/ProQOL_Concise_2ndEd_12-2010.pdf; Katie Baird, K. and Amanda C. Kracen, “Vicarious Traumatization and Secondary Traumatic Stress: A Research Synthesis,” *Counselling Psychology Quarterly*, 19, no. 2, (2006): 181-188, accessed January 10, 2011, from <http://www.informaworld.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/smpp/content~db=all~content=a757714568~frm=titlelink?words=vicarious,trauma>; Dunkley and Whelan; Christian, Pross, “Burnout, Vicarious Traumatization and Its Prevention,” *Torture Journal*, 16, no. 1, (2006): 1-9, accessed January 5, 2011, from http://www.irct.org/Files/Filer/TortureJournal/16_1_2006/page_1-9.pdf; Julie Canfield, “Secondary Traumatization, Burnout, and Vicarious Traumatization – a Review of the Literature as It Relates to Therapists who Treat Trauma,” *Smith College Studies in Social Work*, 75, no. 2, (2005): 81-101; Hesse; Sexton; Bustos.

⁵¹ A. M. Pines and E. Aronson, *Career Burnout: Causes and Cures*, (New York: Free Press, 1988), p. 9.

⁵² McCann and Pearlman, 1990.

be the final common pathway of continual exposure to traumatic material that cannot be assimilated or worked through.”⁵³ Pross, however, states that the symptoms of vicarious traumatization are more extreme than those of burnout. Putting aside the issue of the degree of overlap between the symptoms of burnout and vicarious traumatization, there are evidently important differences between these two concepts. For instance, any person in any profession can experience burnout; vicarious traumatization, on the other hand, is, by definition, solely experienced by individuals who work with trauma victims. Through engaging in such trauma work, these individuals face uniquely trying circumstances, such as exposure to disturbingly traumatic images and stories. Whereas burnout is considered to be “preventable,”⁵⁴ some researchers (as stated above) deem vicarious traumatization to be inevitable.⁵⁵ Moreover, burnout is considered to result from features of the work environment (e.g., long working hours), and not to be due to the worker’s personal traits. Vicarious traumatization, however, “views the counsellor’s response to the client’s trauma material as formed by aspects intrinsic to the individual therapist *as well as* characteristic of the situation.”⁵⁶ Finally, the impact of vicarious traumatization is thought to be deeper and more pervasive than that of burnout. Vicarious traumatization is believed to have long-term impact on the trauma worker (e.g., by affecting the five components of the self), whereas burnout is considered to be a “transient” condition.⁵⁷

Countertransference, according to Hesse, “has traditionally been viewed as the therapist’s reaction to or distortion of client material based on unconscious or unresolved

⁵³ Idem, p. 134.

⁵⁴ Kadambi and Ennis, p. 5.

⁵⁵ See Saakvitne and Pearlman; McCann and Pearlman.

⁵⁶ Dunkley and Whelan, p. 108, emphasis added.

⁵⁷ Kadambi and Ennis, p. 5.

conflicts from the therapist's own life experiences."⁵⁸ Vicarious traumatization differs from countertransference on at least three levels. First, a therapist (or trauma worker) can experience vicarious traumatization even when there are "no pre-existing personal characteristics or unresolved psychological conflicts to explain therapists' reactions."⁵⁹ Second, the risk factors and effects of vicarious traumatization are thought to be greater than those of countertransference. In terms of risk factors, countertransference places exclusive emphasis on the trauma worker's personal characteristics, whereas factors contributing to the development of vicarious traumatization include (as stated above) both personal characteristics *and* characteristics of the situation. In terms of effects, countertransference "is typically construed as a short-term response that occurs and is contained within the context of a therapy session;" vicarious traumatization, on the other hand, has long-lasting effects.⁶⁰ Finally, countertransference is typically thought to occur on a one-to-one level, – i.e., between individual therapists and individual clients. Conversely, vicarious traumatization, however, "refers to the therapist's cumulative emotional, cognitive and behavioral responses across *all clients*."⁶¹ Although these two concepts are distinct, it is important to note that they are "mutually influential."⁶² That is to say, since vicarious traumatization affects one's personal characteristics, and countertransference is a reaction that involves one's personal characteristics, vicarious

⁵⁸ Hesse, p. 297.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Richard L. Harrison and Marvin J. Westwood, "Preventing Vicarious Traumatization of Mental Health Therapists: Identifying Protective Practices," *Psychotherapy Theory, Research, Practice, Training*, 46, no. 2, (2009): 203-219, accessed January 10, 2011, from http://ft.csa.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/ids70/resolver.php?sessid=a2d8b3fdd27ef2796a2e793829abc2f3&server=search1.scholarsportal.info&check=29f3b1f277a879f5b5c451c89963cd22&db=psycarticles-set-c&key=PST%2F46%2Fpst_46_2_203&mode=pdf.

⁶¹ Kadambi and Ennis, p. 5, emphasis added.

⁶² Ibid.

traumatization “invariably” influences countertransference.⁶³ On the other hand, episodes of countertransference influence the ways in which a trauma worker experiences vicarious traumatization, because countertransference “influences our expectations for ourselves and our clients.”⁶⁴ For instance, if a countertransference reaction raised a trauma worker’s expectations for her client, then if that client failed to meet those expectations, that worker would be particularly vulnerable to experiencing certain effects of vicarious traumatization, such as feelings of shame.

Secondary traumatic stress, or compassion fatigue, is defined as “the natural consequent behaviors and emotions resulting from knowing about a traumatizing event experienced by a significant other – the stress resulting from helping or wanting to help a traumatized or suffering person.”⁶⁵ As stated in the previous section, symptoms associated with secondary traumatic stress are similar to those of PTSD, including “reexperiencing, avoidance or numbing reminders, and persistent arousal.”⁶⁶ Whereas the concept of secondary traumatic stress restricts its focus to observable symptoms, vicarious traumatization is based on CSDT and contextualizes the observable symptoms within that theoretical model. As Pearlman and Saakvitne state: “Vicarious traumatization includes the symptomatology of STSD in the context of profound changes in the therapist’s sense of meaning, identity, world view, and beliefs about self and others.”⁶⁷ Secondary traumatic stress, furthermore, is thought to be preventable; some researchers,

⁶³ Laurie Anne Pearlman and Karen W. Saakvitne, “Addressing Vicarious Traumatization,” in *Trauma and the Therapist: Countertransference and Vicarious Traumatization in Psychotherapy with Incest Survivors* (New York: Norton, 1995a), 382-399.

⁶⁴ Saakvitne and Pearlman, p. 48.

⁶⁵ Figley, p. 7. Figley proposed the concept of secondary traumatic stress, but more recently operationalized the concept as compassion fatigue (Dunkley and Whelan, 2006; Sexton, 1999).

⁶⁶ Dunkley and Whelan, p. 109.

⁶⁷ Laurie Anne Pearlman and Karen W. Saakvitne, “Treating Therapists with Vicarious Traumatization and Secondary Traumatic Stress Disorders,” in C.R. Figley (Ed.), *Compassion Fatigue: Coping with Secondary Traumatic Stress Disorder in Those Who Treat the Traumatized* (New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1995b), 1-20.

though, consider vicarious traumatization to be an inevitable side effect of engaging in trauma work.⁶⁸ Secondary traumatic stress also has wider applicability than vicarious traumatization, as the concept is not limited to trauma workers but is applicable to all types of mental health professionals.⁶⁹

Although the concepts of vicarious traumatization, burnout, and secondary traumatic stress are frequently interchanged, the literature appears to generally agree that these concepts are distinct, albeit highly related. Even though a consensus has yet to emerge with respect to the preferred term – a situation that Stamm describes as a “taxonomical conundrum”⁷⁰ – at least a few authors have concluded that vicarious traumatization, in spite of its flaws (which I have outlined above) is the most complete concept among these terms.⁷¹ Sexton, for instance, describes vicarious traumatization as the “most comprehensive account presented so far.”⁷² Unlike other related concepts, vicarious traumatization takes into consideration features of both the person and also of the situation, while also emphasizing “context and aetiology.”⁷³ With its exclusive focus on the effects that trauma work has on the trauma worker, the concept of vicarious traumatization also seems best suited to capture the unique toll that empathic engagement with a trauma survivor can have on an individual. Moreover, vicarious traumatization does not engender the confusion that terms such as secondary traumatic stress do. Dunkley and Whelan, for instance, note that secondary traumatic stress could be misinterpreted as “retraumatisation.” For example, one might say that a rape survivor can

⁶⁸ See Saakvitne and Pearlman; McCann and Pearlman.

⁶⁹ Kadambi and Ennis.

⁷⁰ Stamm, p. 9.

⁷¹ See Dunkley and Whelan; Sexton; McCann and Pearlman.

⁷² Sexton, p. 395.

⁷³ Dunkley and Whelan, p. 109.

experience secondary traumatic stress during the legal process.⁷⁴ Vicarious traumatization, therefore, appears to be the most appropriate concept to be employed when attempting to gain insight into the experience of CCVT counsellors who empathically engage with survivors of torture and war.

B. Vicarious Traumatization: Its Effects

Vicarious traumatization has a wide range of effects. In the previous subsection, I described the impact vicarious traumatization has on the five components of the self, as articulated by CSDT. Bride reviewed a total of 15 independent quantitative studies on secondary traumatic stress and vicarious traumatization in providers of psychosocial services to traumatized populations. Bride investigated the incidence and severity of symptoms of trauma, disrupted cognitive schema, and general psychological distress that were manifested in such providers. According to Bride, the empirical literature on secondary traumatic stress and vicarious traumatization suggests that psychosocial service providers who work with trauma clients are vulnerable to symptoms of trauma, disrupted cognitive schema, and general psychological distress. Bride found that the severity of these negative experiences varied from mild symptoms to those similar to direct sufferers of PTSD. An important limitation of the studies that Bride reviewed is that none of them recorded the experiences of service providers who have left the field as a result of secondary traumatic stress or vicarious traumatization. Without this empirical data, the results of these quantitative studies might be skewed toward downplaying the severity of secondary traumatic stress and/or vicarious traumatization. Although Bride's findings were generally mixed, they nonetheless lend empirical credence to the

⁷⁴ Ibid.

phenomenon of vicarious traumatization and its detrimental effects on psychosocial providers.

Vicarious traumatization can also have important ramifications for the client.⁷⁵ With vicarious traumatization challenging and potentially damaging one's sense of self, the trauma worker may use the client as a means to protect or restore the worker's own sense of self.⁷⁶ For instance, vicariously traumatized workers may use the client as a scapegoat, blaming the client for the suffering that they experience. Rather than acknowledge that vicarious traumatization is a predictable risk of empathically engaging with trauma survivors, the worker may unfairly hold the client directly responsible for his or her vicarious suffering. Alternatively, trauma workers may rely on the client to rebuild the worker's sense of self, which adversely affects the client's recovery process. Hesse, for instance, notes that "if clients idealize the therapist whose identity and self-esteem are impaired, the therapist may fail to perceive this or work through it."⁷⁷ Instead of discussing why the client has the need to idealize the trauma worker, the trauma worker may exploit this feeling for his own benefit. If the trauma worker's sense of control has been challenged as a result of vicarious traumatization, she may try "new, often inappropriate treatment modalities" as a way to regain control of the recovery process – modalities that can negatively impact the client.⁷⁸ In each of these scenarios it is evident that the client's recovery is hindered as a result of the vicarious traumatization that the trauma worker experiences but fails to effectively confront.

⁷⁵ See Hesse, 2002; Sexton, 1999; Pearlman and Saakvitne, 1995a.

⁷⁶ Hesse, 2002.

⁷⁷ Idem, p. 301.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

According to Hesse, “a therapist whose identity as an effective helper has been challenged by vicarious traumatization may have many potentially harmful countertransferential reactions.”⁷⁹ An example of a harmful countertransferential reaction is over-identification with the trauma client, which “involves idealisation, enmeshment, and excessive advocacy for the client, as well as guilt due to the therapist’s perceived failure to provide adequate assistance.”⁸⁰ In this case, a trauma worker can voice so much anger toward the client’s perpetrator that the client will withhold important details from the worker, such as any positive interactions that the client might have had with the perpetrator.⁸¹ From these descriptions it is clear that vicarious traumatization is not only harmful to the trauma worker, but may also be harmful to his or her clients.

Vicarious traumatization can also have detrimental repercussions on the organization. According to Bustos, vicarious traumatization contributes to conflictual team dynamics. He states that by regularly coming into contact with psychic pathologies, institutions that advocate on behalf of torture survivors are prone to suffer from group regression. He asserts that group regression occurs when a group’s energies are focused on counter-productive objectives as opposed to verbalizing the conflicts and attaining appropriate resolutions. He maintains that effective leadership is the key to tackling such regressive behaviours. Hesse, too, suggests that vicarious traumatization can negatively influence organizational functioning. For example, a trauma worker who has become mistrustful as a result of vicarious traumatization may “not make use of helpful referral sources, supervision, or consultation with co-workers and encourage the client to only

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Sexton, pp. 394-395.

⁸¹ Hesse, p. 301.

trust the therapist.”⁸² In a case such as this, an organization could easily become fragmented, as channels of communication are not utilized to their full potential. Rather, trauma workers might isolate themselves and thereby hinder the recovery of their clients and hamper the operations of the organization as a whole.

C. Vicarious Traumatization: Risk Factors

Several articles examine the risk factors that can make individuals more prone to vicarious traumatization.⁸³ Baird and Kracen, for example, documented the degree of empirical evidence for the most commonly researched vicarious traumatization risk factors.⁸⁴ They analyzed the results of published dissertations and research from 1994-2003. Whereas Baird and Kracen found that there is “persuasive” evidence that a trauma worker’s personal trauma history is linked to the development of vicarious traumatization, they found only “some” evidence that the amount of exposure to the traumatic material of clients (e.g., hours with trauma clients, percentage of time spent on caseload, and cumulative exposure) increases the likelihood of vicarious traumatization.⁸⁵ Dunkley and Whelan also noted that several studies have showed that a counsellor’s caseload, level of experience, and personal trauma history can each influence the degree to which he or she experiences vicarious traumatization. Although a study conducted by Lerias and Byrne found gender and age to be predictors of vicarious traumatization – e.g., females were found to suffer from anxiety disorders to a greater extent than males, and younger people were found to be more prone to vicarious traumatization than older

⁸² Idem, p. 302.

⁸³ See Baird and Kracen; Dunkley and Whelan; Bride; Lerias and Byrne; Birck.

⁸⁴ Their study also documented the degree of empirical evidence for the most commonly researched risk factors for the development of secondary traumatic stress.

⁸⁵ Baird and Kracen, p. 184.

people – the majority of studies that Bride reviewed showed no correlation between age and/or gender and increased vulnerability to vicarious traumatization.

Birck and Pross discuss specific risk factors for persons who work with torture survivors. Birck conducted a study on burnout, secondary traumatization, and satisfaction in work among 25 professionals of the Treatment Centre for Torture Victims in Berlin (BZFO). Although Birck's study does not directly investigate vicarious traumatization, the close relationship between all of these concepts, as well as the focus group of her study, makes her results relevant to my own project. Birck, furthermore, may be treating secondary traumatization as an equivalent concept to vicarious traumatization, since one of the questionnaires that Birck distributed to her participants – the TSI Belief Scale – is based on CSDT and is used to measure vicarious traumatization.⁸⁶ Birck claims that at the time of this study the prevalence and severity of secondary traumatization in professionals working with torture victims had yet to be examined. The study focuses on the interplay between the kind of work of BZFO professionals (psychotherapy, interpreting, administration), work factors (caseload, supervision), and the professional's experience of burnout, secondary, traumatization and satisfaction with work. Birck found that the unstable residency situation of many patients and the strain involved in securing permanent residency were major stressors, which, according to Birck, explains why therapists showed higher compassion fatigue than interpreters. Birck concluded that "the threat of deportation seems to be not only a stabilizing factor for post traumatic symptoms in refugees, but also a major risk factor for secondary traumatization in professionals."⁸⁷ Conflicting team dynamics were also found to be another major stressor.

⁸⁶ *TSI/CAAP: Research*, accessed January 24, 2011 from <http://www.tsicaap.com/research.htm>.

⁸⁷ Birck, p. 89.

Birck's findings were inconclusive with respect to the correlation between professional experience in the area of trauma work and one's susceptibility to secondary traumatization.

Pross, an MD at the BZFO, examined the risk factors for burnout and vicarious traumatization among persons who work with torture survivors. According to Pross, "important factors for burnout and vicarious traumatization are the lack of social recognition for caregivers and the financial and legal outsider status of many centers."⁸⁸ Although Pross associates lack of social recognition exclusively with burnout, such lack of recognition, combined with the outsider status of many centres, could contribute to vicarious traumatization. This is because by being overlooked, centres against torture are likely to be underfunded and understaffed. The result of such shortfalls, both in terms of money and personnel, could contribute to occurrences of vicarious traumatization because counsellors who work at such centres are more likely to be overburdened with clients, and a counsellor's caseload has been identified as a predictor for vicarious traumatization.

D. Vicarious Traumatization: Harm Reduction & Coping Strategies

Various strategies have been suggested in order to cope with and reduce the harmful effects of vicarious traumatization; these strategies emphasize both individual and organizational responsibility.⁸⁹ Pearlman and Saakvitne, for instance, discuss a number of personal and professional strategies for coping with vicarious traumatization. These strategies are intended to be beneficial to the trauma client, to the therapist, and to

⁸⁸ Pross, p. 1.

⁸⁹ See Harrison and Westwood; Pross; Clemans; Hesse; Saakvitne and Pearlman; Pearlman and Saakvitne, 1995a.

the organization as a whole. According to Pearlman and Saakvitne, there are three main concepts that are employed in vicarious traumatization interventions: awareness, balance, and connection. Pearlman and Saakvitne maintain that in order to develop personal intervention strategies, the therapist must be self-aware; self-awareness involves identifying one's own needs, limits and resources. Pross, too, advocates that counsellors increase their self-awareness; indeed, he argues that the most effective way to prevent both burnout and vicarious traumatization is through a therapy-training course that increases therapeutic self-awareness.

Pearlman and Saakvitne maintain that creating balance among the areas of “work, play, and rest” is also essential to successfully dealing with vicarious traumatization.⁹⁰ Whereas vicarious traumatization tends to withdraw one from life, achieving balance among these areas tends to reengage one with life. The feelings of isolation that vicarious traumatization engenders are also combated through connecting with oneself and others. Pearlman and Saakvitne state that achieving such meaningful connections allows one to identify personal needs and to meet them. They discuss several other strategies that are related to these three main concepts, including: recognition and acceptance of vicarious traumatization as a natural outcome of trauma work, limiting exposure to trauma work, and seeking spiritual renewal. Hesse also advises that trauma workers maintain, or establish, a sense of spirituality “as a way of regaining meaning, hope, and awareness,” because vicarious traumatization has been found to lead to feelings of worthlessness and despair, as well as a general state of detachment.⁹¹ Harrison and Westwood conducted a qualitative study that tended to support Pearlman and Saakvitne's suggestions.

⁹⁰ Pearlman and Saakvitne, 1995a, p. 383.

⁹¹ Hesse, p. 303.

An example of an organizational strategy for managing vicarious traumatization is Clemans' "psychoeducation group model," which focuses on "mutual aid, confidentiality, context, case vignettes, and self-care strategies" as a means to prevent and mitigate the effects of vicarious traumatization.⁹² Referred to as the "Vicarious Trauma Seed Group Project," Clemans' psychoeducation group model has the goal of "'planting the seed' of vicarious traumatization" by familiarizing trauma workers with this concept and eliminating the stigma that is often associated with it.⁹³ Clemans' model is based on four main "assumptions."⁹⁴ First, her model assumes that it is as important for trauma workers to understand how vicarious traumatization affects them as it is to understand how primary traumatization affects the client. Second, by improving one's understanding of the effects of vicarious traumatization as well as possible strategies for coping with it, the trauma worker can meet the needs of his or her clients more effectively. In other words, trauma workers need to recognize and manage the effects of vicarious traumatization not only for their own sakes, but also for the sakes of their clients. Third, by actively engaging in positive coping strategies on both an organizational and individual level, vicarious traumatization "can be prevented and corrected."⁹⁵ Though, as stated in section II.a., there is a disagreement within the literature concerning whether or not vicarious traumatization can actually be prevented. Finally, Clemans' model assumes that "a group session can impart valuable information, can reduce isolation and provide members with opportunities to both give and benefit from support surrounding their work-related

⁹² Clemans, p. 55.

⁹³ Idem, p. 56.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

stress.⁹⁶ Several other authors have also emphasized the importance of teamwork and education in coping with the effects of vicarious traumatization.⁹⁷

E. Vicarious Traumatization: Ethical Issues

Many ethical issues emerge out of this research topic.⁹⁸ While I described one apparent moral dilemma in the introduction, another example of an interesting ethical problem concerns how to handle the client's need for counselling with the counsellor's need not to be overwhelmed by having too many clients. It would seem that this situation could occur quite regularly in an organization that experiences a high demand for its services, yet has a limited amount of resources. In this case, it would seem that the mental health of the counsellor should take priority, for if his or her mental health were to suffer, the mental health of all of his or her clients would likely suffer too. Hesse, in fact, argues that vicariously traumatized workers have a moral duty to acknowledge and address their vicarious traumatization before it affects the client's well-being. Munroe also emphasizes that therapists have an ethical duty to protect the welfare of their clients, which requires that therapists "actively demonstrate good self-care."⁹⁹ Munroe maintains that therapists are ethically obligated to actively demonstrate good self-care – e.g., to be self-aware, to work reasonable hours, to take breaks, etc. – because they serve as a model for their

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ See Harrison and Westwood; Carol A. Sommer, "Vicarious Traumatization, Trauma-Sensitive Supervision, and Counselor Preparation," *Counselor Education and Supervision*, 48, no. 1, (2008): 61-71; Barbara, Dane, "Duty to Inform – Preparing Social Work Students to Understand Vicarious Traumatization," *Journal of Teaching in Social Work*, 22, no. 3, (2002): 3-20; James F. Munroe, "Ethical Issues Associated with Secondary Trauma in Therapists," in Beth Hudnall Stamm (Ed.), *Secondary Traumatic Stress: Self-Care Issues for Clinicians, Researchers, and Educators* (Lutherville, MD: Sidran Press, 1999), 211-229; Sexton; Pearlman and Saakvitne, 1995a.

⁹⁸ See Harrison and Westwood; Sommer; Pross; Dane; Hesse; Sandra L. Bloom, "The Germ Theory of Trauma: The Impossibility of Ethical Neutrality," in Beth Hudnall Stamm (Ed.), *Secondary Traumatic Stress: Self-Care Issues for Clinicians, Researchers, and Educators*, (Lutherville, MD: Sidran Press, 1999) 257-276; Munroe; Sexton; Pearlman and Saakvitne, 1995a.

⁹⁹ Munroe, p. 225.

clients; thus, if therapists do not acknowledge and deal with their own (vicarious) traumatization, they send a message to the client that it is acceptable for him or her to ignore his or her trauma too.

In order to effectively combat causes of trauma, Bloom maintains that trauma therapists have an ethical duty to recognize that “the person is political.”¹⁰⁰ By being “bystanders” to the trauma material of their clients, Bloom argues that these therapists have a moral obligation to deliver testimony to the public about what they have witnessed.¹⁰¹ For Bloom, ethical neutrality is an impossibility because the bystander (i.e., the trauma therapist) who does not publicly advocate on behalf of his or her client contributes to the “disease of violent perpetration.”¹⁰² In other words, a silent trauma therapist is, according to Bloom, an unethical therapist. Bloom argues that trauma therapists have a moral obligation to speak out against ongoing violence.

Whether or not trauma workers have an ethical duty to advocate on behalf of their clients is a question that is clearly apposite to the CCVT, for CCVT staff members frequently act as advocates on behalf of their clients, especially concerning immigration matters. Thus, it would seem that, at least in this respect, the CCVT heeds Bloom’s ethical imperative – the CCVT does not remain a bystander. It is important to consider the stressors that this dual role may place on the CCVT counsellors. Indeed, as discussed in section III.c., Birck found that the responsibility that professional helpers feel for victims of torture is positively correlated with vicarious traumatization. Thus, when Bloom’s ethical imperative is placed in the context of Birck’s findings, it would seem as though there is an ethical tension, – namely, the ethical duty a trauma worker has to

¹⁰⁰ Bloom, p. 264.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Idem, p. 266.

advocate on behalf of the traumatized client may place an unfair and potentially overwhelming burden on the trauma worker. If this were the case, it would seem that the ethically responsible thing to do would be to separate the roles of trauma worker and public advocate as opposed to combining them; otherwise, the trauma worker would likely be at a greater risk of experiencing vicarious traumatization, which would serve no one's interests.

Several authors have also argued that the organization has a moral responsibility to warn incoming counsellors of the risks of vicarious traumatization.¹⁰³ For example, Munroe maintains that trauma therapists ought to be required to fill out an informed consent form in order to ensure that they are aware of the potential dangers of working with trauma survivors. Although this informed consent form would not necessarily be of legal consequence, it could lead to a reduction in turnover because incoming therapists would be better alerted to the risks associated with trauma work, and thus such a form could have a potentially stabilizing influence on an organization. An informed consent form of the type that Munroe proposes would therefore seem to make sense from both an ethical perspective as well as from an economic standpoint.

One final issue that has important ethical consequences, and an issue that is directly pertinent to CCVT counsellors, concerns workers' compensation for vicarious traumatization. According to Saakvitne and Pearlman, vicarious traumatization ought to be recognized as an "occupational hazard."¹⁰⁴ In order to be eligible to receive workers' compensation for "traumatic mental stress," the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) of Ontario requires that "in all cases, the event must arise out of and occur in the

¹⁰³ See Harrison and Westwood; Sommer; Dane; Munroe.

¹⁰⁴ Saakvitne and Pearlman, p. 25.

course of the employment, and be clearly and precisely identifiable, objectively traumatic, *and unexpected in the normal or daily course of the worker's employment or work environment.*"¹⁰⁵ Since the experience of vicarious traumatization is not unexpected in the normal course of the trauma worker's employment – Saakvitne and Pearlman, in fact, go so far as to say that it is an "inescapable effect of trauma work"¹⁰⁶ – it would appear that a worker would not be eligible to receive workers' compensation for vicarious traumatization from the WSIB.

Even though vicarious traumatization is a predictable workplace phenomenon (if not an inevitable one), this should not prevent a worker from being entitled to receive benefits if he or she experiences it. The WSIB, in fact, regularly compensates workers for known occupational hazards. For instance, the Occupational Health and Safety Council of Ontario (OHSCO) states that "musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) are the number one type of work-related lost-time claim reported to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) in Ontario";¹⁰⁷ MSDs, however, "are strongly linked to *known* risk factors or hazards in the workplace."¹⁰⁸ Thus, there are precedents for workers receiving compensation from the WSIB for known occupational hazards. It would seem arbitrary, at least on an ethical level, to provide compensation for physical occupational hazards but not mental ones. Each type of hazard has the potential to be equally detrimental to the

¹⁰⁵ *Traumatic Mental Stress*, emphasis added, accessed January 24, 2011, from <http://www.wsib.on.ca/portal/server.pt/community/WSIB/230/OPMDetail/24347?vnextoid=7d12ae75e15d7210VgnVCM100000449c710aRCRD>.

¹⁰⁶ Saakvitne and Pearlman, p. 25.

¹⁰⁷ Occupational Health and Safety Council of Ontario, *MSD Prevention Guideline for Ontario*, (2007), p. 1, accessed January 24, 2011, from <http://www.wsib.on.ca/files/Content/Downloadable%20FileMSD%20Guideline/OntMSDPrevGuideline.pdf>.

¹⁰⁸ *Idem*, p. 1, emphasis added.

worker, and therefore each type of hazard should be recognized as being equally worthy of compensation.

To ignore the claims of workers who experience vicarious traumatization solely on the basis that this phenomenon is thought to be predictable seems morally irresponsible. Rather, a more ethical approach, in my opinion, would be to be grateful that these persons choose to enter into a line of work that comes with known, negative side effects, and then to provide these persons with workers' compensation if they suffer from these side effects. Moreover, to deny workers' compensation to trauma workers who experience vicarious traumatization is effectively to provide a disincentive to enter into this important and critical line of work. Considering the tremendous social value of this type of work, it would be absurd, at least from a societal point of view, to discourage persons from becoming trauma workers. Trauma workers not only have a positive impact on their clients, but they have a positive impact on the community at-large – for it is in all of our interests that trauma survivors recover from their injuries (be they physical or mental) and are able to be functioning members of society. Providing workers' compensation for vicarious traumatization is therefore not only the ethically responsible thing to do, it is also the socially sensible thing to do.

V. VICARIOUS TRAUMATIZATION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CCVT

A. Receiving Approval

A critical aspect of my project involved receiving feedback from CCVT counsellors in order to try to understand how vicarious traumatization was relevant to them. In

December 2010, I received formal approval from the University of Toronto's Undergraduate Delegated Ethics Review Committee to interview CCVT counsellors; in late February 2011, the CCVT formally approved these interviews. It is important to emphasize that before I could interview any CCVT counsellor, I required his or her informed consent. Moreover, any individual who partook in the interview process was informed that he or she could choose not to respond to any question(s) if he or she so desired.

B. Measures

I distributed two questionnaires to eight CCVT counsellors. The first questionnaire is entitled the Professional Quality of Life Scale (ProQOL). According to its designers, “the ProQOL is the most commonly used measure of the negative and positive affects of helping others who experience suffering and trauma.”¹⁰⁹ The ProQOL has been implemented in several of the studies that I have read, such as Harrison and Westwood's study, which used a 2003 version of the ProQOL. I distributed a 2005 version of the ProQOL to CCVT counsellors. The ProQOL consists of 30 statements – e.g., “I am happy that I choose to do this work.” – and the participants are asked to indicate their reactions to these statements using a one-to-five scale, with “one” signifying never and “five” signifying very often.

I used the ProQOL's scoring index to evaluate and interpret the participants' responses. The scoring index categorizes responses across three different areas, namely, compassion satisfaction, burnout, and secondary traumatic stress. Even though the ProQOL does not directly measure vicarious traumatization, based upon the results of this

¹⁰⁹ *ProQOL.org*, accessed January 13, 2011, from http://www.proqol.org/ProQol_Test.html.

questionnaire, one can infer whether or not vicarious traumatization is currently an issue for CCVT counsellors. For instance, high levels of compassion satisfaction among respondents would suggest that these individuals are not currently suffering from vicarious traumatization.

The other questionnaire that I distributed to CCVT counsellors is entitled the Coping Strategies Inventory (CSI).¹¹⁰ The CSI is divided into two scales. The first scale is beliefs. Under the beliefs scale, the participants indicate how helpful particular activities (e.g., spending time with family) are in coping with the demands of trauma work. The beliefs scale contains three sub-scales: leisure, self-care, and supervision. The second scale is time. Under the time scale, the participants indicate how often they engage in these particular activities. The time scale contains four sub-scales: leisure, self-care, supervision, and research and development (R & D). The activities listed on the CSI were derived from the literature as well as through discussions with a focus group of experienced therapists.¹¹¹

It is important to note that at least a couple of factors made it difficult to accurately measure vicarious traumatization in the context of the CCVT. First, as discussed in section III.a. of this paper, the concept of vicarious traumatization is still evolving. The theory behind vicarious traumatization continues to be debated, and empirical studies assessing the pervasiveness of this phenomenon continue to be disputed. Thus, in the first instance, vicarious traumatization proved difficult to accurately measure because the

¹¹⁰ I am grateful to Cheryl Regehr, one of the creators of the CSI, for providing me with a copy of it.

¹¹¹ Ted Bober, Cheryl Regehr, and Yanqiu Rachel Zhou, "Development of the Coping Strategies Inventory for Trauma Counselors," *Journal of Loss and Trauma*, no. 11, (2006): 71-83.

concept itself is still in the process of being defined.¹¹² A second factor that made vicarious traumatization difficult to assess is that the tool used to measure vicarious traumatization in the context of the CCVT, i.e., the ProQOL questionnaire, is a proxy indicator of the phenomenon. As I stated above, the ProQOL does not directly measure vicarious traumatization, and hence one must infer from its results as to whether or not respondents are currently experiencing vicarious traumatization. Nevertheless, many published empirical studies have used the ProQOL to measure vicarious traumatization; as Stamm states: “Of the 100 published research papers on compassion fatigue, secondary traumatic stress and vicarious traumatization, nearly half have utilized the ProQOL or one of its earlier versions.”¹¹³

C. Method

Each CCVT counsellor who participated in my research study was provided with a copy of the ProQOL questionnaire and the CSI, as well as a letter that informed him or her of the purpose of my project and asked for his or her consensual participation in my research. These three documents were put into an unsealed envelope and distributed to CCVT counsellors on March 3, 2011. In total, six CCVT counsellors responded to my questionnaires out of a total of eight counsellors who work or volunteer at the main downtown Toronto office of the CCVT. Thus, although the sample size of my study was small, the response rate (75%) was very high. Two of the six respondents filled out the questionnaires in my presence; the other four respondents filled out the questionnaires privately. All of the results were collected by March 22, 2011.

¹¹² This, of course, is a difficulty that is not unique to measuring vicarious traumatization in the context of the CCVT; rather, it pertains to any context in which one is trying to assess the phenomenon.

¹¹³ *ProQOL.org*, p. 13.

D. Results

Results from the ProQOL questionnaire showed that none of the respondents are currently experiencing low levels of compassion satisfaction. Five of the six CCVT counsellors showed high levels of compassion satisfaction, whereas only one counsellor (No. 5) showed an average level of compassion satisfaction. Two counsellors who demonstrated high levels of compassion satisfaction (Nos. 3 and 4) each had cumulative scores that came within two points of average compassion satisfaction levels. Burnout levels were slightly more mixed. No counsellor showed high levels of burnout. Two counsellors showed average levels of burnout (Nos. 2 and 5); each of these counsellors, though, had cumulative scores that were within two points of low burnout levels. The four other counsellors demonstrated low levels of burnout, although two of these counsellors (Nos. 3 and 4) had cumulative scores that each came within one point of average levels of burnout. All respondents, except one, demonstrated low levels of secondary traumatic stress. The other counsellor, Counsellor No. 5, showed an average level of secondary traumatic stress, although Counsellor No. 5's cumulative score was within one point of a low secondary traumatic stress level. Three counsellors who demonstrated low levels of secondary traumatic stress (Nos. 2, 3, and 4) each had cumulative scores that came within three points of average secondary traumatic stress levels.

Table 1. CCVT Counsellor ProQOL Results

Counsellor	Compassion	Compassion	Burnout	Burnout	Secondary	Secondary
No.	Satisfaction	Satisfaction	Score	Level	Traumatic	Traumatic
	Score	Level			Stress	Stress
					Score	Level
1	46	High	17	Low	13	Low
2	42	High	24	Average	20	Low
3	49	High	22	Low	20	Low
4	43	High	22	Low	21	Low
5	37	Average	24	Average	23	Average
6	44	High	17	Low	16	Low

As stated in the previous subsection, the CSI is divided into two scales. The first scale – i.e., the Beliefs Scale – concerns how helpful particular activities are in coping with the demands of trauma work. CCVT counsellors indicated that that receiving supervision tends to help them deal with the demands of trauma work. Self-care activities (e.g., stress management on an individual basis, developing self-care strategies, etc.) were found on average to be less helpful in coping with the demands of trauma work than receiving supervision. As compared to the other two types of activities, counsellors indicated that leisure activities (e.g., watching movies/television, exercising, etc.) are on average the most helpful way to deal with the demands of trauma work.

Table 2. CCVT Counsellor CSI Belief Scale Results

Counsellor No.	Avg. Leisure Score	Leisure Helpfulness	Avg. Self- Care Score	Self-Care Helpfulness	Avg. Supervision Score	Supervision Helpfulness
1	3.8	Always	3.25	Usually	4.0	Always
2	2.4	Sometimes	1.0	Rarely	2.8	Usually
3	4.0	Always	3.5	Usually/Always	3.8	Always
4	3.2	Usually	3.5	Usually/Always	3.5	Usually/Always
5	3.2	Usually	1.75	Sometimes	2.8	Usually
6	3.0	Usually	3.0	Usually	2.6	Usually

The second scale of the CSI – i.e., the Time Scale – concerns the amount of time that counsellors spend engaged in particular activities. On average, CCVT counsellors were found to devote the most time to leisure activities as compared to any other activity measured by the CSI. Counsellors spend nearly as much time on average in R & D activities (e.g., participating in research and educating other organizations about trauma) as they do under direct supervision. On average, counsellors allocate the least amount of time to self-care strategies as compared to any other group of activities measured by the CSI. Thus, on average, there is a positive correlation between the respondents' beliefs about activities that help them deal with the demands of trauma work and the amount of time that they spend in those activities.

Table 3. CCVT Counsellor CSI Time Scale Results

Couns ellor No.	Avg. Leisure Score	Time Spent on Leisure	Avg. Self-Care Score	Time Spent on Self- Care Activities	Avg. Supervision Score	Time Spent Under Direct Supervision	Avg. R & D Score	Time Spent on R & D Activities
1	2.6	Frequently	2.4	Sometimes	3.0	Frequently	2.0	Sometimes
2	1.4	Rarely	0.4	Not at all	1.5	Rarely/Sometimes	1.5	Rarely/Sometimes
3	2.8	Frequently	1.8	Sometimes	1.75	Sometimes	2.0	Sometimes
4	2.2	Sometimes	1.8	Sometimes	1.5	Rarely/Sometimes	3.0	Frequently
5	1.8	Sometimes	1.2	Rarely	2.0	Sometimes	1.0	Rarely
6	2.4	Sometimes	2.4	Sometimes	1.75	Sometimes	2.0	Sometimes

E. Discussion

The results gathered from the ProQOL questionnaire suggest that none of the CCVT counsellors who participated in my research project are currently suffering from vicarious traumatization. Compassion satisfaction levels were on average high, indicating that counsellors “probably derive a good deal of professional satisfaction from [their] position.”¹¹⁴ Moreover, burnout and secondary traumatic stress levels were generally low. If the respondents were experiencing vicarious traumatization, one would expect scores in these two areas to be much higher, as there is a close relationship between burnout and secondary traumatic stress and vicarious traumatization. As compared to the other respondents, Counsellor No. 5 showed the lowest level of compassion satisfaction and the

¹¹⁴ *ProQOL Scale*. Retrieved January 13, 2011, from http://www.proqol.org/uploads/ProQOL_5_English_SelfScore_11-2010.pdf.

highest levels of burnout and secondary traumatic stress. Counsellor No. 5, however, still only demonstrated average levels in all three of these areas; moreover, this counsellor's scores for burnout and secondary traumatic stress were only slightly greater than scores that would qualify as low. Thus, based on the results gathered from the ProQOL, none of the respondents appear to be suffering from the effects of vicarious traumatization. On the contrary, these six CCVT counsellors seem to be deriving generally high levels of satisfaction from their work, while experiencing generally low levels of burnout and secondary traumatic stress.

Even though none of the CCVT counsellors who filled out the ProQOL questionnaire appear to be currently suffering from vicarious traumatization, these results should not be interpreted as proof that no CCVT counsellor is currently suffering from vicarious traumatization. Moreover, CCVT counsellors remain vulnerable to experiencing vicarious traumatization, both now and in the future. In the next subsection, I recommend that the CCVT conducts a self-study in order to try to discern how its counsellors have avoided suffering from vicarious traumatization.

Although I caution against reading too much into the results of the ProQOL, these results do lend some degree of empirical credence to the view that vicarious traumatization is *not* an unavoidable occupational hazard, or at least that those who experience vicarious traumatization appear to be able to largely recover from it. As I stated earlier in this paper, there is a disagreement within the literature regarding whether or not vicarious traumatization is an inevitable side effect of engaging in trauma work. Since none of the ProQOL respondents experienced burnout or secondary traumatic stress levels greater than average – indeed, the majority of respondents experienced only low

levels – it would appear that not all trauma workers inevitably experience vicarious traumatization.

As I stated in section III.a. of this paper, the CSDT has been criticised on the grounds that it fails to adequately take into account the positive effects that trauma counselling has on the individual counsellor.¹¹⁵ The high levels of compassion satisfaction experienced by the respondents indicates that trauma counselling can indeed have positive effects on the counsellor, for the six CCVT counsellors who responded to the ProQOL questionnaire apparently derive much satisfaction from their work, however trying that work may be. Any theory concerning trauma counselling and its effects should therefore be mindful of the benefits that trauma counsellors might gain from engaging in their chosen profession.

In light of the results gathered from the ProQOL questionnaire, it would appear that there is no necessary correlation between respondents' traumatic stress scores (both in terms of burnout and secondary traumatic stress) and the amount of time that they allocated to the activities listed on the CSI. For instance, out of all six counsellors surveyed, Counsellor No. 2 devoted the least amount of time on average to the activities listed on the CSI. Counsellor No. 2, however, experienced higher compassion satisfaction and lower levels of burnout and secondary traumatic stress than Counsellor No. 5. This lack of correlation between traumatic stress scores and the amount of time allocated to coping strategies is consistent with the findings of a 2005 study conducted by Bober and Regehr; they too found that "there was no association between time devoted to coping

¹¹⁵ See Dunkley and Whelan; Kadambi and Ennis.

strategies [as listed on the CSI] and traumatic stress scores.”¹¹⁶ It is possible that CCVT counsellors might engage in activities not listed on the CSI to help deal with the demands of their trauma work, an issue that would be worth raising in any future follow-up interviews with CCVT counsellors.

Although it is difficult to generalize from the results of these two questionnaires, these results do appear to reveal that the CCVT has a solid leadership structure in place. As stated in section III.b. of this paper, Bustos argues that vicarious traumatization contributes to conflictual team dynamics. He maintains that by frequently encountering psychic pathologies, centres that advocate on behalf of torture survivors are prone to suffer from group regression and that effective leadership is essential to combating such regression. Not only did the respondents of my questionnaires appear to show no significant signs of experiencing vicarious traumatization, but their answers also indicated that the CCVT has positive team dynamics, which would suggest, at least according to Bustos’ reasoning, that the CCVT is guided by effective leadership. All respondents, for instance, indicated that “case discussions with colleagues” and “case discussions with management” are either usually or always helpful in dealing with the demands of trauma work; moreover, all respondents either indicated that they “sometimes” or “frequently” discuss cases in team meetings. These responses suggest that the workplace environment of the CCVT is a constructive one wherein colleagues collaborate with each other and evidently benefit from it.

It may appear, at least on the surface, that the results of the CSI do not cohere with the widely held claim that self-awareness is one of the most useful strategies for coping

¹¹⁶ Ted Bober and Cheryl Regehr, “Strategies for Reducing Secondary or Vicarious Trauma: Do They work?” *Brief Treatment and Crisis Intervention*, no. 6, (2005): 1-9, p. 1.

with vicarious traumatization. As stated in section III.d. of this paper, Pross and Pearlman and Saakvitne maintain that it is critical that trauma workers be self-aware in order to manage vicarious traumatization. Yet the results of the CSI showed that not only do respondents believe that self-care strategies are less helpful than any of the other strategies listed on the CSI for coping with the demands of trauma work, but that respondents also devote the least amount of time to these activities as compared to the other activities listed on the CSI. Since the CSI does not define the concept of “self-care” in exactly the same way that Pross and Pearlman and Saakvitne define the concept of “self-awareness,” the results of the CSI are not necessarily at odds with the claim that self-awareness is critical for coping with vicarious traumatization. Whereas “self-awareness” refers to the broad idea of being able to identify one’s own needs, limits, and resources,¹¹⁷ the CSI restricts the notion of self-care to activities that specifically focus on stress management training or care plans. While respondents may not believe that these activities are helpful in dealing with the demands of trauma work, respondents may think that being able to identify their own needs, limits, and resources is helpful. The results of the CSI, therefore, do not appear to contradict the claim that self-awareness is critical to managing vicarious traumatization because the CSI’s concept of self-care is different from the concept of self-awareness (at least as defined by Pross and Pearlman and Saakvitne).¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ Pearlman and Saakvitne, 1995a.

¹¹⁸ The CSI’s concept of self-care also appears to be more limited than Munroe’s notion of “self-care,” which he says trauma counsellors have an ethical duty to demonstrate (p. 225). For Munroe, self-care involves working reasonable hours, being self-aware, taking breaks, etc.; his notion of self-care therefore appears to be broader than the CSI’s notion. One could, for instance, theoretically demonstrate good self-care, as defined by Munroe, without actively participating in stress management training or care plans.

It is evident that further questions remain to be answered regarding vicarious traumatization in the context of the CCVT. I had originally intended to conduct follow-up interviews based on the results of these two questionnaires; however, due to time constraints and the lack of availability of CCVT counsellors, this was not feasible. Nevertheless, it would still be worthwhile to ask respondents to articulate in their own words how they have avoided experiencing vicarious traumatization (assuming that they believe they have avoided experiencing it). It would also be useful for future research studies to focus on the backgrounds of CCVT counsellors (e.g., age, gender, personal trauma history, level of experience, etc.) in order to determine whether or not there is any correlation between particular personal/professional characteristics and the development of vicarious traumatization. To distribute more questionnaires – such as the TSI Belief Scale, which is specifically designed to test for vicarious traumatization¹¹⁹ – and to engage in interviews with all CCVT counsellors would undoubtedly deepen one's insight into the phenomenon of vicarious traumatization as experienced in the context of the CCVT.

F. The CCVT & Vicarious Traumatization: The Next Step

Initially, I had planned on devising a policy for the CCVT that would aim to prevent and reduce the deleterious effects of vicarious traumatization. My findings, however, suggest that such a policy in the current context of the CCVT is not needed; moreover, to try to institute such a policy for the CCVT could be counterproductive. Rather than formulate a policy for the CCVT, I am recommending that the CCVT

¹¹⁹ The TSI Belief Scale was not used for this research project because to acquire the Scale was neither time efficient nor cost efficient; moreover, for the purposes of this project, the ProQOL was a sufficient measure for vicarious traumatization.

conducts a self-study in order to try to ascertain how its counsellors have avoided suffering from vicarious traumatization. The results of such a self-study would be useful to both the CCVT as well as to other organizations whose employees are susceptible to experiencing vicarious traumatization. For the CCVT, such a self-study would allow the organization to gain a deeper, more formalized understanding of how it has managed to keep the phenomenon of vicarious traumatization at bay, thereby increasing the likelihood that the CCVT's current successful strategies for dealing with vicarious traumatization will continue in the future – a future that may be more arduous than the present in light of likely downsizing at the CCVT. Moreover, such a self-study might reveal organizational practices that could be improved. Other organizations could potentially benefit from this study, as they could learn from the CCVT's findings and thus potentially refine their own practices for dealing with vicarious traumatization.

By fundraising and increasing awareness about the traumatic effects of torture and war, it is evident the CCVT is already addressing external factors that can contribute to vicarious traumatization. As I discussed in section III.c., Pross is one author who stresses that external factors can be significant contributors to vicarious traumatization. For instance, Pross argues that the low level of social recognition of helpers who work with trauma clients can lead to burnout because this can cause the helper to feel devalued by his or her fellow members of society.¹²⁰ One possible strategy to combat such feelings of devaluation would be to increase the public's general awareness of trauma and its effects, which might then lead the public to have greater appreciation of the value of trauma workers and the crucial role that they play in the recovery process of their clients. The CCVT makes an active effort to do just that. In keeping with its goal to inform the public

¹²⁰ As I state in section III.c., such devaluation could also contribute to vicarious traumatization.

about the effects of torture and war, the CCVT publishes *First Light*. *First Light* is a semi-annual publication that strives to heighten the public's awareness about torture, its effects, and what can be done in order to help survivors of torture and war overcome their trauma. As mentioned in the introduction, the CCVT also hosts community events such as its *First Light* Celebration, which not only raises the public's awareness of how persons are affected by torture and war, but also serves as a valuable fundraiser. Outreach efforts such as these have the potential to reduce the impact of vicarious traumatization by increasing the level of social recognition for helpers who work with trauma survivors, and also by increasing funding for the Centre itself. By campaigning for increased recognition and increased funding – two mutually reinforcing objectives – the CCVT has demonstrated that it already has initiatives in place that are redressing external factors that can contribute to vicarious traumatization. Other organizations could learn from these initiatives – as well as other CCVT policies and programs¹²¹ – and, as a result, these organizations might be able to reduce their own vulnerability to vicarious traumatization.

VI. CONCLUSION

The University of Toronto's Centre for Ethics states that a central goal of the Community Research Partnership in Ethics program is “to support organizations in their efforts to realize moral principles in practice.”¹²² This research project has tried to do

¹²¹ For instance, during the CRPE final conference Ezat Mossallanejad mentioned that he believes that the “all-embracing support” that CCVT counsellors provide is one reason that they have avoided suffering from vicarious traumatization. To articulate organizational values and strategies of this sort in a more comprehensive and formalized manner would be useful not only to the CCVT, but also to employees of other organizations who are vulnerable to experiencing vicarious traumatization.

¹²² University of Toronto Centre for Ethics, *University of Toronto: Centre for Ethics Partners*. Retrieved January 5, 2011, <http://www.ethics.utoronto.ca/index.php?id=7>.

exactly that. This project has examined vicarious traumatization in the context of the CCVT. After conducting extensive research on the concept of vicarious traumatization, as well as other related concepts, it is clear that vicarious traumatization is continuing to evolve as a concept. Although the literature has yet to reach a consensus regarding either the symptoms of vicarious traumatization or its applicability, the concept nonetheless remains useful in describing a set of reactions that trauma professionals experience in relation to their work. Indeed, several theorists prefer the concept of vicarious traumatization to other related terms, and many studies have offered empirical support for the reliability of this concept. Still, it is clear that more empirical work needs to be done in connection to vicarious traumatization and that the theory behind the concept, i.e., cognitive self-developmental theory (CSDT), can continue to be refined; CSDT, for example, does not appear to adequately take into account the compassion satisfaction that trauma professionals experience from their work.

Since my project focused on vicarious traumatization in the context of the CCVT, it was critical to receive feedback from CCVT counsellors regarding how vicarious traumatization was relevant to them. The results that I obtained offered useful insight into how CCVT counsellors are experiencing, as well as coping with, the demands of their trauma work. The six CCVT counsellors who participated in my research project appear to be deriving generally high levels of compassion satisfaction from their work, and to be experiencing relatively low levels of burnout and secondary traumatic stress. These results suggest that vicarious traumatization is currently not a problem for these respondents. Moreover, based on the results of the two questionnaires that I distributed to respondents, it would appear that the CCVT has a solid leadership structure in place that

is fostering a positive and supportive work environment for its counsellors. Going forward, I believe that it would be beneficial for the CCVT to conduct a self-study in order to try to ascertain how its counsellors have avoided suffering from vicarious traumatization. The work that the CCVT does on behalf of survivors of torture and war already sets an example for other organizations to follow. Based upon the results of my research, the CCVT has the potential to set another kind of example – namely, to set an example for other organizations to follow concerning how to deal with the issue of vicarious traumatization.



“Think occasionally of the suffering of which you spare yourself the sight.”

-Albert Schweitzer

AN INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR DEREK ALLEN

Professor Derek Allen served as Director of Ethics, Society, and Law for its first seven years starting in 1988. In addition, Professor Allen served as Trinity College's Dean of Arts for 16 years. He worked tirelessly to help arrange for the University of Toronto's Centre for Ethics (established in 2005-06) to be located at Trinity, where it has been since September 2006.

Mindful editor, Sofia Brondino Zavalla, conducted an interview with Professor Allen in May of 2013 to discuss the foundation of the Ethics, Society, and Law program in commemoration of its 25th anniversary.

Mindful: Ethics, Society, and Law began in 1988-1989 with an enrolment of 8 students. Since then, enrolment in the program has grown and shown no signs of slowing down. What unique factors have set the program apart throughout its 25 years so that students continuously, and in growing numbers, choose to pursue this particular program in their undergraduate studies?

Derek Allen: At the outset there were only two required courses in the program: PHL271H1 Law & Morality and TRN 412H1 (then 312H1) Seminar in Ethics, Society, & Law. This enabled students to put together packages of courses that reflected their interests. There was plenty of flexibility. This feature of the program was praised in a 1999 external review and played a role in attracting students in the program's early years.

The law component of the program has attracted students, and has expanded in recent years to include TRN304Y1 Law & Social Issues (a course established at the suggestion, and with the valuable assistance, of Dr. Theresa Miedema) and TRN425Y1 Law Workshops Course.

The program's interdisciplinarity (a characteristic it shares with other college programs) has also been attractive to students. There are three broad thematic areas ("Ethics," "Society," "Law"), and students are required to take at least one full-course equivalent in each area. The capstone seminar course aims to integrate these areas, for example by bringing ethical and sociological perspectives to bear on issues pertaining to the law.

When we established ES&L, we hoped that students would be interested in the opportunity to approach topics covered in the program from perspectives that reflected what they were learning in their other programs (e.g., a major in Political Science or a major in Criminology). This would enhance their interdisciplinary study. I believe that many students are attracted to programs in which they can examine issues from a variety of disciplinary perspectives that appeal to their particular interests and abilities. ES&L allows students to do just that.

Mindful: Were there challenges or obstacles Ethics, Society, and Law had to overcome throughout the years that threatened the possibility of the program reaching its momentous 25th anniversary?

DA: Enrolment was tiny to begin with but grew steadily over the next few years. In 1992-93, however, we introduced a modest CGPA enrolment requirement (1.50), and enrolment declined in the following six years. But then it began to increase. As of November 2012, there were 221 students in the program. There could be many more, judging from the number of applications, but the program aims to admit at most 75 students a year so as to ensure that one of the two required TRN courses (TRN303H1 Ethics & Society) can be offered in two sections of approximately 35 students each and that the other (TRN412H1 Seminar in Ethics, Society, & Law) can be offered in three sections of at most 25 students each.

To offer more sections of each course would require additional funds and additional teaching staff. Funding and staffing the program's TRN courses have been considerable challenges. Funding is now covered by the College's Instructional Grant from the Faculty of Arts & Science, but the grant must also cover other expenses in the College's academic program. To staff the TRN courses we have relied in part on sessional instructors, including Dr. Theresa Miedema (who also teaches at Ryerson University) and Mr. Earl Fruchtmann (a lawyer with the Ontario Ministry of the Attorney General). There are now two instructors in the program who have full-time appointments at Trinity. One is Prof. Mairi MacDonald, who has been a practising lawyer and is director of the

International Relations program; the other is Prof. John Duncan, director of ES&L. The Centre for Ethics has provided invaluable support for the program. For example, for several years visiting faculty at the Centre taught sections of TRN412H1, and Dr. James Sherman taught a section of TRN303H1 while he was a postdoctoral fellow at the Centre (and is doing so again this year).

From a student's perspective, I think the key challenge has been to get into optional department/college courses in the program in which ES&L students don't have enrolment priority. This continues to be a challenge, but it has been offset to some extent by the fact that the program now has several optional TRN courses that are restricted to ES&L students and another that doesn't restrict enrolment by program of study.

Mindful: Often, undergraduate students are concerned with the path they are to take upon completion of their undergraduate studies. What kind of skills and career paths does Ethics, Society, and Law equip its graduates to pursue?

DA: In 2012, ES&L submitted a new entry for the program for the 2012-13 calendar of the Faculty of Arts & Science, and the Faculty approved it. The entry said (in part) that "many graduates of the program go on to law school, but a number enrol in graduate programs in such fields as philosophy, political science, criminology, public policy, public health, and social work." As far as careers are concerned, law is the obvious one but there are others that perhaps are not so obvious. One is journalism. Another is teaching, not necessarily at the university level. The program doesn't point to a specific career, but there are various careers for which it provides a useful background. A further point, though not a career point, is that the program aims to provide students with knowledge and skills that will prepare them for (to quote the program's 2013-14 calendar entry) "reflective and engaged citizenship in a democratic, pluralistic society and in a world of global interconnections."

Mindful: As the first director of the program, could you have foreseen that the program would evolve into what we know Ethics, Society, and Law to be today?

DA: When the program was introduced, there were two other interdisciplinary college programs with which it overlapped. Those programs no longer exist. It would have been rash to predict that ES&L would still be around 25 years later. As for the specific content that the program has today, this has been shaped by the Faculty's new degree objectives, and these weren't foreseen when the program began. For example, who would have predicted that one day ES&L students (along with students in all other major/specialist programs) would have to satisfy a quantitative-reasoning requirement? Perhaps I could have foreseen that one day the program would have more TRN courses (not just the capstone seminar course) restricted to ES&L students, but I didn't foresee this. These courses have, I believe, led to a greater sense of community among students in the program and have also strengthened the program in other ways. Something that I think was foreseeable was the establishment of a students' association for the program, and this happened about 10 years ago. Over the past few years in particular, the Association has been truly dynamic with very good and committed students leading it, and this too has strengthened the program.

On behalf of Mindful, I would like to thank Professor Allen for taking the time to participate in this interview.



“Where there is power, there is resistance.”

-Michel Foucault

BIOGRAPHIES

SIMONE AKYIANU

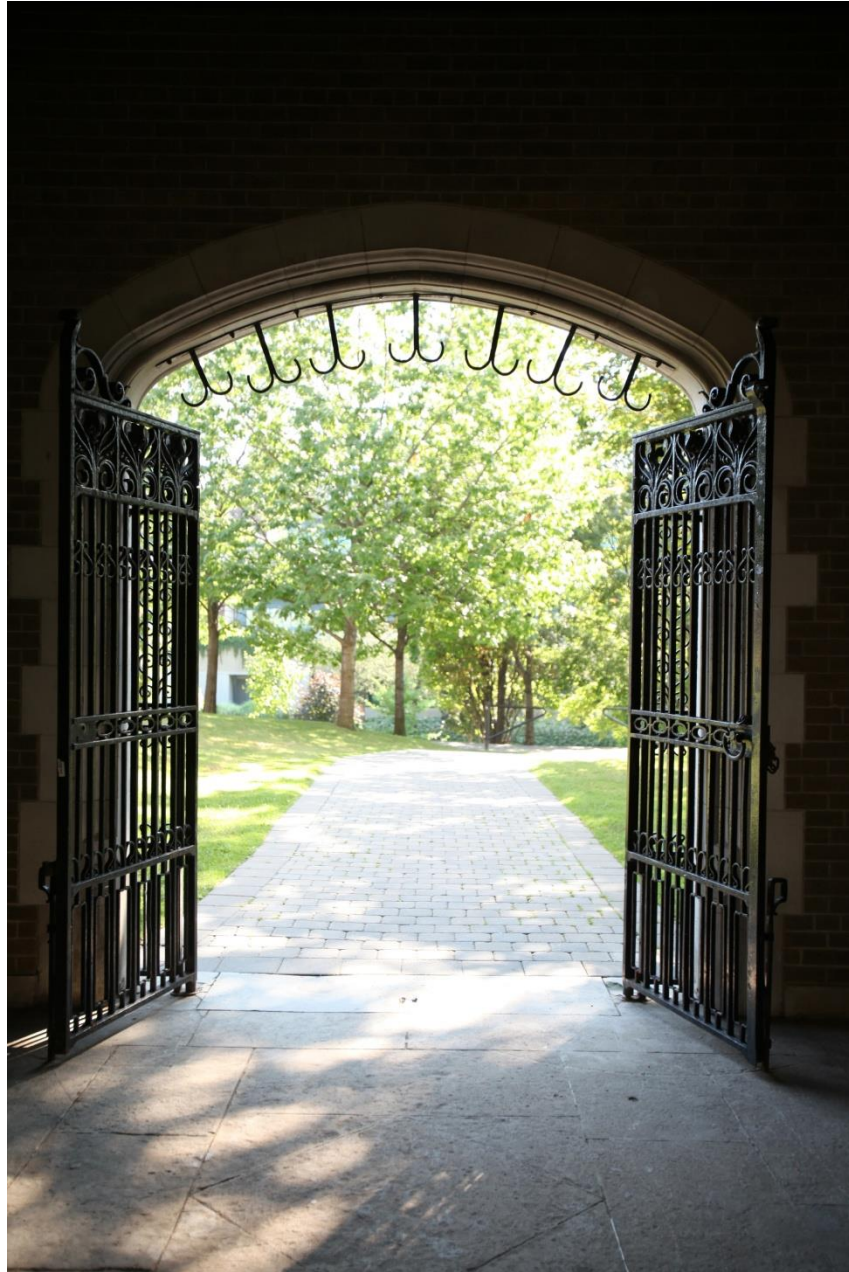
I recently graduated from the University of Toronto in 2013 with a double major in Health Studies and Ethics, Society & Law, as well as a minor in African Studies. I enjoy doing independent research. Most recently, I initiated a qualitative study examining the schooling experiences of racialized students on campus. My research interests include race, equity, and inequalities in health. I have a deep passion for community organizing and volunteering around social justice issues. I hope to pursue law and do advocacy around socio-economic human rights and equity for all.

NADIA ZAMAN

I am a second year student at the University of Toronto Faculty of Law. I graduated from Trinity College at the University of Toronto in 2012 with a double major in Criminology and Ethics, Society & Law, and a minor in Philosophy. I enjoy writing poetry, drawing with ink, trying out new foods, and traveling.

ZACH DAVIDSON

I graduated from the University of Toronto in 2012 with majors in Philosophy and in Ethics, Society, and Law. My current focus is creative writing, having shifted away from the academy in order to explore the possibilities of storytelling for the purposes of fostering critical thinking and compassionate, societal engagement.



*“All the interests of my reason, speculative as well as practical,
combine in the three following questions:*

- 1. What can I know?*
- 2. What ought I to do?*
- 3. What may I hope?”*

-Immanuel Kant