

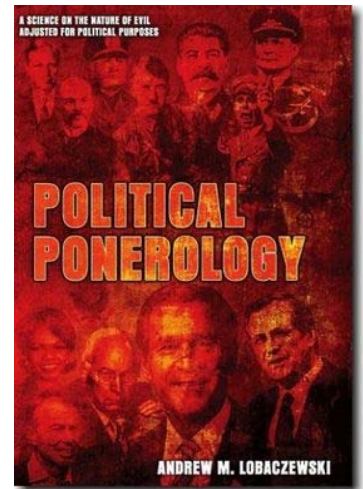
Political Ponerology: A Science of Evil Applied for Political Purposes

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"Many people believe that man is evolving; society is evolving; and that we now have control over the arbitrary evil of our environment; or at least we will have it after George Bush and his Neocons have about 25 years to fight the endless War against Terror"

Laura Knight-Jadczyk, from the Editor's Preface to *Political Ponerology: A Science on the Nature of Evil Adjusted for Political Purposes*, by Andrew M. Lobaczewski

For all of my life, one of my greatest interests has been to understand the nature of human evil. And I have always believed that it is one of the most *important* subjects that mankind needs to understand. So thank you to fellow DUer Larry Ogg for referring me to Lobaczewski's book on Political Ponerology (and for your ideas on how to present this information).



Laura Knight-Jadczyk, in her Editor's Preface to Political Ponerology, puts today's world in perspective:

At the social level, hatred, envy, greed and strife multiply exponentially. Crime increases faster than the population. Combined with wars, insurrections and political purges, multiplied millions across the globe are without adequate food or shelter due to political actions. The totality of human suffering is a dreadful thing.

The woeful status of today's world, as depicted in that brief but cogent summary, is due to human evil more than it is due to any other factor. Furthermore, humanity's historical record in dealing with human evil has been abysmal.

So we need to do much better on that score. And that is the main reason for Lobaczewski's book. For, as Knight-Jadczyk says in her Editor's Preface, there is a lot that can be done to combat evil, and "the very first thing we can do is learn about it".

Descriptions and definitions of human evil

Before one can understand how evil functions at the macro-level, that is, how it affects entire societies, it is necessary to understand how it operates in individuals. There are differing opinions on this issue, but most of them have a good deal in common. Knight-Jadczyk [quotes from Martha Stout](#), who has worked extensively with the victims of psychopaths, on this issue.

Imagine - if you can - not having a conscience, none at all, no feelings of guilt or remorse no matter what you do, no limiting sense of concern for the well-being of strangers, friends, or even family members. Imagine no struggles with shame, not a single one in your whole life, no matter what kind of selfish, lazy, harmful, or immoral action you had taken. And pretend that the concept of responsibility is unknown to you, except as a burden others seem to accept without question, like gullible fools.

Knight-Jadczyk expands on that description:



They can imitate feelings, but the only real feelings they seem to have: is a sort of 'predatorial hunger' for what they want. All else - all activity - is subsumed to this drive. In short, the psychopath is a predator. If we think about the interactions of predators with their prey in the animal kingdom, we can come to some idea of what is behind the "mask of sanity" of the psychopath.

This leads us to an important question: what does the psychopath really get from their victims? It's easy to see what they are after when they lie and manipulate for money or material goods or power. But in many instances we can only say that it seems to be that the psychopath enjoys making others suffer.

Psychiatrist M. Scott Peck, in [*People of the Lie*](#), defined an evil person as someone who is totally unwilling to admit fault or to try to understand him or herself. It's just too painful. So, in order to avoid having to do that, the evil person spends his or her whole life trying to make other people and himself see himself as he would like to be seen, rather than as he really is. That means pretending, lying, killing, or whatever it takes. Therefore, no fault of an evil person can ever be corrected because that would mean having to admit that it exists. Here is Peck's somewhat more technical [definition](#):

Truly evil people, on the other hand, actively rather than passively avoid extending themselves. They will take any action in their power to protect their own laziness, to preserve the integrity of their sick self. Rather than nurturing others, they will actually destroy others in this cause. If necessary, they will even kill to escape the pain of their own spiritual growth. As the integrity of their sick self is threatened by the spiritual health of those around them, they will seek by all manner of means to crush and demolish the spiritual health that may exist near them.

I define evil, then, as the exercise of political power - that is, the imposition of one's will upon others by overt or covert coercion - in order to avoid extending one's self for the purpose of nurturing spiritual growth. Ordinary laziness is non-love; evil is anti-love.

The many difficulties in recognizing human evil

Various estimates in Lobaczewski's book put the prevalence of evil individuals at somewhere between 4% and 6% of the population*, with no known differences by culture, nation, or race (but generally thought to be about ten times more prevalent in males than in females.) So, if it only occurs in a small minority of the population, that raises the question as to why whole societies come under the control of these people, thereby sustaining tremendous damage, for long periods of time. Perhaps the most important answer to that question is that relatively normal people often fail to consciously recognize evil in their midst, for several reasons:

The appearance of normality

As indicated by the title of Dr. Peck's book on evil (*People of the Lie*), deception is one of the primary characteristics of evil people. It is essential to them if they are to avoid being shunned by the good majority of humanity, and some of them are quite good at it. Many of them are even quite good at inspiring trust and confidence. Martha Stout continues her description of psychopaths (noted above) as follows:

Now add to this strange fantasy the ability to conceal from other people that your psychological makeup is radically different from theirs. Since everyone simply assumes that conscience is universal among human beings, hiding the fact that you are conscience-free is nearly effortless. You are never confronted by others for your cold-bloodedness. The ice water in your veins is so bizarre, so completely outside of their personal experience that they seldom even guess at your condition. Your strange advantage over the majority of people, who are kept in line by their consciences, will most likely remain undiscovered.

Denial

[Denial](#) is a very common psychological defense mechanism that people use in order to avoid the psychological pain of having to face something that is very unpleasant to them. It is so common that all humans use it to one degree or another on occasion. But as we grow we learn to face things that were previously too difficult for us to face, and that is part of the process of emotional maturation. Mastering this process gives us the strength to face

the world as it really is, rather than as we would like it to be. With regard to the denial of evil, Knight-Jadczyk notes:

Human beings have been accustomed to assume that other human beings are - at the very least - trying to 'do right' and 'be good' and fair and honest. And so, very often, we do not take the time to use due diligence in order to determine if a person who has entered our life is, in fact, a 'good person'.

Denial also takes place at the national level. There are many things that the United States as a nation denies (i.e., things that most Americans deny). For example, we talk about concepts like freedom and democracy without full awareness of the many historical (and current) examples where we have denied these gifts to other people. Probably the most difficult thing for Americans to admit to as a nation is that their President is evil.

Looking for evil in the wrong places - class prejudice

For many, perhaps most people, evil is something you find in prisons or slums. They simply do not think of people who have money and dress nicely as being evil. But successful psychopaths do not end up in prisons or slums. They can be bankers, physicians, professionals of any stripe, politicians, even leaders of nations.

Racism, nationalism, or other isms

When evil is perpetrated on persons of other nationalities or races people often turn a blind eye, especially when it is justified by their leaders. For example, in the United States slavery was justified by the slave owners for many decades, despite the 'All men are created equal' proclamation of our Declaration of Independence. More recently, hundreds of thousands of Iraqi civilian deaths have been justified in order to excuse our invasion and occupation of their country. Our leaders and journalists don't justify it in any direct straight forward manner, but rather they justify it by virtue of their virtually complete silence on the matter. Or they justify it by saying such things as "We didn't start this war", as if hundreds of thousands of dead Iraqi civilians were responsible for the 9-11 attacks on our country. Noam Chomsky sums up this phenomenon succinctly in [*What we Say Goes*](#) *Conversations on U.S. Power in a Changing World*:

When you conquer somebody and suppress them, you have to have a reason. You can't just say, "I'm a son of a bitch and want to rob them". You have to say it's for their good, they deserve it, or they actually benefit from it. That was the attitude of the slave owners. Most of them didn't say, "Look, I'm enslaving these people because I want easily exploitable cheap labor for my own benefit."

Yet, when a U.S. President gives the American people an excuse for a war of aggression they buy into those rationalizations way to often.

** Scott Peck estimates a prevalence of evil of less than 20 times this amount - about 2 cases per thousand people. The difference probably has to do with the fact that Peck doesn't classify "ordinary psychopaths" as being evil, unless they very actively seek to do substantial damage to others. This is more in line with Lobaczewski's "essential psychopathy", which he defines as someone whose role in the ponerogenic process is 'exceptionally great'.*

The effects of evil on individuals and society

For those who believe that evil people are almost always found in prisons or slums, the criminologist [Georgette Bennett](#) notes:

The consequences to the average citizen from business crimes are staggering: The combined burglary, mugging and other property losses induced by the country's street punks come to about \$4 billion a year. However, the seemingly upstanding citizens in our corporate board rooms and the humble clerks in our retail stores bilk us out of between \$40 and \$200 billion a year.

But the damage goes far beyond monetary losses. Lobaczewski notes:

When (normal) human beings fall into a certain state: the psychopaths, like a virulent pathogen in a body,



strike at their weaknesses, and the entire society is plunged into conditions that lead to horror and tragedy on a very large scale.

Whether or not or how much damage a psychopath actually does is dependent upon circumstances. Martha Stout explains:

If you are born at the right time, with some access to family fortune, and you have a special talent for whipping up other people's hatred and sense of deprivation, you can arrange to kill large numbers of unsuspecting people. With enough money, you can accomplish this from far away, and you can sit back safely and watch in satisfaction.

In such cases evil individuals or cabals may take control of a whole nation, and then the destruction often becomes enormous, in the form of genocides or other mass murders. James Petras explains in *Rulers and Ruled in the U.S. Empire*:

Explanations of genocides that focus on "irrational mass behavior", overlook the central importance of elite manipulation, anchored in the state, the economy and civil society. In none of the genocides of the 20th and 21st Century were the "masses" in a position to initiate, organize and direct them, though, certainly, sectors of the lower classes carried out the policies.

Psychopaths in position of great power

My belief that George Bush and his administration are evil is not based on any single incident, but rather on a pervasive pattern. This is a man who [blew up frogs](#) when he was younger. As Governor of Texas he [mocked](#) a woman (Carla Faye Tucker) who pleaded for her life with him, mimicking her desperate pleas in discussions with other people. In the midst of a national disaster, with people dying by the thousands he sat around and [partied](#). And then, when he finally got to New Orleans he [ordered firemen](#) to wait around and do nothing rather than save the dying people, just so that he could pose for a photo-op with them. Virtually every act of his presidency has been calculated to increase the wealth and power of his benefactors at the expense of the vast majority of Americans, many of whom have consequently been [driven into poverty](#). He created a war that has resulted in [over a million Iraqi civilian deaths](#) and [over four thousand deaths of American soldiers](#) - and [for no apparent reason](#) other than to increase the wealth and power of his benefactors. He unilaterally decided that he is [not subject to the laws of our country](#). And worst of all, [he presides over](#) the indefinite incarceration without charges or trial, and [the torture](#) of our prisoners of war - for no apparent reason at all.

DUers aren't the only people who are open to acknowledging the relationship of evil to political power in their own country. The preface to *Political Ponerology* not only notes this relationship but attempts an explanation, and is not hesitant to point out the role of George W. Bush:

In the past several years, there are many more psychologists and psychiatrists and other mental health workers beginning to look at these issues in new ways in response to the questions about the state of our world and the possibility that there is some essential difference between such individuals as George W. Bush and many so-called Neocons, and the rest of us.

Dr. Stout describes a 'composite' case where the subject spent his childhood blowing up frogs with fire-crackers. It is widely known that George W. Bush did this, so one naturally wonders...

We also began to realize that the profiles that emerged also describe rather accurately many individuals who seek positions of power in fields of authority, most particularly politics and commerce. That's really not so surprising an idea, but it honestly hadn't occurred to us until we saw the patterns and recognized them in the behaviors of numerous historical figures and, lately, including George W. Bush and members of his administration. Politics, by its very nature, would tend to attract more of the pathological 'dominator types' than other fields. That is only logical, and we began to realize that it was not only logical, it was horrifyingly accurate; horrifying because pathology among people in power can have disastrous effects on all of the people under the control of such pathological individuals.



The origins of Lobaczewski's *Political Ponerology*

As Laura Knight-Jadczyk and her colleagues came more and more to recognize the vast potential for psychopaths in position of political power to inflict destruction on whole societies, they published their thoughts and findings on the Internet. Consequently, they received an e-mail from Andrew Lobaczewski, of whom they had not previously known:

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen: I have got your Special Research Project on psychopathy by my computer. You are doing a most important and valuable work for the future of nations. I am a very aged clinical psychologist. Forty years ago I took part in a secret investigation of the real nature and psychopathology of the macro-social phenomenon. I am able to provide you with a most valuable scientific document, useful for your purposes. It is my book *Political Ponerology: A Science on the Nature of Evil Adjusted for Political Purposes*.

Lobaczewski was just one of several scientists who took part in the research and the writing of the book. But he was the only one left alive. The reason that the book had to be researched and written in secret was that Lobaczewski and his fellow scientists were victims of one of the most evil and repressive regimes of world history. Lobaczewski describes the [history of the manuscript](#) for the book:

The original manuscript of this book went into the furnace minutes before a secret police raid in Communist Poland. The second copy, painfully reassembled by scientists working under impossible conditions of violence and repression, was sent via courier to the Vatican. Its receipt was never acknowledged - the manuscript and all valuable data lost. In 1984, the third and final copy was written from memory by the last survivor of the original researchers: Andrew Lobaczewski. After half a century of suppression, this book is finally available.

Knight-Jadczyk describes her reaction to the receipt of Lobaczewski's manuscript:

As I read, I realized that what I was holding in my hand was essentially a chronicle of a descent into hell, transformation, and triumphant return to the world with knowledge of that hell that was priceless for the rest of us, particularly in this day and time when it seems evident that a similar hell is enveloping the planet. The risks that were taken by the group of scientists that did the research on which this book is based are beyond the comprehension of most of us. Many of them were young, just starting in their careers when the Nazis began to stride in their hundred league jack-boots across Europe. These researchers lived through that, and then when the Nazis were driven out and replaced by the Communists under the heel of Stalin, they faced years of oppression the likes of which one cannot even imagine.

A few more words about Lobaczewski's book and our need to understand its subject

What I've written here sets the stage for the latter part of Lobaczewski's book, in which he describes the characteristics of pathocracies (which he defines as social movements, societies, nations or empires that are taken over by psychopaths), how they originate, and the various threats that are posed to them, among other things. I chose not to provide much detail on those issues in this post because I felt that would make it too long. If there is a fair amount of interest in this post I will follow it up with the above noted issues in a few days.

The major theme of Lobaczewski's book is that if world civilization is to survive and thrive it must learn how to deal with evil individuals who seek its destruction. To that end, he believes that it is essential that objective scientific studies continue be pursued in order that humanity may come to recognize evil when they see it and learn how to combat it (I said something very similar to that about a year and a half ago, in a post titled [Evil Must Be Recognized for What it Is Rather than Denied](#)).

Along those lines, Lobaczewski believes that it is essential that we take a strictly objective and scientific view towards evil individuals rather than a moralistic attitude towards them. I'm not sure I'm capable of doing that, but I certainly do agree with him that this is a subject of monumental importance, and we need to learn much more



about it.

The last paragraph of Lobaczewski's [web site](#) sums up why he considers the subject to be of such great importance:

Morality and humanism cannot long withstand the predations of this evil. Knowledge of its nature - and its insidious effect on both individuals and groups - is the only antidote.

Knight-Jadczyk, at the end of her Editor's Preface, puts that theme in the context of the current day:

Based on the syndrome that describes the onset of the disease (pathocracy), it seems that the United States in particular, and perhaps the entire world, will soon enter into 'bad times' of such horror and despair that the Holocaust of World War II will seem like just a practice run. And so, since they were there, and they lived through it and brought back information to the rest of us, it may well save our lives to have a map to guide us in the falling darkness.

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