

**AGAINST THE DICHOTOMY OF MORALITY AND SELF-INTEREST:  
A REVIEW OF POWER'S "*A PROBLEM FROM HELL*": AMERICA  
AND THE AGE OF GENOCIDE**

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**ABSTRACT:** Power's book is reviewed as a powerful analysis of American foreign policy involving genocide. Although behavior analysts will find themselves closely aligned with much of the book, they will likely find fault with Power's conclusion that there are two contrasting determinants of a nation's likelihood of intervening in cases of genocide internationally: a) the moral values of an intervening nation that supports human rights, and b) national interests. In behavior analysis, moral values are not viewed as causal entities, and as a result the dichotomy that casts acting out of self-interest and acting out of morality as opposites must be dissolved. The resulting re-conceptualization is in line with what Power described as "enlightened self-interest," which is discussed as a more accurate predictor of foreign policy decision-making and a more effective vehicle for promoting human rights worldwide.

**KEYWORDS:** genocide, morality, values, human rights, foreign policy, self-interest

Reflecting on the 1994 Rwandan genocide in which almost 1 million people were targeted and slaughtered within a 3-month period while the United States did nothing to stop the atrocities, Samantha Power, a leading voice in the international human rights movement stated that:

it was only later that we all came back to lament what had been done, what might have been done...there was fighting and crying and outrage, but it wasn't a constructive outrage. There was just a sense of despair (Power, Barnett, & Myers, 2002, para. 71).

As initially established by the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (CPPCG), genocide is defined as any act committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group. As Power (2002) details in her book *The Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide*, genocide is a cultural phenomenon with a complex sociopolitical history. In an age of increasing globalization, foreign policy decisions involving genocide intervention are conflicted by oppositional views on the primacy of national sovereignty, international law, and fundamental human rights. Power's central thesis is that although the roots of the international human rights movement are grounded firmly in American philosophy and rhetoric, US foreign policy has long favored inaction in cases

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of genocide beyond the nation's borders. Power's Pulitzer Prize winning book is a detailed and unrelenting examination of the historical determinants of this inaction.

The picture that emerges when a behavior analyst considers Power's detailed analysis is in essence an operant account of the wide-scale cultural contingencies involved in foreign policy making among a multitude of key individuals. The primary aim of the current review is to present Power's remarkable book to the behavior analytic community, to discuss the philosophical barriers that limit Power's proposals for resolution developed in the text, and to outline the behavior analytic re-conceptualization that may help facilitate action.

### **An Overview of A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide**

The early chapters of Power's book recount the initial coining of the term *genocide*. The naming of this term was most prominently the work of Raphael Lemkin, a Jewish linguist and lawyer who had escaped Nazi-occupied Poland. After arriving in the United States in 1941, Lemkin lobbied for almost a quarter century to ban genocide internationally. He never lived to see the ratification of the CPPCG by the United States—the nation that he firmly believed to be the most effective agent to enforce the convention internationally.

The U.S. did not ratify the convention until Ronald Reagan bullied its passing through the U.S. Senate in 1986, nearly 30 years after Lemkin's death. Close to 100 nations had ratified the CPPCG before the United States, and it was reported that the ratification was almost entirely an attempt to recover from the political fallout from Reagan's visit to West Germany the previous year. Reagan accepted an invitation by the West Germany chancellor for a wreath-laying ceremony at Bitburg cemetery, where several dozen Nazi officials were buried, to commemorate the end of World War II. However, Reagan faced heavy criticism from the American Jewish community after initially refusing to visit the site of a former concentration camp, and making comments that appeared to equate Nazi soldiers with the victims of Holocaust at a press conference before the visit. The incident was one of the biggest political blunders of Reagan's presidency (Levkov, 1987).

The United States' entrance into the CPPCG was also weighed down substantially by multiple reservations, understandings, and declarations introduced by several senators during the ratification process, which largely served to inoculate the U.S. from ever being charged with the crime of genocide. As Power details throughout the rest of her book, the largest effect of the CPPCG's ratification was that U.S. officials became more reluctant to utter the term genocide at all—or even more insidiously to invoke the term only as a political tool—as opposed to increasing the likelihood of enforcing international law against the crime, as was the original purpose of the convention.

Against the backdrop of the politics at issue in the U.S.'s involvement in and response to naming and denouncing genocide, in the later chapters Power weaves a compelling history of the political determinants of U.S. inaction in a series of chapters detailing several major episodes of genocide over latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In chronological order and case after case, Power punctuates her central thesis that U.S. foreign policy involving genocide has long been that of strategic inaction as a result of overwhelming national self-interest. With meticulous attention to detail, vivid imagery, and expert analysis, Power details the Khmer Rouge's murder of more than a million Cambodians in the 1970s; the Iraqis' use of property destruction, chemical weapons, and mass executions to destroy the rural Kurdish population in the 1980s; and the atrocities of

the 1990s, including the massacres and other means of ethnic cleansing of unarmed Muslims by the Bosnian Serbian Army and the slaughter of close to a million people in less than 100 days in Rwanda.

In all of the chapters, Power describes the U.S. reaction to these international crimes from the perspectives of multiple key players in U.S. foreign policy including junior state department officials, human rights activists, senators, military generals, Secretaries of State, and former Presidents. From these diverse perspectives Power details the policy decisions made involving genocide as they were determined by what she views as the morality of a few and the self-interest of many. One of the strongest aspects of the book is the specificity with which she portrays the action of these individuals, ultimately leaving the reader with a sense of the both the complexity and lawfulness of their behavior in relation to the circumstances that maintained it.

Although the book is an incredible tour de force of the explanation of complex cultural phenomena almost entirely in terms of the behavior-environment relations at issue, from a behavior-analytic standpoint Power's text ceases to be effective in its final and most critical chapter. After the collection and display of almost exhaustive evidence and environment-based explanation, in an almost stunning switch of directionality Power concludes:

...the real reason that the United States did not do what it could and should have done to stop genocide was not a lack of knowledge or influence but a lack of *will*. Simply put, American leaders did not act *because they did not want to*. (p. 508, italics added)

The introduction of internal causation and mentalistic explanation is likely to be troubling to the behavior-analytic reader and, on the larger scale, may even be one of the reasons that arguments for the United States to serve as protector and defender of human rights often fail to produce action beyond pure rhetoric.

In her conclusion, Power also offers a two-pronged argument for the U.S. to prevent and attempt to punish genocide across national borders. She asserts that the United States should act to end genocide out of a) moral responsibility and b) what she terms "enlightened [national] self-interest." In these few pages, Power introduces a problematic dichotomy that obscures the determinants of foreign policy on the prevention of genocide that were so astutely detailed in the previous 500 pages of her book. A closer examination of this dichotomy, along with the behavior-analytic re-conceptualization that aims to dissolve it, may prove useful not only to our understanding of why a superpower consistently fails to act in the face of genocide and other gross human rights violations, but also in playing a role in the construction of a more effective argument to promote human rights worldwide.

### **The Moral vs. Self-Interest Dichotomy**

The United States should stop genocide for two reasons. The first and most compelling is moral. When innocent life is being taken on such a scale and the United States has the power to stop the killing at reasonable risk, it has a duty to act. It is this belief that motivates most of those who seek intervention. But history has shown that the suffering of victims has rarely been sufficient to get the United States to intervene. (Power, 2002, p. 512)

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The dichotomy that serves as the foundation of Power's argument involves the explanation that individuals may act for the good of others for two mutually exclusive reasons—either out of moral obligation *or* self-interest. From a *moral-based account* of altruistic behavior, individuals act out of moral obligation mandated from a metaphysical higher authority or as a result of the morality inherent in “human nature” (Sullivan, 1995). Many individuals in the human rights movement have a strong affinity for this explanation; however, as Power convincingly details, rarely have foreign policy and action against genocide been engendered solely by moral argument. An *interest-based account* of altruistic behavior asserts that individuals ultimately act for their own benefit or self-interest, even if that behavior appears altruistic. The interest-based explanation of behavior is often viewed as cold, calculated, and morally distasteful. However, as Power's work demonstrates, this account has strong explanatory and predictive power in identifying the conditions under which a collective group of individuals is likely to take action against an international violation of human rights. The predominance of the moral-based account and the predictive power of the interest-based account warrant closer examination to gain a better understanding of action against genocide.

### **The Moral-based Account**

The description of the first explanatory account, described here as the moral-based account, begins with the fundamental tenet of the human rights movement of inalienable rights and “inherent dignity” that every member of the human species is granted. Dignity is argued simply to be a result of being human, as opposed to belonging to a particular class of humans, and is not to be denied under any circumstances. In cases of genocide, this major human rights offense is considered morally wrong in the sense that it violates the inherent dignity of the individual discriminatively on the basis of race, religion, ethnic background, or national origin (Henkin, 2000; Power & Allison, 2000). Thus, the moral-based argument for action against genocide and other human rights violations appeals to each individual's natural responsibility to do what is morally right. Acting in accordance with one's moral obligations is also the basis for intervention in the face of the violation of these inalienable rights.

The conceptual ground upon which assertions of inherent human rights are made are often unexamined and, although they have relatively clear conceptual grounds in the context of various religious understandings, the basis is not always clear within secular understanding (Newman, Reinecke, & Kurtz, 1996; Perry, 2005). Within secular moral philosophy, the universal claim that all individuals have equal status has emerged as a basic axiom (Griffin, 1986). Nevertheless, the conceptual source of this morality is still disputed. When basic human rights are considered a universal truth, the source of this truth is difficult to identify other than by appealing to human nature itself. If considered a subjective or morally relativistic value that is bound by culture and history (Double, 1996), the argument for *universal* acceptance of particular morals is conceptually problematic. If action to promote human rights is not guided by an inherent moral obligation to uphold inalienable individual rights, then it is often assumed such action is likely under the influence of more devious and selfish principles—ultimately those involving one's own interests.

### **The Interest-Based Account**

The second reason for acting is the threat genocide in fact does pose to Western interests. Allowing genocide undermines regional and international stability, creates militarized refugees, and signals dictators that hate and murder are permissible tools of statecraft. Because these dangers to national interests are long-term dangers and not immediately apparent, however, they have rarely convinced top Western policy makers. (Power, 2002, pp. 512-513)

Power supports her assertion above that the second reason that the U.S. should take action against genocide internationally is out of what she refers to as *enlightened self-interest*. An interest-based account usually assumes that all behavior can be reduced to egocentric determinants and that true altruism, or acting for the good of others without self-benefit, cannot exist (Baum, 2005). Enlightened self-interest accepts that in some cases an individual may act for the good of others, but that the likelihood of this altruism is also determined by the individual's own long-term or global past and present circumstantial "interests." While Power finds arguments for intervention against genocide based on enlightened self-interest to be distasteful compared with arguments from a moral-based account, she endorses enlightened self-interest as a more effective rhetorical device for instantiating change in U.S. foreign policy on genocide. Specifically as it relates to policy aimed at stopping genocide Power recognized elsewhere that "...dissent in bureaucracy includes a sense of knowing what your higher-ups want to hear, the language and discourse that's not just fashionable but appropriate—that is, the language of realism and national interest" (Power, Barnett, & Myers, 2002, para 53).

### **A Behavior Analytic Reconceptualization**

Power's dichotomy casts acting out of self-interest and acting out of altruistic morality as opposites and in turn implies that morals themselves can be viewed as causal entities, a position theoretically incongruous with a behavior-analytic approach. Therefore, a behavior-analytic understanding of Power's "enlightened self-interest" must clarify what is at issue when we speak of acting morally. The resulting re-conceptualization is comprised of at least four sets of assumptions focusing on the consequences of action.

### **Against Universal Foundationalism**

One of the most important philosophical assumptions in the dissolution of the moral-interest dichotomy within a behavior analytic framework involves moving away from the idea that human rights and morals somehow exist outside of the cultural or societal context. Richard Rorty (1993), a philosophical pragmatist with whom behavior analysts have found themselves conceptually aligned (see Leigland, 1999), argued against what he refers to as "human rights foundationalism," or the belief that morals concerning human rights are *a priori* universal truths mandated as either a part of the fabric of human nature or as commandments of particular religious belief systems. Rorty argued that no separate human nature exists apart from socialization and environmental circumstance in an individual's history, and therefore universal human morality and inalienable human rights do not exist separately from the culture in which they are embedded. Most importantly for the present discussion, he also asserted that

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foundationalism is both conceptually and pragmatically problematic in the promotion of human rights, despite its appeal to many human rights advocates.

The alternative that Rorty (1993) provided involves assuming that the values of human rights are culture-bound as opposed to universal. In this assertion, he also avoided absolute moral relativism by pointing to a more pragmatic view that focused on the goals and outcomes of particular actions, with his ultimate goal being the strengthening of the human rights culture such that it has a greater impact on action. In one of his more subtle explanations, Rorty argued for demonstrating that human rights strengthen and advance the cultures that promote those rights:

...the rhetoric that we Westerners use in trying to get everyone to be more like us would be improved if we were...less profoundly universalist. It would be better to say: here is what we in the West look like as a result of ceasing to hold slaves, beginning to educate women, separating church and state, and so on. Here is what happened after we started treating certain distinctions between people as arbitrary instead of fraught with moral significance. If you tried treating them that way, you might like the results. (1997, p.19-20)

From this perspective, rejecting foundationalism in favor of viewing moral behavior as determined by the social environment allows for the advancement of human rights in that “we see our task as a matter of making our own culture—the human rights culture—more self-conscious and powerful, rather than demonstrating its superiority to other cultures by an appeal to something transcultural” (Rorty, 1993, p.117).

In line with Rorty’s (1993, 1997, 1999) antifoundationalist view, from a behavior analytic perspective moral behavior has been viewed as arising from the web of interlocking contingencies of speakers and listeners within a verbal community, as opposed to foundational mental entities delivered by metaphysical higher power or from isolated processes within the organism as a part of human nature as suggested by a complete moral relativism (Hayes, Gifford, & Hayes, 1998; Leigland, 2005). The critical role that the verbal community plays in establishing moral behavior as understood from a behavior analytic perspective calls for a more detailed examination of the nature of collective action and cultural practice from this view.

### **Collective Action & the Cultural Level of Analysis**

The dissolution of the moral-interest dichotomy requires the clarification of the behavior-analytic position that, although our explanatory language often appears otherwise, groups do not behave (Todorov, 2009), nor do they have wills that choose between acting morally or out of self-interest. From the behavior-analytic view only the individual behaves, and therefore any understanding of collective action begins with the understanding of the contingencies that select and maintain acts of individuals that interact to produce emergent collective action and cultural processes (Mattaini & Strickland, 2006).

Of particular use may be an analysis of the complex set of interlocking contingencies that make up what has been termed the *metacontingency*, that is, the relations between sets of interlocking individual contingencies and their common consequence(s) (Glenn, 1989, 1991, 2004). The ultimate outcomes on the collective scales of analysis are governed by

metacontingencies that are analogous to, yet more complex than, the selection of the operant behavior of an individual organism.

From a behavior-analytic perspective, all violations of human rights constitute behavior on the individual or collective level of analysis as embedded within a context of interlocking cultural contingencies (Mattaini, 2006). Similarly, collective action to counteract those violations also involves these cultural contingencies operating on the behavior of a multitude of individuals. These contingencies distinctly involve moral behavior and altruism, patterns that, as will be demonstrated below, have recently been well described by environment-based accounts at the level of individual behavior.

### **The Contingencies of Morality and Self-Interest**

Within a behavior-analytic framework, the universal principle governing both individual behavior and cultural practice involves what in the vernacular might be viewed as *self-interest*, that is, the process of reinforcement, or more broadly, selection by consequences (Baum, 2005; Skinner, 1971; 1981). From the organism-based explanatory framework that is predominant in the vernacular and throughout the social sciences, the behavior of others is generally attributed to processes occurring within or as part of the organism (Hineline, 1990, 1992) and, so too, self-interest is commonly viewed as an antecedent internal process that determines action. From an environment-based explanatory framework, self-interest is clearly understood in terms of relatively straightforward principles of selection as a causal mode, and as Rachlin (2002) noted, "...for behavioral compatibility, selfishness translates into reinforcement" (p. 240).

Although behavior we refer to as self-interested is traceable to reinforcement, dissolving the moral-interest dichotomy does not simply result by claiming that moral behavior does not exist while privileging a redefined self-interest. Whether behavior was considered moral or amoral, Skinner dismissed a related dichotomy by making no distinction between "value" and "fact" as often posited in moral philosophy. To some extent, Skinner claimed that *values are reinforcers* and acting in accordance with those values refers to behavior that produces and is maintained by those specific reinforcers (Skinner, 1971; Ruiz & Roche, 2007). In Skinner's (1971) discussion of naturalistic ethics, asserting that *values are reinforcers* was critical to dissolving the distinction between fact and what was believed to be a separate mentalistic realm of values, and in turn asserting that both were to be found within behavior-environment interaction.

The dissolution of the fact-value dichotomy is also reflected in the astute behavior-analytic interpretation by Leigland (2005) in which morals or *values* are described as behavioral phenomena in inextricable interaction with environmental relations. In this view, values are neither solely behavioral nor solely environmental, but rather within behavior-environment interaction itself. As such, values are clearly within the purview of behavior analysis in that variables of which specific values are a function can, in theory, be identified. The assertion that the study of values and moral behavior are not outside the scope of an analysis of environmental contingencies points to the importance of examining the behavior analytic interpretations of moral behavior on the individual level, and then extending that analysis to an understanding of inaction on the cultural scale of analysis. Perhaps the most relevant set of contingencies to examine involves those that generate altruistic behavior—a behavior pattern that, in its strictest

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sense, has often been viewed as counterintuitive to a selectionist account on the ontogenetic scale of analysis.

### On Altruism

Traditionally, behavior analysts have asserted that as a mechanism separate from selection as a causal mode, altruism is not possible. Individuals do not engage in self-sacrifice without the possibility of self-benefit or reciprocation (Baum, 2005). An assumption of true altruism would place this behavior pattern outside of explanation in terms of the contingencies of reinforcement and behavior-environment relations, the very explanation that Skinner (1971) used to account for it. However, to end the analysis by marginalizing the existence of altruism and concluding that seemingly altruistic behavior is simply a product of self-interested reinforcement may miss an important property of patterns that must be considered if we are to understand altruistic or “moral” patterns as they may occur at the level of cultural practice.

As Rachlin (2002) has developed in great detail, altruism or “acting for the good of others” is, like all behavior, a temporally-extended process that may be best conceptualized as a pattern of behavior, as opposed to a singular act. When offered as whole patterns in a choice paradigm, it is believed that most individuals would value and choose the altruistic behavior pattern—saving life as opposed to destroying it, helping others as opposed to inaction, and compassion over cruelty. However, these choices are often not made between whole patterns at the choice points, but rather as alternatives between individual acts with outcomes of limited temporal scope that often favor selfishness. Processes mirroring *altruism* and *selfishness* are also at issue in the behavioral patterns we commonly term *self-control* and *impulsiveness*, respectively (Rachlin, 2000, 2002). Specifically, altruism and self-control have been characterized as control by delayed as opposed to immediate reinforcement (Platt, 1973; Baum, 2005). The deferred or remote nature of the reinforcement contingencies involved in altruism has been used both to account for the behavior pattern and explain why it often fails to occur.

These patterns of behavior-environmental interaction are precisely described throughout the detailed analysis in a *Problem from Hell*. Power argues that the interlocking contingencies responsible for inaction are broader than just a particular presidential administration. Legislators, lobbyists, grassroots groups, and even individual constituents have consistently chosen on what Rachlin (2002) identified as a “case-by-case” basis that consistently leads to non-altruistic patterns of behavior. According to Power’s evidence, at the level of cultural practice the pattern that has emerged has largely been choosing to address immediate domestic concerns or concerns that immediately threatened narrowly-defined US interests over the often isolated and remote concerns of another sovereign nation at issue in cases of genocide. With limited resources, the political costs of becoming involved have generally outweighed the costs of remaining silent, as no member of the US foreign policy establishment has ever truly suffered politically for their sins of omission. As Power (2002b) noted in vernacular terms below, one approach to influencing policymaking behavior would involve an understanding of the temporal interplay of consequences, specifically acknowledging that short-term political interests of leaders and policymakers are often the primary determinant of action that can be used to best facilitate change:



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Because it is unlikely that Western leaders will have the vision to recognize that they endanger their countries' long-term vital national interests by allowing genocide, the most realistic hope for combating it lies in the rest of us creating short-term political costs for those who do nothing. (para 47)

To better understand how these patterns of consistent altruism might be generated, we must also understand how verbal behavior plays a role in moral behavior at the individual level of analysis.

### Verbal Behavior and Rule Governance

Although Skinner (1971) advocated that values are best understood as reinforcers, other behavior analysts have asserted that values (i.e., morals) are behavior, specifically verbal behavior about what is considered to be moral and immoral action (Day, 1992; Hayes, Gifford, & Hayes, 1999; Baum, 2005). This understanding of morals/values also removes the distinction between what we ought to do and what we actually do as inherently different in kind, and again refocuses both fact and value as behavior selected by its consequences.

Some of the most detailed work in the behavior-analytic literature concerning moral behavior and values has involved verbal behavior and rule governance. Hayes et al. (1999) presented an elaborate contemporary behavior-analytic view on moral behavior that specifically involves relations between the hierarchically complex repertoires of both speaker and listener behavior. The most complex type of moral speaker behavior is that which functions to establish abstract verbal consequences for an individual or group of individuals to increase the likelihood that those individuals will work toward such consequences. The speaker's behavior in this case functions to induce the listener to care about and work for these abstract consequences—for example, behavior aimed at getting the listener to care about and act to promote social justice, egalitarianism, or human rights. The abstract and intensely verbal nature of the contingencies and consequences in this type of moral behavior make it particularly complex to establish for both listener and speaker. As Hayes et al. (1999) describe, this level of speaker behavior comprises much of the behavior of moral philosophers attempting to induce their readers to care about issues on the basis of morality—including much of the verbal justification for upholding human rights.

### Conclusion

Everybody I see about me seems bent on teaching his contemporaries, by precept and example, *what is useful is never wrong*. Will nobody undertake to make them understand how *what is right may be useful*? (Tocqueville, 1835, p. 485, italics added).

The issue of inaction—although conceptually challenging—is largely what was at issue when Skinner (1987) asked, almost 25 years ago, why we were not doing more to save the world. We continue to face this issue when reflecting upon the United States' history of serving largely as bystanders to genocide, potentially having put an end to many of the atrocities that occurred. For Skinner, the answer was to be found in effective verbal behavior, specifically that of the experimental analysis of behavior and cultural practices. He argued that when we are faced with dilemmas of major cultural concern, we often remain dormant because most members of the

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culture do not have an adequate verbal repertoire to analyze the contingencies of reinforcement that maintain the behavior of the culture's group members or predict the outcomes of changing wide-scale contingencies.

A behavior-analytic interpretation of moral and altruistic behavior at the level of cultural practice abroad has several implications for better facilitating action against genocidal practices abroad. As Kofi Annan (2000) the seventh Secretary-General of the United Nations described:

... the concept of national interest must change. A new, more broadly defined, more widely conceived definition of national interest in the new century, would, I am convinced, induce states to find far greater unity in the pursuit of such basic Charter values as democracy, pluralism, human rights, and the rule of law....Indeed, in a growing number of challenges facing humanity, the collective interest *is* the national interest." (p. 317)

Rorty (1993; 1997) argued for using explanations of the consequences of collective action (i.e., descriptions of how moral behavior is in our best "self-interest") as opposed to the universal moralist position to better achieve the most optimally effective human rights culture (1993; 1997). Moral speaking that makes the listener's behavior sensitive to abstract verbal consequences and motivates them to act towards these abstract consequences characterizes much of the verbal behavior of moral philosophers. One of Power's central theses in the book is that this type of moral speaker behavior focused on abstract verbal consequences has been largely ineffective in inducing action against genocide in the face of multiple competing contingencies. Speaker behavior aimed at making the listener's behavior more sensitive to the remote, probabilistic, or long-term effects is described by Hayes, Gifford, and Hayes (1998) as having a "focus on establishing *enlightened...self-interest* in others" (p. 265, italics added). The distinct shift in the verbal behavior of human rights advocates specifically aimed at changing sensitivity of the policymaker's behavior to the concrete consequences of their behavior instead of the abstract verbal consequences of their behavior related to morality not only aids in the elimination of the moral-interest dichotomy, but as Rorty (1993; 1997) has suggested, it may also better facilitate action.

The United States continues to remain dormant in situations of genocide that have presented themselves since Power's book was released, demonstrating a commitment to acting on a non-altruistic case-by-case basis. It was not until 2002 that the first permanent, treaty-based International Criminal Court (ICC) was established to prosecute crimes against humanity including genocide, and in 1998 the United States was one of only seven nations to vote against the Rome Statute, the treaty upon which the ICC is based. Bill Clinton signed the treaty in 2000, but it was never presented to the Senate to be discussed or fully ratified. In 2002, George W. Bush withdrew his signature on the Rome Statute, effectively establishing the United States as having a distinct anti-ICC position, a stance that was in stark contrast to many of the nation's closest allies, as well as to many of the principles set forth in the International Bill of Human Rights that the United States had major influence in establishing. Even today, in light of all that we have learned about genocide, the United States does not fully participate in the ICC (Power, 2007).

Despite what appears to be a consistent pattern of inaction related to human rights enforcement specifically involving the ICC, representatives from the United States under the

Obama administration have participated in recent meetings of the state parties to the ICC, an opening of dialog where there was once only outright contempt (Clark, 2009; Kaufman, 2010). This small step in the direction of ratification of the Rome Statute and full participation in the ICC was likely influenced by Samantha Power's 2009 appointment as Special Assistant to President Obama and member of the National Security Council as Senior Director for Multilateral Affairs, as well as her understanding of the power of describing the environmental determinants of individual behavior and cultural practice as they relate to foreign policy involving genocide.

*A Problem from Hell* is a gripping work that demonstrates that sources outside of behavior analysis can inform our understanding of cultural practice as it relates to altruism, moral behavior, and human rights, as well as assist us in establishing an understanding of cultural practice focused specifically on issues of human rights and social justice. With a non-dichotomous focus on the environmental contingencies determining cultural practice, as well as increasingly effective forms of verbal behavior, behavior analysis has unique contributions to offer to the understanding of human behavior as it relates to upholding human rights and the continuously evolving design of a more pragmatically-focused human rights culture.

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