

THE EVIL OF VIOLENCE:
A TRIGGER FOR A HUMAN RIGHTS CULTURE?*

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ABSTRACT

This article seeks to answer the following question: to what extent does the interpretation of violence as evil contribute – positively, negatively or not at all – to a human rights culture among some 2000 grade 11 students at private (Catholic and Anglican) schools and Afrikaans medium public schools in the Johannesburg/Pretoria region on the basis of surveys conducted in 1995/1996 and 2000/2001? The regression analyses show that on a number of population characteristics controlled hamartiological interpretations of violence as evil have a mainly positive effect, especially those couched in terms of the divine apocalypse, provided it is construed in its positive dimension ('the new Jerusalem') rather than its negative dimension ('the last judgment'); this also applies to interpretations couched in terms of the institutional transmission of evil contributing to the world of evil. The other interpretations have a predominantly or purely negative effect, especially those relating to a primordial dualistic struggle between good and evil forces, divine retribution and intergeneration transmission of evil. Some population characteristics appear to be more powerful than the hamartiological interpretations, especially gender (female students are more in favour of human rights) and political and cultural attitudes.

Regular viewers of SABC TV news bulletins and newspapers readers are inundated with reports, interviews, photographs and film recordings of violence. Robbery, hijacking, burglary, rape, murder – and combinations

* This article stems from extensive research in the project, 'Human Rights and Religion Among South African Youth' (HRR project), based on data obtained from a questionnaire survey of Grade 11 students at private (Catholic and Anglican) schools and Afrikaans-medium government schools in the Johannesburg-Pretoria region in 1995/96, 2000/01, and 2005.

of such crimes – are the order of the day. Every year 41 murders are committed per 100,000 people in the metropolitan area of Pretoria, as a result of which that city is known as the murder capital of the world; the name applies even more to Johannesburg (136/100,000). These designations are actually unfair, since the ratio (69/100,000) in the ‘real’ capital of the world, Washington D.C., manifestly surpasses that of Pretoria, and the ratio in a city like Diadema in the metropolitan area of Sao Paulo (150/100,000) outstrips Johannesburg’s. At the moment criminality appears to be levelling off rather than increasing, but that does not mean that the war against crime is going to be an easy victory (*The Reported Serious Crime Situation in South Africa* 2001, 11). This is partly attributable to the existence of gangs and criminal syndicates, whose aim is to accumulate large stores of stolen electronic hardware (especially cell phones), jewellery, credit cards and cars with a view to supplying these goods on order to clients both inside South Africa and abroad. Criminality also afflicts the civil service, particularly crimes against the principles and values, enshrined in the Constitution, of an independent and impartial public service (*South African Police Report* 2002). This is evident in the innumerable instances of bribery and corruption, often embedded in networks both inside and outside official government circles, national and international, and at the highest levels. But government officials are themselves victims of crime. Every year dozens of police officers are killed. Although the number is declining, the statistics still reveal a frightening picture, the more so because the officers are usually not killed on duty but in their own neighbourhoods or homes: 187 in 2000, 155 in 2001 and 137 in 2002 (*Beeld*, 14 January 2003).

What is the origin of all this violence? Is it part of human nature for people to pressurise, rob, rape and murder each other? Genetic and brain research indicates the opposite, or at any rate gives a more differentiated picture. The universal nature of human beings is characterised by an attitude of empathy and compassion, especially when a fellow being is in pain or distress.¹ Studies by developmental psychologists show that infants are capable of empathy and sympathy from the age of eleven months: when they hear or see people crying they cry themselves. Mimicry – when

¹ Steven Pinker, *How the Mind Works* (New York, N.Y.: Norton, 1999); G. Haug-Schnabel, ‘Die “Natur des Menschen” und die Beachtung des humanitären Völkerrecht’ in *Humanitäres Völkerrecht* (ed. Hasse, J., Müller, E., and Schneider, P.; Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2001), 178–196; John O’Manique, *The Origins of Justice. The Evolution of Morality, Human Rights, and Law*. (Philadelphia, Penn.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003).

the child imitates the other's facial expression and posture, whereupon the brain processes this message – reproduces the other's emotions in the child. As the child's language development progresses, verbal cues may evoke emotions resembling the emotional happenings that were associated with the other's emotions in the recent past. Through such linguistic mediation children are able to adopt the other's perspective and put themselves in the other's place.²

If aggression and violence are in fact not part of human beings' universal genetic and cerebral makeup, or at any rate are not the sole determinants of interpersonal behaviour, then there must be social factors that arouse or reinforce them. These factors could be at the micro-, meso- and macro-levels of society.

At micro-level the behavioural examples of people who display aggression exert a powerful influence, for instance in the home, the family, the school, the neighbourhood or area.³ Thus many child rapes by other children are attributable to the fact that they grow up in homes where the sexual act is performed in the very same room in which they sleep, which can lead to imitation behaviour during the day while either one or both parents are far away from home, sometimes travelling more than two hours to their places of employment (*The Reported Serious Crime Situation in South Africa 2001*, 18). Common factors in criminality at the micro-level are alcohol abuse and drug taking, which lead to loss of control over aggressive impulses and, often, a spiral of violence.

At meso-level certain social institutions can give rise to aggression, such as the conduct of the public service, the police and the army. When people feel that they are treated in ways that conflict with the principles of courtesy, justice, equity and fairness, or if they are threatened with (mental, verbal, physical) aggression, it can easily provoke counter-aggression. Here racial differences also play a role, such as those between whites and blacks, and ethnic differences among whites and among blacks. Class differences, too, could be a major factor, including (perceived) superiority of the well-to-do and (perceived) inferiority of the marginalised.

At macro-level it is a matter of factors that transcend not only individual people but also individual institutions, because they are interwoven

² M.L. Hoffmann, 'Empathy, Social Cognition, and Moral Education' in *Approaches to Moral Development. New Research and Emerging Themes* (ed. A. Garrod; New York, N.Y.: Teachers College Press, 1993), 157–179.

³ A. Bandura, *Social Foundations of Thought and Action. A Social Cognitive Theory* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1986).

with the very structure of society, whence they influence violence and aggression at the micro- and meso-levels.

Here South Africa is very much a case in point. The aggression, violence and crime that characterise society at large cannot be dissociated from the long history of oppression by the apartheid regime. For decades the broad masses of black fellow beings had to suffer racial discrimination at the hands of a tiny white minority, living their lives under minimal conditions: for them human dignity and human rights – these inalienable prerogatives of human life! – simply did not exist. The only justification for their existence was to ensure, through their blood, sweat and tears, the continued and increasing affluence and luxury of the white colonists who, with the Bible in one hand and a (mental) bludgeon in the other, kept black people under Spartan control. The whole of society was governed by the structure of racism and the violence it bred, all of which developed into the comprehensive power structure of apartheid.⁴ The everyday lives of black people were profoundly affected by this oppressive structure. Government became an institution which practised structural violence on a grand scale. One need only recall the forced removals of people from their homes to desolate areas on a scale of some 3,500,000 people between 1960 and 1982.⁵ Police killings of activists who resisted the evil of apartheid were exposed in all their brutality and horror in confessions to the Truth and Reconciliation Committee chaired by Desmond Tutu. This system of structural violence rested on two pillars: control of the means of production by white people, and the Population Registration Act.⁶ The result was that blacks became an underclass in their own country, living in dreadful poverty under appalling social conditions. After the police massacre at Sharpeville in 1960 many black political leaders fled the country and set up a revolutionary strategy to fight the apartheid government.⁷ Revolutionary violence became part of the South African scene, to which government responded with repressive violence, especially after 1976, the year of the Soweto uprisings.⁸ Millions of black people fell victim to this ongoing political violence.

⁴ A.H. Blom, 'The spiral of Violence in South Africa,' in *Conflict and Quest for Justice*. (ed. K. Nürnberger, J. Tooke & W. Domeris; Pietermaritzburg: Encounter Publications, 1989), 180.

⁵ T.R.H. Davenport, *South Africa: A Modern History* (4th ed. London: MacMillan, 1991), 404.

⁶ Blom, 'Spiral of Violence,' 187.

⁷ Davenport, *South Africa*.

⁸ J. Pampallis, *Foundations of the New South Africa* (Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman, 1991).

Is it surprising that the forces of aggression and violence, controlled and repressed for decades, were unleashed the moment white supremacy, at least in a political sense, was abolished when the first democratic elections were held in 1994? Is it surprising that these forces kept stirring from the moment it dawned on people that, after the euphoria of liberation from political discrimination, liberation from economic, social and cultural discrimination would require the efforts of several generations? Is it surprising that the asymmetrical distribution of land and natural resources, in which the country abounds, should give rise to persistent feelings of fundamental injustice, leading to frustration, resistance and violence?

Of course the violence gripping South Africa at present cannot be attributed simply and solely to macro-factors rooted in the apartheid regime and the revolutionary struggle against that regime, nor to the profound discontent inherent in the current economic, social and cultural systems despite the fact that the present political dispensation is a constitutional, nonracial democracy and the rule of law prevails. There is also the many-headed violence emanating from the profit-motivated criminality of powerful syndicates and their almighty godfathers. This does not detract from the fact that the participation of 'the little guys' who have to do the dirty work of robbery and murder on a day to day basis may stem from profound despair and disillusionment because they, the desperados, will never be able to live a decent life, partly on account of a daunting unemployment rate of somewhere round 40%. Is anything other than a life of pathological violence possible on this underside of society?

In this jumble of types of violence Curle's typology of violence provides some sort of structure. Curle distinguishes between the following forms of violence:

- (1) structural violence, embedded in unjust or grossly unequal social systems involving economic, social and political deprivation and discrimination;
- (2) revolutionary violence aimed at countering structural violence, which in its turn calls forth a reaction;
- (3) institutional or repressive violence, by means of which authorities restrain and oppress opposition by means of the police and the army;
- (4) ideological violence, which justifies structural and institutional violence and hardens into ideology which is imposed (by violent means) on people;
- (5) pathological violence, which is a destructive response to present or past pain, fear and confusion, causing people to inflict on others the hurt they themselves have experienced;

- (6) criminal violence, which ostensibly relates more to individual crimes committed for personal motives or gain and which can be a result of the experiences that led to pathological violence.⁹

The relevance of this typology to South African society is readily discernible. Structural violence, which was there during the apartheid regime, persists in a society which, notwithstanding political transformation, still suffers under intractable systems of economic, social and cultural inequality and injustice. From an economic point of view one finds structural inequality and injustice in the areas of housing, sanitation, health (e.g. HIV/Aids), food, income and employment; from a social point of view in the areas of family life, civil life and recreation; and from a cultural point of view in the areas of primary, secondary and tertiary education, science and art. As mentioned already revolutionary violence was in evidence from the time Sharpeville triggered the armed struggle against apartheid in 1960. It no longer exists, even though white counter-revolutionary, or at any rate reactionary, movements make themselves heard periodically, their aim being to undo the political transformation or at least reverse it somewhat once sufficient support can be recruited – which, fortunately, is not feasible. It is also highly doubtful whether one could speak of institutional or repressive violence at this juncture, certainly if one takes the virtually total repression of the apartheid regime as a criterion. Nonetheless that danger always lurks, especially in the absence of an effective, powerful parliamentary opposition which, together with a truly free press, is essential for the functioning of any democracy, no matter in what country. The *raison d'être* of a democracy is that it institutionalises organised mistrust of the ruling party and of institutions in which that party – legitimately, by virtue of being the ruling party – constitutes the service. The danger of ideological violence, too, constantly lurks in every democracy. The social labelling which parties sometimes apply to each other, the ingroup/outgroup thinking that underlies it and the concomitant images of friends and foes: all these provide a constant breeding ground for ideological violence. Thus one party may brand the ideas and stances of the other party racist, while the latter in its turn casts the same aspersions of racism on the decisions and actions of the former.¹⁰ We have already referred to pathological violence. It consists in

⁹ P.H. Ballard, *A Christian Perspective on Violence* (London: British Council of Churches, 1979), 13.

¹⁰ Cf. R. Eisinga, P. Scheepers & L. van Snippenburg, 'The Standardized Effect of a Compound of Dummy Variables or Polynomial Terms,' *Quality and Quantity* 25 (2001): 103–114.

a pathological if understandable reaction to structural violence in the form of unjust economic, social and cultural systems: it is the violence of futureless desperados. Finally there is criminal violence, on which we need not elaborate. South Africa is not just – to use a neutral term – characterised by it: all South Africans, black and white, are haunted by it.

The title of this article poses the question whether the various forms of violence identified above could trigger a positive attitude towards the values incorporated in human rights: a human rights culture. This may seem a strange question, unless one takes cognisance of the fact we have just mentioned: the violence that besets South Africa is a product of structural inequality and injustice in the economic, social and cultural spheres, all of which provides a breeding ground for pathological violence, nourished by alcohol abuse and drugs, especially with the scourge of HIV/aids afflicting entire populations. From such a perspective one could argue as follows: if one wants to counteract the aforementioned structural violence and pathological violence, put an end to it and prevent its recurrence in the future, then the only possible solution lies in resolute implementation of the human rights enshrined in the bill of rights in the Constitution of 1996. For these sum up the duty of the state, of all its organs and all its citizens, to realise that to which all citizens are entitled, and more particularly the destitute, the poor and the deprived: it is their inalienable, sacred, right!

Can the Christian religion contribute to this? That is the more specific question we seek to answer in this article. If it contributes little or nothing, that spells, in the long term, the end of that religion's social relevance and hence the end of its identity as the Christian religion. For then it is ignoring a fundamental and radical call contained in the gospel: what have you done for these, 'the least of my brethren', and by the same token, what have you, through your service to these 'the least of my brethren', done for me (Matt 25)?

The problem is not new. In recent years the question has been raised repeatedly, both in scientific forums and in ecclesiastic and pastoral circles, whether a Christian approach to violence, a Christian interpretation of violence, could act as a trigger for the promotion of the values embodied in human rights. Also: are these values alive among young people? This last question is definitely important, for they are the future bearers of society and culture.¹¹

Here it is important to find out whether there has been any change, for better or for worse, in recent years and, more specifically, whether

¹¹ Cf. C. Khumalo, 'Worship of the "Almighty" Gun,' *Challenge* 54 (1999): 16–17; W. Ndlovu, 'Christian Youth to Work with Police,' *Challenge* 55 (1999): 18.

the Christian interpretation of violence has contributed more positively or more negatively to an inspiring human rights culture among youths than before.

To gain some insight into this theme we focus on two groups of youths from Christian homes: a group of grade 11 students at private (in this case Catholic and Anglican) schools, and a group of grade 11 students at a number of Afrikaans medium public schools. The reason for this choice is that private schools have always had a multicultural student population and applied a multicultural policy, whereas the Afrikaans medium public schools used to be characterised by the monoculture of the white minority. For the private school students we have questionnaire data from 1995 (538 students) and 2000 (495 students); for the public school students we have similar data from 1996 (283 students) and 2001 (607 students).¹²

Here we look into three questions. The first relates to the way the students interpret violence in Christian terms; the second to their attitudes

¹² This article stems from extensive research in the project, 'Human rights and religion among South African youth' (HRR project), based on data from a questionnaire survey of grade 11 students at private (Catholic and Anglican) schools and Afrikaans medium public schools in the Johannesburg/Pretoria region in 1995/1996, 2000/2001, and (prospectively) 2005. Counter to our original intentions, we abandoned the idea of including students from Soweto schools in our research. This was because several educationists strongly advised us to leave these schools out of our study for security reasons (deemed valid at that time), and for political and methodological reasons. In addition, for the sake of statistically sound commensurability of these year groups, we had to remove from our data set the scores of certain groups of students that we had collected and on which we have reported in earlier publications. Firstly, in this article we confine ourselves to students in the respective year groups who call themselves Christians. This is because, on our instructions, those who have another religion or who indicated that they are not religious refrained from answering questions relating to the theme of salvation. Also, as far as the public school data for 1996 are concerned, we restrict ourselves to those schools from which we were able to obtain data in 2001 as well. This is because a number of public schools' policy on the relation between church and state changed in the five-year period from 1996 to 2001. Whereas in 1996 several English medium private schools and Afrikaans medium public schools could be included in our study, some of these schools no longer allowed us access in 2001 because of the changed approach to this issue on the part of the ministry of education in Gauteng province, where the Johannesburg/Pretoria region is situated. So for the sake of statistically sound commensurability of the 1996 and 2001 data we were unfortunately obliged to remove the scores of English medium private school students and some Afrikaans medium public school students from the 1996 data set.

towards a human rights culture; and the third to the effect of the students' Christian interpretation of violence on their human rights culture. Each of these questions was subdivided as follows: (1a) What similarities and differences are there between the Christian interpretation of violence of private school students in 1995 and 2000 and public school students in 1996 and 2001? (1b) How do students evaluate this Christian interpretation? (2a) What differences and similarities are there between the human rights culture of private school students in 1995 and 2000 and public school students in 1996 and 2001? (2b) How do the students evaluate a human rights culture? (3a) What effect does a Christian interpretation of violence have on the human rights culture among the private school students in 1995 and 2000, and among the public school students in 1996 and 2001? (3b) Apart from a Christian interpretation of violence, what are the principal factors influencing the human rights culture?

Against this background the article is divided into three sections. The first deals with the Christian interpretation of violence by students in their answers to questions 1a and 1b. The second section examines the human rights culture among these pupils in their answers to questions 2a and 2b. In section 3 we look into the positive or negative effect, or the absence of any effect, of a Christian interpretation of violence on a human rights culture in the responses to questions 3a and 3b.

1. Interpretation of Violence as Evil

When doing empirical research it is important to construct an adequate theoretical framework for responsible decision making and for legitimising the decisions made. If not, one runs the risk of simply conducting some sort of market research, unrelated to scientific theorising and even consciously ignoring it. So when we explore what Christian interpretations of violence the various groups of Christian students endorse and whether these have changed in recent years we need to take four steps. First we have to outline an adequate hamartiological framework, hamartiology being the philosophical and theological study of evil and sin (1.1), on the basis of which we can then develop hamartiological codes that are pertinent to our research (1.2). From these we derive the hamartiological codes which we can, on theoretical grounds, assume to be present among our students (1.3). Finally we determine whether this assumption is valid by describing the empirical codes in terms of the data collected by means of questionnaire research (1.4).

1.1 A Hamartiological Frame of Reference

From a phenomenological perspective the key to the hamartiology under consideration is the multi-layered outcry of people when they are confronted with violence: 'But this is wrong!' 'It is unjust!' 'It cannot be!' 'Where does it come from?' 'Why does it happen to us?' 'It must end!' 'How can we stop it?' We have all heard such outcries, whether they concern violent robbery, rape or murder. Sometimes the experience of violence may be so intense and pierce people's emotions so deeply that they are dumbstruck and can utter only wordless cries of horror, outrage and desperation.

In philosophy and theology such an experience of violence and the outrage it provokes is interpreted as an experience of evil because it violates human dignity, human freedom and the justice to which people are entitled. In such experiences the acts of violence confronting us assume the form of evil; they become figures of evil against a broader, deeper background of evil. Such a figure/ground configuration includes various forms of evil as violations of human dignity, on an ascending scale: from threats through misuse of power, torture, rape, child abuse, to murder.¹³ Evil is perversion – 'per-version': an inversion of the order of the good and just life, the common good and common just life. This evil is not merely directly observable in every deed of violence or in violence as such, but also indirectly – by manifesting, revealing evil – represents it. This means that evil is not present in the straightforward sense but is mediated or 're-presented' by violence. Evil transcends each individual act of violence because, while permeating the whole of human existence, it is radical in nature. For this reason Ricoeur, following Kant, calls it 'radical evil'. But violence makes evil indirectly palpable and tangible, while at the same time it is a symptom, an indication, a symbol of evil.

This interpretation of the experience of violence as an experience of evil distinguishes hamartiology from all other scientific approaches to violence, be it that of sociology, psychology, economics, political science or criminology. Neither can it be reduced to any of these social sciences, for the experience of violence as an experience of evil is original, unique, with its own sense and meaning. The social sciences are primarily able to dissect the various aspects of the experience of violence and attribute it to a coherent series of factors so as to construct a conceptual network of violence and study it fruitfully, both quantitatively and qualitatively.

¹³ P. Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 220–221.

But when people are physically confronted with a concrete form of (composite) violence in a physical place, and they are stricken with horror, indignation and grief, it simply does not enter their minds to unravel their experience analytically from a detached, learned outsider perspective. In a sense they lump all the different aspects together – without identifying them – in a single, all-embracing cry, an all-embracing image: ‘This cannot happen!’ ‘This is unjust!’ ‘This is wrong!’ Put differently: they think holistically rather than analytically, simply because the violence hits them squarely in their entire humanity and in everything they are and possess: ‘This is evil!’

In philosophy and theology such an experience of violence as evil is called a contrast experience of evil. From a philosophical perspective Ricoeur writes: ‘On the other hand, the idea of justice is better named *sense* of justice on the fundamental level where we remain here. Sense of justice and of injustice, it would be better to say here, for what we are first aware of is injustice: “Unjust? What injustice!” we cry. And indeed it is in the mode of complaint that we penetrate the field of the just and the unjust.’¹⁴ From a theological perspective Schillebeeckx observes that people cannot accept the senseless situation of violence and suffering, and therefore develop an openness to another situation – that of a better, other world which in fact does not yet exist.¹⁵

Although people afflicted by specific forms of violence are unaware of it, certainly at the moment of violent confrontation, such a contrast experience of violence as evil has two implicit dimensions. The first dimension relates to a negative-positive continuum, implying that there is always a negative aspect of outrage, anger and sorrow and, simultaneously, a positive aspect of hope, longing and expectation that there will be an end to it, however implicit these feelings may be, especially at the actual moment – although later on, on closer reflection, they will come to feature more consciously. Sometimes the negative aspect is more emphatic and sometimes the positive aspect predominates, in both the intensity and the depth of the contrast experience: the more intense and the deeper the wound caused by the violence, the more negative the contrast experience. Time, too, plays a role: it softens the blow, even if the wound never heals. Here it should be noted that the proverb, ‘time heals all

¹⁴ Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, 198.

¹⁵ E. Schillebeeckx, *Mensen als Verhaal van God* (2nd ed. Baarn: Nelissen, 1990), 25–26; cf. R. Jeurissen, *Peace and Religion* (Kampen/Weinheim: Kok/Deutscher Studien Verlag, 1993).

wounds', operates rather as a kind of selective repression of the past than as a recollection that constantly calls up – re-presents – the authentically suffered anguish of the past. The wound never heals, it always leaves scars which will smart and ache from time to time.¹⁶

The second dimension relates to the theory-practice continuum. Its theory pole is associated with the negative aspect that we identified above and entails a twofold cognitive question that demands an answer: where does the violence of evil come from, and, secondly, why does it befall us? It does not mean that an answer is found, or even that one can be found. But that does not put an end to the question of the origin (where does evil come from?) and the meaning (why does it befall us?) of evil. On the contrary, it is constantly preying on the minds of victims of evil and sometimes continues to prey on their minds for a long time. This cognitive quest for meaning is sometimes edged to the sidelines or even pushed out of the conscious mind, as happens in theological critique of the so-called theoretical theodicy. This is not merely a futile exercise that can never succeed; it also does no justice to the nagging despair that underlies the question about the origin and meaning of evil that haunts people.¹⁷ People have to pass through that despair, have to work their way through it (*durch-arbeiten*, as Freud aptly puts it), by endlessly repeating the two questions and gradually assigning them, in effect still unsolved, a place in their consciousness and in their lives, so as to be able to accept them *as* unsolved questions.¹⁸

The practice pole is associated with the positive aspect that we identified above. It entails the impulse, the motivation, the action tendency aimed at combatting evil effectively, putting an end to it and preventing its recurrence. This aspect plays an important role in the so-called practical theodicy, characterised as it is by compassion and solidarity with those that are afflicted by evil, with a view to liberating them from that evil here and now or, if that does not work, at least protecting them against it in the future.¹⁹ This theodicy of solidarity is rooted in the prophetic line of the Old and New Testament writings and in the history of

¹⁶ P. Ricoeur, *La mémoire, l'histoire, l'oubli* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2000).

¹⁷ Cf. H.-G. Janssen, *Das Theodicee-Problem der Neuzeit* (Frankfurt: Lang, 1982).

¹⁸ S. Freud, 'Mourning and Melancholia,' in *Freud on Metapsychology. The Theory of Psychoanalysis* (The Pelican Freud Library Volume 11. New York, N.Y.: Penguin Books, 1984), 245–268.

¹⁹ J.A. van der Ven and H. Vossen, *Suffering: Why for God's Sake? Pastoral Research in Theodicy* (Kampen/Weinheim: Kok/Deutsche Studienverlag, 1995).

Christianity and the church, more specifically in movements and sects that are critical of, or peripheral to, the church, or are entirely non-ecclesiastic. Whereas the theoretical theodicy seeks to answer the unanswerable question about the origin of evil (where does it come from?) and its meaning (why does it befall us?), the practical theodicy tries to respond to it rather than to find a solution. Here the distinction between a (envisaged but unattainable) solution on the hand and an active response on the other is essential.²⁰

This means that we do not opt for either the theoretical or the practical theodicy. Hence we are not following the current trend reflected in theodicy literature which entails a preference for, or even an exclusive choice of, a practical theodicy as epitomised, for example, by Janssen's observation: 'Theodicy is only possible through praxis in solidarity with others, together with its theory, which describes the individual and social solidarity with those who are suffering or who are in need.'²¹

The rest of this article deals at length with both sets of aspects in the contrast experience of evil. In the remainder of this section the negative-theoretical aspect is explored in detail, particularly its association with the insoluble question about the origin (where does it come from?) and meaning (why does it befall us?) of evil: the so-called theoretical theodicy. The positive-practical aspect is explored in the final section, where we examine whether the interpretations of violence in the theoretical theodicy function effectively to trigger – to reiterate the term used in the title – a contribution in the sense of the practical theodicy, more particularly in the perspective of the values embodied in human rights. In short, does a theoretical theodicy trigger a practical theodicy of human rights?

1.2 Hamartiological Semiotics

Against the background sketched in the previous subsection we can now develop a hamartiological structure that can be used to investigate our students' ideas about violence as evil. To this end we employ a semiotic procedure that enables us to distinguish between the surface level of soteriological signs and the deep level of hamartiological codes. The signs are the actual images and metaphors which, we assume, the students use

²⁰ P. Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*.

²¹ Janssen, *Das Theodicee-Problem*, 32; cf. Jeurissen, *Peace and Religion*, 114; A. Houtepen, *In God is Geen Geweld* (Vught: Radboudstichting, 1985); and A. Houtepen, *God Een Open Vraag* (Zoetermeer: Meinema, 1997).

to articulate their conception of the evil of violence. The codes form the basis of the signs, generating and directing them. In addition to the distinction between surface level and deep level that inheres in the difference between signs and codes there is another phenomenon that calls for attention: the plurality of signs and codes. A code can form the basis for a potentially infinite number of signs, known as code/sign plurality. Thus the code 'evil in the primordial past' may give rise to such diverse images as 'violence caused by demonic powers' and 'evil powers controlling the world'. In different contexts, moreover, the same code can cause the same sign to assume different meanings, known as context/code/sign plurality. Thus the code 'present retaliation of evil' may lead to different meanings of a sign like 'God punishes people by means of violence for the evil they committed' when it is used in different contexts, for instance a liberal church context, where the accent is on the immanent connection between evil in the past and evil in the present in the sense of 'evil punishes itself', and a fundamentalist church context, where the emphasis is on God as an absolute, transcendent monarch and a forensic, supreme court judge constantly watching, controlling and judging people, condemning their evil acts, avenging their sins and imposing extreme penalties of eternal retribution and torment.

The distinctive feature of codes is that they are binary, in the sense of two linked opposites based on polar oppositions rather than mere contradictions. Thus one cannot say that God's apocalyptic judgement simultaneously occurs and does not occur in the future, that it is both transcendent and non-transcendent; but one can say that it is both transcendent and immanent.

In practice we developed a hamartiological semiotics of binary codes pertaining to the experience of evil from a philosophical and theological perspective. From each of these codes we inferred a number of items on the assumption that these function as signs reflecting certain aspects of the experience of evil according to the way that code refers to these aspects. The resultant list of items was the instrument we used to determine our students' hamartiological notions.

We developed our semiotic structure from the following binary oppositions: (1) transcendent versus immanent, which refers to God's relation to the evil befalling people, as opposed to forces in human beings and the world that generate evil; (2) past versus present, referring to God's relation to evil in the past or in the present, or humans causing evil in the past or in the present; (3) present versus future, referring to God's relation to evil in the present or in the future, or humans causing evil in the present or in the future. Our assumption is that there are no major

hamartiological structures relevant to our study which cannot be traced to these three binary oppositions or combinations of them. Let us examine these binary codes more closely.²²

Transcendent versus immanent. We have said that when people are confronted with the evil of violence they react with outrage and horror, demanding to know the origin (where does it come from?) and meaning (why does it befall us?) of evil. We have also said that these questions basically remain unanswered and unanswerable. They refer to dark forces in which evil dwells and from which it afflicts us; in short, they refer to the enigma, the aporia of evil. So is it not pointless, we asked ourselves, to pose these questions about the origin and meaning of evil? Should we not rather sidestep them, eliminate them, push them aside, in effect repress them? Is the operation of the repression mechanism described by Freud, which can help us get rid of these insoluble questions, not healthier than to be constantly perturbed by the evil of violence? This is the potentially positive function of the repression mechanism, especially when the assault on personal integrity and the pain of loss are still fresh and intense in the mind; in the long term, however, the traumatic contrast experience and its absolute meaninglessness still have to be digested (*durchgearbeitet*) in all its anguish.

The history of religions, including Christian religion, offers certain symbols and myths that can be used to construct a frame of reference for traumatic contrast experiences: not to answer the questions raised by such experiences, but to assign them a place as insoluble questions and thus to accept them. Thus the tradition of religions generally, including Christian tradition, has symbols and myths of evil as (sexual) defilement and flawing; of a struggle between good and evil powers, spirits and demons, angels and devils; of the fall; of the tragic hero dying heroically, his head held high.²³ The search for the origin and meaning of the experience of violence as evil by means of these and other symbols never ends, but ultimately it discovers that meaning within itself. The search itself becomes meaningful: it constitutes acceptance of the enigma of evil; that is what Ricoeur calls 'rendering the aporia [of evil] productive'.²⁴

²² What follows is based broadly on Jeurissen's study, but in regard to both conceptualisation (see Jeurissen, *Peace and Religion*, figure 2.10, 120) and operationalisation (see Jeurissen, *Peace and Religion*, figure 3.6, 170) we introduce some modifications, which the reader can trace by means of comparison.

²³ P. Ricoeur, *Symbolen van het Kwaad* (Part 2. Rotterdam: Lemniscaat, 1970).

²⁴ P. Ricoeur, *Figuring the Sacred. Religion, Narrative and Imagination* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 1995), 258.

In looking for the origin and meaning of evil one constantly faces the question of where to direct one's search: in the direction of transcendence or in the direction of immanence? If one settles for transcendence, one is at once confronted with a fundamental problem, for how can the following two propositions about God be upheld without contradiction: God is almighty, so why can he not eliminate or at least put a stop to evil? And: God is absolutely good, so how could he make evil happen or at any rate tolerate it? If he is both almighty and good, then in his omnipotence he should make evil disappear because of his goodness. Epicurus articulated this problem perspicaciously as four possibilities: 'Either God wants to remove evil from the world, but cannot. Or he can, but will not. Or he will not and cannot. Or he will and can. If he will and cannot, he is impotent. If he can and will not, he does not love us. If he neither will nor can, he is not the good God. If he will and can – and that is the only thing that befits him as God – then where does evil come from and why does he not take it away?'²⁵ This aporia emerges in each and every transcendent interpretation of evil. It is evident in the despondency and discouragement of people when, ravaged by evil, they kneel before God to view evil in God's perspective. They are left with a feeling of inexplicable contradiction, attributable not only to the nature of evil but also to the nature of God. Hence transcendent interpretations, while not explaining evil satisfactorily, do restore the order disrupted by evil by surrendering to God, whose mystery is more unfathomable than that of evil.²⁶ The origin of evil remains hidden in the nebulousness of God's mystery.

Then should the origin of evil rather be sought in an immanent direction: in human beings? We have already noted that genetic and brain research indicates that human nature does not have an exclusive propensity to evil, that there is far rather a universal, innate inclination to empathy and sympathy that manifests itself at an early stage of child development. Many years earlier Ricoeur already described the radical nature of evil in human existence in philosophical terms, in the sense that factually and historically human life is permeated with evil. But he rejected the notion of original sin, as if evil inhered and originated in human nature. In so doing he deviated from the Kantian doctrine, which in fact stresses the origin of evil in human beings, even though Kant does not claim that

²⁵ *Epicurus* (Zürich: Edition O. Gigon, 1949), 80.

²⁶ E. Schillebeeckx, *Gerechtigheid en Liefde. Genade en Bevrijding* (Bloemendaal: Nelissen, 1977), 665–671.

this solves all the enigmas of evil.²⁷ No, if we must look for the origin of evil in an immanent direction, then we should turn, not to human nature, but – following Ricoeur – to the factual history of the human race which, as we have seen, is characterised by institutions that hold it in thrall nowadays, especially at the meso- and macro-levels.

We shall now describe the two directions – transcendent and immanent – in which one can proceed in search of the origin of evil (where does it come from?) and its meaning (why does it befall us?). We do so by relating both directions to the binary oppositions in time referred to already: past/present and present/future. First we look at the transcendence of evil in the past, in the present, and in the future; then we examine the immanence of evil in the past, in the present, and in the future.

Transcendence of evil in the past. It remains a tricky question whether the evil we experience can be ascribed directly to some act of God in the past without any reference to human evil or guilt – for that is what transcendence of evil in the past implies. This creates a radical dilemma with various aspects. Firstly, if one takes God's monism seriously, implying that nothing exists which does not exist in God and is not encompassed by him, then one must either admit that evil is present in God or deny the existence of evil as such. The first option conflicts with God's love: how can good and evil coexist in God? That would be an internal contradiction. The second alternative refutes the reality of the theme of this article: the factual existence of evil. Secondly, if one assumes a dualism between God on the one hand and evil spirits, powers and demons outside him on the other, one fundamentally denigrates the very nature of God: nothing exists outside God, because God is one and all (*hen kai pan*), as Plato taught, or all in all, as Paul wrote in the first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 15:28).

The dualism which, one way or another, is intrinsic in the transcendence of evil in the past refers to the struggle that originated in the mists of the beginning of creation: a struggle between positive and negative powers, a conflict between powers of light and darkness implicated in a cosmic war. It has its roots in the Zoroastrian religion of ancient Iran that influenced Second Temple Judaism and early Christianity. The transcendent evil principle that directs the powers of darkness is supposed to

²⁷ J.-P. Wils, 'Das Böse angesichts seiner Unsichtbarkeit. Anmerkungen zum "Wesen" des Menschen,' in *On Cultural Ontology. Religion, Philosophy and Culture. Essays in Honor of Wilhelm Dupré* (ed. I. Bocken, et al.; Maastricht: Shaker Publishing, 2002), 31–50.

be responsible for evil in the world, because it created or co-created the world. The world is not (only) God's *creatio ex nihilo*, because since the beginning of the world there were both God and evil.²⁸ Or at least, there was darkness and dust and chaos, and from these God created the world by separating the most important elements and giving them their names, as we read in Genesis.²⁹ But can darkness, dust and chaos be called evil? Is evil nothingness, emptiness? Is its existence in fact non-existing, like the scholastics said? So the question is: what is this dualism we are referring to? Is it an opposition between good and evil, between good and nothingness, or between cosmos and chaos?

In the Jewish and Christian tradition one discerns a certain ambivalence towards dualism. On the one hand the existence of cosmic and demonic powers precludes the notion that God instigated, caused or at least permitted the raw, crude existence of evil and suffering, and supports the theologically sound idea that God is 'pure positivity, the "first" principle of goodness, and in no way the ground of evil'.³⁰ In God there is no negativity, no evil, no violence whatsoever. He only exists gratuity. He is gratuity.³¹ In the book of Job it is God who cares for Job and loves him, whereas Satan puts him to the test, takes his wealth from him and throws him on a scrapheap, despised and hated by his friends.³² Furthermore, the dualistic model not only liberates God from the shadow, darkness and chaos of evil; it also allows for and clarifies the cosmic entanglement of human beings who feel alienated from their inner core, doing what they do not like and liking what they do not do, as Paul put it.³³ In other words, it rescues some major insights of both theology and anthropology. On the other hand, dualism represents an attack on the idea of God as the only transcendent principle from the beginning of the world *tout court*. In God we live and move and have our being, as Paul said in his sermon to the Areopagus in Athens (Acts 17:28).

One may ask, however, whether there really is no evil in God, at least implicitly, when he passes and enacts judgment on evil deeds by evil

²⁸ P. Ricoeur, *Symbolen van het Kwaad*.

²⁹ P. Ricoeur, *Thinking Biblically. Exegetical and Hermeneutical Studies* (Chicago, Ill.: Chicago University Press, 1998).

³⁰ E. Schillebeeckx, *Gerechtigheid en Liefde*, 668.

³¹ Houtepen, *In God is Geen Geweld*; Houtepen, *God Een Open Vraag*, 121–125.

³² E.J. van Wolde, *Meneer en Mevrouw Job: Job in Gesprek met Zijn Vrouw, Zijn Vrienden en God* (Baarn: Ten Have, 1991).

³³ W. Kasper, 'Negativität und Böses,' in *Christlicher Glaube in moderner Gesellschaft* (Freiburg: Herder, 1981).

people, for how can God judge evil if he does not recognise and know it from the inside? Is it true that anyone who denies God's shadowy, dark and chaotic side denies a fundamental dimension of God's very existence?³⁴ Again we come up against the enigma of both God and evil.³⁵

In our research, as will be seen below, we decided that our questionnaire should allow adequate scope for the dualism of God and evil, as well as for the aspect of a judging, retaliating God who must somehow be able to recognise evil from the inside, since otherwise he would not be competent to pass and enact judgment. Here we merely cite, by way of example, one of the items in the questionnaire that expresses this dualism: 'Violence is caused by a demonic higher power which controls the world.'

Transcendence of evil in the present. The violence as evil that confronts people is often interpreted in the sense that present evil is a divinely imposed punishment for evil that we committed in the past. Sending, or at least tolerating, present violence as evil is God's retaliation for the wrong we perpetrated in the past. This past can be conceived of in varying degrees of extension in time, as described by Max Weber.³⁶ It may refer to evil we committed in the recent past or some years or decades ago, or which our parents, our ancestors or some earlier generations perpetrated; or it can merge mythically into the primordial history of humankind and refer to the archetypal figures of the first man and the first woman.

If retaliation relates to evil in the present in the sense of a kind of punishment for evil done by us, our parents, ancestors or past generations, we may speak of divine retaliation in the pure sense. Thus it may be regarded as a projection on to God of a social law described in the Old Testament, the *lex talionis* ('an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth' – Deut. 19:21), but which was rejected by Jesus (Mt. 5:38–42). Here God is a chastising God who punishes his people, treating them as children because of their disobedience, and he does so in order to enhance their happiness and true life. But before this happens and true life can start, people have to suffer for the evil they themselves have committed. On

³⁴ U. Berges, 'Hiob in Lateinamerika,' in *The Book of Job* (ed. W. Beuken; BETL 114; Leuven: Peeters, 1994), 304; J.A. van der Ven, 'De Godsbeelden in Psalm 139: Intersignificatie of Contradictie?' in *Voor de Mens er nog in Geloof* (ed. G. Ackermans, A. Davids, and P. Nissen; Nijmegen: Faculteit der Godgeleerdheid, Katholieke Universiteit, 1998), 80–97.

³⁵ E. Schillebeeckx, *Gerechtigheid en Liefde*.

³⁶ M. Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1980), 314–319.

the basis of this idea of retaliation the same applies to violence, as reflected by one of the items in our questionnaire: 'God punishes people through violence for the evil they committed.'

If the relation between present evil and violence in the past is couched in mythical terms so that the past merges into primordial history or the archetypal figures of the first human couple, then retaliation itself assumes mythical features. Then it is no longer retaliation in the pure sense with a more or less interpretively demonstrable cause and a more or less interpretively demonstrable effect, but a retaliation transcending space and time, rendered most adequately with the term 'absolute condemnation'. In this divine condemnation evil is interpreted as the result of the mythical fall of the first human beings, to which God reacted with banishment from paradise and eternal punishment that endures to this day. As Drewermann puts it: 'Human life in its present form is lived under God's judgement, it is an existence of banishment, expulsion and homelessness'.³⁷ We live in a paradise lost with absolutely no chance of regaining it. There is no paradise to be regained. It is night, and the sun will never rise again. In our questionnaire we included, in the set of items for the retaliation model, one item from the submodel of condemnation, which reads: 'Violence is the result of a curse which God laid on humankind in the beginning.'

The retaliation model and the submodel of condemnation have a twofold characteristic in common, namely God's sadism and human beings' masochism.³⁸ God is portrayed as the absolute sovereign who commands, directs, administers, knows and foresees everything, and demands obedience. Humans are portrayed as beings that have only one obligation: to kneel down, bow their heads, listen silently, acquiesce patiently, accept what happens, surrender and submit. Whereas God is honoured, praised, prayed to and obeyed, humans are humiliated and denied or, even worse, humiliate themselves. In a way these models 'solve' the problem of evil and suffering by presenting them as self-inflicted: they are given meaning by making people meaningless to themselves; they allow God esteem by depriving people of their self-esteem.³⁹

The idea of original sin may be seen as a mythical elaboration on the submodel of condemnation. It amplifies the notion of condemnation, in

³⁷ E. Drewermann, *Strukturen des Bösen. I. Die Jahwistische Urgeschichte in exegetischer Sicht* (München: Schöningh, 1977), 87.

³⁸ P. Berger, *Zur Dialektik von Religion und Gesellschaft* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1973).

³⁹ Cf. J.A. van der Ven, *Practical Theology. An Empirical Approach* (Kampen: Kok, 1993), 157–224.

that God's absolute condemnation and rejection of the mythical first man and woman entail universal condemnation and rejection of the entire human race generated by this couple. All generations after them will be branded forever by God's disapprobation and contempt, without exception and for all time. Through Augustine's interpretation, which has pervaded religious thinking and theology right up to the 21st century, the notion of original sin acquired a secondary connotation. The transmission of the absolute evil of God's condemnation from one human being and one generation to another occurs through sexual intercourse. As a result an absolute, universal condemnation complex has prevailed ever since, composed of the following elements: the existence of a mythical human couple in primordial history; God's absolute condemnation and rejection of this couple because they erred by eating the mythical fruit; the sexual act through which evil and divine condemnation are passed on from one generation to the next; and finally the sexual act itself, tinged with sin, and disapproval of sexual lust. This condemnation complex has had a disastrous effect on proclamation and the religious life of innumerable generations of Christians, cowed as they have been by fear and guilt imposed by so-called pastoral strategy in both Catholic and Protestant churches since at least the 12th century up to the present day.⁴⁰ To many theologians this was good reason to scrap the notion of original sin from the theological dictionary, as Tillich for one proposed.⁴¹ We felt, however, that we had to waive Tillich's suggestion, not because we are not convinced of the adverse implications, both theologically and pastorally, of the concept of original sin, nor because we underestimate its detrimental effects on psychological health and a well-balanced religious life, but because we were curious to find out if this myth is still alive in the minds of our students and how it influences their human rights culture. Hence in the set of items for the retaliation model, in conjunction with the submodel of condemnation, we included an item that refers to original sin, as follows: 'Violence stems from original sin, which is inherited by every new generation.'

⁴⁰ J. Delumeau, *Le catholicisme entre Luther et Voltaire* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1971); J. Delumeau, *Peur en Occident: Une cité assiégée* (Paris: Fayard, 1978); and J. Delumeau, *Le péché et la peur. La culpabilisation en Occident (XIII-XVIII siècles)* (Paris: Fayard, 1983); J.A. van der Ven, 'De Toekomst van Religie in Europa,' *Tijdschrift voor Theologie* 43, no. 1 (2003): 5-15.

⁴¹ P. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 2 (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1957).

Transcendence of evil in the future. The experience of evil that confronts people can be so overwhelming that any reference to its origin in the struggle between good and evil powers in primordial history no longer helps. The experience may be so profound that even an explanation in terms of divine retaliation and condemnation because of evil perpetrated by humans in the recent, remote or primordial past is unavailing. When this happens people turn their attention wholly and exclusively to the future. When they experience an acute crisis which they cannot control and from which they cannot easily escape, they usually project some ideal situation into the future. This future situation can only happen after a cataclysmic disaster in which God himself destroys what they consider to be evil. We call this the apocalyptic model. Focal to this model is the idea of an absolute, universal catastrophe through which all evil will disappear. It is the last evil to defeat evil, the last violence to defeat violence, the last death to defeat death. Through this cataclysm God's universal, final judgment is enacted, his final act, his last intervention. And this divine cosmic drama, in which good and evil powers meet in a final confrontation, will ultimately bring the total victory of good and the total downfall of evil. This perspective not only has cognitive dimensions, but also and more especially functions as an emotional message, in that it brings hope to the hopeless, confidence to those who have lost confidence and comfort to the despondent. This is because several apocalyptic myths contain the expectation that a faithful few will survive the cosmic battle and be saved. Notwithstanding the negative impulses arising from the apocalyptic battlefield where Michael and the other angels fight the red dragon, the ultimate message is one of hope. The apocalyptic struggle will put an end to the utter hopelessness that evil inflicts on people and will establish a new Jerusalem, a new heaven and a new earth.⁴² Although apocalyptic thinking seems to have become marginalised in present-day theology, several authors still devote attention to it, mainly because they feel it expresses the despairs and hopes of people confronted with huge social crises and also epitomises an intrinsic aspect of the Christian message that should not be lost, namely that God's history with humans will bring humankind's violent and evil history to a salvific end.⁴³

⁴² A. van Schaik, *De Openbaring van Johannes* (Roermond: Romen, 1976).

⁴³ J.B. Metz, *Glaube in Geschichte und Gesellschaft* (Mainz: Grünewald, 1977); H. Häring, "Uitschreuwen wat er Gaande Is": Over de Relevantie van Eschatologie en Apokalyptiek,' *Tijdschrift voor Theologie* 36, no. 3 (1996): 246-269; H. Haker, 'Compassie als Wereldprogramma van het Christendom?' *Concilium* 37, no. 4 (2001): 55-71.

Accordingly we included some items on these lines in our questionnaire, such as the following: 'One day God will exterminate all evil in this world by means of a final war.'

Having described three models of the transcendence of evil (transcendence of evil in the past, in the present and in the future), we shall now describe three models of the immanence of evil encountered in Christian thinking.

Immanence of evil in the past. This model relates to people's experience of the evil of violence which they attribute to misdoings and omissions by groups of individuals, communities and whole collectivities in both the recent and the remote past that continue to influence and affect the human situation. The question is this: how can wrongs perpetrated in the past continue to affect the present generation, right up to this day? What mechanisms effect this transmission? In contrast to the traditional doctrine of original sin, the answer is not that evil is inherited by each generation through sexual intercourse, but that it is passed on through the influence that people exert on each other horizontally by the example they set, and the influence they exert vertically on successive generations by the example they set. The former happens synchronically, the latter diachronically, mainly through each outgoing generation's socialisation, upbringing and education of the new generation. In both cases behavioural models have a regulatory effect: not only is the other's or others' behaviour observed but also the negative norms and values underlying that behaviour. Inasmuch as these norms and values are profitable, or at any rate limit loss – irrespective of the nature of such loss or profit: physical, psychological, social, cultural, or whatever – they will be adopted and will determine the recipients' behaviour, in such a way they are gradually internalised and interiorised.⁴⁴ This is how evil is transmitted: synchronically within generations and diachronically between generations. The two forms of transmission together form what Schoonenberg calls the world or evil or the world of sin. Evil is transmitted through participation in the world of sin and evil by every individual person, every group of people and every generation: that is where evil comes from and how it befalls us.⁴⁵ One could also call it socio-historical evil or socio-cultural sin.⁴⁶ From this perspective our questionnaire asked students to

⁴⁴ Cf. Bandura, *Social Foundations*, 335–389.

⁴⁵ P. Schoonenberg, *Het Geloof van ons Doopsel*. Part 4. *De Macht der Zonde* (Den Bosch: Malmberg, 1962).

⁴⁶ R. Jeurissen, *Peace and Religion*, 120.

respond to the following item: 'There is violence because evil which existed in the world in the past still has a hold on humankind today.'

Immanence of evil in the present. We have now seen one aspect of the immanence of evil, namely that the world of evil, the world of sin has both a diachronic and a synchronic dimension of meaning. Here we shall look more closely at some institutional aspects of the synchronic dimension. To put it briefly: the evil of violence to which people are subjected and which breaks their spirits, sometimes threatening to engulf them completely, stems from the institutions in which they are – perforce – situated. That is the immanence of evil in the present. Rousseau would have said: in themselves human beings are good, only the institutions that surround them and of which they are part contaminate them, enslave them, harm them, may even destroy them.

The concept in itself is remarkable. After all, ideally and in principle institutions embody or should embody the twofold idea that people belong together and that they cooperate for the very reason that they belong together. Everybody should get their share on the basis of proportional equality, 'their share' referring to the sharing of both rights and obligations, both advantages and disadvantages.⁴⁷ Inasmuch as institutions are characterised by power – and, like all interpersonal processes, they are thus characterised – that power, ideally and in principle, is not power-over but power-in-common, on the basis that institutions form the structure of living and acting together. People do not live and act alone, they do so together; and it happens in institutions, ideally and in principle not on the basis of constraining rules but of the bond of common mores. It is this power-in-common that unites people in their living and acting in concert, to borrow Hanna Arendt's lovely expression: it is a power of all, which ensures that the power relations between people are nonhierarchical and non-instrumental, whereas power-over implies domination, which leads to violence.⁴⁸ Here one should note the Roman maxim: '*potestas in populo, autoritas in senatu*' ('power rests in the people, authority in the senate' – Arendt).⁴⁹ The principle that should, in principle and ideally, govern institutional life and behaviour is justice: 'justice is the first virtue of social institutions, as truth is of systems of thought'.⁵⁰

But the reality is different. This happens because people's institutional relations are not characterised by an I/you relationship but by an I/he

⁴⁷ P. Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, 200.

⁴⁸ Hanna Arendt, *Crisis of the Republic* (New York, N.Y.: Harcourt, 1972).

⁴⁹ Hanna Arendt, *The Human Condition* (New York, N.Y.: Harcourt, 1983).

⁵⁰ J. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 3.

relationship, an I/she relationship or an I/they relationship. Institutions are anonymous; they are third party institutions as Ricoeur puts it. Both the common initiative and the sharing of rights and obligations, of advantages and disadvantages that express the commonality of this initiative actually have 'the status of something forgotten', which makes them invisible. This in turn makes institutions susceptible to domination, alienation and violence. In fact, justice more often seems to be lacking and injustice, coupled with violence, prevails.⁵¹ Max Weber holds that state-based or state-affiliated institutions separate the governors from the governed. He defines the state in terms of humans dominating humans on the basis of violence that is supposed to be legitimate.⁵²

As we said at the beginning, the violence embodied in institutions is structural inasmuch as it relates to intractable economic, social and cultural institutions that prevent people from actualising themselves and from realising their full potential – that is the definition of structural violence according to the polemologist Galtung: the structural conditions that oblige people to function below their own potential.⁵³ In addition, as mentioned already, there is ideological violence which, Weber maintains, legitimises structural violence by presenting it as plausible, meaningful, just and even good. The only way out of this muddle is to analyse and criticise the ideology in terms of a utopia that is considered important and valuable and to which one subscribes, whilst realising that ideology and utopia are dialectically linked and that a utopia can also assume ideological forms.⁵⁴ Total freedom and independence from any ideology whatever is . . . utopia. Hence critique of ideology is always embedded in a hermeneutics of suspicion; an ongoing task which should subject itself at all times to the sharp tool of ideological criticism. In other words, the evil of ideological violence is ineradicable, which does not mean that there are not degrees of ideological violence in the sense of more or less violence.

In the questionnaire items of our survey research we included two submodels in the institutional violence model: those of structural violence and ideological violence. These we focussed on what a former president of the USA, Dwight D. Eisenhower, called the industrial-military complex. The item relating to the submodel of structural violence in this

⁵¹ P. Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, 194–197.

⁵² M. Weber, *Gesammelte politische Schriften* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1958), 533–548.

⁵³ J. Galtung, 'Violence, Peace and Peace Research,' *Journal of Peace Research* 6 (1969): 167–191.

⁵⁴ P. Ricoeur, *Ideology, Utopia and Faith* (Berkeley, Calif.: The Center for Hermeneutical Studies in Hellenistic and Modern Culture, 1976).

complex reads as follows: 'Mankind is brought to violence by the demonic power of weapons'; the item relating to the submodel of ideological violence reads: 'Violence happens because nowadays belief in security through weapons has been perverted into idolatry.'

Immanence of evil in the future. As in our description of the transcendent origin of evil in the future, we note that people may be so acutely, intensely and profoundly affected by the evil of violence and may feel themselves afflicted in body and soul to such an extent that they reject any reference to the origin of evil in the past or the present and turn exclusively to the future. Only this future will not be the glow of a fervently awaited dawn but of an all-annihilating final conflict. In contrast to the idea of divine apocalypse, the immanent apocalyptic model does not refer to God who will end all evil by fighting one last battle with the demonic powers in order to conquer and destroy them, thus giving people hope and confidence. The immanent apocalyptic model offers only absolute negativity, ultimate disaster: universal death. It expresses people's fear that the planet will be destroyed by calamities caused by blind demographic, ecological, economic, political and military processes. The seemingly widespread demoralisation evident in all statistics on violence supports this fear. There will be a Last Judgment that will call each and everyone to account. It will be the end of history, of humankind and of the world. It has no plan, no goal, no meaning, no relevance whatsoever. The all-annihilating catastrophe will bring nothing but total destruction. 'This is the way,' Jeurissen says, 'in which the German author Enzensberger evoked the inevitability of the end of the world in the image of the Titanic driven against the iceberg by the invisible hand of recklessness, carelessness and fate. The ship and the iceberg symbolise the uncontrollable character of the fatal course of history.'⁵⁵ In our survey questionnaire we inserted only one item on this immanent apocalypse, omitting any reference to the divine: 'There is so much evil in the structures of this world that an all-annihilating war is inevitable.'

1.3 Theoretical Codes

Against the background of the bipolar oppositions between transcendence and immanence, past and present, and present and future, from which we developed the three forms of transcendence of evil and the three forms of immanence of evil, we briefly summarise the following six theoretical codes:

⁵⁵ Jeurissen, *Peace and Religion*, 112.

Table 1. Theoretical codes

Transcendence of evil

1. transcendence of evil in the past: primordial dualism (3,7,15)
2. transcendence of evil in the present: divine retaliation (1,10,12,13)
3. transcendence of evil in the future: divine apocalypse (6,11)

Immanence of evil

4. immanence of evil in the past: intergeneration transmission (5,14)
5. immanence of evil in the present: institutional transmission (2,4,9)
6. immanence of evil in the future: all-annihilating catastrophe (8)

We assumed that these six theoretical codes would be present in our students' minds. We called them theoretical codes because they were compiled and formulated on theoretical grounds. They are operationalised in 15 items altogether, which – in order to approximate the instrument developed by Jeurissen⁵⁶ as closely as possible for the sake of commensurability – are distributed somewhat unevenly over the codes, as indicated in brackets after each code in the foregoing table.

1.4 Empirical Codes

To analyse students' scores on the 15 items we used factor analysis. This method enables one to determine the correlations between items so as to classify them in empirical groups. The premise of factor analysis is that correlations between items are attributable to one or more underlying phenomena known as factors. With due caution one could say that what is called a factor in the procedure of factor analysis parallels what is called a code in the semiotic procedure. In other words, the semiotic theoretical structure that we developed is comparable to the semiotic empirical structure found through factor analysis.

We conducted an overall factor analysis of the scores of the private school students in the 1995 survey. For the sake of the commensurability of the 1995 data with those of 1996, 2000 and 2001 we took the factor structures of the 1995 survey as our premise for scale construction, and for the surveys in the other three years we merely determined the statistical reliability of the scales thus constructed. As in the factor analy-

⁵⁶ Jeurissen, *Peace and Religion*.

ses conducted in other thematic domains in the Human Rights and Religion Project, certain major and minor discrepancies between theoretical and empirical codes emerged in this case as well.⁵⁷ Thus code 6, relating to immanence of evil in the future and referring to an all-annihilating catastrophe, fell away because only one such item was available, which had to be excluded from the factor analysis for statistical reasons.

Another point we want to mention explicitly concerns a detail – albeit an interesting one – pertaining to the one item on original sin that we included in the questionnaire. On the theoretical grounds outlined above we slotted this item into the transcendence of evil group under the model of divine retaliation, in conjunction with the submodel of divine condemnation. Factor analysis showed, however, that our students placed this item in the immanence of evil group rather than the transcendence of evil group, categorising it in the intergeneration model. This is remarkable. Original sin certainly pertains to the relation between generations; that is indisputable. But the students manifestly disregarded the retaliative and condemnatory interaction between God and human beings in primordial time, as well as the mythical configuration of the first man and the first woman, paradise, the tree of life, the serpent, the apple, the banishment from paradise, the shame at their nakedness, the toil in blood, sweat and tears that awaited them, and, finally, the refigurative meaning implicit in this configuration. Ricoeur eloquently describes this refigurative meaning: ‘In one sense, it does take up one fundamental aspect of the experience of evil, namely, the both individual and communal sense of human impotence in the face of the demonic power of evil already there, long before any bad initiative may be assigned to some deliberate intention.’⁵⁸ But our students saw original sin not as a mythical story but as a quasi-concept and interpreted it so literally and artificially that it struck them as an apparently rational explanation of intergeneration transmission.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ For the differences between theoretical and empirical codes see e.g., J.A. van der Ven, J.S. Dreyer & H.J.C. Pieterse, ‘Human rights in the name of God?’ *Religion and Theology* 8, no. 1&2 (2001): 165–206, here 181–186.

⁵⁸ Ricoeur, *Figuring the Sacred*, 254; cf. Ricoeur, *Symbolen van het Kwaad*.

⁵⁹ Cf. Ricoeur, *Figuring the Sacred*, 254.

Table 2. Empirical codes

	private 1995 ⁶⁰	public 1996	private 2000	public 2001	Total
<i>Transcendence of evil</i>					
1. in the past: primordial dualism	2.6	2.8	2.4	2.7	2.6
2. in the present: divine retaliation	2.2	2.4	1.9	2.4	2.2
3. in the future: divine apocalypse	2.9	3.2	2.8	3.2	3.0
<i>Immanence of evil</i>					
4. in the past: intergeneration transmission	3.2	3.4	3.1	3.4	3.3
5. in the present: institutional transmission	2.2	3.2	3.2	3.3	3.0

Table 2 gives the empirical codes, plus the average scores for 1995 and 2000 (private schools) and 1996 and 2001 (public schools), the last column showing the combined average scores of the four year groups. Comparing these scores enables us to answer the following question: what similarities and differences are there between the interpretation of violence as evil by private school students in 1995 and 2000 and by public school students in 1996 and 2001? First we made a synchronic comparison between private school students in 1995 and public school students in 1996, and then between private school students in 2000 and public school students in 2001. Then we made a diachronic comparison between private school students in 1995 and 2000, followed by one between public school students in 1996 and 2001. In these comparisons we applied a difference score of 0.5 or more as a criterion of relevance on the five-point scale on which the scores are based.

The answer to question 1a in the introduction to this article is as follows. What is remarkable is that the synchronic comparison between 1995 and 1996 yielded only one relevant difference according to the aforementioned criterion. It relates to the immanence of evil in the present (institutional transmission of evil): whereas the private school students reject this model, those at Afrikaans medium public schools agree with it to some extent.⁶¹ In the comparison between 2000 and 2001, too, there

⁶⁰ In contrast to an earlier article by Van der Ven & Pieterse (1998) on the 1995 student population, which included non-Christian students, this article, for reasons explained in note 1, is confined to Christian students. That explains the difference in average scores in the 1998 article and this one.

⁶¹ We interpret these average scores as follows: 1.00–1.79: total disagreement; 1.80–2.59: disagreement; 2.60–3.39: ambivalence (2.60–2.99: negative ambivalence; 3.00–3.39: positive ambivalence); 3.40–4.19: agreement; 4.20–5.0: full agreement.

is only one relevant difference, namely as regards the transcendence of evil in the present (divine retaliation): here private school students score even lower than those at public schools. The scores of the diachronic comparison between private school students for 1995 and 2000 reveal only one difference, albeit a highly relevant one. It relates to the immanence of evil in the present (i.e. institutional transmission): five years later their attitude has changed from rejection to some sort of agreement. The comparison between the scores of public school students in 1996 and 2001 produced no relevant differences.

That brings us to question 1b: how do students evaluate the interpretation of violence as evil? On the whole the picture that emerges is differentiated. The scores indicate that the students clearly agree more with the immanent interpretation of violence as evil than with the transcendent interpretation: all of them subscribe more or less to intergenerational and institutional transmission of evil, whereas they reject or are ambivalent towards the primordial struggle between divine and demonic powers and towards divine retaliation. There is just one exception: public school students agree to some extent with the divine apocalypse.

2. *Towards a Human Rights Culture*

After completing our research into our students' interpretation of violence as evil we turned to the next two questions posed in the introduction to this article. These relate to students as bearers of a human rights culture. Are there similarities and differences in this respect between private school students and those at Afrikaans medium public schools in 1995, 1996, 2000 and 2001? And how do they evaluate a human rights culture?

The problem was to determine on which human rights we should focus to discover our students' human rights culture. Since we have elaborated on this in detail elsewhere, we merely summarise the conclusions of our earlier study.⁶²

According to a relatively longstanding tradition human rights can be divided into three generations: blue rights, red rights and people's rights. Blue rights have a relatively liberal background, as they stem from the

⁶² See J.A. van der Ven, J.S. Dreyer and H.J.C. Pieterse, 'Attitudes Towards Human Rights Among South African Youth,' *Religion and Theology* 7, no. 2 (2000): 111-141; J.A. van der Ven, J.S. Dreyer and H.J.C. Pieterse, 'Social Location of Attitudes Towards Human Rights Among South African Youth,' *Religion and Theology* 7, no. 3 (2000): 249-283.

Anglo-Saxon world; red rights tend to have a social-democratic character; and people's rights emerged mainly from the concern of developing countries. Following Michael Haas, who, after the example of Charles Humana's *World Human Rights Guide*, empirically researched the one-dimensional or multidimensional character of human rights, we distinguish between three kinds of human rights within the first generation of blue rights: civil, political and judicial rights. Again following Haas, we treat the second generation, red rights, as a single group entitled socioeconomic rights. Finally we add environmental rights as an example of the third generation, people's rights.⁶³ Thus we speak of a multidimensional human rights culture: a civil rights culture, a political rights culture, a judicial rights culture, a socioeconomic rights culture, and an environmental rights culture.

As is evident in table 3, we differentiate six rights in the civil rights culture (freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, right to privacy, freedom of lifestyle, freedom of religion); three in the political rights culture (rejection of political oppression, political action, political interest); and four in the environmental rights culture (environmental action, appreciation, sacrifice, concern). Together with the judicial rights culture and the socioeconomic rights culture, this amounts to five human rights culture categories, giving us a total of 15 rights.

Having taken this decision, we asked our students to respond to various lists of items which should be seen as an operationalisation of the five human rights culture categories that we identified.⁶⁴ We conducted a number of statistical analyses on the private school students' responses in 1995 in order to construct adequate scales to measure their involvement in the various dimensions of the human rights culture.

⁶³ M. Haas, *Improving Human Rights* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1994).

⁶⁴ For the civil and judicial rights culture we used items from the measuring instrument by H. McClosky and J. Zaller (*The American Ethos. Public Attitudes Toward Capitalism and Democracy* [Cambridge, Mass. 1984], table 7.8); for the political rights culture we used items from the Core Questionnaire 'Democratisation in Eastern Europe' by the Erasmus Foundation for Democracy and from the Nijmegen Program 'Sociaal-Culturele Ontwikkelingen in Nederland (SOCON)' by A. Felling, J. Peters and P. Scheepers (*Individual Changes in the Netherlands* [Steinmetz Archief: Amsterdam 1992]); for the socio-economic rights culture we used items from the International Social Survey Program (ISSP); and for the environmental rights culture we used items from the British social attitudes source book (L. Brook et al., *British Social Attitudes* [Harts: Dartmouth, 1992]; S2) and the SOCON Survey.

For the sake of the commensurability of the 1995 data with those from 1996, 2000 and 2001 we again took the scales constructed for the 1995 study as our premise, and in the other three years we confined ourselves to determining the statistical reliability of the relevant scales.

On the basis of table 3 we first made a synchronic comparison between private school students in 1995 and public school students in 1996, followed by a comparison between private school students in 2000 and public school students in 2001. Next we made a diachronic comparison between private school students in 1995 and 2000, and then between public school students in 1996 and 2001. Again we used a difference score of 0.5 or more as our criterion of relevance. The last column gives the combined average scores for all year groups.

In the synchronic comparison for 1995 and 1996 only one human right met the criterion of relevance, namely rejection of political oppression: private school students reject political oppression, whereas public school students accept it.

Table 3. Human rights culture

	private 1995	public 1996	private 2000	public 2001	total
<i>Civil rights culture</i>					
freedom of speech	3.3	2.9	3.7	2.9	3.2
freedom of the press	2.7	2.5	2.9	2.3	2.6
freedom of assembly	2.9	2.7	2.7	2.4	2.7
right to privacy	2.8	2.4	2.8	2.3	2.6
freedom of lifestyle	3.3	2.9	3.3	2.7	3.1
freedom of religion	1.5	1.4	1.6	1.4	1.5
<i>Political rights culture</i>					
rejection of political oppression	3.2	2.5	3.3	2.5	2.9
political action	1.6	1.8	1.5	1.8	1.7
political interest	3.3	2.9	3.1	2.9	3.1
<i>Judicial rights culture</i>					
right of due process	2.2	2.4	2.2	2.1	2.2
<i>Socioeconomic rights culture</i>					
socioeconomic equality	4.1	3.9	4.1	4.0	4.0
<i>Environmental rights culture</i>					
environmental action	3.5	3.4	3.5	3.5	3.5
environmental appreciation	4.1	3.9	4.1	3.9	4.0
environmental sacrifice	3.7	3.6	3.8	3.7	3.7
environmental concern	4.7	4.7	4.8	4.7	4.7

The comparison between 2000 and 2001 revealed that private and public school students differ in regard to five human rights: the latter clearly value freedom of speech, the press, privacy, and lifestyle less than the former, and they accept political oppression, whereas private school students reject it. It is noteworthy that today these blue rights, which have a manifestly white historical background and evolution, are endorsed more strongly by students at multicultural private schools than by those at predominantly white, Afrikaans medium public schools. Naturally the apartheid and post-apartheid eras play a crucial role in this regard.

In the diachronic comparison between 1995 and 2000 there were no relevant differences. The same applies to the 1996/2001 comparison.

These data enable us to answer question 2a in the introduction to this article: in 1995/1996 there was only one demonstrable difference – and then only partly relevant, partly irrelevant – between private school and Afrikaans medium public school students in regard to the aforementioned blue rights, which difference has become more pronounced over the past five years. Here we are referring to a human rights culture in regard to freedom of speech, the press, privacy, lifestyle, and rejection of political oppression.

On the other hand students from both types of schools obtained similar scores in the area of the judicial, socioeconomic and environmental rights culture. Here it is noteworthy that scores on the socioeconomic rights culture are uniformly positive. The same applies to the environmental rights culture. Scores on environmental concern are extremely high among students at both types of schools.

To answer question 2b (how do students evaluate the human rights culture?) we turn to the last column in table 3. Students are negatively ambivalent towards the civil rights culture (average: 2.6); they are negatively ambivalent towards the political rights culture as well (average: 2.6); towards the judicial rights culture they are clearly negative (2.2); towards the socioeconomic rights culture they are clearly positive (average 4.0); and they are equally positive towards the environmental rights culture (average: 4.0). Overall we can say that our students manifestly have greater affinity with the second and third generation human rights culture than with the blue rights culture.

One finding that is cause for concern on any time scale if it were to persist is the negative scores, among students at both types of schools, in the area of the judicial rights culture (average: 2.3). In a country like South Africa, which by and large has an adequately functioning judicial system that keeps the population together and enables the various population groups to enforce the legally required recognition of their dignity and rights, 'faith' in this system is vitally important. The negative scores

and the decline among the public school year groups between 1995 and 2001, as may be cautiously inferred from the data, indicate that there is no question of any such 'faith'.⁶⁵

Another finding that must certainly be a cause of concern on any time scale if it were to persist is the extremely negative score on freedom of religion. To some extent it is explicable. In the first place, South Africa is a religious country and most people take religion for granted on a day to day basis, hence the students may have experienced freedom of religion as an irrelevant theme. Secondly, the items in which this human right was operationalised may well have been phrased a bit radically from the students' point of view, causing them to assign it a low score. One of these items read: 'prayers at public schools should be forbidden'. Another read: 'the freedom of atheists to make fun of God and religion is a legally protected right'. Although this last item admittedly lacks sensitivity, in itself it is an adequate operationalisation of the right to religious freedom, which would apply equally to an item, not included in the questionnaire, which could have read: 'making fun of the godlessness of atheists is a legally protected right'. The reason why the extremely negative score on freedom of religion is cause for concern is that, historically, this human right – whose codification marked the end of the feudal marriage between throne and altar and ushered in democracy – provided the basis for the origin and development of all the other human rights.⁶⁶ That this fact is not just historical but remains topical to this day is evident in the fundamental significance of the separation between church and state in the debate on political Islamic fundamentalism that is raging around the world. It is not merely freedom of religion that is at issue, moreover, but also freedom within religion, including Christian religion.

3. The Evil of Violence and a Human Rights Culture

Having dealt with our students' interpretation of violence and their affinity with the human rights culture separately, in this final section we relate

⁶⁵ Cf. D. Pessers, 'Liefde, solidariteit en recht, Een interdisciplinair onderzoek naar het wederkerigheidsbeginsel' (PhD. diss., University of Amsterdam, 1999); cf. J.S. Dreyer, H.J.C. Pieterse, and J.A. van der Ven, 'Religious and Human Rights Attitudes among South African Youth in a Time of Transformation,' in *Religion, Morality and Transformation* (ed. F.A. Swanepoel; Pretoria, Unisa 2001), 103–128, here 112, 117.

⁶⁶ R.N. Bellah, 'Is There a Common American Culture,' *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 66, no. 3 (1998): 613–626.

the two themes to each other. Our question is: does their interpretation of violence as evil have a positive or a negative effect on their human rights culture, and if so, how great is that effect? Or does it have no effect at all? In other words, does the interpretation of violence act as a trigger – as we put it in the title of this article – for the students' human rights culture? To this end we examine if and how the various year groups at private and public schools differ in regard to this effect.

3.1 Effect of Violence as Evil on Human Rights Culture: Non-Controlled

To determine this effect we conducted a large number of regression analyses: one for each of the 15 human rights for each of the four year groups: 1995, 1996, 2000 and 2001 – hence 60 analyses altogether. Each regression analysis yielded one or more predictions: it indicated which hamartiological code(s) has predictive value for students' attitudes towards a particular human right. Predictive value could be positive, negative or nonexistent.

Prediction should not be confused with causation. Only if a prediction is formulated in a theoretically based hypothesis may it be regarded as at least indicative of causation – that is to say, as indicating that the relevant hamartiological code has at least some effect on the students' human rights culture.⁶⁷ In this article such a hypothesis is contained in the concept of the contrast experience that was described above. As we explained, the contrast experience has both a negative cognitive dimension and a positive practical dimension. Our hypothesis is that the practical positive dimension causes the contrast experience – in this case of the evil of violence – to trigger a practical positive input for the sake of a better society, here defined in terms of the students' human rights culture.

First we simply examine the effects of the hamartiological codes on the human rights culture, non-controlled, as it is known in research methodology, for population characteristics (table 4). Then we shall control for these population characteristics (table 5).

Table 4 contains the necessary information. The horizontal axis gives the various year groups that were studied: students at private schools (Anglican and Catholic) in 1995, at (Afrikaans medium) public schools in 1996, at private schools in 2000 and at public schools in 2001.

⁶⁷ For the asymmetry between prediction and causation, see: P. Ricoeur, *Main Trends in Philosophy* (New York, N.Y./London: Holmes & Meier 1979), 64. It is possible to 'leap' from one to the other: 'We need not be too unhappy about making the intellectual leap to a causal interpretation' (H.M. Blalock, *Social Statistics* [rev. 2nd ed. McGraw-Hill: Tokyo, 1979], 469).

The vertical axis shows the five hamartiological codes encountered in our empirical study: code 1: transcendence of evil in the past: primordial dualism; code 2: transcendence of evil in the present: divine retaliation; code 3: transcendence of evil in the future: divine apocalypse; code 4: immanence of evil in the past: intergeneration transmission; and lastly, code 5: immanence of evil in the present: institutional transmission.

The figures in the cells indicate the number of times the particular hamartiological code had a positive or negative predictive value in regard to a human rights culture, hence a positive or negative effect on it.

Table 4. Effect of hamartiological codes on human rights, non-controlled (numbers betas)

	1995		1996		2000		2001		total	
	private pos.	neg.	public pos.	neg.	private pos.	neg.	public pos.	neg.	pos.	neg.
1. dualism	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	2	-
2. retaliation	-	1	1	2	-	2	1	4	2	9
3. apocalypse	-	2	-	-	2	2	-	-	2	4
4. historical	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
5. institut.	3	1	-	1	1	2	3	1	7	5

Like we did before, we first make a synchronic comparison: we compare the scores of private school students in 1995 with those of public school students in 1996, and then those of private school students in 2000 with those of public school students in 2001. Next we make a diachronic comparison between the scores of private school students in 1995 and 2000, and those of public school students in 1996 and 2001. Our criterion of relevance in these comparisons is a difference of 2 or more.

The synchronic comparison between 1995 and 1996 yielded two relevant differences. Among private school students divine apocalypse had a negative effect on their human rights culture: the greater the emphasis on divine apocalypse, the less these students support human rights; among public school students this code played no role at all. Secondly, among private school students institutional transmission of violence as evil acted as a trigger for human rights; among public school students it did not.

The synchronic comparison between 2000 and 2001 yielded three differences. Among private school students divine retaliation had a clear negative effect on their agreement with human rights; among public school students this negative influence was even stronger. Second, divine apocalypse again played a role, but only among private school students and this time its role was ambivalent: its influence was both positive and

negative. Finally, among public school students institutional transmission of evil acted as a trigger for human rights, whereas among private school students it no longer did.

The diachronic comparison between 1995 and 2000 produced some interesting results. Among private school students the code of the divine apocalypse changed its function: whereas in 1995 it still played an exclusively negative role, by 2000 this was augmented with a positive role. On closer analysis of the data it turned out that the stronger the emphasis on divine apocalypse, the less inclined students were to reject diverse forms of political oppression; they seemed to reason: after all, there will be a final settlement in the future. At the same time it appeared that the stronger the emphasis on divine apocalypse, the more strongly students agreed with socioeconomic human rights; they seemed to reason: on the new earth and in the new Jerusalem all people, genders and races will be truly equal, we can start preparing ourselves for that now. Finally, the trigger function of institutional transmission clearly declined.

The diachronic comparison between 1996 and 2001 revealed two differences. Among public school pupils the negative trigger function of divine retaliation had increased. These students also appeared to have switched places with private school students in regard to institutional transmission of evil. As mentioned already, the latter had initially rated institutional transmission of evil positively, in the sense that changes to institutions would promote the various kinds of human rights; five years later they appeared to have become sceptical. Public school students, who initially assigned institutions hardly any role in the realisation of human rights, now appeared to have greater faith in them.

We can summarise these results in terms of our earlier distinction between the hamartiological codes of transcendence versus immanence of violence as evil. Under transcendent codes we subsumed primordial dualism, divine retaliation and divine apocalypse, and under immanent codes we subsumed historical and institutional transmission of violence as evil. Table 4 shows that students from both types of schools ascribe a far more positive role to the immanent hamartiological codes in regard to a human rights culture (7 times) than to the transcendent codes (4 times); they also ascribe a far more negative role to the transcendent codes (15 times) than to the immanent codes (6 times).

3.2 Effect of Violence as Evil on Human Rights Culture: Controlled

We have now given the results of the 60 regression analyses that were conducted to determine the effects of students' interpretation of violence

as evil on their human rights culture. Now we shall examine whether the effects that were found remain intact when we control for a number of relevant population characteristics among the students. To this end we conducted a further 60 regression analyses. Why did we do that? It would not be the first time that we believe we have found effects of religious attitudes, such as our students' interpretation of violence as evil, on social attitudes, such as their human rights culture, only to discover that these are in fact pseudo-effects because factors such as gender or political preference turn out to play a decisive role that 'explains away' the supposed influence of the religious attitudes. In other words, the inclusion of population characteristics may help to 'demythologise' causal pseudo-relations between hamartiological attitudes and human rights attitudes. We stress the point: inclusion of population characteristics *may* contribute to such demythologisation but it does not necessarily do so. In other words: the more relevant population characteristics one introduces into the regression analyses, the more robust the effect of the hamartiological codes may be considered – that is, if any effect remains. This accords perfectly with empirical research methodology: to test a given hypothesis (in this case the effect of hamartiological attitudes on a human rights culture) one has to subject it to the most stringent conditions possible to see whether the hypothesis holds water and whether the effect remains intact. That is what we shall do next.

As in table 4, the horizontal axis in table 5 gives the year groups that were researched. The vertical axis again lists the five hamartiological codes that we studied empirically. On the vertical axis we appended certain relevant population characteristics to these hamartiological codes so as to control and check the relations between the hamartiological codes and a human rights culture and see if there are any 'pseudo-effects'. We divided the population characteristics into four groups: demographic, political, cultural and religious characteristics. The demographic characteristics are: gender, age and home language. The political characteristics are: importance of politics, political preference, political communication with the parents, and political agreement with significant others. The cultural characteristics are: ethnicity/trans-ethnicity and materialism/post-materialism. The religious characteristics are: religious communication with parents, religious transfer by parents, religious steering by the parents, Bible reading, religious saliency, church membership, church participation and rites of passage. Some of these population characteristics are underlined, because they were measured on a different scale than the other population characteristics and required special statistical treatment and interpretation, with which we need not trouble the reader. These are: home language,

Table 5. Effect of hamartiological codes on human rights, controlled for population characteristics (numbers betas)

	private 1995		public 1996		private 2000		public 2001		total	
	pos.	neg.	pos.	neg.	pos.	neg.	pos.	neg.	pos.	neg.
<i>hamartiological codes</i>										
1. dualism	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
2. retaliation	-	2	1	2	-	1	1	2	2	7
3. apocalypse	2	1	-	1	2	-	-	-	4	2
4. historical	-	2	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	3
5. institutional	3	1	-	1	1	2	3	1	7	5
<i>population characteristics</i>										
<i>demographical</i>										
gender	4	1	3	1	-	1	2	1	9	4
age	-	1	1	-	-	1	1	1	2	3
<u>home language</u>	(4)	-	(2)	-	(2)	-	(1)	-	(9)	-
<i>political</i>										
importance	3	-	1	-	2	-	3	-	9	-
<u>preference</u>	-	-	(3)	-	-	-	(3)	-	(6)	-
comm.parents	1	-	2	-	1	-	2	-	6	-
agree others	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1
<i>cultural</i>										
<u>ethn./transethn.</u>	(1)	-	-	-	(1)	-	(2)	-	(4)	-
<u>mat./postmat.</u>	(3)	-	(3)	-	(3)	-	(3)	-	(12)	-
<i>religious</i>										
comm.parents	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
transfer parents	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	2
steering	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	2	1	3
Bible reading	1	-	1	-	1	1	-	3	3	4
saliency	1	2	1	1	-	2	1	1	3	6
<u>church membership</u>	(2)	-	-	-	-	-	(1)	-	(3)	-
church particip.	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-
rites of passage	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	1	1

political preference, ethnicity/trans-ethnicity, materialism/post-materialism and church membership.⁶⁸

Table 5 comprises two parts: the cells in the upper part contain the effects of the hamartiological attitudes towards a human rights culture; the cells in the lower part contain the effects of the population characteristics on a human rights culture. The purpose, as mentioned already, is to determine whether the effects of the hamartiological attitudes on a human rights culture that were established earlier (table 4) remain intact when controlled for the aforesaid population characteristics (table 5). Our criterion of relevance was again a difference of 2 or more.

Effect of Hamartiological Attitudes on Human Rights Culture

As in the case of the previous tables, we first made a synchronic comparison between private and public school students in 1995 and 1996 and again in 2000 and 2001, followed by a diachronic comparison between private school students in 1995 and 2000 and between public school students in 1996 and 2001.

The synchronic comparison between the private school group of 1995 and the public school group of 1996 revealed several differences. Firstly, the divine apocalypse code had a positive effect on human rights culture among private school students but not among public school students. Second, the two forms of transmission of evil appeared to have had an opposite trigger function among private school students: historical transmission of violence as evil contributed negatively to human rights culture and institutional transmission contributed positively. Among public school students neither of these phenomena were discernible. In the comparison of the 2000 and 2001 year groups divine apocalypse appeared to have retained its positive trigger function among private school students. Also, in contrast to the earlier year groups, private school students no longer ascribed any positive function to institutional transmission of violence as evil in relation to human rights, whereas public school students now did.

⁶⁸ Here we deal with so-called polynomial variables, which are inserted into the regression analyses as 'dummy variables', in that one of these polynomial variables functions as reference category, in relation to which the loading of the other polynomial variables is computed. The polynomial variables are then combined into 'compound variables' in order to compute their total standardised beta effect, so that this beta effect can be compared with the beta effects of the other variables; cf. R. Eisinga, P. Scheepers and L. van Snippenburg, 'The Standardized Effect of a Compound of Dummy Variables or Polynomial Terms,' *Quality and Quantity* 25 (2001): 103-114.

In the diachronic comparison between the 1995 and 2000 groups and those of 1996 and 2001 the same switch in regard to the institutional transmission of evil is discernible as was noted above. Initially private school students assigned this hamartiological code a positive influence as a trigger for a human rights culture, whereas five years later they no longer did; the reverse applies to public school students.

Again these results can be summarised in terms of the distinction between transcendent and immanent hamartiological codes: primordial dualism, divine retaliation and divine apocalypse on the one hand and historical and institutional transmission of violence as evil on the other. Table 5 shows that students from both types of schools ascribe a more positive contribution by immanent hamartiological codes to a human rights culture (8 times) than to transcendent codes (6 times), and a more negative contribution to transcendent codes (10 times) than to immanent codes (8 times).

Effect of Population Characteristics on Human Rights Culture

But hamartiological codes are not the only factors that affect a human rights culture. The population characteristics appended to these codes in table 5 also have a definite impact, as may be seen in the two last columns of totals. Of the demographic characteristics – and indeed of all the population characteristics – gender has the strongest effect on a human rights culture: in 9 out of 13 cases female students have a greater preference for a human rights culture than their male peers. From the diachronic comparison, however, the importance of gender appears to have declined during the intervening five years. Secondly, age seems to have an ambivalent effect (positive: 2; negative: 3). Home language plays a major role: in nearly half of the cases students who speak an official black language at home show a stronger preference for a human rights culture than those whose home language is English, Afrikaans or some other language. Of the political characteristics political importance and political communication with parents have definite explanatory power, which stands to reason: in all nine instances students who consider politics important support a human rights culture more strongly than those who consider politics unimportant, whereas in all six cases students who regularly discuss politics with their parents are more warmly disposed to a human rights culture than those who do not discuss it with their parents. Students' political preference also plays a major role: in all six cases students who feel an affiliation with the ANC agree more strongly with human rights than students who align themselves with other parties. Among the cultural characteristics the role of ethnicity/trans-ethnicity is unclear: in two of

the four instances ethnically oriented students support human rights more strongly than trans-ethnically oriented students; in the other two instances the distinction between ethnic and trans-ethnic orientation makes little difference, although the trans-ethnic orientation predominates slightly. In the case of materialist/post-materialist orientation the position is very different: in 10 of the 12 cases students with a moderate to strong post-materialist orientation support a human rights culture more strongly than those with a materialistic orientation. Among the religious characteristics, religious steering by the parents, Bible reading and religious saliency appear to be the factors with the greatest, albeit mainly negative, impact. This does not apply as directly to church membership: in 2 of the 3 cases students who consider themselves to be affiliated with the Catholic Church or the Afrikaans Reformed churches have a stronger preference for human rights than those who feel they are affiliated with the Anglican Church, the Methodist Church or one of the other Christian churches.

3.3 Effect of Violence as Evil on a Human Rights Culture: Reality or Illusion?

On the basis of our findings we need to examine to what extent the effect of students' interpretation of violence as evil on their human rights culture remained intact after introducing certain relevant population characteristics into the regression analyses to control these effects. Did they in fact remain intact or did they turn out to be pseudo-effects once we controlled for these population characteristics? To answer this question table 6 compares the non-controlled positive effects (see total columns in table 4) with the controlled positive effects (see total columns in table 5).

Table 6. Comparison of violence of evil effects: non-controlled and controlled (numbers betas)

	non-controlled		controlled	
	pos.	neg.	pos.	neg.
dualism	–	2	–	1
retaliation	2	9	2	7
apocalypse	2	4	4	2
historical	–	1	1	3
institutional	7	5	7	5
total	11	21	14	18

This table shows that overall the effects of the hamartiological codes on human rights culture remain intact. However, certain striking phenomena emerge, on which we shall focus explicitly.

Firstly, the total number of positive effects appears to have increased after being controlled (non-controlled: 11; controlled: 14). This is associated with two hamartiological codes: divine apocalypse (controlled: +2) and historical transmission (controlled: +1). We shall return to historical transmission in due course. Here we confine ourselves to the stronger trigger function of divine apocalypse. What causes it? How can it be explained, at least hypothetically? We have mentioned already that divine apocalypse has two dimensions: a negative dimension of the total defeat of all evil that manifests itself in all sorts of violence, and a positive dimension of hope and yearning for 'the new Jerusalem'. The obvious assumption is that this positive dimension was reinforced by some of the population characteristics that we introduced by way of control in the second series of regression analyses. They contain the conditions and instruments for the realisation of human rights, especially political characteristics such as political preference (ANC), considering politics important, and political communication with parents. Here we note that when a code like divine apocalypse and the concomitant utopia of 'a new heaven and a new earth' are not viewed in isolation, but are linked with mundane conditions and methods to expedite them and realise them step by step, their power and significance for a human rights culture may increase.

We now turn to the negative effects. From table 6 we see that the total number of negative effects decreased slightly after the controls were introduced (non-controlled: 21; controlled: 18). This is attributable to primordial dualism (controlled: -1), divine retaliation (controlled: -2) and divine apocalypse (controlled: -2). Clearly these negative effects are to some extent 'explained away' by the operation of the population characteristics that were introduced by way of control. That was in fact our intention: to apply a 'demythologising' test to establish whether the hamartiological codes remain intact or whether they produce only pseudo-effects. This appears to have happened to a limited extent only, mainly among the negative effects.

But there is one striking exception: as we have just observed, the number of negative effects of historical transmission of evil has not, as in the case of dualism, retaliation and apocalypse, declined but has actually increased (controlled: +2). How can we explain this, at least hypothetically? Again we come back to the fact that in the second series of regression analyses we introduced a number of population characteristics, including political characteristics. These latter are dynamic, active, positive factors which contrast sharply with the more static, passive, negatively deterministic,

almost fatalistic meaning inherent in intergeneration transmission: who can hope to escape from the long chain of evil perpetrated by past generations? The introduction of political characteristics puts the relation of the hamartiological code of historical transmission to human rights in a far harsher light. That, any rate, is our conjecture.

But the cardinal question is obviously what the effects of hamartiological codes on a human rights culture signify once they have been controlled for population characteristics. As is evident in table 7, the general answer to this question is as follows: the students' interpretations of violence as evil have a real but non-exclusive effect as well as a differentiated effect on their human rights culture. The effect is differentiated inasmuch as some hamartiological codes have a positive effect and others a negative effect. The effect is non-exclusive, since other religious characteristics also appear to have an impact, sometimes a greater impact, and also because other, nonreligious population characteristics have an equally strong or even stronger effect. This is illustrated in more detail in table 7, which classifies the various types of effects in five groups: purely positive effects; mainly positive effects, where positive dominates negative; ambivalent effects, where positive and negative (more or less) balance each other; mainly negative effects, where negative dominates positive; and lastly, purely negative effects. Within this framework the factors are divided into three groups: hamartiological codes, other religious characteristics and other population characteristics.

From table 7 we observe that no hamartiological code has a purely positive effect, but that two of them – divine apocalypse and institutional transmission of violence as evil – have a mainly positive effect on students' human rights culture. Apart from these, no other religious factors have a purely or mainly positive effect on human rights culture.

But there are other factors that have a purely or mainly positive effect. These are three political factors: considering politics important, political preference (ANC), and political communication with parents. In addition (female) students' gender has a mainly positive effect. Finally, a post-materialistic orientation has a mainly positive effect.

There is also a group of ambivalent factors. These do not include any of the hamartiological codes but only two other religious factors: Bible reading and church membership (Catholic Church or one of the Afrikaans churches). They also include some other population characteristics, namely age, home language (one of the official black languages) and an ethnic/trans-ethnic orientation.

The group of mainly and purely negative factors is composed of three hamartiological codes: divine retaliation, historical transmission of violence as evil, and primordial dualism. It also includes other religious factors

such as religious steering by 17 May 2003 parents, religious saliency, and religious transfer by parents.

From all this we could establish that, as mentioned already, students' hamartiological interpretation of violence has a very real – albeit non-exclusive and differentiated – effect on their human rights culture. The qualification means that their hamartiological interpretations are not the sole factor influencing their human rights culture, since other religious attributes as well as certain nonreligious population characteristics also have an impact, and an even greater impact at that. Furthermore, the effect of the hamartiological interpretations is not always positive: some of these codes have a mainly or even purely negative effect.

Table 7. *Effects on human rights culture*

purely positive effects	hamartiological codes ... <i>other religious characteristics</i> ... <i>other population characteristics</i> considering politics important political preference (ANC) political communication with parents
mainly positive effects	<i>hamartiological codes</i> divine apocalypse institutional transmission of evil <i>other religious characteristics</i> ... <i>other population characteristics</i> gender (female students) post-materialism
ambivalent effects	<i>hamartiological codes</i> ... <i>other religious characteristics</i> Bible reading Catholic and Afrikaans Reformed Churches <i>other population characteristics</i> age home language (official black languages) ethnic/trans-ethnic orientation
mainly negative effects	<i>hamartiological codes</i> divine retaliation historical transmission of evil <i>other religious characteristics</i> steering by parents religious saliency

Table 7. (cont.)

	<i>other population characteristics</i>
	...
purely negative effects	<i>hamartiological codes</i>
	dualism
	<i>other religious characteristics</i>
	religious transfer by parents
	<i>other population characteristics</i>
	...

4. Evaluative Overall Conclusion

In terms of the questions posed in the introduction the overall picture emerging from these data is fairly easy to describe.

In response to the first question regarding the students' interpretation of violence as evil we can say that students from both types of school, no matter how much they differ as a result of the schools' multicultural as opposed to monocultural character, agree more or less with the immanent hamartiological codes (historical and institutional transmission of evil), but not with the transcendent codes. They are ambivalent about primordial dualism, divine retaliation and divine apocalypse, or even reject these codes. Public school students are an exception: they are more or less positive about the last code, divine apocalypse. By and large this general picture has not changed over the last five years.

Our answer to the second question regarding a human rights culture is that when it comes to blue rights, the differences between the two types of school have grown greater over the past five years: private school students manifestly agree with them more than students at Afrikaans medium public schools. Otherwise no relevant differences were found in regard to a judicial, economic and environmental human rights culture between students at the two types of school, nor over the past five years. As pointed out already, the judicial rights culture and the right to religious freedom culture call for special caution.

In the light of the foregoing discussion our answer to the third question regarding the influence of the interpretation of violence as evil on a human rights culture is briefly as follows. No hamartiological codes appears to have a purely positive effect, though two have a mainly positive effect, namely divine apocalypse and institutional transmission of evil. The other hamartiological codes have a mainly negative effect (divine retaliation and historical transmission of evil) or a purely negative effect (primordial dualism). Hence the effect is differentiated and, moreover, largely non-exclusive:

in addition to the hamartiological codes certain other religious factors are operative, as well as some nonreligious factors which sometimes exert far greater influence, for instance political factors, gender (female students) and a post-materialistic lifestyle.

This leads to the following conclusion in regard to the hamartiological codes. If we want to promote a human rights culture among students on the basis of an interpretation of violence as evil, we would be wise to focus our activities on the mainly positive codes, especially the divine apocalypse and the institutional transmission of violence as evil. By the same token we would be wise to refrain from discussing purely and mainly negative codes with students, or at any rate to treat them with extreme caution, especially primordial dualism, divine retaliation and historical transmission of evil. Hence our point of departure should be institutional transmission of evil and the divine apocalypse, and even then we should proceed cautiously.

When it comes to institutional transmission of evil we should again exercise caution, since the attitude of the two groups combined suggests ambivalence (table 2: 3.0). Here we have to allow for some unpredictability. Private school students rated this hamartiological code negatively in 1995 (2.2), but five years later they more or less agreed with it (3.2). We have also referred to a switching of positions between the two groups of students. Even though the private school students initially rejected this hamartiological code, to the extent that they did agree with it, it contributed to their human rights culture (positive effect: 3, negative effect: 1 – table 5). Five years later, although they did agree with this code to some extent, its positive contribution to human rights was gone (positive effect: 1, negative effect: 2 – table 5). Among the public school students the situation was reversed. Whether these contrary trends have continued since 2001 or whether they are converging we cannot tell. That calls for follow-up research. At all events, a positive trigger function of the code of institutional transmission of evil is by no means a foregone conclusion!

In the case of divine apocalypse, too, we have to exercise caution. Firstly, private school students approach this hamartiological code with an ambivalent attitude, whereas public school students more or less agree with it (table 2). Secondly, we would be wise not to emphasise the negative dimension of the divine apocalypse (total retribution, which closely approximates the divine retaliation that students reject), but should focus on the positive dimension (the new heaven and the new earth, the new Jerusalem), since the latter – according to our interpretation – has a positive effect on students' attitude towards human rights. Finally, in discussing the divine apocalypse, it would be wise to include some insight into the mundane conditions and methods – day-to-day instruments, so

to speak – to make the religious utopia underlying this hamartiological code physically attainable and to demonstrate that it can be attained step by step. If not, there is a very real danger that the divine apocalypse will have a negative effect on students' human rights culture and that the utopia will not materialise. The same caveat applies here: a positive trigger function of the code of institutional transmission of evil cannot be taken for granted!

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