



Anatomy of Malice

Rorschach Results from Nuremberg War Criminals

April 03, 2013

57 minutes, 39 seconds

Speaker: Dr. Joel Dimsdale

Transcribed by: Stephanie Duncan

[Holocaust Living History Workshop](#)

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Anatomy of Malice: Rorschach Results from Nuremberg War Criminals (2013)
Holocaust Living History Workshop

Time	Transcription	Slideshow Text
00:01	Announcer: This UCSD-TV program is presented by University of California Television. Like what you learn? Help others discover UC-TV podcasts by leaving a comment or rating for us in iTunes.	
00:06	[UCSD TV / This UCSD-TV program is a presentation of University of California Television for educational and non-commercial use only. / uctv UNIVERSITY of CALIFORNIA TELEVISION / ucsd.tv / uctv.tv	
00:10	[uctv UNIVERSITY of CALIFORNIA TELEVISION / uctv.tv / iTunesU Beyond Campus / YouTube / youtube.com/UCTV	
00:26	[The Library UC San Diego and the Judaic Studies Program at UC San Diego present]	
00:30	[The Holocaust Living History Workshop / “The Anatomy of Malice: Rorschach Results from Nuremberg War Criminals” featuring Joel Dimsdale, MD / Professor of Psychiatry, UC San Diego / April 3, 2013]	
00:40	Seth Lerer: It’s a great honor to be here, to introduce Dr. Dimsdale, and to participate in the Holocaust Living History Workshop. It’s traditional in giving introductions to go through, in effect, a narrativized CV [Curriculum Vitae] for our speaker, to say that he was an undergraduate at Carleton College, to say that he did his medical education at Stanford, to say that he worked and taught at Harvard before joining the faculty here at UC San Diego. But I want to take this occasion to say a few personal things about Dr. Dimsdale as a humanist as well as a physician. I had the opportunity in preparing for this introduction	Anatomy of Malice: Rorschach Results from Nuremberg War Criminals Joel E. Dimsdale M.D. jdimsdale@ucsd.edu

to look back on Dr. Dimsdale's remarkable essay of 1974 on the coping behavior of Nazi concentration camp survivors. Where Dr. Dimsdale, Dr. Dimsdale is looking at me like, did I write that?

01:39 Seth Lerer: As I read through it, I noticed how Joel sensitively outlines the range of strategies the concentration camp inmates used to survive. In effect, he's giving us a taxonomy of coping strategies, and he offers up not simply an historical account, but really ways of understanding stress in all its forms, in its most severe forms. And in the decades since this study was first published, we've all seen the spectrum of modern world varieties of trauma which we may barely have imagined before. And what I'm trying to suggest is that in this publication, as well as in many other of Dr. Dimsdale's publications, we see not simply case studies or clinical accounts, but really guides for behavior and understanding who we are.

02:32 Seth Lerer: Joel is a physician, in my mind, with a deeply humanist sensibility. His case studies are more than narratives and interpretations, they look for signs and symbols. He is in many ways a great reader, a reader not just of people, but of their stories, their language, and their patterns of action. And I've come to know Joel not just as a reader, but as a great, and generous friend of the Division of Arts and Humanities, and an understanding of how close his own skills of interpretations are to what we do in the division. Little wonder then that Joel has turned most recently to another art of interpretation: reaching back then, to that most uninterpretable of traumas. His talk today is called, "Anatomy of Malice: Rorschach Results from Nuremberg War Criminals."

[Anatomy of Malice: Rorschach Results from Nuremberg War Criminals / Joel E. Dimsdale, M.D. / jdimsdale@ucsd.edu]

03:25 Seth Lerer: The inkblot is a classic case of an interpretable sign, something apparently without intention or agency. Something whose meaning lies solely in the mind of the person who sees it. How can we understand the machinery of evil? What is the place of individuals in the bureaucracy of extermination? Rather than coming at these questions through philosophical speculations such as those of Hannah Arendt, or the archival historicism of someone like Lucy Dawidowicz. Joel comes at them through the discipline of psychoanalysis. My understanding is that this spring, the Holocaust Living History Workshop continues its “Long Shadow of the Past” series. And I can think of no better way to lead off this new term than with Joel’s presentation on those inkblot shadows that may reveal for us something of the past, but also a hope for our future. Joel, it’s an honor and a great pleasure.

04:32 [audience applauds]

04:38 Joel Dimsdale: Thank you very much, Seth. That’s a very kind introduction, I should also add that Dean Lerer is one of my professors right now. I have the fortune of taking one of his classes to a, in an effort to deepen my understanding and ability to read and understand. I’d also like to thank librarian Brian Schottlander who is the steward of this extraordinary institution. UCSD’s Geisel Library has an enormously rich collections, and these collections have helped my work a great deal. Research addresses enduring questions, and sometimes these questions straddle, and must straddle, medicine, history, and our ideas of the nature of the world.

05:39 Joel Dimsdale: This presentation will focus on such questions in one historical context. The Nazi hierarchy was responsible

for an unbelievable amount of carnage and could be considered to embody the essence of malice. What drove them? I will discuss this in the context of two investigators' explorations of the Nuremberg war criminals with Rorschach testing. In addition to many scholarly sources, I will rely on insights from [William] Faulkner, Peter Townsend, [Fyodor] Dostoevsky, as well as diverse diaries, news stories, and interviews.

06:35 Joel Dimsdale: Peter Townshend and The Who stated the problem lyrically: what is it like to be evil? Who were these people? "No one knows what it's like / To be the bad man / To be the sad man / Behind blue eyes / No one knows what it's like / To be hated / To be fated / To telling only lies / But my dreams / They aren't as empty / As my conscience seems to be." How could the war criminals do what they did? Were they suffering from a psychiatric disorder? Were they criminally insane? Were they psychopaths, sadists, delusional? What do we as psychiatrists think?

Understanding Evil

No one knows what it's like
To be the bad man
To be the sad man
Behind blue eyes

No one knows what it's like
To be hated
To be fated
To telling only lies

But my dreams
They aren't as empty
As my conscience seems to be

"Behind Blue Eyes," Peter Townshend, The Who,
1971

07:26 Joel Dimsdale: Now, by way of an outline, I'd like to start with a brief discussion of the geographical terrain that shapes this talk. Then I'd like to go back to 1920 and the origin of the Rorschach

Outline

- Mapping an inquiry
- Rorschach

test. I will then move forward twenty years to review the Nazi genocide, the War Crimes Trial, and in the aftermath, the extraordinary story of the sequestration of the Nuremberg Rorschachs, and I do mean that term quite literally. I should add that this is not a critique or a defense of Rorschach testing. Instead, it is a discussion of how these tests were employed, what happened to the people who administered the tests, and how we try to make sense of this seventy years later.

- Nazi genocide
- Nuremberg War Crimes Trial
 - the testing and the testers
- The aftermath

08:26 Joel Dimsdale: Maps are one of my hobbies, and the dots on this map of the world approximate locations that influenced my studies in this area. Herisau, Switzerland, where Rorschach worked; Nuremberg, site of the War Crimes Trial; Berkeley, where one of the protagonists settled after the war; Sioux City, Iowa, my hometown where I grew up. Many concentration camp survivors settled in that town, and I learned there that the shadow of the past is very long indeed, and stretches out over the vastness of the plains. Faulkner said “The past is not dead. The past is not even past.”*

Partial map of an inquiry

- Herisau
- Nuremberg
- Berkeley
- Sioux City
- Palo Alto
- Jerusalem
- Boston
- Gainesville

09:23 Joel Dimsdale: Palo Alto, where I became acquainted with the enormous archives of the Hoover Institute of War, Revolution, and Peace. Jerusalem, where I did my work studying concentration camp survivors and coping. And Boston, where I was sitting in my office, and one day, totally unannounced, the Nuremberg executioner came to see me, knocked on my door, carrying what looked like a gun case, and said, I am the executioner. This was stressful.

10:05 [audience laughs]

10:06 Joel Dimsdale: He opened up the gun case and it was filled with his discharge papers, proving that he was who he said he was, etcetera. We had a little chat and he told me that what we really need was people to start studying the Nazi swine, in his words. And finally, Gainesville, Florida, where at a dinner party, I met, accidentally, one of the heroes of this story, Molly Harrower.

10:42 Joel Dimsdale: So the inquiry properly begins in 1920 with Hermann Rorschach. He's a Brad Pitt lookalike. He was a, even in his youth, he was interested in the area of commonality between art and medicine. And he agonized personally over what he would do in his life direction. He ultimately went into medicine, became very prominent in Swiss psychoanalytic circles, and moved to Herisau, Switzerland. He wrote his classic work on the Rorschach inkblot, and couldn't get it published. It kept getting rejected over and over, and it was only accepted one year before he died. He died tragically as a very young man. Now, it turns out that not many people understand Rorschachs anymore. They're not used as prominently as they were in the [19]50s or even [19]60s. Today we get most of our ideas about the Rorschach from old movies. And a lot of those ideas are not particularly accurate.

12:02 Joel Dimsdale: So what is the test? There are ten cards. This is one of the cards. And it is an ultimate projective test. The tester asks the subject two questions on each of the cards: What might this be? And the next question really is, what made you say that? Point out what you saw that could account for that answer. So it's a projective test; it's also a perceptual test. It was used particularly before days of contemporary neural

Hermann Rorschach

- 1884-1922
- Art vs. medicine
- Vice President of Swiss psychoanalytic society
- Moved to Herisau (NE Switzerland)
- Died 1 year after publishing

The Test

- Projective test, 2 questions
 - "What might this be?"
 - Inquiry phase- "What made you say that?"
- Also a perceptual test

imaging. It's a way of characterizing how thinking is organized. You may think that the investigator is only listening to what you say. That's not quite correct. Because a real Rorschach expert is interested in what you're responding to on the blot. How the form is, whether you're responding to the shading, whether you're responding to the color.

- 10 cards scored on:
 - Form, shading, color, interactions with the tester, gestalt vs detail, response time

Card 5

13:16 Joel Dimsdale: He or she is also looking at your interactions with the tester, whether you're responding to the gestalt or detail. And also your response time. So it is a quite complicated test. More complicated than you would get, than you would assume from the movies.

13:40 Joel Dimsdale: Before discussing the War Crimes Trial, it is helpful to review the scope of the Nazi genocide and some of its unique characteristics.

Outline

- Mapping an inquiry
- Rorschach
- **Nazi genocide**
- Nuremberg War Crimes Trial
 - the testing and the testers
- The aftermath

13:52 Joel Dimsdale: There were many targets, but principally and abidingly the targets were Jews. The genocide involved a concentration and deportation to thousands of camps. The dots on this map are not just towns in Germany, but virtually every dot is a location of one of the concentration camps. And the camps varied enormously in terms of levels of lethality and also for different classes of prisoners.

Targets: Jews, Gypsies, Poles, homosexuals, psychiatric patients, Jehovah's Witnesses, communists,...

14:30 Joel Dimsdale: The Nazi genocide was characterized by deception and massive bureaucratization. By the end of the

Bureaucratization, deception, and brutality

war, seventy-five percent of the survivors were in fact the sole survivors of their family. The concentration camps somehow convey a peculiar sense of familiarity. The noted critic George Steiner said, The concentration camps are the transference of Hell from below the earth to its surface. Anyone who spends time studying in these dark places must be prepared for an inner resonance of great discomfort.

15:16 Joel Dimsdale: The camp embodies often down to minutiae. The images and chronicles of Hell in European art and thought. Please remember Steiner's comment that those who study in these dark places must be prepared for resonance because it will become eerily relevant as we go on. Contemporary historians are grappling with how to portray the human scale of this genocide. A previous speaker in this series spoke of some of the newer ways of envisioning loss.

Familiar themes of hell
Detail from Bosch, *Garden of Earthly Delights*, ~1500 /
Detail from Bruegel, *Triumph of Death*, 1562

16:00 Joel Dimsdale: This is a pixelated image where every pixel represents one of the 100,000 Dutch Jews killed in the war. And if you put your mouse over one of the pixels, and it lingers on one of the spots, it grows and displays that individual's name, fate, and as you can see I've portrayed that in the slide. One looks at such arrays and wonders, one wonders about the killers. Who were they? How could they?

One way of envisioning
Dutch Visual Monument Website for 100,000
<http://www.joodsmonument.nl/?lang=en>

16:37 Joel Dimsdale: After the war ended, there were multiple War Crimes Trials eventually involving thousands of defendants. But Nuremberg was the trial. The first trial involving the highest ranking Nazi party and cabinet ministers that could be found. The assumption is that these guys were depraved monsters, psychopaths. But what does that mean? How do you prove it? In fact, it was a very heterogeneous group of high-ranking

Outline

- Mapping an inquiry
- Rorschach
- Nazi genocide
- **Nuremberg War Crimes Trial**
 - **The Rorschach testing and the testers**

defendants. [Rudolf] Hess was occasionally paranoid, and frequently claimed amnesia. [Julius] Streicher's pornographic, racist theories were so objectionable, that the Nazis themselves confined him to house arrest for the last years of the war. In fact, many of the defendants loathed each other.

- The aftermath

17:38 Joel Dimsdale: Psychiatrist Douglas Kelley and psychologist Gustave Gilbert were minor functionaries at Nuremberg, but are our major protagonists concerning the Rorschach testing. They had multiple roles, some official and some unofficial. They were to determine fitness for trial. They were to maintain prisoners' morale so that they could cooperate with the trial. They were advisors to the prosecution, but they also had their own inner agendas as well. Kelley and Gilbert were interested in investigating the psychopathology of Nazi leaders, and they also were interested in pursuing their own ambitions. I have to say, this was a very difficult collaboration. And when you read the diaries, the lawsuits, everything that has gone on, this was a collaboration from hell.

Nuremberg War Crimes Trial

21 defendants

Kelley and Gilbert's multiple roles:

- Determine fitness for trial
- Maintain prisoners' morale so they could cooperate
- Advise the prosecution
- Investigate psychopathology of Nazi leaders
- Pursue their own ambitions

18:45 Joel Dimsdale: I'll focus on Gilbert and Kelley's interactions with four of the defendants. We don't have time to go beyond that. [Rudolf] Hess, [Hermann] Göring, [Robert] Ley, and [Julius] Streicher. A recent BBC docu-drama on Nuremberg actually includes some scenes portraying the complex interactions of Gilbert and Kelley. There was a great deal of stake with the War Crimes Trials, and one senses the pressures that Kelley and Gilbert faced. I'll be showing you two brief film clips because they do an excellent job of setting the context. The first clip shows psychiatrist Kelley, interacting with prosecutor Robert Jackson, and discussing the use of Rorschachs in trying

to figure out what was going on with Hess. Hess was particularly troubling because he claimed amnesia, didn't recall much of the war, didn't even recognize his own wife.

- 19:58 Speaker One: He wanted to do something to compensate for this relative inactivity which was forced upon him.
- 20:11 Narrator, Matthew Macfayden: With the trial approaching, the chief Allied prosecutor Justice Robert Jackson needed reliable psychological reports to press ahead with the case. One of the men who was given the task of proving that Hess was fit to stand trial was prison psychiatrist Major Douglas Kelley.
- 20:30 Robert Gellately: The prosecution had to show that he really was not insane. Well, trying to prove that people are faking is very difficult. And the Allies went through extraordinary steps to try to show that Hess was perfectly alright.
- 20:55 Robert Jackson, portrayed by Colin Stinton: Ah! Dr. Kelley.
- 20:57 Douglas Kelley, portrayed by Stuart Bunce: Sir. Colonel.
- 20:59 Robert Jackson, portrayed by Colin Stinton: Coffee?
- 21:00 Douglas Kelley, portrayed by Stuart Bunce: Thank you.
- 21:01 Robert Jackson, portrayed by Colin Stinton: Please. So, is he fit to stand trial or not?
- 21:08 Douglas Kelley, portrayed by Stuart Bunce: I'd like to perform a few test before submitting a professional opinion, if I may.

What were these guys doing there?
[source BBC Two, Nuremberg: Nazis on Trial, 2006]
Prosecutor Robert Jackson and Psychiatrist Douglas Kelley discussing Rorschach testing on Deputy Fuhrer Hess (Hess Part 1 8'-9:50')

[Robert Gellately / Historiador]

- 21:12 Justice Robert Jackson, portrayed by Colin Stinton: What kind of tests are we talking about?
- 21:16 Douglas Kelley, portrayed by Stuart Bunce: The Rorschach test. It's the most useful single technique in mental examination. The armed forces are using it more and more.
- 21:23 John Amen, portrayed by Tim Woodward: Isn't that that inkblot thing?
- 21:25 Douglas Kelley, portrayed by Stuart Bunce: We give the patient ten large cards to look at. Each one has an ink stain on it. An abstract pattern. We get the patient to talk through what he thinks the patterns look like. Get them to make up stories about them. That starts to give us a picture of their personality.
- 21:45 Rudolf Hess, portrayed by Ben Cross: Hmmm, this one—I see a monster [laughs]. Yes, a human monster. Yes, there's its mouth. And this is its eyes—these, these red parts. It could be a negro with a big mouth and red lips...and red eyes.
- 22:14 Joel Dimsdale: The prison authorities were very concerned about suicide and with reason. Imagine being the psychiatrist or psychologist responsible for these defendants. Again, imagine the pressures they were under. This clip shows a warden of Nuremberg, Warden [Colonel Burton C.] Andrus, discussing suicide risk with Gustave Gilbert and Douglas Kelley.
- 22:43 Narrator, Matthew Macfayden: ...not all of the Nazi leaders were in jail. Andrus, Gilbert and Kelley re suicide risk (Göring Part 1 8:10-10:50)
- 22:47 Speaker Two: In Lüneburg lies the body of the most hated man in Europe: Heinrich Himmler, chief of the Nazi secret police and

the savage SS troops. Himmler was carrying tiny vials of poison.

22:58 Narrator, Matthew Macfayden:: The suicide of Himmler, creator of the Nazi death camps, was a disaster for the Allies. With Hitler and Goebbels already dead, Göring was the most senior Nazi left.

23:12 Burton Andrus, portrayed by Anthony Valentine: Let me show you something. Apart from an armed assault on a prison, this is what keeps me awake at night. We found it amongst Göring's jewelry. [Burton Andrus, Comandante da Prasad]

23:28 Gustave Gilbert, portrayed by Adam Godley: It's a cartridge, German caliber.

23:31 Burton Andrus, portrayed by Anthony Valentine: Sure. But you can open it. Carefully. Potassium cyanide. There's enough there to kill a dozen men. Regular issue, SS suicide ampule. Himmler used one.

24:02 Gustave Gilbert, portrayed by Adam Godley: Is Göring suicidal?

Burton Andrus, portrayed by Anthony Valentine: Let me tell you about Göring, when he came to us he was a simpering slob with two suitcases full of paracodine. I thought he was a drug salesman.

24:11 Gustave Gilbert, portrayed by Adam Godley: He's addicted to drugs?

24:12 Douglas Kelley, portrayed by Stuart Bunce: Oh sure. His habit traces way back to when he was wounded in a Nazi fight. He took drugs for the pain.

24:19 Burton Andrus, portrayed by Anthony Valentine: If you think Fat Stuff is a big guy, you should've seen him before we put him on a diet.

24:25 Douglas Kelley, portrayed by Stuart Bunce: Our job, Captain, is to ensure these men are healthy enough to stand trial before the world.

24:32 Burton Andrus, portrayed by Anthony Valentine: And I do not want them to become stir bugs. A guy could go nuts sitting in a little cell with what some of these boys have got on their minds. I want you to be our eyes and ears, Captain. Get to know the prisoners. Report back to me regularly on their mental states, especially Göring. If we lose him, we don't have a trial. Nothing must happen to Göring.

25:10 Gustave Gilbert, portrayed by Adam Godley: Yes Sir.

25:18

[25 de Outubro de 1945] [October 25, 1945]

25:26 Speaker Three: Get a doctor!

25:29 Narrator, Matthew Macfayden: Four weeks before the trial, Robert Ley, creator of the Nazi leisure organization, Strength Through Joy, committed suicide.

25:38 Robert Ley, portrayed by unknown: I have been one of the responsible men, we have forsaken God, and therefore, we were forsaken by God.

[carta de suicidio de Robert Ley] [Robert Ley's suicide letter]

25:55 Speaker Four: This must never happen again.

26:04 Joel Dimsdale: That second film clip portrays the aftermath of Ley's suicide. Ley suppressed the labor unions, authorized numerous war crimes, he had a history of multiple head injuries and episodes of unconsciousness. He was a plane crash survivor with a persistent stammer and was an alcoholic. Kelley submits his evaluation on Ley in October 1945, and one can recognize the familiar cadence of a psychiatric examination: "normal psychomotor reactions, and normal attitudes and behavior, mood is normal, but affect is extremely labile. Rorschach examination reveals emotional instability manifested by color and shading responses and evidence of frontal lobe damage. He is one of the most potentially suicidal prisoners due to his extreme instability, secondary to his old head injury. Ley is competent."

27:13 Joel Dimsdale: Ley hung himself shortly afterwards, and Kelley writes sardonically in 1946, "Since Ley kindly made his brain available for postmortem examination, we were presented with the rare chance to verify our clinical and Rorschach findings." There was a great deal of popular interest in the idea of finding the lesion in the war criminals' brains. The race was on to prove that these were evil, brain-damaged Frankenstein-like monsters.

27:53 Joel Dimsdale: The Sarasota Herald Tribune, you can see the article here, quoted Major General Kirk, Surgeon General of the Army, as saying, "these changes were sufficient to account for the unusual behavior of Ley." Not to be outdone, Life Magazine ran a story showing the famous neuropathologist, Major Webb Haymaker, of the U.S. Army Institute of Pathology, dissecting Ley's brain. He reported, "Out - longstanding degenerative

[Brain of Robert Ley, Nazi Labor Czar Who Killed Self, Reported 'Diseased For Years']

processes in the frontal lobes consistent with chronic encephalopathy.” But I would like to move on to discuss Göring and his interactions with Gilbert and Kelley. Göring arrives in prison with 49 suitcases and loads of jewelry, notably large rings, and with all of Germany’s paracodine supply.

28:53 [Audience Laughs]

28:54 Joel Dimsdale: He was charming, confident, dominated all of the other prisoners, profoundly cynical man: “The people can always be brought to do the bidding of the rulers. That’s easy. All you have to do is tell them that they are being attacked and denounce the pacifists for lack of patriotism and exposing the country to danger. It works the same in any country.” Göring committed suicide two hours before he was to be hung. He ingested cyanide, and no one knows to this day where he got the cyanide from. There’ve been some recent work on that, but I, I’m not sure it’s definitive.

Hermann Göring at Nuremberg

- Charming, confident, cynical, dominated the other prisoners
- Regarded the trial as victor’s justice
- “The people can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders. That is easy. All you have to do is tell them they are being attacked and denounce the pacifists for lack of patriotism and exposing the country to danger. It works the same in any country.”
- Suicide with cyanide the night before he was to be executed
- Where did he get the cyanide?

29:43 Joel Dimsdale: Kelley spent considerable time with Göring, and one starts to get a glimpse of Kelley as an astute, pragmatic clinician: “Göring started complaining of withdrawal symptoms from the paracodine,” Kelley writes, “Göring was very proud. I suggested to him that while weaker men, like [Joachim von] Ribbentrop whom he loathed, would perhaps require doses of medicine should they ever be withdrawn from a drug habit. He, Göring, being strong and forceful would require nothing. Göring agreed and cooperated wholeheartedly.

30:19 [audience laughs]

30:20 Joel Dimsdale: Göring weighed 280 pounds on capture, and Kelley was worried about his heart and appealed to Göring's narcissism. When I pointed out that he would make a better appearance in court should he lose some weight, he agreed and lost 60 pounds.

30:43 Joel Dimsdale: Rudolf Hess was one of the other major defendants. He complained of amnesia and numerous somatic ailments. He was intermittently suspicious and saved samples of his food to prove he was being poisoned. Seen here is a photo of his blotting paper on which he soaked peach preserves which he saved as evidence, proving that it contained brain poison and corrosive acid. Once he asks Gilbert to sample one of his poisoned crackers before agreeing to talk with him further. Gilbert and Kelley agreed on the call on Hess. They agreed they both describe him similarly as preoccupied, withdrawn, and suspicious.

31:38 Joel Dimsdale: Let's meet the people who administered the Rorschachs. Psychiatrist, Douglas Kelley was one of the California Terman geniuses. He was the top, he was in the top half percent of I.Q. in the state of California, and the Terman study followed these people for decades. And here the Terman investigators are sitting with Kelley and his family in a follow-up interview.

32:09 Joel Dimsdale: Kelley was a Columbia graduate, an expert in forensic psychiatry, personality, and the Rorschach. Kelley's

Rudolf Hess

- Gilbert: "...emotionally immature preoccupation with the animal and botanical world and only lifeless details at that."
- Kelley: introverted, shy, withdrawn, suspicious

Douglas Kelley, M.D.

- Child prodigy (one of Terman's California geniuses)
- Terman team visiting Dr. Kelley for follow-up interview
- Columbia graduate, Rockefeller Fellow, UCSF faculty member
- Interests in forensics and personality
- Rorschach expert but did not speak German

relationship with Göring was intense and close, quote: “Göring was one of the easiest to get along with, each day when I came to his cell, he would jump up from his chair, greet me with a smile, an outstretched hand, escort me to his cot, and pat its middle with his great paw. ‘Good morning, Doctor. I’m so glad you’ve come to see me. Please sit down, Doctor, sit here.’ Then he would ease his own great body down beside me, ready to answer my questions. He was charming when he chose to be charming, excellent intelligence, keen imagination, great drive, and sense of humor.”

33:03 Joel Dimsdale: Kelley spent hours discussing politics, war, and the trial with Göring. And in turn, Göring regarded Kelley as a well-connected fixer. Kelley agrees to intercede with “Wild Bill” Donovan, the soon-to-be director of the CIA on Göring’s behalf, and to personally deliver letters to Göring’s wife. Göring writes his wife: “Today I can send you a letter direct. Major Kelley, the doctor who is treating me and who has my fullest confidence, is bringing it to you. You can talk to him freely.” Göring offers Kelley one of his enormous rings in thanks. Kelley refuses, and then Göring responds, “Then I’ll give you something even better and more valuable, a signed photograph of me.”

33:56 [audience laughs]

34:04 Joel Dimsdale: Our other protagonist is Gustave Gilbert. Gilbert was an American psychologist from an Austrian-Jewish family. You get the sense that Kelley is looking at people very pragmatically with a certain sense of sardonic remove. Gilbert, one senses much more personal feelings of hatred for the Nazis. Kelley was just trying to get them on trial, and was intellectually curious about them, regarding them as specimen

so to speak. However, Gilbert loathed them and urgently wanted to understand their psychology.

34:46 Joel Dimsdale: He was also a Columbia graduate, although they didn't know each other apparently, and he had a particular expertise in social psychology, but had no expertise whatsoever with Rorschachs. The following interchange between Gilbert and Streicher gives a sense of Gilbert's feelings. Gilbert to Striker: "Why did you have to print all that sexual filth about the Jews?" Streicher: "Why it's all in the Talmud—the Jews are a circumcised race. Didn't Joesph commit race pollution with Pharaoh's daughter? The judges are crucifying me now, I can tell. Three of the judges are Jews."

35:30 Joel Dimsdale: Gilbert: "How can you tell?" Streicher: "I can recognize blood. Three of them get uncomfortable when I look at them, I can tell. I've been studying race for twenty years." Gilbert writes in his diary: "A quarter of an hour with this perverted mind is about all one can stand at one time. And his line never varies. World Jewry and circumcision serve as the channels for projecting his own lascivious thoughts and aggressions into pornographic antisemitism." This has been a long preamble. I'm getting to the Rorschachs. But it's crucial that you understand the context and a bit about the two investigators, and particularly what happens afterwards.

36:20 Joel Dimsdale: Kelley designed the testing protocol. It was in fact never used in evidence in Nuremberg, and the criminals enjoyed the testing. They competed with each other on their IQ tests. After the war, Kelley has a meteoric career. He assumes prominent editorial positions and becomes a professor of criminology at Berkeley. He concludes in his book, "Nazism is a socio-cultural disease. I had at Nuremberg the purest known

Gustave Gilbert, Ph.D. 1911-1977

- Columbia graduate, social psychologist; little clinical experience
- Initially a translator, later prison psychologist and counter-intelligence officer, Kelley's assistant
- Wanted to probe the minds of Nazis and understand the mass movement
- Not much experience with Rorschachs but fluent in German.

Douglas Kelley, M.D.

"Nazism is a socio-cultural disease. I had at Nuremberg the purest known Nazi-virus cultures—22 flasks as it were—to study"

- Rorschach, Wechsler-Bellevue IQ
- Never introduced as evidence

Nazi-virus cultures - 22 flasks as it were - to study." Okay. Let's look at some of the Rorschach responses. Please remember, there are ten cards, and people will elaborate on and on about what they saw in the card. This is just an extract of responses from some of the war criminals to card number two.

- Defendants enjoyed being tested, comparing IQ scores
- Associate editor of what became J Personality Assessment
- 1949-58 Professor of Criminology, UC Berkeley

37:34 Joel Dimsdale: There's a lot to keep track of, and one senses the challenge of these data from this one minuscule sampling. So [Hans] Fritzsche, the propaganda ministry, says, "It's uncanny. They're just ink blots, but it shows that beauty and a deeper meaning can be concealed. You know it's terrifying. A man wants to make an ink blot and the ink itself makes a symbol of life. I see two dancing bears very clear, or gnomes, or dwarfs. Makes a revolting impression, not all friendly. The bloody color makes me feel uncomfortable." [Hans] Frank, the butcher of Poland: "Those are my darling bears. They're holding a bottle. A beautiful prima ballerina dancing in white dress with a red light shining from below." [Albert] Speer, Hitler's architect, minister for armaments and war production simply says, "a butterfly" and refuses to elaborate.

Response to card 2

- Fritzsche: Two dancing bears-very clear; or gnomes or dwarfs. Makes a revolting impression- not at all friendly. The bloody color makes me feel uncomfortable.
- Frank: Those are my darling bears. They're holding a bottle...beautiful prima ballerina dancing in white dress with red light shining from below.
- Albert Speer: A butterfly
- Göring: [laughs] Those are two dancing figures, very clear, shoulder here and face there, clapping hands. [cuts off bottom part with hand, including red]. Top red is head and hat; face is partly white.
- Rudolf Hess: Two men talking about a crime, blood is on their minds.

38:45 Joel Dimsdale: Göring, head of the Luftwaffe, minister of interior, chief of the Prussian Gestapo, laughs: "Those are two dancing figures, very clear, a shoulder here and a face there, clapping hands. The top red is the head and hat; the face is partly white." Hess, Deputy Führer, survived the bizarre flight to Scotland and complained of intermittent amnesia, says, " Two

men talking about a crime, blood is on their minds.” Now, what do these responses tell us? I’m not going to call on anyone. But it’s a heterogeneous bunch of responses. Remember also when I discussed how Rorschachs are really scored. The scoring goes much more into issues of what the person is picking out than just the image the person sees. But you can see the challenge of this testing.

40:06 Joel Dimsdale: So I will summarize the conclusions of the Rorschach analyses, but it is not a pretty story. The aftermath of the testing, and the mystery surrounding this aftermath are riddles in themselves.

Outline

- Mapping an inquiry
- Rorschach
- Nazi genocide
- Nuremberg War Crimes Trial
 - The Rorschach testing and the testers
- **The aftermath**

40:24 Joel Dimsdale: At first glance, Kelley and Gilbert agreed in their first conclusion; they were sane as a group. But their second and third conclusions differ profoundly. Kelley says, “Strong, dominant, aggressive, egocentric personalities like Göring’s with their lack of conscience, are not rare. They can be found anywhere in the country - behind big desks deciding big affairs.” Basically, they’re ordinary people influenced by mendacity and bureaucracy, creatures of their environment. Gilbert’s conclusion is very different: “They were ruthlessly aggressive, had emotional insensitivity, and presented with a front of utter amiability.” They were narcissistic psychopaths. But there were peculiar things going on, and not just between Kelley and Göring, but also with the entire field of Rorschach testing, and between Gilbert and Kelley.

Different conclusions

- Kelley
 - Sane
 - “Strong, dominant, aggressive, egocentric personalities like [Göring’s with]...their lack of conscience, are not rare. They can be found anywhere in the country- behind big desks deciding big affairs...”
 - Basically ordinary people influenced by mendacity and bureaucracy, creatures of their environment
- Gilbert

- Sane
- “[They were] ruthlessly aggressive, [had] emotional insensitivity, [and presented with] a front of utter amiability.”
- Narcissistic psychopaths

41:45 Joel Dimsdale: Kelley was particularly close to Göring. Indeed, Göring weeps when Kelley leaves Nuremberg and asks Kelley to adopt his daughter, Edda, if his wife dies. And I, there was an enormous amount of distrust and competition between Kelley and Gilbert, and a race to see who could publish first in this area. Plus their conclusions were so different. And again, I think back to George Steiner’s quote that “anyone who spends time studying in these dark places must be prepared for an inner resonance of great discomfort.” There is something toxic that Kelley and Gilbert were exposed to. After the war, no one would touch it.

Stranger and stranger

- Kelley particularly close to Göring
- Distrust & competition between Kelley and Gilbert
 - Recall Steiner “Anyone who spends time studying in these dark places must be prepared for an inner resonance of great discomfort.”
- Race to publication but the complete Rorschachs have never been published
- No one would touch it!
 - Toxic conflict between Gilbert and Kelley
 - Odd sense of unease of the experts
 - Harrower: “Remember the context of this in 1946. We espoused a concept of evil which dealt in black and white. Our concept of evil was such that it must be a tangible scoreable element in psychological tests.”

42:45 Joel Dimsdale: There was an enormous toxic conflict between Gilbert and Kelley, and you get an odd sense of unease when you look at writings from Rorschach experts. Molly Harrower,

who we shall meet shortly, said, "Remember the context of this in 1946. We espoused a concept of evil which dealt in black and white. Our concept of evil was such that it must be a tangible scoreable element in psychological tests." And what the experts were encountering was that these tests were much more subtle than that rapid assessment. Oh, I'm afraid I have a shocking conclusion on Douglas Kelley.

43:36 Joel Dimsdale: He committed suicide on New Year's Day in 1958 in front of his entire family. He was cooking a New Year's Day dinner, went to his study, came out and said, "I think I have killed myself," and died a minute later. His wife, son, and daughter don't know why he did it. The son added cryptically in a recent interview: "I think maybe he knew he was on a runaway train. I think he knew what was inside, but he didn't know how to make it go away." Kelley's study was filled with chemicals, medications, and Nazi memorabilia, including letters from Göring, quote, "I regret your departure from Nuremberg, as do the comrades confined with me. I thank you for your human behavior, and also for your attempt to understand our reasons."

44:35 Joel Dimsdale: Why Kelley killed himself, whether it was an accident or suicide, is unanswerable. The one thing that struck everyone was the method.

44:52 Joel Dimsdale: So, Molly Harrower. Molly Harrower was the world's foremost Rorschach expert. She was one of the few people on good terms with both Gilbert and Kelley. And she persuaded them to share the Rorschachs with the world experts. The problem was that no one would agree to analyze the Rorschachs. Imagine in 1947, you're a Rorschach expert. I,

Douglas Kelley, A shocking conclusion

- New York Times: "one of several souvenir capsules Dr. Kelley had brought home from Nuremberg. The capsules had been discovered on Hermann Göring."
- Harrower: The pill was "...taken from the Nuremberg prison as a souvenir"
 - Göring gave Kelley the pill
- Who gave whom the cyanide?

San Francisco Chronicle, 1/2/58, page 1

Molly Harrower 1906-1999

- 1947, sought independent reviewers; none agreed; data never presented at Rorschach congress. Why?
- 1948, tried and failed to get Kelley and Gilbert to collaborate

Molly Harrower, write you, the esteemed leader of Rorschach studies, and I say, would you do this as one of the ten? Everyone would be glad to do it. This is one of the most pressing questions of the day. No one agreed. Everyone suddenly had time pressures and commitments that precluded their participation in this analysis, and in this symposium she was planning for a presentation in London.

- Legal threats
 - Gilbert to publish in Harrower's series but, impatient with review, submits to another publisher without telling Harrower
 - The new publisher selects Harrower as the independent reviewer!
- Gilbert's Rorschachs FINALLY released in 1975 by Miale and Selzer
- Molly has doubts about their analysis

45:56 Joel Dimsdale: Trouble was partially that there were lawsuits and squabbles about publication. Molly somehow - she was a very energetic, lovely lady - she managed to get Gilbert to agree to publish his Rorschachs in her volume, but he gets impatient with the review and publication time and goes around her and simultaneously submits it to another journal. And as luck would have it, the editor of that other journal by happenstance picks Molly as the blind reviewer.

46:33 [audience laughs]

46:34 Joel Dimsdale: So, there are things that are going on in here that are quite complex. Finally, Gilbert's Rorschachs were published in 1975. Thirty years. But Molly has doubts about the analyses that Miale and Selzer performed on the Rorschachs.

47:04 Joel Dimsdale: [Florence R.] Miale and [Michael] Selzer conducted a non-blind analysis, and they concluded that these were a homogeneous group of warped psychopaths who were distinctly savage and devilish. Molly had her doubts about that because, in fact, homogenous does not describe the

Miale's convictions vs Harrower's doubts

- Miale and Selzer non-blinded analysis (1975): homogeneous group of warped psychopaths
 - "Distinctly savage and devilish"

Nuremberg war criminals. They were a very heterogeneous group of men. She also wondered whether the Nuremberg war criminals represent sadistic psychopaths or upper-level executives? And she wondered maybe a testing of some of the killers would be more revealing. But she said to address this, we have to have blind testing. So she again tried, this time successfully, contacted ten Rorschach experts throughout the world, sent them a set of Rorschachs from the war criminals, from Unitarian ministers, and from psychiatric patients, all blindly coded, so you wouldn't know who was who.

- Harrower: But the Nuremberg Nazis were Very heterogeneous
- Do the Nuremberg war criminals represent sadistic psychopathic killers or upper-level executives?
 - Maybe test results would be different with the SS guards from the camps?

We must have blind testing

- Records to 10 Rorschach experts (1976)
 - Blind comparison of war criminals, Unitarian ministers and psychiatric patients
 - Experts found no common characteristics in the war criminals

48:20 Joel Dimsdale: This is a, her design is kind of complicated, and I'm trying to boil it down. Basically, each Rorschach card had a code on it. In this slide, all of the blues were war criminals, the orange were clergy, the yellow were psychiatric patients. The ones were high-functioning people, the fours were very impoverished. But again, you as the rater don't know that code. And Molly said, How would you organize these sets of Rorschachs? Which is the most sensible way of organizing them: by colors or by numbers? In other words, could you see something distinctly characteristic of the Nuremberg war criminals? None of them did. They all coded by functioning level.

Molly's first challenge

How would you organize these sets of Rorschachs?

Which is the most sensible way of organizing them, by colors or by numbers?

(The blues were war criminals. The orange were clergy. The yellow were psychiatric patients. The ones were high functioning; twos were normal; threes were mediocre, fours were impoverished.)

Respondents organized by functioning level rather than group.

0049: 16 Joel Dimsdale: Molly gave a second challenge. She says, ok, each row now corresponds to a certain group. You decide which group they belong to. Here are some possibilities: clergy,

Molly's 2nd challenge

Each row corresponds to a certain group. You decide which group they belong to. Here are some possible

cross-section of middle class, persons facing a death sentence, prominent civil right leaders, superior adults in spot-light positions, etc. And even when provided this menu of possibilities for group identification, the experts could not identify the groups. The Nazis were identified as a cross-section of middle-class, superior adults in spotlight position, members of clergy.

groupings: clergy, cross-section of middle class, persons facing death sentence, prominent civil right leaders, superior adults in spot-light positions, war criminals, patients before and after dialysis, ..., assassins, ...

Even when provided grouping, the experts could not identify the groups.

Blue [nazis]: cross-section of middle class, superior adults in spotlight position, members of clergy

Orange [clergy]: superior adults in spotlight position

Yellow [patients]: political assassins, persons facing death sentence, members of clergy

50:01 [audience laughs]

50:02 Joel Dimsdale: The clergy were identified as superior adults in spotlight positions, the psychiatric patients were identified as political assassins, persons facing death sentence, members of clergy

50:15 [audience laughs]

50:21 Joel Dimsdale: When all is said and done, how do we understand malice? There are multiple intellectual strands and Gilbert and Kelley correspond to two of these separate strands. Gilbert - this is paradoxical - Gilbert is the social psychologist who believed in psychopathology. Kelley is a psychiatrist who espouses a social-psychological viewpoint. It's interesting.

50:50 Joel Dimsdale: Gilbert clearly believed in psychopathology and he was influenced by [Hervey M.] Cleckley's description of the psychopathic personality. Such individuals are described as

Intellectual traditions for understanding malice

- Psychopathology (Gilbert)

violent, manipulative, impulsive, callous, lacking empathy or remorse, or remorse. Popular culture portrays two variants of psychopaths, Norman Bates in *Psycho*, and Tony Soprano. In contemporary psychiatric terminology, such individuals are an extreme variant of antisocial personality disorder.

- Psychopathic personality (Cleckley 1941): violent, impulsive, lacking empathy or remorse, callous law-breakers, manipulative
- Norman Bates in Psycho vs Tony Soprano
- DSM- traditionally categorical (antisocial personality disorder)
- “Bad brains” (neuropsychiatric perspective)

51:28 Joel Dimsdale: There are even studies that point out that perhaps the psychopaths have a bad brain, a neuropsychiatric underpinning of psychopaths. And some contemporary studies are using neural imaging to study the brains of psychopaths. In this study, by [Martina] Ly, et al, MRIs were used to compare brain cortex thinning in psychopathic prisoners, and non-psychopathic prisoners. The psychopaths had thinner cortexes. This figure shows the difference in the two groups. The red and yellow parts of the brain denote areas of significant thinning of the psychopaths’ brains. It is tempting to say one can almost see the reptilian brain burning through areas of the thin cortex in the psychopaths.

Is it, after all, a Bad brain?

- MRIs of psychopathic prisoners vs non-psychopathic prisoners
- Pronounced cortical thinning in psychopaths

52:30 Joel Dimsdale: Well, if Gilbert believed in psychopathology, and some neuropsychiatrists believed in bad brains, Kelley was swayed by a different perspective. A social-psychological perspective, that we are all capable of such evil under certain circumstances. Arendt concluded in her studies about banality of evil that evil happens often mindlessly without intention. Stanley Milgram in the classic studies at Yale on shock found

Intellectual traditions for understanding malice

- Psychopathology (Gilbert)
- Social psychology (Kelley)
 - Banality of evil (“The sad truth is that most evil is done by people who never make up their minds to be either good or evil.”), Hannah Arendt (1963)

that people would hurt others if told to do so by an authority figure. [John] Darley and [Bibb] Latané found in group settings there's a diffusion of responsibility in that people will not take the risk of looking foolish in an effort to help someone who appears to be in trouble. And closer to home, of course, we have Phillip Zimbardo's studies at Stanford where people started spontaneously adapting sadistic behaviors when put in a position of power over another.

- Yale shock experiment, Stanley Milgram (1963)- obedience to authority
- Bystander apathy (Kitty Genovese murder), Darley & Latane (1968)- there is a diffusion of responsibility in group settings
- Stanford prison experiment, Phillip Zimbardo (1972)- adoption of sadistic behaviors when placed in certain roles

53:52 Joel Dimsdale: There are other traditions. A third perspective is legal. People make mistakes and must make restitution, and there are certainly variations from state to state and country to country as to how a psychiatric disorder influences judgment and sentencing. The fourth perspective is embodied in many religious beliefs to the effect that the devil is real. Indeed, Paul says, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers, the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

Other intellectual traditions for understanding malice

- Psychopathology
- Social psychology
- Forensic ≠ Psychiatric Disorder
- Religious (the devil is real)
- Paul (Ephesians 6:12) "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers, the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."
- Malice not otherwise explained (cf. Bias, 6th c. BCE): "Most men are bad."

54:42 Joel Dimsdale: The fifth perspective is perhaps one of the darker views, as if these are not all dark already. The Greek philosopher, Bias, sixth century, basically concluded: "Most men are bad." So, we're almost done this evening. If you were the refereeing editor and you saw a paper on the Rorschachs of Nuremberg, do you think these data are valid?

55:29 Joel Dimsdale: It's a sample size of 21. They were very heterogeneous guys. They were in prison, in solitary confinement. Were these the right Nazis to test in the first place? And then there are some technical issues about the way the Rorschachs were administered that are a little beyond us for discussion right now.

The burden of Proof: can these data address the issue?

- Sample size (n=21)
- Heterogeneity
- Effect of imprisonment and defeat (i.e. state vs trait measures)
- Were these "the right" Nazis to test?
- Rorschach administration technique (translators, repeated administration)

55:56 Joel Dimsdale: So I started out by suggesting that there are enduring questions in research. I've tried to summarize how the field has struggled to answer such questions with these data. I'm afraid I have left you with the enduring questions as opposed to an answer. And the questions of course pertain not just to Nuremberg, but to contemporary events. There is depravity, wickedness, and malice. They are not understood. Dostoevsky says, "Nothing is easier than to denounce the evildoer. Nothing is more difficult than to understand him." Thank you.

The Anatomy of Malice: What is the nature of evil?

56:46 [audience claps]

56:51 ["The Anatomy of Malice: Rorschach Results from Nuremberg War Criminals" featuring Joel Dimsdale, MD / Professor of Psychiatry, UC San Diego / April 3, 2013]

57:01 [Was Presented By The Holocaust Living History Workshop / Sponsored By The Library UC San Diego and the Judaic Studies Program at UC San Diego]

- 57:06 [Brian E.C. Schottlaender / The Audrey Geisel University Librarian / Professor Deborah Hertz / Judaic Studies Program / Susanne Hillman / Holocaust Living History Workshop]
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*"The past is never dead. It's not even the past." - William Faulkner