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A Case of Moral Heroism: Sympathy, Personal Identification, and Mortality in Rwanda

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Abstract

What sort of person chooses to remain in a place like Rwanda when an easy exit is offered, when leaving seems the only safe or sane option, and when one is not directly connected to the would-be victims? And how does this person come to develop a circle of care that is expansive enough to include those who are radically Other? In what follows, I consider these questions through a detailed examination of the recent example of Paul Rusesabagina, the Hutu hotel manager in Kigali, Rwanda, who sheltered more than a thousand Tutsi and moderate Hutu refugees during the hundred-day genocide. I argue that Rusesabagina was primarily motivated by an awareness of his own mortality, his personal history, a desire to distance himself from the negative behavior of Hutu like himself, and a strong identification with the Tutsi refugees under his protection.

Keywords: heroism, sympathy, Rwanda, Richard Rorty, Paul Rusesabagina, Peter Singer

Consider the following problem: four friends stand on a street corner in an unfamiliar town; as they are deciding what to do with their day, they notice that—across the street—a helpless citizen is being accosted by a thief. What should these four people do in the face of this crime? Are they required to act on behalf of the victim? If they fail to intervene, can they be held responsible? And if so, what sort of responsibility do we, as a community, have in mind in this case? In other words, is it simply that they ought to feel morally compelled to act or could they even be legally required to help?

This is a well-known scenario, most likely because it was the central plot element of the two-part series finale of "Seinfeld," one of the most popular television programs of the 1990s. The characters—Jerry, Elaine, George, and Kramer—do not feel morally obligated to assist the victim of the mugging they witness. In fact, rather than heroically coming to his rescue, the four friends actually laugh at the overweight victim and videotape the robbery. They are subsequently arrested and prosecuted under the community's "Good Samaritan" law, according to which they

can be held legally responsible for failing to assist a crime victim. While some of the pageantry that attends their conviction and subsequent sentencing is far-fetched, the central plot element itself is not. Numerous states have introduced legislation like this, likely with a view to preventing the response to crime that we see from Seinfeld and his friends. Massachusetts, the setting of the episode, has such a law in place; its General Law (chapter 268, section 40) requires that anyone who "knows that another person is a victim of aggravated rape, rape, murder, manslaughter, or armed robbery and is at the scene of said crime shall, to the extent that said person can do so without danger or peril to himself or others, report said crime to an appropriate law enforcement official as soon as reasonably practicable."

Looking at the wording of this particular statute, of course, it is clear that Jerry, Elaine, George, and Kramer were not obliged to attempt to rescue the victim from his attacker. Reporting the crime to the police seems to be all that is required in this situation. Though they might have done more, such as rescuing the victim from his attacker, any action of this sort would be considered heroic because it could potentially result in some harm to themselves, and they are under no legal obligation to put themselves at risk on behalf of a complete stranger. We might wonder, however, whether citizens should do more to help one another and, indeed, what it means for our society when we must pass legislation that requires citizens, at the very least, to notify law enforcement officials about crimes they have witnessed. While the majority of citizens are unlikely to go so far as Seinfeld and actually laugh at a crime victim, the suggestion, clearly, is that they are far more likely to look away than to act helpfully (let alone heroically).

Undoubtedly, the state cannot legislate altruistic behavior in the same way that it can legislate that witnesses offer very minimal assistance by calling the police, for we cannot be compelled to endanger ourselves on behalf of others even if doing so is morally choice-worthy. That said, Peter Singer suggests that we ought to feel compelled to act much more altruistically. Singer's principle is a simple one: "if it is in our power to prevent something very bad from happening, without thereby sacrificing anything morally significant, we ought, morally, to do it" (1972: 231).[1] By way of an example, he argues that anyone who walks past a drowning child in a pond ought to act in order to save the child.[2] Proceeding from this principle, Singer demonstrates that we, individually, ought to assist those in need, whether or not they are in close proximity and whether or not they

1 Singer (1972: 241) notes that this is the more moderate of the two principles he sets out; the stronger version "required us to prevent bad things from happening unless in doing so we would be sacrificing something of comparable moral significance." Though Singer (1972: 241) believes the strong version of the principle to be correct, he notes that to adopt it would likely mean "that one would reduce oneself to very near the material circumstances of a Bengali refugee." In thinking through the implications of the more moderate principle that I quote, Singer (1972: 241) suggests that "it may not follow that we ought to reduce ourselves to the level of marginal utility, for one might hold that to reduce oneself and one's family to this level is to cause something significantly bad to happen."

2 A powerful example from the world of professional athletics is Joe Delaney, a Pro Bowl running back with the Kansas City Chiefs, who attempted to rescue three drowning boys in a Monroe, Louisiana park on June 29, 1983. Though he had never learned to swim, Delaney succeeded in saving one of the boys before drowning in an attempt to save the two others. He was posthumously awarded the Presidential Citizens Medal by Ronald Reagan (cf. Reilly 2003). Of course, in his more moderate discussion of the duty an individual should feel when he walks past the pond, Singer does not require that anyone risk his own life by jumping into the water to save the children.

are unknown to us: "It makes no difference whether the person I can help is a neighbor's child ten yards from me or a Bengali whose name I shall never know, ten thousand miles away" (1972: 231–232).

The upshot of all this, as Singer (1972: 235) notes, is that "our traditional moral categories are upset. The traditional distinction between duty and charity cannot be drawn, or at least, not in the place we normally draw it." Indeed, what Singer wants to argue is a good deal more controversial than the relatively obvious example of easily rescuing a drowning child. The main thrust of his article, in fact, involves a duty to provide assistance to those who are starving halfway across the world; in currently referring to such aid as charity, we make it a reasonable option for many people to do nothing in the face of terrible tragedy. Singer (1972: 235) argues that "The charitable man may be praised, but the man who is not charitable is not condemned. People do not feel in any way ashamed or guilty about spending money on new clothes or a new car instead of giving it to famine relief. (Indeed, the alternative does not occur to them.) This way of looking at the matter cannot be justified."[3]

This debate about whether we are morally obligated to help the world's poor remains a contentious one. Indeed, whether or not we are morally required to provide assistance to anyone, across the seas or in our own backyard, has not been conclusively answered. Today, we might add the question of international humanitarian or military intervention to this problem, in which case the shadow of events like the Rwandan genocide in 1994 loom large. What should the international community have done in that case? Was intervention owed to the Rwandans by the safe and wealthy citizens of other countries? Should this lack of action be considered a moral failing or was it, instead, simply one of a series of morally neutral choices? The voluminous literature on the genocide suggests the former, as do recent films and—of course—the public apology from President Clinton to the people of Rwanda in 1998.

These questions—whether or not action on behalf of victims by people who are themselves safe should be thought of as a duty and, consequently, whether or not a lack of involvement should be thought of as a moral failing—lie near the center of this project. At its core, however, is the concept of heroism, both classical and contemporary. The difference between duty and heroism is clear:

3 On the other hand, the strictness of Singer's principles might well render them impossible and thereby actually make it *less* likely that people will act on behalf of those who are suffering around the world. In this way, Singer's principles might well be compared with the claims about morality made by Kant (1993: 11) in the *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*:

> there are many persons who are so sympathetically constituted that, without any further motive of vanity or self-interest, they find an inner pleasure in spreading joy around them and can rejoice in the satisfaction of others as their own work. But I maintain that in such a case an action of this kind, however dutiful and amiable it may be, has nevertheless no true moral worth.... Suppose then the mind of this friend of mankind to be clouded over with his own sorrow so that all sympathy with the lot of others is extinguished, and suppose him still to have the power to benefit others in distress, even though he is not touched by their trouble because he is sufficiently absorbed with his own; and now suppose that even though no inclination moves him any longer, he nevertheless tears himself from this deadly insensibility and performs the action without any inclination at all, but solely from duty—then for the first time his action has genuine moral worth.

This position, that one can behave morally only in response to duty, seems to excuse a lack of action by either rendering morality impossible or making it largely a matter of robotic compulsion rather than human agency.

we might argue about whether President Clinton was duty-bound to commit the U.S. to ending the Rwandan genocide. But few would suggest that—had he done so—Clinton would have acted heroically, given the size and strength of the armed forces at his disposal, the lack of his direct, personal involvement in any military action in Rwanda, and the Genocide Convention that seemed to require action from him and other world leaders. Of course, to find examples of heroism in Rwanda is not as difficult as might be imagined, despite the enormity of the horror that took place, though only one American citizen comes to the fore: Carl Wilkens, an Adventist missionary, who was the only American to remain in Rwanda throughout the genocide. When the genocide began, the U.S. government closed its embassy in Kigali and evacuated citizens who were residing all across the country. Wilkens, however, made the decision to send his family home and to remain in Rwanda (cf. Barker 2004*a*). In doing so, he put himself directly in harm's way, not only because of the ongoing warfare between the Hutu Power government and Tutsi-led rebels but because he sheltered Tutsi refugees from the *interahamwe* militia ["those who stand/work/fight together"] and worked to assist others who were in hiding.[4]

To agree that this constitutes heroic action is not particularly difficult; but exactly what *sort* of hero is he? Following Seth L. Schein, I argue that there is an important connection between heroism and mortality as exemplified by Achilles in Homer's *Iliad*, namely that those who act heroically are aware of and can embrace their mortality. Schein (1984: 69) writes that Homer's hero is a seasonal one, who "comes into his prime, like flowers in the spring, only to be cut down once and for all." Unlike Schein, however, I distinguish between two broad types: conventional, *mortal* heroism and uncommon, *moral* heroism. The first type involves nothing more than an impressive, courageous action on the part of the hero. The reasoning or motivation behind this heroic action is often personal and unquestioned by others; in some cases, it might even be considered foolish or selfish by outside observers. The quintessential example is Achilles, the singularly impressive warrior whose exploits are motivated by his grief and his desire to achieve a glorious name. Though few, if any, can successfully achieve the *kléos* [κλέος; everlasting glory] of Achilles, further examples of this sort of battlefield heroism abound. Indeed, mortal heroism seems to be far more common than moral heroism, which is characterized by a selflessness that few possess. With regard to this second type, then, a good deal more needs to be said. It should be noted that moral heroism is bound up with conventional, mortal heroism insofar as I argue that one cannot be a moral hero without acting in an impressive, courageous manner. But moral heroism is concerned not simply with the courageous behavior itself, but also with the motivating

4 Because of a relatively high rate of intermarriage—and because of the dubious origins of the distinction between Hutu and Tutsi in the first place—most scholars conclude that the difference between the groups is an imagined one. It is variously described as largely a class differentiation, with wealthy Tutsi kings and nobles originally ruling the poorer Hutu; a phony racial categorization cooked up by Belgian colonists eager to see a generally taller and lighter-skinned group of Tutsi as more European than the shorter, darker Hutu; a myth about native origins, with native Hutu farmers and invading Tutsi herders migrating from the north; or all three in some combination (cf. Gourevitch 1998: 50–58; Mamdani and Mahmood 2002: 41–75; Rusesabagina 2006: 16–18). Whatever the actual origin of the distinction, it became a powerfully entrenched one in the early part of the twentieth century, when the Belgians issued identification cards and assigned privileges based on group affiliation; the minority Tutsi were put in charge of the majority Hutu and were instructed to use their power to ensure the profitability of the colony for the Belgians.

factors behind that behavior. While both the conventional and the moral hero must come to terms with their mortality in order to act heroically, the latter, I argue, not only recognizes the grave consequences of his actions but also acts on behalf of others rather than for some personal belief or goal.

Once again, the example of Carl Wilkens is instructive here. While sheltering several individuals from those who sought to kill them, he exposed himself to a great deal of danger by also providing assistance to endangered Tutsi men, women, and children throughout the Rwandan capital. When asked why he chose to act as he did, Wilkens' response is telling:

> For a while, when people would ask me why [I] chose to stay, I would try to go into some detail [about] that Tutsi young lady and that Tutsi young man [who worked for me]. [They] were [the] faces [of the victims of the genocide], representing the country and I felt if I left, they were going to be killed. … The first three weeks, I never left my house, and I was wondering, why did I stay? What am I doing? [Then I realized] the two people in my house [were] still alive, and I [was] very grateful for that (Barker 2004*a*).

Rather than leaving Kigali with the American convoy soon after the genocide began, Wilkens chose to risk his life in an effort to protect and assist endangered Tutsis. And though Singer (1972: 231–232) claims that proximity to suffering should be unimportant, Wilkens' actions suggest that the opposite is the case. To my mind, it is no surprise that he began this heroic endeavor with those who were closest to him, but what is noteworthy is that he need not have identified with them in the way that he did, given that so many others (Hutus, Americans, other foreign nationals in Rwanda and abroad) did not. Doing so, recognizing that these potential victims were like him in some important respect, allowed him to expand the circle of care that is so important to morally heroic behavior.

Having made the dangerous choice to shield those Tutsis with whom he closely identified, Wilkens' decision to assist other Tutsi was likely made significantly easier. But in helping to save a single Tutsi man, woman, or child, Carl Wilkens distinguished himself as a moral hero in the most difficult of situations. What sort of person chooses to remain in a place like Rwanda when an easy exit is offered, when leaving seems the only safe or sane option, and when one is not directly connected to the would-be victims? And how does this person come to develop a circle of care that is expansive enough to include those who are radically Other? In what follows, I consider these questions through a detailed examination of the recent example of Paul Rusesabagina, the Hutu hotel manager in Kigali, Rwanda, who sheltered more than a thousand Tutsi and moderate Hutu refugees during the 100-day genocide. I argue that Rusesabagina was primarily motivated by an awareness of his own mortality, his personal history, a desire to distance himself from the negative behavior of Hutu like himself, and a strong identification with the Tutsi refugees under his protection. Able to cut through the genocidal rhetoric that gripped so many of his countrymen, he viewed these Tutsi not as a collective group of Others but as individual husbands, wives, brothers, sisters, children, and parents. Just as important was the experience of growing up in a household that placed little value on the Hutu/Tutsi distinction and then creating a similar household himself. Aware of himself as a Hutu from an early age, Rusesabagina was also affected by the injustice of privileging or punishing some-

one on this basis alone. Given this identification, paired with his recognition that the violence surrounding him would likely claim his life and the lives of his family members, Rusesabagina determined that he should do what he could to help others before he died. This focus on suffering individuals and the understanding that one's own life is terribly brief ultimately led Rusesabagina to act against the tidal wave of violence in what he viewed as his own small way.

Moral heroes, then, are able to confront their mortality and choose the way their lives will unfold, but act on behalf of others because they both learned altruistic behavior from a respected model and, rather than accepting the privileged status of a non-victim, can empathize with those who are suffering. In marked contrast with Singer, Richard Rorty argues that solidarity with victims directly results from personal identification with them. He asks,

> Did they [non-Jewish Danes and Italians] say, about their Jewish neighbors, that they deserved to be saved because they were fellow human beings? Perhaps sometimes they did, but surely they would usually, if queried, have used more parochial terms to explain why they were taking risks to protect a given Jew—for example, that this particular Jew was a fellow Milanese, or a fellow Jutlander, or a fellow member of the same union or profession, or a fellow bocce player, or a fellow parent of small children (Rorty 1989: 190–191).

When those who are suffering "are thought of as 'one of us,' where 'us' means something smaller and more local than the human race" (Rorty 1989: 191), the sense of solidarity with them is strongest. Indeed, Rorty (1998: 176) suggests that human rights promotion is best served by "[concentrating] our energies on manipulating sentiments, on sentimental education. That sort of education gets people of different kinds sufficiently well acquainted with one another that they are less tempted to think of those different from themselves as only quasi-human." However, not everyone finds Rorty's assertion to be compelling. Norman Geras (1995: 11) is surprised by "how abstract…how obviously speculative, Rorty's thesis about the rescuers is. 'Perhaps', he suggests, they occasionally said something like this; but 'surely' they more often said something like that. These rescuers were real people and there is a body of writing about them."

On first blush, Geras's detailed examination of the reasons these men and women give for their heroic actions seems to throw Rorty's assertions about personal identification into doubt. Indeed, Geras hopes to demonstrate that most rescuers acted on behalf of the Jews because they felt a moral duty to other human beings as such, rather than because of a more immediate personal connection.[5] After more careful consideration, however, the picture is a bit less clear, as many of those interviewed—like Eva Anielska, a Polish woman who saved Jews who were strangers to her—took action because each one was "a persecuted human being, desperately struggling for life and in need of help … a persecuted, humiliated human being" (Geras 1995: 24). Did she save these Jews because she identified with their humanity, broadly conceived, or—more specifically—with their particular persecution and humiliation? While this example might support the claims of either Rorty or Geras, there is also the example of Bill Bouwma, who helped Jews

5 In addition, Jean Bethke Elshtain (1992: 212–214) offers five examples of Holocaust rescuers that, like Geras's examples, suggest potential problems with Rorty's theory about personal identification.

"because he knew what it felt like to be the underdog" (Geras 1995: 25) and of Louise Steenstra, who said, "'we felt so sorry for those Jewish people with their kids screaming when the Nazis came in the night to pick them up'; '[w]hen you are the mother of one child, you are mother to them all'" (Geras 1995: 33). Rorty's concern, of course, is not with creating more heroes like Anielska, Bouwma, and Steenstra; his goal, instead, is to expand everyone's sense of solidarity in order to prevent the human rights violations that require their heroic behavior.

My primary goal, however, is precisely to examine why these people—and others like them—chose to act heroically, and I believe that Rorty's thoughts on sympathy and solidarity are crucial to any explanation. Indeed, both this personal identification and the recognition of his own mortality are important in that they lead Paul Rusesabagina to struggle heroically to save lives during the Rwandan genocide. This story has been told a number of times (cf. Gourevitch 1998 and Rusesabagina 2006) and is now the subject of *Hotel Rwanda*, a critically acclaimed film. Rather than rehearse the details of his well-known story, I look closely here at an unexamined aspect of his efforts. I am interested not only in *what* Rusesabagina did or *how* he did it—saving more than a thousand refugees from the violence with little more than his charm, his connections, a telephone, and a well-stocked bar—but in *why* he was motivated to act as he did during the genocide.[6] When so many others, all across the country, turned their backs on friends, neighbors, and even family members, Rusesabagina repeatedly endangered himself and his family in an attempt to protect others with whom he had no particularly strong bond. Given all that has been written about the pull that the violence exerted on the vast majority of Rwandan Hutus during the genocide, it is surprising that so little has been said about the reasoning behind Rusesabagina's ability to avoid acting as others did. And given the amount of attention paid to him and the awe that he inspires in those who read, hear, and see his story, it is very unusual that no one has asked what it would take to encourage this type of behavior in others who are faced with similarly terrible choices.

To that end, I focus here on the motivations for the dangerous actions that have made Rusesabagina a hero around the world. Why did he work to save so many people when he might have, instead, turned them over to the *interahamwe* militia in exchange for his own family's safety? There are a number of possible answers. One of the great motivating factors is religious; there are many people who act heroically because they feel called to do so by their religious traditions (cf. Oliner and Oliner 1988: 154–157; Gushee 2003: 149–187). The scriptures of Jews, Muslims, and Christians all place great value in acting to preserve the lives of Others. The former two religions equate saving one life with saving the entire world, while the latter repeatedly emphasizes the importance of caring for others. Of course, Rwanda is a country in which Catholic and Protestant churches are leading institutions; nearly everyone in the country—Rusesabagina included—was raised in a church. For the most part, though, Catholic and Protestant Hutus did not spare their Tutsi coreligionists, churches became convenient places of extermination, and Hutu priests have been implicated in the massacres. Fur-

6 This is quite a different question from why he—or anyone—ought to be motivated to act on behalf of others, the point made by Singer (1972). In focusing on why heroes *are* so motivated rather than on why we all *ought* to be, my argument attempts to avoid the sense of impossibility that plagues Singer's account.

ther, Rusesabagina does not count himself religious, nor do a great many people today. Instead, I argue that Rusesabagina was primarily motivated by an awareness of his own mortality, the example of altruistic behavior modeled by his father, his desire to distance himself from the negative behavior of Hutu like himself, and a strong identification with the Tutsi refugees under his protection.

Rusesabagina's personal history begins as one might expect of an ordinary Rwandan; it is largely a story about growing up in a large and loving family in a rural community. From a global perspective, his family was poor; he notes that their "house was made of mud and sticks" and that he "grew up without shoes" (Rusesabagina 2006: 1, 4). From an early age, however, he had some advantages that many others did not. Not only was the family "solidly middle class by the standards of rural Africa in the 1950s," but Rusesabagina (2006: 4, 2) was also sent to school by his parents so that he would "learn how to read and write, which neither of them could do." By the end of his education, he knew not only his native Kinyarwanda but also French and English. Further, Rusesabagina's father—Thomas Rupfure—was a particularly respected member of the community, one to whom the people listened when it came to settling disputes through the traditional system of *gacaca*: "He was usually the elder who spoke last, and his words therefore carried a great deal of weight (Rusesabagina 2006: 10).[7] In

7 The *gacaca* court system involves the community in settling disputes, most often on civil matters like competing property claims. Often translated as "justice on the grass," it places a premium on honesty and, ultimately, seeks reconciliation. As Rusesabagina (2006: 9) explains, "The elders would invite the village to come sit under the shade of a tree and hear the opposing sides tell their stories.... After the two enemies had finished speaking, the elders would give their opinions, one by one, on what should be done to remedy the problem.... Then came the most important part of justice on the grass: the two aggrieved men were required to share a gourd of banana beer as a sign of renewed friendship." There have been recent attempts at applying the *gacaca* system to some of the crimes committed during the genocide, largely in an attempt to assist the overwhelmed criminal justice system but also to promote some sort of reconciliation within communities (cf., Temple-Raston 2005). Interestingly, Gary Herbert (2008) points out the connection between the *gacaca* courts and those of the Homeric Greeks: "For them, it was Themis, an Olympian deity, who convened and dissolved any judicial assembly. Themis represented, in effect, the sense of right that governed and guided all the sacred assemblies of men that meet to pass judgment." A good example can be found in the description of a scene on the shield of Achilles in the *Iliad*:

> A crowd, then, in a market place, and there/two men at odds over satisfaction owed/for a murder done: one claimed that all was paid,/and publicly declared it; his opponent/turned the reparation down, and both/demanded a verdict from an arbiter,/as people clamored in support of each,/and criers restrained the crowd. The town elders/sat in a ring, on chairs of polished stone,/the staves of clarion criers in their hands,/with which they sprang up, each to speak in turn,/and in the middle were two golden measures/to be awarded him whose argument/would be the most straightforward" (Homer 1974: 451).

For Herbert (2008), this Homeric assembly—and the *gacaca* court system—accords with "a tribal notion of justice, one that leads to and supports class and ethnic identity and warfare.... Presumably, what Rusesabagina learned from his father was the justice of his clan or tribe, something akin to Themis." To make this case, Herbert (2008) juxtaposes Themis with Dike, which he notes "signifies... what is right 'by nature,' i.e. not tribally, not ethnically, not for one class against another. Dike would represent a step toward universal justice and human rights." I am not convinced, however, that Rwanda's *gacaca* system is quite so focused on tribal or ethnic identity. While the courts of his father's time were surely focused on restoring harmony between feuding clan members, it seems clear that for Rusesabagina, and for proponents of the contemporary *gacaca* courts, this traditional mediation technique can be applied even to much more serious interethnic strife by extending the core principle of reconciliation beyond ethnic boundaries.

addition to loving, respecting, and hoping to impress his father, Rusesabagina (2006: 4, 48) also learned a great deal from him; he refers to him as "the greatest hero in my life" and says that "he taught me most of what I know about patience, tolerance, and bravery." Rusesabagina takes great care to preserve both the wisdom and the morality that his father imparted, often in parables, and points out that, like his father, his own sense of right and wrong owes much to those who preceded him. Speaking of his father, he says, "His morality was not something that he made up on his own; it had been given to him by his own father and his grandfather before that, a mixture of Hutus and Tutsis stretching back hundreds of years" (Rusesabagina 2006: 12). Nor was the intimate connection between Hutu and Tutsi a thing of the past for the family; Rusesabagina's father was Hutu while his mother was Tutsi, and he would go on to marry a Tutsi woman. This too was not unusual for Rwanda, where the number of mixed marriages was seemingly not affected by the troubles that routinely plagued the country long before the genocide.

Of course, it was the recent and painful memories of Tutsi domination over Hutu, rather than the many years of peaceful cohabitation and intermarriage, that prevailed when Rwandans democratically elected a Hutu government in the aftermath of gaining their independence from Belgium. Indeed, despite the number of mixed marriages in Rwanda—and, hence, all of the children who grew up with both Hutu and Tutsi family members—Rusesabagina's own experience as a child of such a marriage or husband in such a family is likely not the driving force behind his heroic actions, for there are clearly so many others who came from a similar background and acted quite differently. There are numerous accounts of Hutu wives killing their Tutsi husbands, Hutu children turning their Tutsi mothers over to the militias, or—perhaps more common—Hutu husbands murdering their in-laws while also attempting to shelter their Tutsi wives (cf. Gourevitch 1998: 115, 303–320; Rusesabagina 2006: 134).[8]

While it is undoubtedly the case that Rusesabagina learned about the harmony that can exist between Hutu and Tutsi from his own family, there are a number of other experiences that shaped his thinking about the ways in which people ought to be treated and about the unhappy effects arising from the differences between people in Rwanda. These experiences, I argue, ultimately differentiate him from other Rwandans and allowed him to separate himself from the actions taken by so many others. The first such experience involves his father and a group of a dozen Tutsi refugees who arrived in the aftermath of the violence of the Hutu Revolution of 1959 and were sheltered for a week, despite the risk of doing so. As Rusesabagina (2006: 14) learned much later, "Those who tried to protect the Tutsi were considered targets as well. To shelter the enemy was to become the enemy." The risk that his father took in protecting the refugees was a very serious one, and so it is noteworthy that, of those who were sheltered, Rusesabagina (2006: 13) says that his "father seemed to know some

8 In Rwanda, group affiliation passes to children through the father, particularly fortuitous for Rusesabagina (whose father was Hutu and thus whose children were Hutu, despite his mother and his wife both being Tutsi). Ultimately, this piece of good luck played a relatively large role in determining whether Rusesabagina, his family, and all of the Tutsi refugees under his protection would live or die, as a hotel manager with a Tutsi father and Hutu mother would likely not have survived even his first encounter with the *interahamwe*.

of them, but not all." Indeed, one of his father's parables speaks exactly to these points:

> A party of hunters was chasing a wounded lion through the valley. The lion tried to take shelter in a man's house and the man decided to admit the lion, even though he was putting himself at great risk. The lion recovered from his wounds and was set free. And so if a man can keep a fierce lion under his roof, why can he not shelter a fellow human being? (Rusesabagina 2006: 12).

Protecting and housing the refugees was not an isolated act of kindness, reserved for friends or relatives, but was instead an extension of the Rwandan concept of hospitality that Rusesabagina's father also instilled in him. Like the man in the parable, Rusesabagina would himself embody the idea of hospitality in an extreme form during the genocide.[9]

For Rusesabagina, then, the idea of welcoming others into your home and caring for them is a natural one; further, it is one that he very much connects with being Rwandan. On this point he says, "I suppose our values are very much like the Bedouin of the Middle East, for whom sheltering and defending strangers is not just a nice thing to do but a spiritual imperative" (Rusesabagina 2006: 12). While this idea can be found in numerous traditions—including as a primary commandment for all Jews, Christians, and Muslims—it is notable that he identifies it within Rwandan culture, given that most international observers identify Rwanda with the dearth of shelter and defense offered to Tutsis during the genocide. While the breach of a norm does not invalidate it, of course, there is much to be said for the fact that Rusesabagina took the stories and example of his father to heart and that, as he notes, many others seem not to have learned the same lesson. As he says, "Rwandans are expected to offer shelter to the distressed, no matter what the circumstances. I took this lesson as gospel, and I grew up believing that everybody felt this way" (Rusesabagina 2006: 12).[10]

Though Rusesabagina was quite young at the time—only 5 years old—his recollection of the event many years later highlights its importance. The threat of violence was very real and his father made no attempt to disguise it from him. Rusesabagina (2006: 13) recalls that "On the second night I asked my father why we

9 The influence of Rusesabagina's father is very much in line with the existing literature on rescuers, which has been almost exclusively limited to those who acted on behalf of Jews during the Holocaust. Summarizing several of the most prominent studies, David P. Gushee (2003: 120) notes that "London concluded that rescuers identified themselves intensely with a parent who 'tended to be a very strong moralist—not necessarily religious, but holding very firm opinions on moral issues and serving as a model of moral conduct.' Coopersmith reaffirmed this finding, emphasizing that these parents both preached and practiced 'ethical, altruistic, and moral values' and that rescuers later consciously imitated a specific role model. The same was true in Huneke's sample; he emphasized the significance of moral instruction in the home, whether rooted in the Bible, folk wisdom, or other sources. In Eva Fogelman's sample of rescuers, a parent who behaved altruistically appeared almost universally."

10 Oliner and Oliner (1988: 164) note that, in their sample of Holocaust rescuers, nonrescuers, and bystanders, "There is no significant difference between rescuers and nonrescuers with respect to parental equity values; approximately 45% of rescuers, nonrescuers, and bystanders mentioned them. But words and phrases characterizing care—the need to be helpful, hospitable, concerned, and loving—were voiced significantly more often by rescuers as they recalled the values they learned from their parents or other most influential person (44% of rescuers, 25% of nonrescuers, and 21% of bystanders)."

were sleeping outside and he told me the truth: 'Because if somebody comes to burn the house down we will not cook to death inside it.'" It was at this time that Rusesabagina first heard about a distinction existing between people in Rwanda and also, he reports, failed to understand it. His father explained that "The people who had come to stay with us were known as 'Tutsis,' … and there were people roaming about who hated them. It was hard for me to understand because they looked just like us" (Rusesabagina 2006: 13–14). While his feelings on the matter undoubtedly would have solidified much later in life, there is no mistaking the feeling of commonality he must have experienced on seeing "one strange boy about my age. His shorts were filthy. There were cuts on his feet, as if he had been walking a long way" (Rusesabagina 2006: 13). His own early childhood was one of safety and love, but this boy—with whom he likely would have had much in common—had already experienced terrible fear, pain, and violence because of a largely invisible difference.

While Rusesabagina does not recount either playing or conversing with this Tutsi boy, an equally formative experience involves another young Tutsi, one he knew well and with whom he closely identified. Only 3 years after the events that led to the arrival of the refugees, Rusesabagina (2006: 19) befriended a boy named Gerard; the two were best friends, walked to school together from the age of 8 years old, "had both come from mixed families and we had a lot in common in the way we viewed the world." Rusesabagina (2006: 19) recalls that they "had grown up together—played soccer together, talked about girls, made fun of each other, wondered together about our future careers, speculated about who we would marry." In a short vignette, between two longer passages about the colonial history of Rwanda, he recounts the day in 1973 that Gerard was expelled from school as part of a Rwandan Hutu reprisal campaign for the terrible violence led by Tutsi against the Hutu in neighboring Burundi the year before. At the age of 19, Gerard, who was a gifted student, was suddenly on a list of undesirables and was barred from any further schooling. Rusesabagina (2006: 28) laments for his friend, who "never quite recovered…. He later moved to Kigali, where he landed a clerical job in a bank. But he was always plagued by the image of what he might have become had he been allowed to continue his education." In addition, their friendship was irreparably damaged at the moment when one boy was allowed to remain in school and the other was expelled. Understandably, "there was a taint of sadness, and even anger, that always hung over our friendship. I was one thing in the blood and he was another and there was nothing either of us could do to change it" (Rusesabagina 2006: 28).

Perhaps even more than the obvious waste of Gerard's talents and sadness of a lost friendship, the important lesson that Rusesabagina (2006: 19) takes away, about "a bloodline inside me that divided me from people that I loved," goes on to shape the way he treats others. The reason for the importance of this moment in Rusesabagina's life is that he is able to see the unfair treatment to which Gerard is subjected as both arbitrary and as a cruelty that might have just as easily affected him: "His name was on the list because his mother was a Hutu and his father was a Tutsi. My name was *not* on the list because my mother was a Tutsi and my father was a Hutu. … Had the parentage been reversed it would have been me walking down that lane of guava trees with my head down" (Rusesabagina 2006: 20). He feels lucky to have been allowed to remain in school, but also

experiences a deep hurt at both his friend's misfortune and at his own good fortune. "I loathed myself that day for having been lucky," he says. "It was the first time I became aware of myself not as 'Paul' but as a 'Hutu' (Rusesabagina 2006: 20–21). For many, that dawning awareness—coupled as it was with privilege—would have been a boon; indeed, Rusesabagina (2006: 20) reports that the Tutsi students were barred from entering the classroom by their Hutu counterparts, those who had "laughed, played, and gossiped together just twenty-four hours before." But for him, the distinction that had not previously seemed to exist and now loomed before him was an accidental one; that it helped him and hurt others was no cause for celebration. Instead, he felt guilt at his own accidental privilege as a Hutu. That Rusesabagina felt the pangs of conscience at this defining moment was no accident: he had been raised to distance himself from the privileges tied to ethnicity and to care about others, even those he might not know. It should be no surprise, then, that he now mourned the loss of his best friend's education as his own.[11]

When things were at their worst in Rwanda, it was clear that Rusesabagina would eschew the privilege of his Hutu ethnicity, identifying instead with his Tutsi neighbors and feeling a sort of solidarity with them. As I have argued to this point, his experiences made him quite a different person from anyone who might have been tempted to make an arrangement to save himself and his family at the expense of others. Indeed, he recognizes the similarity between his situation and the one that his father faced years earlier (Rusesabagina 2006: 84). Unlike so many who fell into line with the program of genocidal violence or who simply kept quiet, then, Rusesabagina became outspoken in his opposition to the Hutu Power mentality and the massacres that followed from it. Many undoubtedly felt as he did, but few turned that opposition into action. As Gourevitch (1998: 141) points out, "The riddle to Paul was that so many of his countrymen had chosen to embrace inhumanity." And Rusesabagina notes that he "was disappointed by most of my friends, who immediately changed with that genocide. I used to see them just as gentlemen, and when I saw them with the killers I was disappointed" (Gourevitch 1998: 141). His own opposition was critical to the way he thought about himself; before the genocide, he had been a man who voiced his opinion and to do otherwise would have been a betrayal, not only of the refugees under his protection but also of himself.

11 Oliner and Oliner (1988: 174) argue that "What distinguished rescuers from nonrescuers was their tendency to be moved by pain. Sadness and helplessness aroused their empathy. More frequently than others, rescuers were likely to say 'I can't feel good if others around me are sad,' 'Seeing people cry upsets me,' 'I get very upset when I see an animal in pain,' 'It upsets me to see helpless people,' and 'I get angry when I see someone hurt.'" It is not entirely clear whether these feelings stem from sympathy with the other or from guilt associated with not being in pain oneself; most likely, the combination of these feelings share the responsibility for the behavior of rescuers. In the case of Carl Wilkens, described above, the guilt or shame arising from his sense of safety expressed itself not only as empathy but also as anger toward others in similar positions of security:

> They gave a 72-hour window for all the foreigners to leave. I sat on the front porch of our house there, and I watched the buses come down the road from the city and go up the road out towards the airport, and the trucks and the cars [leaving]. This sadness just kind of came over me, because now, if people in Rwanda ever needed help…now was the time; and everybody's leaving…. This thing didn't end in a couple of days like we thought it [would]; it didn't end in a week or two like we thought it would. Somebody's going to do something. By the time the genocide was over, I was so angry at America—America the beautiful, America the brave (Barker 2004*a*).

Rusesabagina recounts an early act of defiance against orders he considered foolish and pointless. At some point, the Rwandan president decided that his portrait should be worn by the citizens of his country, especially those who might be considered prominent themselves. To that end, he designed pins with his portrait in the center and sold them to local administrators, businessmen, the clergy, and—of course—hotel employees. Rusesabagina (2006: 55) reports that he chose not to wear the pin, even at the anniversary celebration of Rwanda's independence—held at his hotel, the Mille Collines—where he greeted the president: "I suppose it was my private act of rebellion against President Juvenal Habyarimana, who I considered a criminal and a blowhard." Despite attracting a considerable amount of negative attention from Habyarimana's retinue, he continued to protest against the portrait pin. At first, Rusesabagina was threatened, then he was put under surveillance, and finally he was escorted to a meeting at the office of the president, where several of the president's men screamed at him for hours. And yet he continued to arrive at work without the pin adorning his suit, earning him daily meetings with the president's men. By the end, it seems to have become something of a farce:

> It went on like this every day for a month. I was no longer working at the hotel, just reporting to the office of the president. His thugs became my daily escorts. We started to get used to each other and exchanged morning pleasantries before the daily screaming began. And I would always tell them the same thing: "I really don't see why I should wear the medal" (Rusesabagina 2006: 57).

Of course, he recognizes that this stubborn opposition was risky—given the dangerous combination in Habyarimana of power and insecurity—noting that "I should have just worn the stupid thing to make the flunkies happy and not risked my job or my family's welfare on a symbolic matter" (Rusesabagina 2006: 60). Symbolic though it was, however, Rusesabagina (2006: 60) is clear on its personal importance to him: "It would have cost me a huge amount of self-respect to have worn that dictator's face on my jacket."

This experience of challenging authority seems not to have any serious negative repercussions for Rusesabagina at the time and also confirms for him the importance of standing up for one's convictions. That said, it likely made him a more visible target than he otherwise would have been. When the massacres begin, for example, it seems to Rusesabagina (2006: 87) that he "really should have been dead" and that "In retrospect it is a miracle that my name was not on the lists of the undesirables that the Presidential Guard were sent out to eliminate in the first two days."[12] Nonetheless, Rusesabagina is not tempted to alter his oppositional stance. With regard to his enduring—and even more obviously life-threatening—opposition during the genocide, he simply tells Gourevitch (1998: 127), "I kept telling them, 'I don't agree with what you're doing,' just as openly as I'm telling you now. … That's all I did—what I felt like doing. Because I never agree with killers. I didn't agree with them. I refused, and I told them so." And yet the ability to maintain such opposition in the face of known killers—some of whom carried bloodied weapons and informed him that their intention was to

12 Among the first casualties of the genocide in Kigali were Tutsi politicians and prominent moderate Hutu, such as Rusesabagina, who were not outspoken members of Hutu Power.

kill him—seems to require a far more complete explanation. Gourevitch (1998: 133) "asked Paul … why his refusal was heeded. He said, 'I don't know,' and again he laughed. 'I don't know how it was, but I refused so many things.'" Why was Rusesabagina so intent on maintaining his opposition and how could he do so when he seemed to be staring into the abyss? Apart from simply believing that he was in the right, it is also clear that Rusesabagina held an outlook on life at the time that distinguishes him from a great many of his countrymen. As he told me, "I knew I was going to die and I became committed to saying 'no' until that time when they killed me" (Rusesabagina 2005). He felt, as so many others did in Rwanda, the full weight of his mortality; he became powerfully aware that his life was bounded and that it would end soon. Unlike a great many others, however, Rusesabagina truly confronted this eventuality and recognized that no amount of bargaining could change his fate. He would die, no matter what he did, and so it became relatively unimportant to him whether he could buy a few more hours, days, or even years with his compliance. Gourevitch (1998: 118) recalls the following conversation with him:

> "Sometimes," Paul told me, "I felt myself dead."
> "Dead?" I said. "Already dead?"
> Paul considered for a moment. Then he said, "Yeah."

What would undoubtedly be thought an incredibly morbid and bizarre feeling at any other time likely saved everyone who could make it to the Mille Collines during the genocide.

None of this is to suggest that Rusesabagina became cavalier with his own life or the lives of those in his care; if he had done so, the story would have most certainly turned out very differently. He knew very well that he stood between the killers and one of their most desired targets—"Inside the Mille Collines was the remnant of what might be called the 'Tutsi aristocracy'"—and "was convinced we would be invaded by the militia any day. I knew also that that would mark the day of my death" (Rusesabagina 2006: 138). Rather than giving up, however, Rusesabagina was able to bargain for the safety of those in his care because he was more concerned with living well in the moment than with working toward a safe and secure future for himself. He focused his attention on turning a terrible situation into a bearable one for the refugees and also on his vocal disagreement with those who reveled in the violence that surrounded the hotel. And although he spent his days bargaining with the killers, maintaining close connections with some of the architects and sponsors of the genocide, he refused to offer anything other than alcohol, money, or space in the hotel for their own refugees. He did not make it easy for anyone to kill him, but he also refused to use his contacts to remove himself and his family from an increasingly hopeless situation. Instead, Rusesabagina (2006: 138) lumped himself in with the refugees in the hotel: "We were all condemned prisoners, but we did not know the date of our execution, and we woke up every morning wondering if we were in our last few hours of consciousness." Faced with such circumstances, Rusesabagina found it far more important to maintain his sense of self, his integrity, and his values instead of worrying about precisely when he would be murdered. As Gourevitch (1998: 141) writes, "Paul had devoted all his diverse energies to avoiding death—his own and others'—but what he feared

even more than a violent end was living or dying as what he called a 'fool.'" At those times when death seems most imminent and when one truly confronts the notion that life will come to an end, a space opens up for asking questions about the sort of person one has been and about what one might do with the time that remains. In other words, the kind of life that one lives becomes far more important than the length of that life, for it is the way we live that will be remembered by others and these memories offer the only way that our existence might continue after death catches up with us.

Of course, it was not simply foolishness that Rusesabagina sought to avoid, as he points out after more careful consideration. One might, after all, find some way to excuse foolishness and many of those who did not act to help others during the genocide have attempted to do just that.[13] But Rusesabagina understood, from the very outset of the violence, that his fate was bound up with those who came to him for protection. When the possibility of a United Nations evacuation is presented to him, after a month in the hotel, he decides to send his family and remain behind with the refugees who had been unable to secure invitations abroad from foreign friends. His reasoning is that "If I left and people were killed I would never be at peace. My food would never taste good again; I could never enjoy my freedom. It would be as though I had killed those people myself" (Rusesabagina 2006: 146–147). And so Rusesabagina elected to remain in the hotel with the refugees, certain that he would not be able to save them from their fate and committed to dying with them rather than embracing a longer life in the absence of the principles he learned in his youth. In doing so, Rusesabagina commits to a final rejection of the privilege associated with his ethnicity and his connections, along with the guilt he seems to feel about them.

That the promise of the UN evacuation turned immediately into a deathtrap from which his family and the others were barely able to escape—back to the prison of the hotel—does not ultimately matter. The important point is that Rusesabagina could not conceive of doing anything other than what he did, though he assumed he was sealing his own fate in the process. Indeed, the only time he allowed himself to think about the future was in the early morning, when he went alone to the roof of the hotel, and his thoughts focused on the only future he could imagine, one not of rescue but of violent death:

> These mornings on my roof, with the sky melting to blue from purple, I took the time to prepare myself for what I knew was coming. I was go-

13 Consider, for example, the case of Augustin Misago, the Bishop of Gikongoro, who failed to protect 82 Tutsi schoolchildren during the genocide. When Gourevitch (1998: 138) asks him about the fate of those children, he suggests that he actually worked to increase their police protection but "The unfortunate thing was that among those policemen there were some accomplices of the *interahamwe*. I couldn't have known that." In further contrasting Misago with Rusesabagina, Gourevitch (1998: 139) presses the bishop about the influence he might have had on the killers and Misago tries to exonerate himself and the many other clergy who did not protect people from the violence: "When men become like devils, and you don't have an army, what can you do? All paths were dangerous. So how could I influence? Even the Church—we are not like extraterrestrials who can foresee things. We could have been victims of a lack of information. When one is poorly informed, one hesitates to take a position." Gourevitch (1998: 139) concludes his treatment of Misago by articulating his profound doubt about the position that the bishop hopes to adopt with regard to this particular massacre, namely, that "he had been a profoundly ignorant man who was duped by demons."

> ing to die. I had done far too much to cross the architects of the genocide. The only question would be the exact time, and the method of my death, and that of my wife and our children…. There was a stash of money in the hotel safe. The money was for a last bribe, something to pay the militia to let me and my family be shot rather than face a machete (Rusesabagina 2006: 134).

Certain that things would end very badly for himself and those he loved, and that the only difference he could ultimately make would involve the manner of their execution, Rusesabagina chose to keep up his opposition to the violence that surrounded him.

The feeling that his actions would not make a difference, that the refugees would die either way, did not diminish the importance of undertaking those actions. Rusesabagina understood that everyone in the hotel would die one way or another, sooner or later. This is not a callous statement—though it might very much sound like it—as much as it is a simple statement of fact. The way in which they might die could vary a great deal, an eventuality for which he planned, but the outcome would be the same. Everyone must finally die, whether he succeeded or failed in foiling the plans of the *génocidaires* and whether or not a rescue mission finally came to take everyone out of the hotel. On the other hand, his actions determined who he was; they spoke to his character and ensured that he lived his life authentically, even in the face of grave danger, just as his father had done. That his actions turned out to make a difference, delaying the eventuality of death and ensuring that the 1,200 people in his care would not be added to the tally of the genocide's victims, has made him a celebrity of moral heroism. Had everything turned out differently, however, Rusesabagina would still be an important example of moral heroism, who went to his death for refusing to turn his back on those in need. It is certainly preferable to be a living international celebrity than a dead one, but when we face the fact of our mortality—when we give up all hope for continued existence—we are able to think clearly about the sort of life we can choose to live. In doing so, we open up a space for the possibility of heroic action and the only sort of permanence available to human beings, namely, that of being remembered by others after we are gone.[14]

It is important, then, to tell the stories of those who did what they could to help others, even if they were ultimately much less successful than Rusesabagina in saving lives. For in celebrating moral heroism of any kind, we might motivate others to act heroically, whether in a similar situation to Rusesabagina's or a

14 One such example is of Captain Diagne Mbaye, a Senegalese peacekeeper with the United Nations Assistance Mission to Rwanda (UNAMIR), who was killed by mortar fragments fired by the Rwandan Patriotic Front at an *interahamwe* roadblock (cf. Barker 2004*b*; Dallaire 2005: 400; Peterson 1994: 7). While not nearly as well-known as Rusesabagina's story, Mbaye was briefly featured in the 2004 PBS "Frontline" documentary, "Ghosts of Rwanda," where he was remembered for rescuing the two children of slain Rwandan Prime Minister Agathe Uwilingiyimana. Greg Barker (2004*b*), the documentary's producer, writes that "On one occasion he found a group of 25 Tutsis hiding in a house in Nyamirambo, a Kigali neighborhood that was particularly dangerous. Capt. Mbaye ferried the Tutsis to the UN headquarters in groups of five—on each trip passing through 23 militia checkpoints with a Jeep-load of Tutsis." UNAMIR commanding officer Lt. Gen. Roméo Dallaire (2005: 400) wrote that Mbaye "had personally saved the lives of dozens upon dozens of Rwandans. Braving direct and indirect fire, mines, mobs, disease and any number of other threats, he eagerly accepted any mission that would save lives."

world away from such difficult choices. That said, more than simply telling these stories, it is also necessary to look closely at the motivation behind the brave actions of men like Rusesabagina. In doing so, we can learn a great deal about heroism and we can untangle heroic behavior from extraordinariness. In general, it is difficult for most people to believe Rusesabagina's claim that he is an ordinary man, just as it is difficult not to feel awed in his presence. His actions, on the surface, seem too extraordinary. And, indeed, in looking closely at the man behind those actions, it seems clear that Rusesabagina was quite different—even before the genocide—than a great many of his countrymen. He was far less willing to adopt an extreme position, and far more tolerant and self-aware, than most were. In this, he was extraordinary for his time and place. But this is not to say that only extraordinary people can act heroically, nor is it to suggest that he is wrong about the way he sees himself. Indeed, there is something extraordinary about Rusesabagina's ordinariness. Rather than seeming remote from the rest of us, his example can help us to think about how we might act in his place. If an ordinary man—simply "a bourgeois hotel manager, after all" (Gourevitch 1998: 127)—can act so heroically, might we also be capable of it?

Fortunately, for most of us, a terrible situation that calls for such heroism is unlikely to arise. But if it did, most of us would like to think that we would not be so quick to trade our values for an extra few hours, days, or years of life, that we would stand up for others. In the absence of these life-or-death situations, we would do well to think about the role played by human rights in our lives today; from the safety and security of the global North and of the classroom, for example, we might do a great deal more to assist those who are suffering across the globe or in our own backyards. While Peter Singer (1972: 231) insists that we are required to act "if it is in our power to prevent something very bad from happening, without thereby sacrificing anything morally significant," he is well aware that the vast majority of us do not respond as he believes we must. But Singer leaves it at that, claiming that we ought to feel compelled even though that argument does not, in fact, compel us. If one of our goals is to advance the cause of human rights among the safe and secure, to get "the strong to turn their piggy little eyes to the suffering of the weak," we would likely do well to follow the argument of Richard Rorty (1998: 182) instead. For Rorty, in rejecting the concept of duty in favor of solidarity, points us in the direction of Paul Rusesabagina, whose own sense of sympathy led him to act a good deal more heroically than even Singer requires.[15] While we might never face a similarly horrific situation, the way to be sure we could pass it seems clear. We can follow the example

15 On this point, Rorty (1989: 196) is particularly eloquent and it is useful to quote him at some length:

> The right way to take the slogan 'We have obligations to human beings simply as such' is as a means of reminding ourselves to keep trying to expand our sense of 'us' as far as we can. That slogan urges us to extrapolate further in the direction set by certain events in the past—the inclusion among 'us' of the family in the next cave, then of the tribe across the river, then of the tribal confederation beyond the mountains, then of the unbelievers beyond the seas (and, perhaps last of all, of the menials who, all this time, have been doing our dirty work). This is a process which we should try to keep going. We should stay on the lookout for marginalized people—people who we still instinctively think of as 'they' rather than 'us.' We should try to notice our similarities with them. The right way to construe the slogan is as urging us to *create* a more expansive sense of solidarity than we presently have.

put forward by these moral heroes, working toward greater personal identification with those who initially seem unlike us, thinking critically about the values that have been instilled in us by our families, and making choices that take into account the kind of life we want to live in the limited amount of time we have.

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