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The Journal of Mind and Behavior  
Summer 2004, Volume 25, Number 3  
Pages 267-270  
ISSN 0271-0137

**Collision of Wills.** Roger V. Gould. Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 2003, 211 pages, \$18.00 paper.

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To die is to leave unfinished business. We live, our lives end, and the sad jest of it all is that nothing else does. Even for the anomaly who "lived a full life," the question remains as to what the deceased might have accomplished if only he or she had lived longer. With creative people, well-intentioned friends and family members often try to force the departed's unfinished work into the category of "finished," to varying degrees of failure. In literature and rhetoric, James Berlin's *Rhetoric, Poetics and Cultures* comes to mind. Though the text is a credit to Berlin's place in his field, he died before its completion. Was the draft that was published even close to Berlin's final vision? It is unlikely. Witness the proliferation of "rag and bone stew" recordings released after a pop star's demise or the veneration of a thespian's final curtain, no matter how compromised the material might have been. Bruce Lee's film *Game of Death* (1978) saw release half a decade after his demise but differed severely from Lee's original vision. Rather than represent Lee's philosophy of Jeet Kune Do on celluloid, the film resembled something closer to the hackneyed martial arts films he loathed, with stand-ins donning Lee's yellow track suit to finish out the film. Roger V. Gould did not live to see the publication of his text *Collision of Wills*, dying from leukemia before its completion. While the insights within are significant, it was and remains an unfinished work.

It is a common aside in British stage comedy that when a person is arrested and escorted off stage by a police officer, he or she turns to the audience and says, "Tis a fair cop. Society is to blame." Gould would agree, as that is the central thesis of his work. "Why we fight" joins "who we fight" as the two points Gould attempts to explain in his book. It is not the authorities, but rather the people on equal footing that are the root of the problem. Most conflicts that result in violence happen between people who know each other, whether the person committing the violent act is a repeat or one-time offender (pp. 4-5). With this knowledge, Gould seeks to view "interpersonal violence as a product of social relations . . . rather than as an expression of individual personality types" (p. 5). To return to the "why," Gould points to the possibility of one feeling dishonored (p. 6). Preserving honor is as important in some cultures as preserving material wealth (p. 7).

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Chapter Two focuses upon dominance relations. Gould notes that the four tendencies underlying any discussion of domination is first, that domination is not abstract but has a lot of content. Second, domination is “almost always seen first and foremost as a matter of subordination of one group by another.” Third, domination is understood as a matter of differences in welfare. Last, discussions of domination portray it as “a system resistant to conflict and to change” (p. 31). Gould argues that domination is a person or group exercising control over another person and not the specific way it is exercised (p. 31). Of the scenarios he discusses, a school setting comes close to mirroring dominance in an honor society although it is, for Gould, “a form that is somewhat less extreme” (p. 47). A certain group or, although not very often, groups of students hold the fates of non-elite students in their hands. Whether the student is elevated to blackboard brahmin or relegated to social pariah status is that group’s decision. Other groups do not wish to play the game and form “counter-groups” such as goths, nerds, and others whose memberships are more interchangeable, depending on the size of the school (p. 48). Gould writes, “popular students do in fact dominate the non-elites who do not defy the mainstream status ranking” (p. 48).

Is this too simple though? Is Gould speaking from personal experience? One might agree or disagree based on personal experience. The ugly truth is that although school relations are supposed to be symmetrical, especially with the institution of mainstreaming, the phasing out of class rank (an appropriate, though redundant term) and tracking, the elites still force oligarchy on the counter-groups, often out of spite. One wonders if Gould found the shootings in Colorado shocking *because* they occurred, or because they do not occur *more often*? It is a missed opportunity for inclusion due to his passing.

Although Americans pay lip service to notions of equality, given the choice, most would rather dominate another group or groups. According to Gould, equality causes more problems than it eliminates. He claims, “[C]onflict is harder to resolve, and violent conflict thus more likely to occur, when cues concerning which person outranks the others are absent or mixed . . . . [I]n many situations [the cues] are derived from mutually recognized and explicit names for relations and roles” (p. 70). Some of the examples of groups where conflict arises include but are not limited to friendship groups, crowds in a public setting, and neighborhoods (p. 71). In this situation, equality is problematic because not one party has status or seniority over the other. Gould postulates that homicides result from the response by one party being publicly humiliated at the hands of another. By terminating the life of a rival, the revenge-seeking party has, in his or her own mind, for the moment, achieved the dominant position (pp. 95–96).

To move from the specific to the general, Gould analyzes group interaction in Chapter Four, “Solidarity and Group Conflict.” Gould explains, “[O]bserved group solidarity is a crucial ingredient in establishing intergroup rank — more crucial, in some contexts, than the properties most often invoked in accounting for the strength of social groups” (p. 110). It is “more crucial,” because it is only observable by action. Furthermore, “[I]t happens quite frequently that members of groups with an apparent common interest do not act collectively to achieve it” (p. 112). Gould states, “Unless groups have a reputation for following through on solidarity expressed prior to violent conflict, such expressions of solidarity constitute ‘cheap talk’ and will not convey information about what will happen” (p. 119). Lack of solidarity causes adversity to come from within as well as from without (p. 136).

Ignoring for a moment that areas like Northern Ireland, the Gaza Strip, and the former Warsaw Pact nations have witnessed terrorist attacks for decades, all of which Gould as an educated non-insular scholar would have been aware of, his death becomes more of a tragedy as one can only speculate how he would have reacted to the attacks on the East Coast in late summer, 2001. Had he been healthy enough, *would* he, *could* he have included a discussion of the attacks in the text? Seemingly, America went from a, or *the* super power, to an honor society in the aftermath of the attacks.

Sadly, *Collision of Wills* seems eerily prescient: we are in the middle of a war that has taken not only the lives of too many soldiers, but also civilians on both sides. Perhaps Gould is stating the obvious when he says, "The second way in which conflict can have a group character involves generalization to nondisputants, that is, expansion of conflict to include people who have not actively taken a side, but who are connected in some way to one of the parties" (p. 122). George W. Bush declared, "You're either with us or against us." His statement is a logical fallacy. However, in the new world disorder, the idea that it is possible to be against the war but not the warriors is regarded as irrational. Both sides embrace this view.

It was a war declared out of revenge for the attacks on American soil, though the target shifted to a red herring in Saddam Hussein, and it is revenge Gould focuses on as a way that honor societies "resolve" conflict. He states, "the social order as a whole selects a dispute-resolution mechanism that will contribute to its own stability. Regardless of the genesis of blood revenge as a practice, the expectation that it will follow a deadly attack deters aggression" (p. 127). The online beheading of Nick Berg took place in retaliation for the photographs of the physical and mental torture of Iraqi prisoners at Abu-Ghraib prison. Repeated retaliations from both sides thus continued, with varying numbers of lives lost in each attack.

Having focused on the individual in Chapter Three and groups in Chapter Four, Gould shifts to groups interacting globally in Chapter Five. Gould says, "a struggle for rank in one relation however it is resolved, can set off further struggles in neighboring relations, triggering yet other struggles" (p. 152). The effects of one group sets off a chain reaction that affects other groups (pp. 163–164). To shift from the present and give matters additional historical context, one need only look at the civil unrest in the world during the late 1960s and early 1970s. What started as nonviolent resistance in the pursuit of equal rights predominantly by the youth culture in the United States took the form of armed urban guerilla warfare against the state over in Europe, perpetrated by the likes of Italy's Red Army Faction and West Germany's Baader–Meinhof Gang.

In Gould's "final" chapter, "Honor and the Individual," he sets up a dichotomy with one end composed of those individuals who "are collections of momentary selves that, because they inhabit the same body, are strung into a single self by social convention, yet each momentary self behaves like a distinct person who pursues his or her own well-being at the expense of other selves in the sequence" (p. 167). The patron saint of such people for Gould would be Holly Golightly (p. 167). At the other end are those who are more aware of how their actions in the past and present will have an effect on future selves and how they are portrayed. Those who think of how their consequences will appear over time are regarded as closer to "Atticus Finch" in nature (p. 168).

If the most wonderful aspects of Gould's work need to be singled out, here are two examples. Gould explains, "indifference to harm is simply indifference to our future selves" (p. 172). It is not an overgeneralization to say we all know people

who act without considering possible repercussions, whether physically or socially. Second, Gould notes that, "Sensitivity to insult dictates strong connections from the present self to past selves, albeit connections that become weaker as selves recede. To say that an honor-obsessed individual is as angry a month after a verbal slight as the rest of us might be after a day is also to say that he is more loyal to his predecessor selves than we are" (p. 173). If one were to be honest, he or she would also admit to holding grudges that are months to years to even decades old. Is all of this bad blood healthy? Is it right? Unlike Gould's tragic passing at thirty-nine and its halting of his unfinished work, value judgments do not enter into it. It just is.

As for Gould's work, though, to return to matters addressed in the introduction, yes, it is an unfinished piece. Peter Bearman, in the foreword, explains that "Everything was completed except the part that sets the stage for the reader, describes the context of the book . . . and identifies, in retrospect, the scope conditions for the arguments made" (p. ix). The task falls to Bearman, and while his attempt is admirable, he is not Gould. Gould did not, according to Bearman, consider this part of the book important for the review process (p. ix). Furthermore, the text lacks a "conclusion" chapter. Gould felt such chapters to be simply restatements of the points made in the main text, and therefore, unnecessary (p. x). Without a beginning or conclusion to bracket the text, all the audience has is the body copy of an unfinished work that is closer in composition to a ransom note than a scholarly piece, held together only by virtue of being bound together on the same pages.

Bearman admits to editing the text only slightly (p. xi). Thus, the book is not without some faults. If Gould's loved ones did not want to corrupt what he left by altering too much of the manuscript he submitted for review, I understand, but at the same time, I do not agree with their stance. Letting emotion override reason weakens the text. Whatever the reasons, the problems remain. In his historical overview of gestures first being recognized as a slight at one point and a compliment at another (p. 8), Gould neglects to mention where a gesture can be both. In Manchester, Liverpool, and Ireland, calling someone a "daft bugger" is as much an expression of love as it is a disparaging remark. Secondly, Gould writes, "there may be examples of societies in which it is not insulting to spit in someone's face (though, again, I know of none)" [p. 11]; which shows his hand. Again, one should look to England and its geospecific version of the punk rock subculture where "gobbing" is on par with presenting someone with a bouquet of roses.

While both points on insults are arguably minor, a more problematic one is in Chapter Four. It seems Gould spends an unnecessary amount of time discussing the violent eruptions between individuals and groups of individuals on the island of Corsica. The fact that the word "vendetta" was originally Corsican is interesting (p. 121), but it is flimsy justification for the time spent. In addition, while the documented fifty-nine vendetta attacks that occurred between 1840 and 1865 in Corsica are also interesting from an historical standpoint (p. 131), one wonders why Gould could not have found more recent and locally available records. His discovery of this data provided the genesis for this work (p. x), however, what it started out as and what it became, or was becoming, are two different things. Lastly, placing an appendix for his discussion at the end of the chapter throws off the text (pp. 137-145). This should have been moved to the last part of the book.