

Routledge Handbook of Dehumanization

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Preface and Introduction

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Editor's Preface

"A stranger on a train, and you're going down
They're gonna run you out of this town
I wonder what your story is, why you in the gutter lie
And who it was who ruined you, I wonder why?"

(The Tiger Lillies, Devil's Fairground)

Take the civilians that are tortured, raped, or killed in the shameful line-up of wars and violent conflicts that we have stockpiled over historical time, with no end in sight. Take that homeless people, sick people, refugees, or those deemed 'racially inferior' are often treated in a far from respectful manner, likened to bacteria, vermin, or waste, and treated alike. Take the age-old view that women are only a 'second' sex with all the consequences this view has had for the oppression and the violence women have had to face. Take abusive work relations as part of which people are treated as exploitable machines. These are all paradigmatic examples of dehumanization occurring as part of our contemporary social world.

Dehumanization happens when people are depicted, regarded, or treated as not human or less human. As a result, the dehumanized might, in fact, end up – in 'the devil's fairground' – with less than a human life. What 'being human' means as part of dehumanization varies, is often idealized, and is rarely about an easy-to-capture matter.

Admittedly, the just-given characterization of dehumanization is almost trivially true. It simply points to the term 'human,' without specifying it further, and the prefix 'de,' which is used in words borrowed from Latin to indicate separation, privation, or negation. I start with such a thin notion since not much agreement exists beyond it in the scholarship on dehumanization, not even with respect to the above examples. Most scholars will count them as dehumanizing, while others will not. The skeptics will admit that the cases are describable as cases where the individuals are depicted, regarded, or treated with less moral standing and less respect than other human beings. Yet, they will argue, these disparaged individuals are depicted, regarded, and treated in that way *qua* human beings. Most scholars will count the hatred that is part of genocides, rape, torture, and similar atrocities as dehumanizing, but some will not. Hatred, the latter will argue, involves per definition recognition of sorts. Despite these disagreements, the mentioned

cases form a cluster of cases that most scholars will accept as *dehumanizing in some sense*. That also holds for the much studied, most often quoted, and in that sense paradigmatic if not enigmatic example of dehumanizing atrocities of the 20th century: the Holocaust.

Since dehumanization often leads to inhuman treatment of people, it also holds that understanding dehumanization, the goal of this *Handbook*, can contribute to describing, explaining, and eventually preventing or at least exiting the resulting inhumanity, whether that consists in killing, enslaving, raping, torturing, hunting, or other forms of humiliation, oppression, subordination, coercion, exploitation, marginalization, inequality, injustice, discrimination, etc. The related atrocities go by different names: murder, torture, rape, slavery, crimes against humanity, religious violence, genocides, politicides, ethnicides, democides, ecocides, etc.

If dehumanization happens at the level of depiction or attitudes, it *often leads to* inhuman treatment. If dehumanization is actualized, then it *consists in* inhuman treatment of people, which amounts to a less than human life of people, or to the end of that life. Yet, neither implies that all inhuman treatments are due to dehumanization. There are clearly instances of inhuman treatment for which there are alternative and better descriptions and explanations rather than pointing to dehumanization. And even in cases in which dehumanization is descriptively and explanatorily adequate, it will be far from the complete story. In short, dehumanization is not in everything and never the whole story when 'man's inhumanity to man' is at issue; but it is an existing phenomenon and a key aspect of inhumanity.

Historically viewed, dehumanization is the dark side of humanism. Since the latter mainly belongs to the history of the intellectual traditions that descend from Greek Antiquity (conventionally called the 'West'), dehumanization does so too, even though it exists in other traditions as well. This *Handbook* focuses on dehumanization as part of the history of the West, without denying that it can be found in other traditions.

Humanism frames and opposes dehumanization by two oscillating aspects of it: First, there is the idea of a universal *humanity* – that all human beings belong to the same kind and are equal in that respect. Second, there is the idea of a shared reciprocal *humanness* – that there are properties (capacities of humans), such as rationality, morality, civility, etc. that characterize how humans are, and how they treat and should treat each other reciprocally in specifically human ways. The different kinds of optimisms that were sometimes connected to humanism (mainly inscribed in ideas about different kinds of progress: educational, intellectual, moral, legal, social, etc.) have by now faded away considerably in many quarters of intellectual life. There is also an increasing awareness that humanness has often been defined in quite biased ways, and that this needs to change. Nonetheless, that there is a shared humanity and a shared reciprocal humanness (in some form) is still among the most fundamental ontological assumptions about human beings, at least as the ontology of the human developed in the West. It has found over time its scientific and philosophical echo in theories of human nature, moral standing, equality, and justice. It has found public codification, most importantly in the various legal initiatives and declarations concerning human rights, crimes against humanity, etc. Since dehumanization is the direct mirror of the notion that there is a shared humanity and a reciprocal humanness, it is a more elementary notion compared to humiliation or loss of dignity, which are related but richer notions.

The question that drives this *Handbook*, which is the first of its kind, is this: How can one make sense of dehumanization across disciplinary boundaries of the humanities and the social sciences?

Mapping dehumanization studies

Maria Kronfeldner

This Introduction aims to map the landscape of dehumanization studies, with its history, multiple facets, steep abysses, and muddy waters. The multidisciplinary field of dehumanization studies is rather young and vibrant but with an age-old implicit heritage. It has some stable islands of disciplinary discourses, or interpretations that follow certain traditions of thought and use a specific set of methods – for example, historical, phenomenological, and conceptual analysis, or the various empirical methods from the social sciences. Overall, the field is rather patchy. And, as any important phenomenon studied, dehumanization has its staunch skeptics.

The *Handbook* aims to revisit, connect, consolidate, and synthesize the insights that have been reached so far, in order to arrive at a new solid plateau for making progress in understanding dehumanization. It aims to do so without reducing the complexity in the phenomena at issue and without overextending the limits of the category of dehumanization. The aim is not to see dehumanization everywhere; the aim is to understand it in its multifaceted depth.

Section 1.1 will briefly portray the history of the field. The systematically minded Sections 1.2-1.5 will guide the reader through the resulting rugged landscape represented in the *Handbook's* contributions. Section 1.2 distinguishes between different realizations, levels, and forms of dehumanization and will point to three ontological contrasts operative in it. Section 1.3 will add some remarks on the variety of targets of dehumanization, its valence, and emotional aspects. Section 1.4 is on causes, functions, and consequences of dehumanization, and on the prospects for reducing or undoing it. I will close the systematic overview in Section 1.5 with a discussion of some important theoretical complexities that arise in studying dehumanization. Most of the issues mentioned in Sections 1.2-1.5 are of crossdisciplinary concern – that is, they arise in most if not all subfields of dehumanization studies. This is the case even though – as Section 1.1 will show – the subfields focus on different subissues and might even use a different analytic language to address the same subissue. Section 1.6 will situate dehumanization studies in the broader intellectual landscape of debates about the ‘human’ in the humanities and social sciences. Readers who wish to first find out how dehumanization relates to posthumanism or transhumanism and like discussions are advised to first go to Section 1.6. Section 1.7 will describe the scope, limitations, and intended readership of the *Handbook*. Sections 1.1 and 1.7 will refer to the chapters’ individual contributions in a systematic and integrated rather than a linear manner. The reader can also find the abstracts of the individual contributions in the linear order of their appearance in Section 1.8.

1.1 Remarks on the history of the field

The term ‘dehumanization’ emerges in English around the turn of the 19th century. The *Oxford English Dictionary* quotes with respect to first usage from the 1818 diary of Thomas Moore (published 1853). While Moore (1779-1852), an Irish poet, wrote about a

dehumanized face of a boxer and was thus concerned with appearance of human bodies, usage was quickly broadened to include reference to social conditions. For instance, in his *Narrative of a visit to the Mauritius and South Africa* (1844) the English Quaker missionary James Backhouse (1794-1869) writes about a “fallen” world that he encountered, with conditions that are “gloomy,” “dark,” and “hopeless,” inhabited by “savage tribes.” About the latter, he asked, “By what means shall these be raised up to the condition of men? How shall these almost *dehumanized* creatures be formed into orderly societies?” (Backhouse 1844: 109; Emph. in the original)

The set of phenomena denoted by the term ‘dehumanization’, as it is used in practice and as it is studied in the *Handbook*, has certainly been addressed much earlier than the 19th century, and actually it has been since Greek antiquity. It has been addressed in particular by those who defended a shared humanity and humanness – that is, by the critics of those cases of dehumanization that showed up in social reality. Stuurman (this volume), Kontler (this volume), and Sebastiani (this volume) provide historical insights into that deep history of addressing dehumanization. The contexts, in which *avant-la-lettre* reflections on dehumanization occurred, certainly varied and did so not only in time but also in topical orientation. They were part of discussions on diversity, assimilation, exclusion, purity and danger, education, religious belief, sexuality, misogyny, hatred, wars, savagery, barbarism, cannibalism, slavery, racism, ethnocentrism, egocentrism, evolutionary thinking, anatomy, perfectibility and civility, progress, the exotic, missionary or colonial activities, public events, and so on.

As Stuurman (this volume) shows, there were times when dehumanization was not in need of justification. Aristotle, an example Stuurman mentions, lived at a time when a shift toward a critical discourse about dehumanization surfaced, and with it there rose the need to justify it in face of the critique. Aristotle’s defense of natural slavery, as Stuurman argues, is thus already a reaction to critical stances regarding the attitudes and treatment of slaves. Thus, the beginning of the intricate dialectic of humanization, dehumanization, and rehumanization, which the *Handbook* addresses, is also the beginning of what historians call the ‘invention of humanity’ – the historically increasing awareness and belief that there is a shared humanity and humanness (see Preface). This invention is ongoing, with oscillating boundaries of humanity and humanness ever since. Kontler (this volume), for instance, shows how contingent the standard of belonging to humanity was in the different debates about the human during the early Enlightenment: if expedient (in order to exclude certain people), the standard simply got adapted. And today? The boundaries of the human are still negotiated, and convenient adaptation of standards still occurs, even though the details in the strategies and the ontologies might have changed. Beliefs in ‘true religion,’ a worn strategy on which Stuurman and Kontler both report, are for some still the basis of an active category that allows the differentiation between ‘real’ humans and erroneous ones; for others, this strategy is replaced by the imagined community of a ‘nation,’ or a ‘race,’ etc. Us-versus-them thinking has never vanished fully, even though its contours changed. Nonetheless, the invention of humanity led to a universalist frame and, eventually, to a truly global era, with an ever-increasing global interdependence of people and states, an interdependence so deep that some simply took it for granted – till its current weight and vulnerability became fully exposed as part of the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic lockdown.

Even though the history of humanism and dehumanization extends beyond the West, as Stuurman (2017, this volume) shows, the *Handbook* sets its focus on the history of dehumanization in the West. Within the traditions of the West, it seems that the study of dehumanization (with or without using the word) surfaces whenever humanity looks at its very own atrocities (unfortunately, most of the times by looking back). It is thus not

surprising that the contemporary multidisciplinary field explicitly studying dehumanization has its starting point in reactions to the Second World War (WWII) and its atrocities, in particular the Holocaust. Arendt (1951, 1963, 1971) is most often mentioned in that respect. Arendt wrote about losing, first, the “right to have rights”, then, one’s moral personhood, and, finally, one’s individuality – three stages of dehumanization in the Nazi camps. She added her account of the “banality of evil,” which, in part, rested on her philosophical anthropology of the *vita active*, and on her claim that Adolf Eichmann and other perpetrators of the Holocaust were unable to *think* and were, thus, in that sense not (fully) human themselves.¹ Levi (1947), Améry (1966), Delbo (1970), and other Holocaust survivors added their own reflections and impressions on the loss of humanity as part of the horror they had to bear – and then witness. Brudholm and Lang (this volume, Brudholm 2008) refer to their narratives. Klemperer (1947) documented the dehumanized and dehumanizing language of the ‘Third Reich’ – the *lingua tertii imperii* (LTI). Sartre (1937), de Beauvoir (1949), and Fanon (1952) should also be mentioned as early sources for contemporary dehumanization studies, as Heinämaa and Jardine (this volume) stress, be it with respect to the colonial context or the gendered facets of dehumanization, or of their intersections. Montagu (1942, 1968, Montagu and Matson 1983), most known for his work on aggression and racism, also belongs to that history, as Milam (2019, this volume) shows. A core concern for Montagu was how modern technology increases the prevalence of dehumanization in contemporary society. In psychology, Allport’s (1954) account of prejudice and Goffman’s (1963) account of stigma can be regarded as early influences, not focused on dehumanization explicitly, but preparing the ground for studying dehumanization as part of social psychology.² These are just a few important examples from the post-WWII context.

The history of this impetus from the post-WWII intellectual climate, and its impact in the multiple fields of the humanities and social sciences with respect to dehumanization, still awaits in-depth analysis. It is a history that is beyond the scope of the *Handbook* since it is a metahistory of dehumanization studies, with its own challenges – not only because of the multidisciplinary involved, but also because it is a history that probably involves some underground, military-funded ‘secret rivers.’³ From what is readily available about that history, it is clear that the explicit study of dehumanization surfaced with considerable force during the Cold War, and in particular at the time of the Vietnam War. Taking the psychodynamic perspective of a therapist, Bernard et al. (1971) discussed dehumanization as a psychic defense mechanism that accompanies indifference and apathy, which function as responses to social problems or grave threats, such as nuclear annihilation or pandemic outbreaks. Kelman (1973) and Bandura et al. (1975), finally, introduced the term ‘dehumanization’ to the experimental study of violence. Over time, attention to dehumanization increased steadily, albeit slowly, peaking in the 1990s. Dehumanization was then studied as a part of evil (Staub 1989), as intergroup aggression being distinct from ingroup bias (Schwartz and Struch 1989), as contributing to genocides (Kuper 1982, 1989), as a form of delegitimization (Bar-Tal 1989), and as one of the symptoms of moral exclusion (Opatow 1990a, b).

At that time, a broadening of the horizon toward more graded and implicit forms of dehumanization began, in particular as part of **social psychology**. Opatow (1990a, b), for

¹ For details about her respective philosophical theories, see Lang (2017), Corrias (2016, this volume), Frick (2019, this volume).

² See Kronfeldner (this volume) on how Allport is relevant with respect to essentialism and dehumanization; see Brudholm and Lang (this volume) on how Goffman’s concept of stigma enters.

³ Military funding for psychology (including social psychology) has been not low during the Cold War era, at least not in the United States, where most of the authors working on dehumanization were based at that time. See Morawski and Beyer (2013), for evidence regarding social psychology.

instance, distinguished (albeit, implicitly) between three forms of exclusion in which dehumanization can play a part: exclusion *within* a society (e.g., via barriers to professions or citizen rights), exclusion *from* a society (e.g., by deportation or detention), and exclusion *from life* (annihilation via working to death or other ways of killing).⁴ In effect, social psychology took dehumanization more and more often as a complex, subtle, and widespread phenomenon (or set of phenomena) of social life that can be studied in detail in the psychologists' labs, using the various empirical methods available to that field. The history of studying dehumanization as part of social psychology, the most thriving subfield of the emerging multidisciplinary field of dehumanization studies, is covered in detail by Haslam (this volume), who, starting with Haslam et al. (2005), has substantially contributed to the later parts of that history.⁵ The spurt of research in social psychology began with the infrahumanization account of Leyens et al. (2000).⁶ Haslam et al. (2005) then added the mechanistic-animalistic humanness model (see, Haslam, this volume), Fiske et al. (2002) contributed the stereotype content model (see Fiske 2011, Fiske, this volume), and Gray et al. (2007) added the agency-experience mind perception model. Again, these are just some of the most important recent contributions, reviewed in more detail by Haslam (this volume) and Fiske (this volume). The latter approach, the mind perception model, is also discussed as part of **experimental philosophy** and **philosophy of mind**.⁷ In these fields, the focus is on how we access and assess other minds and mental properties, how the alleged mental properties connect to moral standing, and on why we are cognitively so prone to recognize the humanity of others, which also has its impact on how we deal with robots, as discussed by Paladino et al. (this volume).

When Opatow and others discussed social exclusion as part of the social psychology tradition, **sociological works** on socialization and social death surfaced as well, in particular following the work of Patterson (1982), with its focus on the history of racism. Hund (this volume) reviews and discusses the thus-inspired sociological tradition of research on dehumanization. In other areas of sociology, and moving more to the present scholarship, Pugh (2004), Hagan and Raymond-Richmond (2008), Bleiker et al. (2013), and Weissmann (2015), to name but a few, studied how institutions organize and frame dehumanization. At issue are the organizational and collective dynamics of dehumanization, with varying subissues (e.g., security threat construction, media and propaganda) and within different contexts (e.g., genocides, the dehumanization of refugees, torture). Some approaches to contemporary **political thinking** also take dehumanization in one form or another as fundamental (e.g., Agamben 2004, Vetlesen 2005, and Savage 2013).

Certainly, **genocide studies** as well as **peace and conflict studies** have their own tradition of discussing dehumanization. Kuper (1989) reviews in detail the history of references to dehumanization in what is now called the first-generation of scholars in comparative genocide studies. Kuper accepted dehumanization as a phenomenon that exists at a cognitive, institutional, and ideological level. Yet, he already recommended caution with respect to over-attributing dehumanization, for three reasons. First, dehumanization might be an implausible explanation for the occurrence of a specific case of violence at the level of an individual perpetrator's cognition, as well as at the level of explaining the collective onset of the violence, even in cases in which there is clearly an ideology of dehumanization operating. Dehumanization, in other words, can appear at any one of the

⁴ See Opatow (2011: 213) for review and explicit use of this tripartite distinction.

⁵ See Haslam (2006), Haslam et al. (2007), Haslam and Loughnan (2014), Haslam and Stratemeyer (2016), and Haslam (this volume).

⁶ With Paladino, Vaes, and Demoulin among the coauthors; see their contributions in this volume.

⁷ See Knobe and Prinz (2008), Sytsma and Machery (2012), Figdor (2018), Machery (this volume), and Varga (this volume).

three levels, independent of its occurrence at the other levels. Second, dehumanization “may not be necessary” (ibid.: 161) for the violence occurring if alternative explanations are possible (whatever the level of occurrence at issue). Third, caution should guide us with respect to a frequent assumption backing the “dehumanization thesis”. That assumption is the claim that human beings generally have an inhibition to kill members of their own kind; for Kuper, it is a questionable postulate. Despite such early skeptical tones, dehumanization is still debated as part of genocide studies, and mostly listed as one among a set of mechanisms that are taken to be involved in conflicts and genocides.⁸ The function of dehumanization can thus be compared to other mechanisms. Hence, Williams and Neilsen (2016) claim that dehumanization makes killings merely tolerable (e.g., in the Khmer Rouge genocide in Cambodia, the case they refer to), whereas toxification, treated as a distinct mechanism, makes the killings necessary. Accordingly, dehumanization (as defined by them) is not sufficient for explaining genocides.

Intellectual history and the history of ideas have so far primarily focused on dehumanization in specific contexts of emerging modernity: natural law theories, taxonomical ordering, and colonial encounters. The issues discussed include dehumanization in the context of changing contours of concepts such as ‘race’ and ‘gender,’⁹ the ‘savage,’¹⁰ being ‘wild’ (e.g., Horigan 1989), the ‘exotic’ (Abbattista 2011, this volume), ‘monstrous’ people (e.g., Friedman 1981, Davies 2017), or the ‘subhuman’ (Smith 2011, 2020, this volume), or simply discussions of how ‘aliens’ or ‘enemies’ have been dehumanized, as in Koselleck (2006) or Stichweh (2010). Special focus has been on the ‘discovery of mankind,’¹¹ the ‘invention of human science’ (Fox et al 1995), the history of the idea of human rights (Hunt 2007, Slaughter 2007), the history of human-looking automata (LaGrandeur 2013, Voskuhl 2013), the history of racism (Smith 2015; Hund, this volume), the history of simianization and the ape-human boundary,¹² the history of exhibiting humans,¹³ and the relationship between theories of natural law, stadial history, and dehumanization (Wokler 1988, Kontler 2012, this volume).

History and philosophy of science is mostly focused on how dehumanization connects to naturalization of difference and inequality.¹⁴ Dehumanization can in that context also refer to the dehumanization of the overall species, as Milam (2019, this volume) shows. In such a case, all humans are dehumanized since they are reduced to the specifically animal-like parts of being human, often called ‘human nature.’ That ‘nature’ has often been taken to be biologically inherited and in that sense determined. Even though this form of dehumanization applies to all humans, it can have significant trickle-down effect on the dehumanization of specific groups of humanity, since the existing social and cultural inequalities are naturalized thereby as well. Kronfeldner (2018, this volume) analyzes how dehumanization connects to the concept of human nature and the implied essentialism, while Steizinger (2018, this volume) compares naturalist and non-naturalist background theories of the Nazi regime. Milam (2019, this volume) portrays how naturalizing humanity and inequality unfolded in Cold War contexts.

⁸ See, for instance, Straus (2006) on the Rwandan genocide and Theriault (2007) on the Armenian genocide. Many more could be added here; some mention dehumanization only in passing; e.g., Hinton (2013) on the Cambodian genocide.

⁹ See Schiebinger (1993), Sebastiani (2013, 2016, this volume).

¹⁰ See Pagden (1982), Jahoda (1998), Buchan and Andersson (2019), and Kontler (this volume).

¹¹ See Abulafia (2008) and Stuurman (2017, this volume).

¹² See Corbey (2005), Hund et al. (2016), and Sebastiani (2016, this volume).

¹³ See Abbattista (2011, 2013, 2014, this volume) and Blanchard et al. (2011).

¹⁴ See Gould (1987), Schiebinger (1993), Tuana (1993), Kontler (this volume), Kronfeldner (this volume), and Sebastiani (2016, this volume).

Literary studies and technology studies connect to the above-mentioned historical works and add their specific perspectives. **Literary studies** analyze the respective literal reverberations of dehumanization. Different narrative structures are analyzed as part of it – for example, the literary grotesque (as in Cassuto 1997), narrative empathy (Keen 2011), or narrative structures with an ‘unreliable’ narrator (Zunshine 2006), to name a few (see Timár 2019, this volume). **Technology studies** analyze whether technology makes us less human. Bernard et al. (1971) and Montagu and Matson (1983) are early examples of such an orientation (see Milam, this volume). It finds resonance in contemporary critical stances regarding our consumer culture (see, for instance, Tester 1995). Building more specifically on the history of automata, there is contemporary work in **robotics** that discusses how the humanization of robots connects to the threat of dehumanization (e.g., in the sense of a desensitization regarding social relations). For review of the work in that field and the involved issues, see Paladino et al. (this volume). Discussions in literary studies and technology studies are closely related to discussions in **critical theory and cultural sociology** that state that misrecognition, or treating individual humans instrumentally (i.e., as objects rather than subjects), is a key phenomenon in the creation and stabilization of social inequalities of all kinds (e.g., in exploitation as part of capitalist societies).¹⁵

Certain forms of dehumanizing speech and media depiction are analyzed in **media and visual studies** and in **philosophy of language**, with connections to genocide studies and empirical analyzes of propaganda.¹⁶ Straus (2007), for instance, did a detailed empirical study of the hatred distributed via radio as part of the Rwandan genocide. Volpato et al. (2010) compared fascist propaganda with contemporary right-wing propaganda in Italy. With respect to dehumanization, they “found in images what was left unsaid in words” (Volpato et al. 2010: 275).

In **feminist philosophy and gender studies**, a lot has been written on the dehumanization of women since de Beauvoir discussed it, in part with reference to sexual objectification involved in pornography, rape proclivity, domestic violence, and so on.¹⁷ Connected to moral theory, dehumanization is discussed in **disability studies** and **animal studies** that critically discuss various issues related to dehumanization. The continuing legacy of eugenics belongs here (see Wilson 2018, this volume). There are discussions about animal–human comparisons and the resulting ‘humanization’ of animals (Opotow 1993, Costello and Hodson 2010). Others discuss human–animal comparisons resulting in ‘animalization’ of disabled people.¹⁸ There are discussions on whether it is appropriate to compare animal slaughter and the Holocaust (Crary 2019). Some speak of ‘linked oppression’ of people and animals (e.g., Wyckoff 2014). These discussions often relate to the claim that humanism wrongly relies on ‘speciesism’ (McMahan 2002, Singer 2009, Kagan 2016), according to which all and only *Homo sapiens* have moral standing (see Crary, this volume). All these debates relate to ideas about moral standing (see Machery, this volume). **Legal studies**, finally, discuss the history and justification of laws and legal categories in connection with dehumanization, in particular with respect to the concept of human rights (Rorty 1998, Meyers 2016, Frick, this volume), crimes against humanity (Geras 2011, Corrias 2016), and similar ideas – for instance, that war criminals or torturers

¹⁵ For philosophy, see Taylor (1994), Honneth (1992), or Fraser (2000); see Demoulin et al. (this volume) on how it is studied as part of social psychology.

¹⁶ See Bleiker et al. (2013) and Musolff (2015) for media studies, and Tirrell (2012, 2018), Stanley (2017), and Jeshion (2018) for philosophy of language.

¹⁷ See LeMoncheck (1985), Nussbaum (1995), Langton (2009), Vaes et al. (2011), Mikkola (2011, 2016), Manne (2016, 2018), and Tipler and Ruscher (2019). Mikkola (this volume) summarizes the debates.

¹⁸ See Kittay (2009), O’Brien (2013), Keith and Keith (2013), and Crary (2016, 2018, this volume).

should be conceptualized as enemies of humanity (see Luban 2018; Corrias, this volume; Frick, this volume).

This short overview of the history and ‘state of the art’ of dehumanization studies is necessarily patchy (as is, in the end, the selection of contributions for the *Handbook*). The aim is not completeness, but to illustrate how burgeoning the field is, especially given its rich, multidisciplinary nature. The *Handbook* treats the multidisciplinary nature involved as a chance rather than a burden. It allows comparisons of the concepts and evidence from multiple angles, sometimes consolidating the evidence gathered in other fields, sometimes exposing frictions and opportunities for further research. The following Sections 1.2-1.5 shall guide the reader through the existing landscape of dehumanization studies in a more systematic manner.

1.2 Realizations, levels, forms, and ontological contrasts

There are, clearly, different **realizations** of dehumanization, even if we focus on individuals only (rather than structures and institutions as dehumanizing). Dehumanization can occur at the level of **discourse or rhetoric** (e.g., in media or propaganda), which can be strategic and figurative only – that is, not reflecting actual attitudes of the respective speakers. Yet, even if dehumanizing depictions are strategically used only, they are usually meant to influence the thoughts and acts of those listening or watching. Dehumanization can thus also be **cognitive**, inscribed in real attitudes of people. These dehumanizing attitudes often have a **behavioral** counterpart, be it verbal or nonverbal.

Different accounts of dehumanization may thus address different levels of realization, or give priority to one of the levels. Mikkola (2016, this volume) defines dehumanization with a focus on actual behavior, whereas Smith (2011; 2020, this volume) does so with a focus on attitudes. Frick (this volume) distinguishes between latent dehumanization (cognitive), expressivist or activist dehumanization (linguistic), and actualized (behavioral) dehumanization. Social psychology focuses – by disciplinary perspective – on the cognitive side of the matter, yet some studies in social psychology cross the disciplinary borders of their field to other areas – for example, media analysis. Esses et al. (this volume), for instance, set a focus on dehumanizing media coverage, an area that has also been studied independently of social psychology (see references in Esses et al., this volume).

Since the different levels at which dehumanization can show up interact, Heinämaa and Jardine (this volume) stress that whether a cognitive attitude or a certain rhetorical, pictorial, or linguistic depiction is actually dehumanizing or not depends on the practical and emotive context. In addition, causal influences can go both ways: dehumanizing rhetoric or attitudes can cause dehumanizing behavior, but they can also be the result of previous dehumanizing behavior. In the former case, the dehumanizing rhetoric or attitude motivates actions, and in the latter case the exhibited dehumanizing behavior is rationalized *ex post facto* – that is, justified after the fact by referring to a dehumanized status of the targets. Thus, the relationship between the three levels of dehumanization (latent/cognitive, rhetoric/discursive/expressivist, and actualized/behavioral) can be quite complex and will vary from case to case or from context to context. It is thus important to note that inferences from one level to the other have to be made with care, because they can exist – despite interacting – separately too. Hence, even if dehumanizing actions can be performative and thus transformative, as Eichler (2019) stresses – making the life of those depicted, regarded, and treated *actually less human* – that kind of

actualized dehumanization might occur without dehumanization at the other levels, and vice versa.

Dehumanization also has **levels that go beyond the rhetoric, thoughts, and actions of individuals**. It can be inscribed in ideologies, philosophies, and scientific theories;²⁰ it can be inscribed in institutions, such as the law (Corrias, this volume), or in business organizations and their respective work relations (Caesens et al. 2019; see Demoulin et al., this volume). Dehumanization is also inscribed in hierarchical social structures and relations, which have to be perpetually reproduced to stabilize the respective dehumanization. The 'subalterns' (i.e., those rendered passive through the hierarchies) would indeed speak without that stabilization, as Hund (this volume) mentions. In addition, Fiske et al. (2002, 2011, this volume) show that dehumanization relates to status and the competitive or cooperative interdependence of people in a society. As a result, certain kinds of dehumanization increase with the inequality in a society, and with the respective meritocratic beliefs about deserving or not deserving status, power, inclusion, respect, help, and so on. Data on this come from a large variety of countries, as Fiske (this volume) reports. Dehumanization is also inscribed in cultural practices – for example, in schemes of exhibiting humans (Abbattista 2011, 2013, 2014, this volume), or in literature (Timár 2019, this volume), to name but two such practices.

There are also different **forms** of dehumanization. Historically, dehumanization often involved **categorically** denying some human beings membership in the human kind. The latter has often been identified with a genealogical category (e.g., the biological species *Homo sapiens*). Polygenists, for instance, regarded slaves as outside of humanity because they believed that slaves have no shared ancestry with Europeans. Today, dehumanization still occurs in such an either/or (i.e., categorical) form. Smith (2011, 2020, this volume) sets a focus on this form. Yet, dehumanization exists also in a **graded** form. People are regarded as more or less human even though they are simultaneously clearly recognized and regarded as humans – for example, women when they are objectified, or refugees or foreigners when they are deindividualized or even demonized. These graded forms are mainly (even though not exclusively) addressed in contemporary social psychology, as reviewed in Haslam (this volume). For historical roots of such graded forms and the discourses about them, see Kontler (this volume), Kronfeldner (this volume) and Sebastiani (this volume). This means that dehumanization can happen even if no sharp boundary between humans and non-humans is assumed, and even if no sharp boundaries between groups of humans are assumed. For dehumanization to operate, shades are enough. Neither racism nor speciesism are necessary for it, even though the latter undoubtedly can further it. In addition, contexts of atrocities are not the only contexts in which dehumanization occurs. It is much more pervasive. Finally, while dehumanization is still often **explicit** or “blatant,” as Opatow (2011) and Kteily et al. (2015, 2017) call it, it is also encoded in **implicit** attitudes that influence explicit opinions and actions (see for instance, Esses et al., this volume).

Dehumanization can be theorized with a focus on **certain properties** that are taken as specific or typical for a human life (humanness). These humanness properties, the assumed insignia of humanity, are then shown to be attributed differentially to different people, for example: secondary emotions (as in Leyens et al. 2000), traits of human nature that allow us to distinguish ourselves from machines, as Haslam et al. (2005) added (see Haslam, this volume), mental properties such as agency and experience (Gray et al. 2007; Sytsma and Machery 2012; see Machery, this volume), competence and warmth (see Fiske 2011, this volume), harmfulness (Piazza et al. 2014; see Machery, this volume),

²⁰ See Sebastiani (2013, this volume), Steizinger (2018, this volume), and Kronfeldner (2018, this volume).

prosociality (Schwartz and Struch 1989; Esses et al. 2008; see Esses et al., this volume), cooperation versus aggression (see Milam 2019, this volume), or eugenic traits (see Wilson 2018, this volume). This is an open list, and historians will add still further foci of dehumanization. Kontler (2004), for instance, shows how values like softness, grace, politeness, refinement, and the like were used to limit women's 'proper' role in modern commercial societies, torn as women were (and often still are) between two alternative roles of 'beauty or beast,' as part of the Enlightenment ideas of humanity's progress (see also Kontler, this volume; Sebastiani, this volume).

Yet, dehumanization is not only about properties that are differentially attributed to different (kinds of) people. It is about how the differential attribution of properties leads to further judgments about the people. Hence, Machery (this volume) shows how it connects to moral standing. Wilson (this volume) claims that it is crucial (philosophically) to distinguish between taking a certain property to be negative (e.g., a certain disease or impairment) and using it to devalue people (and their life). The former is not in and of itself dehumanizing, whereas the latter is. Varga (2017, 2020, this volume) similarly shows that there is a difference between mind perception and perceiving specific mental properties in others. Heinämaa and Jardine (this volume) add that a stance that looks at the typical (rather than the irreducible subjective) can already be dehumanizing, irrespective of which property is looked at specifically. Dehumanization is, according to that approach, happening already when the very subjectivity and individuality of a person is ignored (i.e., when the individual is reduced to being a mere bearer of typical properties, whichever). Stuurman (this volume) reminds us that religious membership properties (rather than substantial properties) were decisive for dehumanization as part of religious worldviews. Being a believer in the religious truth rather than any substantive property of the individual grounded dehumanization in such a case. Kronfeldner (2018, this volume) also stresses that dehumanization can be purely relational: somebody can be regarded as less human if fewer or less intense biological or social relations exist between the dehumanizer and the dehumanized. Differential attribution of properties can be part of such a relational dehumanization, but it does not have to be. With this in mind, Kronfeldner (this volume) claims that psychological essentialism, which is based on the attribution of intrinsic properties, is not necessary for dehumanization, even though it is often associated with it (as claimed, for instance, by Smith, this volume). Pointing in a similar direction, Kontler (2012, this volume) mentions that, as part of the naturalization of man during the Enlightenment, differences between people were de-internalized. Rather than finding difference only in static classifications of bodies (e.g., racial ones), or body-versus-soul ontologies (with the dehumanized ones lacking soul, or mind), difference was now *also* located in the differences in historical development, which points to a dynamic (rather than static) difference and a relational standard for humanness – namely, distance in historical development.

Nonetheless, looking at the mentioned properties (e.g., autonomy, agency, experience, secondary emotions) is informative. They can be operative on top of the relations driving dehumanization. Most importantly, they show that some **recurring ontological contrasts** are operative in dehumanization. Dehumanization often builds on a contrast between **animals and humans** or a contrast between **machines and humans**. Haslam et al. (2005, see also Haslam, this volume) regard the focus on secondary emotions (also called 'human uniqueness traits') in Leyens et al. as biased toward human superiority over animals. According to Haslam, a sense of being human that is oriented at sentient animacy, which is more related to contrasting humans and machines, has often been ignored. Certainly, a lot depends on how the animalistic dehumanization (not much agency or secondary emotions attributed) and the mechanistic dehumanization (not much experience or

animacy attributed) are measured in the respective empirical work.²¹ In addition, the relationship between these two sources of dehumanization, fueled by the two ontological contrasts, is complex, as Haslam (this volume) shows. Machery (this volume) agrees and adds evidence from experimental philosophy confirming that the two sources of moral standing (agency and experience) can act independently but also additively. This makes it clear (as Machery, this volume, claims) that none of the typical philosophical traditions analyzing moral standing is right: for real people, both the Kantian agency and the Utilitarian experience are important in treating each other as part of a moral community. A third ontological contrast is the one between **demons, angels or gods versus humans**. To regard women as witches, which relates to considerable violence against women accumulated over history, is a case in which the demon versus human contrast was important, as Frick (this volume) mentions. In current scholarly work, this third contrast seems to have received less attention, but probably this is due to an increase in a-religious ontologies in the West. In the frame of the mentioned psychological accounts of dehumanization, it might even be reducible to mechanistic dehumanization – that is, attribution of agency but not (much) experience.

The form of dehumanization will vary with the **idea of being human** that is operative in each respective case (see also Bain et al. 2014 on that issue). This also explains (in part at least) the usage of slightly **different words** for different forms of dehumanization. Leyens et al. (2000) have introduced the term ‘*infrahumanization*’ (as different from dehumanization) to focus on graded forms of differential attribution of secondary emotions taken to be unique for humans (and thus what it means to be human rather than just another animal). Smith (2011) aims at a similar bifurcation when he uses ‘*subhumanization*’ (less than human) and ‘*dyshumanization*’ (less human), the first involving a categorical difference in essence, while the later involves only degrees of being human. ‘*Superhumanization*’ (more human), ‘*metadehumanization*,’ and ‘*selfdehumanization*’ are also part of the recent literature. Smith (this volume) addresses the first and Demoulin et al. (this volume) the latter two. The term ‘*ontologization*’ is used similarly to ‘*naturalization*’; the words ‘*deindividuation*,’ ‘*depersonalization*,’ and ‘*desocialization*’ signal what exactly is at issue: the human as an individual, person, or member of a society. Ever since Marx, ‘*alienation*’ has a special valence as part of social philosophy. At issue is dehumanization that stems from work relationships that lead to selfestrangement and then selfdehumanization. Demoulin et al. (this volume) show how it is studied in contemporary psychology. Terms like ‘*zoomorphism*,’ ‘*animalization*,’ ‘*simianization*,’ ‘*barbarization*,’ ‘*objectification*,’ ‘*commodification*,’ ‘*instrumentalization*,’ ‘*derivatization*,’ ‘*monstrification*,’ ‘*deification*,’ ‘*demonization*,’ ‘*diabolization*,’ ‘*bestialization*,’ ‘*verminization*,’ and ‘*toxification*’ can all be found in connection with dehumanization. They focus more on what one is or becomes in the mind of the dehumanizer as a result of dehumanization – namely, an animal, an object, a commodity, a demon, a toxic entity, and so on. As mentioned, the relationships between all these forms, realizations, levels, contexts, and aspects of dehumanization can be complex. This is why Frick (this volume), Heinämaa and Jardine (this volume), and Mikkola (this volume) all discuss how not to equate objectification and dehumanization, focusing on different traditions or contexts of comparing objectification and dehumanization. An important distinction in that respect, used by Frick (this volume) and Mikkola (this volume), is between reductive and non-reductive attitudes.

There is no point in shortcutting the complexities stemming from the different forms, realizations, levels, contexts, and aspects studied. Yet **from the abstract and general point**

²¹ See Haslam (this volume), Demoulin et al. (this volume), Fiske (this volume), Machery (this volume), and Varga (this volume).

of view, one aspect seems to be always present: dehumanization *establishes difference and distance* between human beings. Dehumanization enables a stratified organization of humanity.

1.3 Targets, valence, and emotions

The **targets** of dehumanization vary greatly over time and cultural context, and can consist of **individuals** or **groups**. That it matters whether it is individuals or groups becomes evident in the history of exhibiting humans, a history that moves from individuals exhibited as oddities to individuals and groups exhibited as representing a type, as Abbattista (this volume) shows.

The targets (whether as individuals or groups) often overlap with the targets of racism, sexism, classism, ableism, ageism, meritocracy, and so on. Dehumanization is, nonetheless, not equivalent to the latter since they are more specific (see also Section 1.5 and 1.6). Recently, the traditional focus on gender, races, and classes has been broadened so that further targets come into focus. There are studies on refugees,²² patients,²³ disabled people,²⁴ elderly people,²⁵ low-status people,²⁶ LGBT people,²⁷ and even on children dehumanized by other children,²⁸ and so on. For more on the variety of targets studied as part of contemporary social psychology, see Haslam (this volume) and Fiske (this volume).

A special case of targets emerges from the study of selfdehumanization. After all, targets and perpetrators of dehumanization can dehumanize themselves in reaction to previous dehumanization. Targets do so as a reaction to being dehumanized by others and perpetrators do so in reaction to their own dehumanizing attitudes or actions toward others. Abbattista (this volume) discusses the complex bidirectional dynamics between perpetrator and target, including the metadehumanization and selfdehumanization of the latter in the historical contexts of exhibited humans. Demoulin et al. (this volume) present evidence from the psychologists' labs and add that perpetrators sometimes dehumanize themselves in reaction to their own inhuman attitudes or actions. Following a long-standing tradition since Arendt's account of evil, Frick (this volume) claims that those treating others in inhuman ways risk becoming inhuman themselves. If so, as Frick claims, this can have impacts on how we factor in ideas about restricted reciprocity, in particular when the content and scope of human rights is at issue. This is reminiscent of a quite old tradition in philosophy as Meyers (2016) illustrates. Corrias (2016) shows how this echoes in legal categories and actual tribunals – for example, with respect to charges of crimes against humanity. An important issue in that respect is certainly whether we owe it to ourselves *not* to dehumanize the dehumanizer (see Corrias 2016 and Frick, this volume).

In principle, the **valence** of dehumanization is neutral – it can be considered something **good or bad** to be less (than) human. After all, in a negative anthropology, being human is *not* considered something particularly good. Consistent with that, recent work in social psychology tries to keep dehumanization distinct from dislike or outgroup biases (see Haslam, this volume, for review). This fits the results that differential attribution of properties deemed to be the insignia of humanity can be quite perspectival, as Paladino et

²² See Esses et al. (2001), (2013); see Esses et al. (this volume).

²³ See, e.g., Fontesse et al. (2019), Luna et al. (2019).

²⁴ See Capozza et al. (2016), Crary (2016, 2018, this volume), and Wilson (2018, this volume).

²⁵ See, for instance, Wiener et al. (2014).

²⁶ See, Harris and Fiske (2006); Fiske (this volume).

²⁷ See, for instance, Fasoli et al. (2016).

²⁸ See, for instance, Costello and Hodson (2014) or McLoughlin and Over (2017).

al. (2009: 237) have shown. In a series of experiments, they show that 'ours is human' – that is, what the participants attribute to the ingroup is what it means for them to be human, independent of the valence of these characteristics. Yet, the majority of the historical cases discussed in the literature seem to be cases where the valence is clearly on the negative side: to be human is taken to be good and protected (in the agent's perspective and/or the scholar's metaperspective) or at least the best status available on planet earth, whereas being less human, subhuman, and also superhuman means negative rhetoric or attitudes if not negative treatment by the dehumanizer.

This does not exclude that there can be a **valence ambiguity** involved. As Heinämaa and Jardine (this volume) show, de Beauvoir (1949) already recognized that men might well idealize women as part of inferiorizing and subordinating them as less human. Fiske (Glick and Fiske 1996, this volume) shows, as part of her stereotype content model, how such a form of dehumanization involves pity, an ambivalent emotion that relates to the ascription of low competence and high warmth. Smith (this volume) discusses such a valence ambiguity with a focus on intergroup prejudice and hatred (e.g., anti-Semitism). Superhumanization, he claims, often occurs if the respective other is perceived as dangerous; it can be theorized, as he claims, as perceiving the other as a monster.²⁹ The above-mentioned contrast between demons and humans relates to this. Frick (this volume) also discusses the intricate dynamics of deification and demonization as forms of superhumanization, with respect to hierarchies in religious cults or sects, 'true' believers versus infidels, or witchcraft beliefs.

The discussion above also shows that dehumanization often has an **emotional side**, on both the perpetrator's and the target's ends. Which emotion that is depends on the form of dehumanization, as Fiske's stereotype content model shows. Already Strawson (1962: 190-195), for instance, claimed that a "human relationship" involves a "reactive attitude" (i.e., an attitude that reacts to the actions of the other as a member of a moral community). Reactive attitudes, according to Strawson, correlate with specific emotions, such as resentment, gratitude, forgiveness, and love. These emotions are missing if there is, instead, a dehumanizing "objective attitude," which also has a potpourri of emotions attached, just different ones – for example, pity, fear, repulsion, disgust, and certain forms of paternalistic care. The objective attitude can, however, also lead to indifference, a fact that contradicts the widespread assumption that emotions like hatred and disgust are defining elements of dehumanization. Bernard et al. (1971) already tried to correct this one-sidedness in the literature on dehumanization by stressing the importance of apathy and indifference in contemporary forms of dehumanization. This also raises the question of how dehumanization and hatred connect, if we take the latter as an emotion that is based on a reactive attitude.³⁰ As Brudholm and Lang (this volume) show, the connection is far from straightforward. There can be both dehumanization without hatred (e.g., in cases of atrocities that are characterized by sheer indifference) and hatred without dehumanization (e.g., when violence involves a reactive attitude toward the target and should thus not be counted as dehumanizing).

²⁹ See also Brudholm (2015) on monstrification as a key form of dehumanization in genocides, building on Žižek (2005) and others.

³⁰ See Brudholm (2010) for an in-depth discussion of the concept of hatred.

1.4 Causes, functions, and consequences of dehumanization, and prospects for rehumanization

The **causes** of dehumanization are still under study. Stereotypes are among the much-discussed causes, often with a respective emotional signature attached, if not caused themselves by emotions. Stereotypes also connect to the varieties of social structures and relations mentioned earlier – power, hierarchies, status, interdependence, and exclusion. Thus, social structures, relations, and situations are clearly relevant, either as further independent causes or as causes of the individual stereotypes, emotions, or social attitudes, such as social dominance orientation, nationalist orientations, and so on. Individual difference variables (i.e., whether a person is disgust prone, or narcissistic, etc.) need to be factored in, as Haslam (this volume) reminds us. As with many social issues, it holds that the causal story underlying cases of dehumanization will be quite complex. That is, it will involve many causes, feedbacks, and the like. Thus, any search for a monocausal, unidirectional, and simple ‘one-cause-fits-all’ causal structure is doomed to fail.

The **functions** of dehumanization vary too. Prominent are the explanatory and justificatory functions with respect to harm: dehumanization is one of the causes of the inhuman and/or a *post hoc* perceived justification and thus perceived license to the inhuman. In other words, dehumanization often enables people to overcome an inhibition to harm or kill, or it is taken by people to justify the harming and killing – and be it after the fact. There are other functions that will fit less violent forms of dehumanization. Projection is one; and according to de Beauvoir (1949) and Nussbaum (2006, 2013), it is not ultimately grounded in a need to overcome inhibitions to harm or kill, but rather in a need to overcome the anxieties related to one’s very own mortality and bodily existence. Heinämaa and Jardine (this volume) provide us with a philosophical take on that facet of dehumanization. In psychology, it is known as terror management.³¹ Esses et al. (this volume) discuss still another function – namely, the function of defending a social status quo (e.g. with respect to excluding refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrants). That function can connect to still further functions. Dehumanization is used, for instance, for upholding a specific identity. Those with a cosmopolitan identity, for instance, can dehumanize others, despite well-meaning universalist attitudes. They do so in reaction to their own passivity regarding the suffering of war victims, refugees, asylum seekers, poor people, drug addicts, and other socially ‘distant’ people. They can prevent thereby nagging guilt feelings or emotional discomfort (see Esses et al., this volume). A more general but related function is what Bernard et al. (1971) called ego defense, a mechanism that prevents otherwise painful or overwhelming emotions and contradictory self-images. Last but not least: dehumanization serves submission and exploitation. These functions also relate to our emotions regarding those social robots that look and behave uncannily similar to humans (see Paladino et al., this volume). Being afraid of the humanization of a robot is not a case of dehumanization of a human being, but it is its mirror image. For instance, the hope of some, to replace certain forms of exploitation of humans (e.g., in sex work, care work, or other exploitative work) by using social robots instead, might be doomed to fail. Widespread human-robot replacements might be a spurious victory over dehumanization since these replacements might well deepen the hierarchies that cause dehumanization, jeopardizing human sociality as such (i.e., as we know it, based on principles of reciprocity and equality). That technology can lead to the dehumanization of the overall species is a claim (or fear) that already concerned Montagu and Matson (1983), as Milam (this volume) mentions. Paladino et al. (this volume) discuss how to explain (at

³¹ See Costello and Hodson (2010) or Vaes et al. (2010) for how it connects to dehumanization.

the level of perceptual and cognitive processing) the fears that relate to the humanization of robots and its potential mirror image, the increased dehumanization of humans.

The negative **consequences of dehumanization** range from sheer indifference, lack of kindness, subtle discriminations, deliberate rudeness, hierarchical domination, exploitation, oppression within a society, to social death and outright social or moral exclusion from a society. A variety of injustices, harms, and atrocities result from these. For review of empirical studies on the variety of specific consequences, see Haslam (this volume). Haslam also reviews work that shows that the effects of dehumanization can extend backwards, blocking forgiveness and the willingness of perpetrators to take responsibility for past atrocities. Actual (rather than imagined) behavioral consequences of dehumanization have not been studied much in experimental settings, because of obvious methodological difficulties that stem in part from ethical limits of psychological research. But there are some endeavors in that direction. Esses et al. (this volume) review them. They also mention an important point about behavioral consequences: dehumanizing attitudes that are implicit are unlikely to have consequences at the level of verbal behavior. They will, rather, show their 'ugly face' in nonverbal behavior that is often less (norm-)controlled by the subjects. Implicit forms of dehumanization are therefore sometimes the more dangerous ones since they are harder to influence.

As with the causes, it is important to note that connections between the different consequences can be complex. For instance, hierarchical domination, social death, and moral exclusion should not be understood as unconnected or alternative consequences of dehumanization. The former, the hierarchical domination within a society, theorized by Hund (2010, this volume) as societalization by dehumanization, can thrive on the latter – the social death or exclusion of *still others*, leading to a vicious social spiraling of societalization (inclusion) and desocietalization (exclusion) by dehumanization.

Finally, the **prospects of reducing dehumanization or undoing it (rehumanization)** in discourses, attitudes, and acts can vary, depending on background assumptions and contexts. If there is an innate 'like us' detector grounding dehumanization, as Wilson (this volume) and Smith (this volume) mention, or an innate animacy detector (Varga, this volume), then the prospects might be slim. But it might as well be that assuming such an evolved, innate mechanism grounding dehumanizing is itself a historically and culturally contingent way of looking at dehumanization – a metaessentialist move that can be overcome, as dehumanization itself can be overcome, to a certain degree at least or maybe fully. As Fiske (this volume) notes, even a neurological signature of dehumanization is no sign of inevitability.³² Dehumanization can thus also be conceptualized as part of a cognitively, historically, culturally, and socially contingent reasoning process that is quite malleable. Thus, if the respective attitudes can be adapted, the prospects might lighten up a bit at least; and the pathways of securing the human will gain some contours.

Abbattista (this volume), for instance, discusses how those being exhibited as part of ethnic shows (re-)gained (some) agency, despite economic dependency. Recent histories of German violence during the Nazi era also show that some targets managed to rehumanize themselves. As Leydesdorff (2017) illustrated with her history of the revolt and mass escape of inmates from the Nazi death camp Sobibor in Poland, those escaping, led by the Russian Jew Aleksandr Pechersky, did clearly not behave like 'sheep being led to the slaughter.' That animalistic metaphor for passivity in face of violence is part of an anti-Semitic stereotype that gained unfortunate prevalence in parts of the Holocaust literature and public discourse, leading to a myth of Jewish passivity. By wrongly

³² See also Harris (2017) on neurology, dehumanization, and flexibility.

portraying targets of dehumanization as merely passive victims, scholars can contribute to a culture of memory and to ways of telling the history of inhumanity that reiterates what it meant to study in an objective manner, contributing to cycles of metadehumanization and selfdehumanization. It is thus of utmost importance to analyze the latter, as Demoulin et al. (this volume) do – in their case, from the psychologist’s point of view.

Demoulin et al. (this volume) add that as long as the antecedents of metadehumanization and selfdehumanization are not totalitarian, systemic, and enduring, the individual might find a way out. Such antecedents can consist in detrimental cultures of memory in the case of atrocities, abusive work relations that lead to mechanistic selfdehumanization in the case of industrialized capitalist societies, and the like. What the individual has to find is not only a way out of incorporating the myth of passivity or abusive structures into the subject’s self-model (selfdehumanization), but also a way out of the dehumanizing conditions themselves.

In other contexts and at other levels, further options for rehumanization will be pertinent. Esses et al. (this volume), in part based on Gaucher et al. (2018), discusses empirical evidence on how governments can positively influence the rehumanization of refugees – for example, by utilizing the so-called system justification motivation. Esses et al. offer the example of how the newly elected Canadian government, in 2015, managed to positively sanction the humanization of refugees. As a result, the minds of the citizens followed, to a considerable degree at least. Esses et al. (this volume) also discuss that a more individualized portrayal of the dehumanized targets (e.g., in the media) can have positive effects.

Whether and how literary works can help in rehumanization (or preventing dehumanization) is discussed in a quite crossdisciplinary manner. Hunt (2007) has claimed that works generating narrative empathy with dehumanized others historically contributed to the emergence of the idea of universal human rights (compare Slaughter 2007). Philosophers like Nussbaum (1995) and Rorty (1998) also stressed the rehumanizing potential of literature. Experimental work also aims to provide evidence for answering the question (e.g., as reported in Kidd and Castano 2013). Prinz (2011) or Bloom (2018) argue that lack of empathy – understood as an emotion – is neither always the right diagnosis of cases of inhumanity nor is more empathy always the best cure. Far from being “the magic bullet of morality,” as Bloom (2018: 33) writes, empathy is often ineffective in beating inhumanity, and frequently even adds to it or is the source of it. Blum (2018), by contrast, understands empathy as a recognitional attitude and comes therefore to a different conclusion. Timár (2015, 2019, this volume) discusses different meanings and effects of empathy, sympathy, and the like on dehumanization, from the perspective of literary scholarship. Crary (this volume) claims that overcoming widespread beliefs about human superiority can contribute to limiting dehumanization. She also claims that the neutral stance regarding the human in many contemporary accounts of moral and political philosophy will not be helpful in that respect. Finally, there are methods of legal rehumanization, as Corrias (2016, this volume) shows.

1.5 Theoretical complexities

In this section, a set of theoretical complexities shall be highlighted. The first stems from the fact that one can **study dehumanization from different actors’ perspectives**. One can study it with respect to the **dehumanizer’s perspective** (used for instance in perpetrator studies), but also with respect to the **target’s perspective**, the perspective of the

dehumanized. That the two can fall apart becomes clear if we imagine a case of dehumanization where the dehumanization goes completely unnoticed by the target. Mikkola (this volume) discusses such a case, with reference to a thought experiment from Gardner and Shute's (2000) account of rape. So far, most works have been analyzing the first perspective, that of the dehumanizer, which is why Demoulin et al. (this volume) set a decisive focus on the targets' metadehumanization (awareness that they are dehumanized) and selfdehumanization. It is important to keep metadehumanization and selfdehumanization distinct, since the latter can happen without the first (e.g., in the case of perpetrators). In such a case, selfdehumanization is a reaction to one's own immoral behavior, as Demoulin et al. (this volume) show. The target and the perpetrator are the same person. If it is two persons involved, downward spirals of violence can result, with self- and other-related dehumanization interacting. Brudholm and Lang (this volume) thus try to involve both perspectives in order to arrive at a balanced picture, in their case with respect to the question of how hatred and dehumanization relate. Heinämaa and Jardine (this volume) stress that dehumanization is an interactive process between the perpetrator, target, and others, often involving a selfdehumanization on the side of the target that can be embodied, leading to what they call epidermalization. Literary work has, evidently, a special sensitivity regarding such dynamic complexities, and analyzes the respective narrative structures (see Timár 2019, this volume).

Another important metalevel issue relates to **the appropriate specificity of a description or explanation**. An example can illustrate why keeping that risk in mind is important. The atrocities of the National Socialists against Jewish people and other groups are often taken as paradigmatic cases of dehumanization. The National Socialists regarded and treated their targets as less human if not less than human. Yet, irrespective of all the historical, philosophical, and sociological debates about how to properly account for the Holocaust and other atrocities of the National Socialists, it is clear that the Nazi hatred against Jewish people was based (not only but also) on anti-Semitism. The latter can rest on quite different anthropological theories (as Steizinger, this volume, shows) and also on different concepts of race or *volk* (as Hund, this volume, mentions). In any case, it is clear that the hatred against Jewish people during the Holocaust was *specifically* against Jewish people *as* Jewish people. If so, then it seems that Jewish people were humiliated, tortured, and killed because they were regarded *as Jews*, as, for instance, Améry (1978) already stressed (see, Kravitz, 2019). Anti-Semitism would be the more specific description and explanation of the atrocities, at least compared to dehumanization. The latter would amount to describing and explaining the atrocities as having happened because Jews were not regarded *as humans*. Since more specific descriptions and explanations are usually taken as better descriptions and explanations, it would miss the point to quote dehumanization as the description and explanation of the atrocities that Jewish people had to face. It would be referring to a quite general cause of the wrongdoing involved even though a more specific and precise explanation is available.

Yet, this only looks at one side of the matter, it seems. If a human being is recognized *only* as Jewish – rather than as Jewish *and* human – then the bond, the reciprocity, the recognitional attitudes (like solidarity, respect, and empathy) operative as part of humanism are likely to be undone more easily. And this is why it might well be that referring to dehumanization is doing *some* explanatory work, be it in the case of the Holocaust or other instances of inhumanity. Rorty (1998) can be interpreted as giving such a reply when he claims that – during the Bosnian War – Serbian soldiers killed and tortured Muslims because they regarded them *as Muslims rather than as humans*. So, dehumanization means: not recognizing the respective other as *also human*. Anti-Semitism and other specific forms of group-based enmity can thus involve dehumanization, even though they can never be reduced to dehumanization since they are more specific.

Overemphasizing the explanatory importance of dehumanization (i.e., the explanatory force that dehumanization has for a specific case) is thus clearly a risk that needs to be kept in mind.

An important mechanism that can trump dehumanization as a cause and/or assumed justification of the inhuman lies in other kinds of assumed **justifications** of the inhuman. Non-psychological levels can enable dehumanization at the psychological level, but they can also replace it. If the perpetrator is convinced that other kinds of justifications for the respective inhuman behavior exist, then dehumanization is (from the perpetrator's perspective) not necessary anymore in order to enable the inhuman behavior. Sykes and Matza's (1957) account of neutralization already made it quite clear that a perpetrator can use a variety of "techniques" to neutralize claims about responsibility, harm, and wrongdoing. These techniques include deferral of responsibility, blaming the victim, and the like. Dehumanization is one among a set of such techniques of neutralization. This also fits Arendt's (1963) account of 'banal' cases of evil, Kelman's (1973) account of sanctioned massacres, functionalist accounts of the Holocaust (e.g., in Browning 1992), and recent experimental results that show that dehumanization is involved in instrumental violence but not in so-called moral violence – that is, violence that has, for the perpetrator, a moral or political justification (Rai et al. 2017). Brudholm and Lang (this volume, Lang 2020) discuss these strands in the literature. The perceived justifications of discrimination, harm, or violence that are non-dehumanizing can stem from non-dehumanizing stereotypes, ideology, science, law, or – last but not least – obedience. Hence, the issue arises as to when exactly dehumanization explains inhuman treatment – for example, in genocides. Consequently, the skeptics all (in one way or another) question whether dehumanization is (always) adequate for describing and explaining the inhuman. They have thus spotted an important issue, whatever the exact critical argumentation is, since it varies.³³

The problem regarding dehumanization's explanatory force directly relates to the so-called **paradox of dehumanization**, which rests on the assumption that very often dehumanization seems to involve simultaneously 'being regarded as human' and 'not being regarded so.' This paradox challenges, as Smith (this volume) writes, the "reality of dehumanization." Kuper (1989) already pointed to it in order to ask for caution. One needs "to guard against too ready an acceptance of the dehumanization thesis," Kuper (1989: 163) claims. Kronfeldner (draft) claims that the paradox can easily be dissolved since the core of it rests on an equivocation of 'being human': many cases of dehumanization seem to involve a recognition of the *bare humanity* of the targets, while (parts of) their *humanness* and/or their moral standing is ignored or destroyed.

Taking this into account, the alleged paradox of 'being regarded as human *and* not being regarded so' can be reformulated as involving alternative interpretations of how dehumanization exactly works in the respective cases. At least three theoretical options are available. Take again the example of the National Socialists dehumanizing Jewish people.

(Option a) *Full recognition of humanity*: Did the National Socialists see and accept that their targets were fully human, and inflict the harms and atrocities *despite* or maybe even *because* they could not help but recognize the humanity and humanness of their targets? Actualized dehumanization (inhuman treatment) would be the result of certain negative

³³ See Lang (2010, 2017, 2020), Theriault (2007), Weissmann (2015), Manne (2016, 2018), Steizinger (2018), and Enock et al. (2020). See also Brudholm and Lang (this volume), Mikkola (this volume), and Steizinger (this volume).

attitudes toward the targets and a full recognition of the targets' humanity and humanness at the level of attitudes. Appiah (2006: 151-153; 2007: 144) is often quoted for his support for such an interpretation of the paradox. He claims that perpetrators may well take their victims as *deserving* of the respective atrocity. Such an attitude, as the assumption goes, is only shown toward entities recognized as humans. Yet, this assumption can be taken to be on unsecure ground, if one takes into account that animals are also treated in cruel ways and frequently punished and enslaved, if not humiliated. Harming animals and harming humans might thus be more tightly connected than assumed in this interpretation of the paradox. Crary (this volume) focuses exactly on that issue. Yet, even if this 'speciesist' assumption is dropped, the 'full recognition interpretation' of cases of dehumanization from the Nazi context can still be correct and more nuanced than an account that simply states that National Socialists dehumanized their targets. The same holds for other cases. With respect to misogyny, marital rape, and torture, Manne (2016, reprinted in slightly different form in Manne 2018) and Mikkola (2016, this volume) develop an interpretation of the paradox that belongs here. Conclusions drawn from the interpretations of the respective cases along such lines differ. For instance, for Manne (2018) and Enock et al. (2020), the paradox leads to the claim that dehumanization (as defined by them, i.e., a cognitive attitude of regarding somebody as similar to an animal) is (often) a myth, and thus wrongly attributed to the perpetrators. For Mikkola, in contrast, it rather follows that dehumanization consists not in the misrecognition of the victim's bare humanity but in having one's legitimate human interests actually violated, which is a concept of dehumanization that is premised on actions and not on cognitive attitudes.

(Option b) *Ambiguous recognition of humanity*: An alternative interpretation of the very same cases would be, to stay with the Nazi cases, that the National Socialists recognized their targets as ambiguously human. Smith (2016, this volume) defends such a solution of the paradox, a solution that bites the bullet with respect to the involved equivocality. It attributes ambiguous attitudes to the perpetrator. According to Smith, perpetrators have basically two ways to cognize their targets: one that follows the format of psychological essentialism and one that 'crosses the borders' to ideas about monsters. The first consists in a non-contradictory belief in the other individual as human-looking but devoid of a human essence, whereas the second consists in a logically but not cognitively contradictory belief that the 'other' is a monster – that is, simultaneously fully human and fully subhuman, or neither human nor subhuman. The same perceived blurring or crossing of ontological boundaries is dealt with in Paladino et al. (this volume), since it is part of the uncanny feeling that has been studied as part of human–robot interactions. Paladino et al. also show how this connects to the phenomenon of passing, which entails a similar ambiguity and emotional valence, since a threat to distinctiveness regarding human identity seems to be involved in such cases (see also Ferrari et al. 2016). The involved identity threat is also known from research on impostors – that is, people who try to pass as a member of a group they are (or were) not part of (see Hornsey and Jetten 2003). Passers are often punished for their efforts to pass, mainly (even though not exclusively) by the receiving group since the passing is perceived as blurring their identity too. This is a phenomenon that seems to connect – in, indeed, uncanny ways – reactions to robots, to LGBTQ people, and to racial or ethnic passers. Some cases of dehumanization that seem paradoxical are likely to be explained that way. Yet, there is also a third theoretical option to dissolve the paradox.

(Option c) *Failure to recognize humanity*. There might well be cases that are wrongly classified as paradoxical. Mikkola (this volume) mentions that option: it can well be that some perpetrators simply and unambiguously fail to recognize the humanity of their targets. They make a category mistake. Mikkola dismisses this option as applying to the

cases she looks at, yet it is theoretically clearly possible that the perception of humans is as error-prone as the Muller-Lyer illusion is for people growing up in the 'West.'³⁴ In cases of dehumanization following that format, the respective ideology is so entrenched in the cognition (e.g., via the respective knowledge production, be it via science, propaganda, totalitarian education, etc.) that the targets' humanity is *literally* perceived to be absent. For most readers of this volume, it is probably hard to imagine such an illusion (or category mistake), as it is hard for probably most in the world (i.e., those who did not grow up in the West) to understand why those in the West have the Muller-Leyer illusion. Intuitions about what is hard to imagine are always to be handled with great care. Applied to the case of dehumanization, it means that eventually it might not have been hard (anymore) for the respective dehumanizers to literally believe that their targets are less (than) human. Steizinger (this volume) interprets some cases from the Nazi context in this manner – that is, as involving literal beliefs (based on anthropological theories) about Jews being not human. Kronfeldner (this volume) provides cases from earlier history. When ideas about non-Adamic heritage were used in cases of categorical relational dehumanization, or when dehumanizing claims about graded mental inferiority of women were naturalistically justified, the dehumanization involved was literally meant. For instance, when craniological measurement was taken to provide evidence for lesser humanness (of other races or women), then the respective claims about inferiority were neither meant metaphorically nor did they amount to an ambiguous attribution of humanity. Finally, Varga (2017, 2020, this volume) claims that dehumanization can be understood as quite perceptual (rather than post-perceptual), as is explicitly or implicitly assumed by many in the field. If so, then we are cognitively able to literally fail to see the humanity of another human being.

A final metalevel **restriction** that emerges from the discussions represented in the *Handbook* and that relates to all of the above is that it would be **overstretching the concept** if every discrimination, instrumentalization, outgroup bias, or harm done is automatically treated as a case of dehumanization. Given that dehumanization is now acknowledged as an important phenomenon of social life, there is some **danger of seeing it everywhere** and thus of overusing it. Haslam (2016, this volume) discusses this danger as “concept creep.” The earlier-mentioned discussions on not equating all kinds of objectification with dehumanization belong here too. And indeed, one can find publications where the term ‘dehumanization’ shows up, not as object of study, but as an unspecific negative qualifier – used in order to stress a negative evaluation of whatever phenomenon is under study. Even positivism interpreted as physicalism, which has nothing to do with how human beings regard and treat each other, has been portrayed as dehumanizing (Cooper 1996). In addition, there are quite some works on arts, sciences, technology, or medicine as *dehumanized* (rather than as dehumanizing). These studies, as the claim that physicalism is dehumanizing, refer to various forms of ‘leaving out the human.’ Since they do not refer (or at least not directly) to the social phenomenon of people regarding and treating other people as *not* or as *less* human, they are not covered in the *Handbook*, except for the one case discussed by Milam (this volume), in which dehumanization applies to all of humanity, in which humanity itself is dehumanized.

This means that dehumanization, as studied in the *Handbook*, does not concern any phenomenon that ‘leaves out the human’ or that deserves to be criticized from this or that perspective. Taking all phenomena that ‘leave out the human’ or that can be regarded as negative to be dehumanizing would clearly broaden the category too much. Dehumanization as studied in this volume ultimately concerns how people regard and treat other people. That holds despite the multiple levels involved, according to which

³⁴ See Henrich et al. (2010) on such cultural relativity.

dehumanization is also inscribed in structures, institutions, and relations, and not just in individual minds and actions.

The starting point in the *Handbook* is thus social relations between people, and that an idea of (not) being human (humanity or humanness) needs to be involved in the discrimination, bias, or harm done in order to meaningfully and productively talk about dehumanization. All forms of dehumanization involve either humanity or humanness (in this or that sense) being attributed or used in a differential manner with respect to different people. Finally, special care needs to be in place in order to not **wrongly assume or superimpose one's own concept of the human** onto the cases at issue, be it in anachronistically interpreting historical cases or in interpreting or studying contemporary cases. Kronfeldner (this volume) and Steizinger (this volume) included remarks along these lines.

The aim of the *Handbook* can thus be reformulated as the aim to arrive at a critical understanding of dehumanization across disciplinary boundaries that is neither too stipulated (i.e., tailored to a few cases or the researcher's ontology) and thus too narrow, nor seen everywhere and thus too broad.

1.6 Connections to related areas in the humanities and social sciences

Dehumanization is clearly distinct but connected to **other issues related to contemporary humanism**. As mentioned, it relates to issues about human rights, forms of discrimination (racism, sexism, classism, ableism, ageism, etc.) and specific realizations of the latter (anti-Semitism, anti-Islamism, anti-Ziganism, xenophobic beliefs, homophobic beliefs, misogyny, prejudices against low-status groups, etc.). These forms of group-based enmity are studied widely in all kinds of corners of the social sciences and humanities, in isolation, in their intersectionality, or even as a complex syndrome of "group-based enmity" (Heitmeyer 2005: 13-34). Finally, there are studies that directly focus on social phenomena like nationalism, expulsion, slavery, terror, torture, and so on. Dehumanization is usually under the radar of such studies – a background variable or side issue only. Hence, studying dehumanization means bringing that common background to the fore, not as an alternative but as a complement to studying the more specific forms of discrimination, prejudices, or violence.

Studying dehumanization is also related to discussions about contemporary humanism that address what it means to be human – in particular, posthumanism and transhumanism, discussions about the animal-human boundary or artificial intelligence, and discussions about the monstrous in different cultural contexts. First, take the set of debates that can be bundled together under the label posthumanism. Posthumanists (e.g., in the Heideggerian (1947) or Foucauldian (1994) tradition) deny that individual agency (or subjectivity) – understood as the epitome of being human – is fundamental to understand 'us.' What is usually challenged is the category of a 'subject,' or 'individual person,' as being such an epitome of being human. Reflections on embodiment, robotics, cyborgs, and hybrids are often added, questioning the ontological boundaries between humans, animals, and machines.³⁵ This directly relates to the interdisciplinary field that studies the history of perceived monstrosity. As Musharbash and Presterudstuen (2020) portray it, monsters (from the cyclops of antiquity to modern vampires, and beyond) are beings that relate to but also transgress the human. They signify something about the human and its shifting boundaries. Finally, 'we' might (and according to transhumanists,

³⁵ See Haraway (1991), Hayles (1999), Esposito (2014), and Peterson (2018).

like Bostrom 2003, should) become *more than human* via enhancement, newgenics, or digitalization. All these newer debates have been foreshadowed by techno-critical approaches of the Cold War era, discussing the specter of technological dehumanization of humanity as a whole (see Milam, this volume). Add that scholars in critical animal studies (e.g., Wolfe 2010) and bioethicists (e.g., Singer 1975, 2009) try to revolutionize morality, by including animals as *equally or almost human*. The aim is to overcome the alleged 'speciesism' (taken to be analogous to racism) in contemporary mainstream moral thinking about who has moral standing (for an overview, see Jaworska and Tannenbaum 2013). That this attitude is not radical enough – since it still *compares* animals to humans in hierarchical manners, fostering thereby the age-old logic of animalization – is the accusation of still others (see Crary, this volume). As a consequence, some scholars even aim to take the 'human' out of 'human rights' (e.g., Harris 2011). Finally, there are discussions about a relativist challenge of the idea of humanness – that is, the idea that there are universally shared properties of being human.³⁶ If there are no ethically important universal facts about being human, what is then the basis for our humanistic moral intuitions about equality, justice, or human rights? This relativist challenge boils down to the view, mentioned in the Preface, that humanism and the contents of human rights are too perspectival, or too biased and far from universal.

Connections between dehumanization and these other issues certainly exist. To stay with the last issue, human rights relativism and dehumanization both concern a challenge for humanism from within humanity, but they are strikingly distinct. While human rights relativism, in some versions at least, *postulates* differences between humans (e.g., with respect to their basic needs), dehumanization studies analyze how *the perception of and belief in* such differences emerges as a psychological, social, legal, political, or literary phenomenon. In addition, there is a direct link between dehumanization and animal rights. As mentioned, disability scholars (e.g., Kittay 2009) discuss whether it is epistemically and morally adequate to *compare* cognitively disabled people to animals, as has been done in bioethics discussions. This is the topic taken up by Crary (this volume). There is also a link between dehumanization and posthumanism via the concept of subjectivity – for example, in Agamben's (2000) analysis of dehumanization, testimony, and sovereign power in and after Auschwitz. Kristeva's (1980) concept of the abject is clearly relevant too. All of these frontiers of humanism connect to all kinds of debates about postcolonialism and otherness, given that all of them have to do with hierarchies, discrimination, and harm done to other people. Crary (this volume) connects dehumanization issues with the latter, and discusses how an anti-objectivity stance that is prevalent in postcolonial discourses negatively impacts the declared aim to counter dehumanization by liberating oppressed people and animals. Finally, dehumanization connects to concepts such as decency, civility, humiliation, and dignity, which are often discussed in law, ethics, and moral philosophy (see Margalit 1996, Kaufmann et al. 2011, Düwell et al. 2014). In relation to these concepts, dehumanization is more fundamental since it more directly relates to the fundamental ideas of humanity and humanness.

Discussions about postcolonialism, posthumanism, animal rights, artificial intelligence, the relativist challenge regarding human rights, humiliation, and dignity are quite *en vogue*, be it within the humanities, social sciences, or public discourse. Dehumanization is mentioned here or there, but it usually remains a blind spot – a background variable or side issue at best, and a catchy word at worst. This *Handbook* turns things upside down: it puts dehumanization in the spotlight, analyzes it from different angles, and it does so without losing sight of the other issues mentioned in this section.

³⁶ See Antony (1998, 2000) for a classic take on that; see Donnelly (2013) or Frick (2019) for overview.

1.7 Final remarks on focus, limitations, and readership of the individual contributions to the handbook

If one brings together multiple perspectives on complex issues, there will be frictions and disagreements, as well as open issues and limitations. Given the abundance of issues and cases, a focus for the *Handbook* was necessary. In terms of history, the focus is, as mentioned, on the history of the 'West,' with respect to the 'invention of humanity' and how dehumanization shows up from the early modern period to the biological anthropologies of the 19th and 20th centuries. Systematically, the focus is on specific, selected contexts and issues that relate to the historical, ethical, legal, conceptual, and epistemological issues involved in the wrongdoings that are increasingly often called dehumanizing. Finally, despite the intentionally set foci, I am sure I missed something that I should not have missed. Since the *Handbook* is meant to be a new vantage point for further multidisciplinary work on dehumanization, I can only hope that the reader takes it as an invitation to add.

One important limitation not mentioned explicitly in the above (despite the note on valence in Section 1.3) needs to be confronted directly, to prevent misunderstanding. The *Handbook* does not aim at a discussion as to whether or not dehumanization is morally wrong (and if so, why). The *Handbook* rather assumes from the start that dehumanization, in the contexts studied here, is to be regarded as morally wrong – simply because, given the historical and systematic focus of the *Handbook*, the contexts at issue are contexts of *wrongdoing*. Nonetheless, the question as to why dehumanization is morally wrong shows up occasionally in the *Handbook*: in Frick's (this volume), Machery's (this volume), and Mikkola's (this volume) contributions. The same holds for contexts where dehumanization might be regarded as morally neutral or benign (see Heinämaa and Jardine, this volume; Mikkola, this volume), or contexts in which it can be objectively justified to dehumanize the dehumanizer, as discussed in Frick (this volume). This creates a balance and opens a broader horizon, without losing sight of the goal of this *Handbook* – namely, to first and foremost understand the paradigmatic examples of dehumanization that are broadly accepted as neither morally neutral nor benign or justified.

The *Handbook* aims to reach professors and graduate students in various fields of the humanities and social sciences – in particular traditional, methodologically oriented fields, such as the history of ideas, history of science and technology, social philosophy, political philosophy, moral philosophy, philosophy of mind, philosophy of science, epistemology, anthropology, psychology, cognitive science, pedagogy, criminology, legal studies, rhetoric studies, or visual studies. It should also concern scholars in interdisciplinary but topic-oriented and newer academic areas, such as inequality studies, gender studies, disability studies, racism studies, genocide studies, Holocaust studies, animal studies, science studies, and so on. It should also appeal to readers from social work and political activism, as well as to those in public policy that regulate our social interactions as part of their work in those social institutions that structure our life.

1.8. Overview of chapter content

See Publisher's version or Postprint.

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