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A Journal of Interdisciplinary Normative Studies

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Articles

Wittgenstein and Thoreau (and Cavell): The Ordinary Weltanschauung

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I

For a long time I had been able to resist Cavell's pressure on me to turn to Thoreau in order to look for an "underwriting" of ordinary language philosophizing. Finally, however, my working at reading Wittgenstein - in particular at reading *Philosophical Investigations* 109-133 - forced me to reconsider my resistance. The remark that finally sent me from *Philosophical Investigations* to *Walden* was *PI* 122:

> The concept of a perspicuous representation is of fundamental significance for us. It earmarks the form of account we give, the way we look at things. (Is this a 'Weltanschauung'?)

The parenthetical question that ends this remark began to bother me: Why did Wittgenstein ask the question? Did he intend the question to be answered "Yes" or "No"? (Did he intend the question to be answered at all?)

The problem against which I read the question was the problem of defending ordinary language philosophy from various attacks, but especially from the flank attack that charges ordinary language philosophy with being "trivial," "flat," with "turning its back on the traditional questions and mission of philosophy." This charge struck me as wrong-headed, but also as exceptionally hard to resist. After all, ordinary language philosophy, if it has any dealings of any sort with 'Weltanschauung', looks to be a (the?) style of philosophy that repudiates the Weltanschauung.

Eventually, I retreated to the sentence that prefaces the question, and began to turn it over. The word that caught my attention was 'account'. This is Thoreau's word, the word that he used to describe *Walden*. The question then struck me: What if Thoreau's "underwriting" of the work of Wittgenstein (and of Austin) could be understood as his helping to provide an answer to the question "Is this a 'Weltanschauung'?"

I do not want to try to front this question immediately. Instead I want to wander around in its vicinity for a little while, to see what I can find.

II

In a well-known passage in *Walden*, Thoreau writes:

> Let us settle ourselves, and work and wedge our feet downward through the mud and slush of opinion, and prejudice, and tradition, and delusion, and appearance, that alluvion which covers the globe, . . . through poetry and philosophy and religion, till we come to a hard bottom and rocks in place, which we can call *reality*, and say, This is, and no mistake; and then begin, having a *point d'appui* . . .

Reading this passage recalls a couple of key passages in *Philosophical Investigations:*

> What has to be accepted, the given, is - so one could say - *forms of life* (226).

> If I have exhausted the justifications I have reached bedrock, and my spade is turned. Then I am inclined to say: "This is simply what I do." (217).

Wittgenstein notes that at the bottom of justifications, there is something that is bedrock, something hard enough to turn his spade. Whenever he reaches bedrock, he is *inclined* to say - "This is simply what I do." His reason for reporting his inclination is to make it clear that whatever he says at that point, after his spade's turning, is going to be something he is (only) inclined to say, not something he has to say or even something he says: If he were to say something, his inclination would be to say "This is simply what I do." I take Wittgenstein to call this an inclination because he wants to deflect the tendency most would have to reach bedrock and then to say "QED," as though something had been proven, or to shout "This is simply what I do" as if it were a challenge. But bedrock is reached *after* "the justifications" have been exhausted. The bedrock proves nothing; it only provides a place to stop, rough ground on which to walk.

What is at bottom? What is bedrock? I think that the passage from *PI* 226 gives the answer, namely that bedrock is a form of life. As I understand the term 'form of life', it primarily refers to "something animal" (*OC* 359), not to some idiosyncratic way of living, or even to some culture or some culture's set of practices. A form of life is a particular type of creature, some kind of living thing.

This is not as arbitrary an assertion as it might seem. As Putnam has rightly pointed out, 217 is phrased in terms of what "*I* have exhausted . . . ," what has happened to "*my* spade," what "*I* am inclined to say . . . " and what "*I* do."[1] If bedrock were to be understood as the practices of a culture, then Wittgenstein's emphasis on himself would be misplaced. Noting this about the passage gives rise to a different problem, however. Perhaps Wittgenstein, by placing the emphasis on himself, is suggesting that his bedrock and someone else's might be located at different strata. Again, though, the phrasing of the passage makes this reading troublesome: Wittgenstein does not say "I have exhausted *my* justifications" nor does he assert that the bedrock he reaches is *his* bedrock. The clear route through the *ipsissima verba* of the passage then looks to be the one I want to take, the one that sees Wittgenstein as having struck bottom at his form of life, to have struck bottom at being human.[2]

Bedrock is a particular creature, hence a particular creature's nature; for Wittgenstein, in *PI* 217, human nature is bedrock. By 'human nature' I do not mean 'human essence' - something unchanging and atemporal, a set of necessary and sufficient conditions that every human being is supposed to satisfy. By 'human nature' I mean those activities that typify human beings as we know them, those that are the ordinary features of a *human* life in *this* world; those that are more than idiosyncracies (a taste for blood sausage, a love for Barbara Cartland novels, etc.) and less than purely biological compulsions (the pumping of the heart, breathing, eating, etc.). The activities I am concerned with are those that would be the fit subject matter of a natural history of human beings. And this is how Wittgenstein describes his philosophical activity (in *PI* 415): "What we are supplying are really remarks on the natural history of human beings."

What does all of this have to do with Thoreau? Well, in one way the answer is pretty obvious, in another less so. I want to take up the question in the latter way. In the chapter "Economy," Thoreau writes that he went to the woods in order to "learn what are the gross necessaries of life." He goes on to explain that by 'necessaries of life' he means

> whatever . . . has been from the first, or from long use has become, so important to human life that few, if any, whether from savageness, or poverty, or philosophy, ever attempt to do without it.

The "necessaries" Thoreau has in mind here - as the rest of the chapter makes clear - are less those we share with the brutes than those we (ought to) share with other human beings, things he will describe in the next chapter as the things he "lived for." ("We crave only reality").

Thoreau has been called the inventor of the natural history essay, and it is this way of thinking of *Walden* that I am trying to exploit.[3] The type of description Thoreau provides, a description of the "necessaries of [human] life," is a description, I think, of what Wittgenstein calls the human "form of life." That is, *Walden* can be understood as Thoreau's remarks on the natural history of human beings. All of Thoreau's talk of "Nature" has blinded some to the fact that the nature that Thoreau is most concerned to describe and to understand in *Walden* is his nature, our nature - human nature.

As an aid to unpacking some of those overstuffed sentences, recall that one of the recurrent themes of *Walden* is that "men labor under a mistake." Throughout the book, Thoreau proposes "disfutations" (to use O.K. Bouwsma's word) of the mistakes men labor under: Thoreau does not try to refute the mistakes, he tries to overwhelm them, to rid them of their appeal. The mistakes Thoreau disfutes are the type better forgotton, better left behind, than rebutted; the type of mistakes we can with effort shed, like the misconceptions of childhood. (What Thoreau here calls a "mistake," Wittgenstein will later call, more aptly, a "superstition" (*PI* 110)).

The mistake that the book takes aim at again and again is the mistake of thinking of human beings as creatures set over and against Nature. Thoreau wants us to come to see ourselves a right; to "regard man as an inhabitant, or part and parcel of Nature . . . "One of the important facts about human beings is that we have a tendency to bargain our nature

away: We tend to impute our activities and skills and accomplishments to the tools we use: We say that "scissors cut," when it is we who do the cutting; we claim that our vehicles "take us where we want to go," when it is we who do the driving; we describe books as "saying something," when it is the author who does the talking; we maintain that words "have meanings," or refer to things," when it is we who mean things and we who refer to things. This ability to regard our nature as foreign to us - this "doubleness"; this "standing beside ourselves in a sane sense" - keeps us from being "wholly involved in Nature," keeps us from being wholly involved in our nature.

In "Walking," Thoreau describes himself as suffering from this "doubleness":

> But it sometimes happens that I cannot easily shake off the village. The thought of some work will run in my head and I am not where my body is, - I am out of my senses. In my walks I would fain return to my senses.

The work of *Walden,* as I read it, is summed up in these lines. Thoreau's retreat from the village to the pond - his walk from one to the other - is an attempt to return to his senses.[4] Thoreau's reparation to the woods can be taken as symbolic of his return to his body, of his reinhabiting his body. Hence his concern with habitation, with settlements, becomes his way of provoking concern for *occupying* the body; it becomes his way of tempting us into a whole involvement with our nature.[5]

The concern Thoreau wants to provoke is not a fetish for the body, or things bodily, nor is it a call to glorify, or revel in, the body. Both of these require precisely what Thoreau wants us to forego - "doubleness." Both require a sort of "separation" from the body, a holding of it at arm's length; both require us to take notice of the body. The concern Thoreau wants to provoke is instead a concern compatible with, perhaps best expressed in, being unmindful of the body. (Note that this is not the same as neglecting ir ot being forgetful of it.) What I mean is that Thoreau wants us to return to our senses, to our body, and to return with a sense of homecoming. Our home is the place where we are at home; it is the place we can be with no sense of being anywhere. It is the place where we are comfortable. And the mark of comfortable clothing is my lack of awareness that I am wearing it. Thus, Thoreau wants to provoke us to concern with the body, to return us to where it is, to lead us home. Coming to see the body as home is not to pant after it, nor to glorify it, but rather to settle into it, to become comfortable in it, to eventually let go of awareness of it; it is to see embodiment as ordinary. (For most of us, the body is too much or too little with us for embodiment to be seen as ordinary.)

III

My dwelling on the body will, I hope, be excused. I did it in order to make clearer some of the things involved in looking at *Walden* as I do and also to provide a perspective from which to consider the passage from *Walden* that began Section II. How should that passage be understood? Like this, I think: What Thoreau calls "a hard bottom" is human nature. His "*point d'appui*," the stopping-place, is the type of creature we are.

Consider the potential ambiguity of the term 'human nature'. Above I treated it as a term for whatever activities typify human beings as we know them. It might also be taken as a term for the nature that humans find or that they observe - Nature seen through human eyes. I want to suggest that there is no actual ambiguity in 'human nature'; it is because both ways of taking the term end up coming to the same thing that Thoreau can treat human nature as a hard bottom, as reality. For Thoreau, the Nature we know is our nature.

In "Experience," Emerson notes that "we can only say what we are." It is this tie-up between what we say (or know) and what we are that Thoreau wants us to admit. I can make this a little less obscure by turning to a couple of passages in *Philosophical Investigations*:

> *Essence* is expressed by grammar. (371)

> Grammar tells what kind of object anything is. (Theology as grammar.) (373)

These passages seem mystifying. I think that they need not be. It is tempting to understand the passages to be saying something much stronger and much more controversial than they are, something like "*Essence* is created by grammar" and "Grammar makes anything into the kind of object it is." Taking the passages this way makes it necessary to grapple with nightmarish questions of linguistic idealism. These questions can be avoided, will be avoided, if we pay attention to the wording of the passages. 371 notes that essence "is *expressed by* grammar" and 373 that grammar "tells us *what kind of object* anything is." These are really fairly pedestrian remarks. To see this, imagine talking to a blind man about colors. Imagine asking him "Have you tasted any brown lately?" Do you think he will answer? Does the fact that he is blind make him unable to recognize the question as nonsense? Does the fact that he has never seen brown render him incompetent to judge whether it can be tasted? The point is that his acquaintance with color talk, with color terms, has told him what kind of objects colors are. Though he has not seen and may never see something brown, he knows that brown cannot be tasted. He knows, we might say, something about the essence of colors; he knows something about the possibilities of color (*PI* 90.) Thus, in *PI* 371 and 373 Wittgenstein tells us something about the way language - our nature - and Nature are bound up with one another, and that in turn tells us something about the way what we know and what we are bound up with one another. What human beings know something to be, their experience of it, is shown by the ways they talk about it and vice versa.[6] (In the end, there is only a mock- formal distinction between the two; we cannot prize them apart.[7]) And the way we talk is a function of what we are: Our grammar tells us what kind of creature we are.

My suggestion that human nature is reality for Thoreau, that it is what he calls the "hard bottom," should be easier to understand when seen in light of *PI* 371 and 373. The response to my suggestion that seems most likely to me is that, if I am right, then Thoreau has abandoned us in (to?) human nature and has made (non-human) Nature some kind of thing-in-itself, something we cannot reach.

This response springs from the idea that to say that our nature is the only Nature we can know is to say that human nature sets us (that is, we humans) limits, that we are

confined by it, confined in it. But this is the wrong way of responding to my suggestion.[8] What could it mean to me to be told that I cannot experience what a human being cannot experience? Would this be news to me - even interesting gossip? How can I be *denied* a non-human experience? While I can imagine what it *might be like* to be lion, I cannot imagine being one. (Wittgenstein: "If a lion could talk, we could not understand him." [223]) I cannot be abandoned someplace, or trapped there, when there is no place (else) to go. A form of Butler's remark pretty much captures the thought: Human beings are what they are and not any other thing. Thus, we can only *say* what *we* can say; we can only *do* what *we* can do.

This is not a defeatist doctrine. It only seems so to those whose view of human nature is unduly pessimistic or to those who think that the so-called "limits" of human nature have been fixed in advance. Thoreau did not think that they were; if he had, there would have been no 'experiment' in his experiment. Emerson asked the question, "How can we know in advance what we are capable of?" And Thoreau answered, "We can't; we can only put ourselves to the test." Though there is no defeat in this, there is renunciation: there is a renouncing of any claim to empire, a renouncing of a claim on anything more than or other than human; and, there is acceptance, hence acknowledgement: the acknowledgement of embodiment, of being a human being. It is when we come up against what we are that we can say "This is, and no mistake."[9]

We might think of the passage I am responding to here as the beginning of Thoreau's reply to Descartes. When all else is stripped away, I am left with myself, with what I am - not with a mere thinking thing, though, but rather with a human being. "I only know myself as a human entity."

The passage on 'thinking' in "Solitude" (from which this last quoted line above is culled) finishes Thoreau's reply to Descartes, but readers of *Walden* have sometimes failed to notice this because they have thought the passage a celebration of a certain type of thinking. The passage begins by noting that in this type of thinking we can "be beside ourselves in a sane sense" (and that Thoreau adds ." . . . in a *sane* sense" is significant) and that by a conscious effort of mind (an effort like Descartes') we can "stand aloof from things and their consequences." This standing aloof puts the thinker in a position from which he "*may* be affected by a theatrical exhibition" and from which he "*may not* be affected by an actual event which appears to concern" him. But this is topsy-turvy, as Thoreau goes on to make clear when he points out that this standing aloof, this "doubleness," "may easily make us poor neighbors and friends." That the passage is condemnatory and not celebratory of this type of thinking is clinched by a further consideration: The first sentence of the next paragraph is: "I find it wholesome to be alone the greater part of the time." As I read the sentence, it looks back to the "doubleness" brought on by thinking and declares it unwholesome. How can a person be alone when he is standing beside himself? (The type of thinking Thoreau goes on to discuss, the type in which "a man . . . is always alone" is a different sort of matter; it is the type of thinking done by a person who acknowledges what he is and has no desire to stand aloof from it.[10]) In effect, Thoreau has condemned Descartes' project as yet another attempt to bargain away human nature in hopes of some grander goods. Unfortunately, Descartes' project leaves us empty handed and "stand[ing] as remote from [ourselves] as from another."

The point of departure for the philosopher then is human nature, the human entity. It is what Wittgenstein tells us "must be accepted." Making it the point of departure requires the philosopher to treat it as what is given to philosophy, not given in it.[11] In other words, the philosopher must treat human nature, the human entity, as "outside" philosophy: the human entity may not be treated as some kind of first principle (what would it mean to say it is "indubitable," "incorrigible," "self-justifying"?) Instead, it is the "external" ground of philosophy, something philosophy measures itself against; something it strives to be adequate to (and not vice versa.) The human entity is not the answer to any philosophical problem, but philosophy is answerable to it (to us): Thoreau locates his "hard bottom," his "reality," *below* philosophy, Wittgenstein reaches bedrock only *after* "exhausting the justifications," meaning that the bedrock - the human entity - justifies nothing and is justified by nothing (is something that "lies beyond being justified or unjustified" [(*OC* 359]). Any philosophy adequate to the human entity is not going to guarantee us against anything, nor is it going to guarantee anything, except that it is not, for human beings *here, now,* irrelevant or impractical.

IV

I have now reached a vantage point from which to address my initial worries. If human nature, the human entity, is what is given to philosophy, and if I was right to state that "our grammar tells us what kind of creature we are," then the attacks on ordinary language philosophy can be answered.

To begin, the tie-up between our nature and our grammar - our language - requires us to treat our grammar as itself given to philosophy. Like our nature, which pre-exists us in the form of our parents and elders, our language pre-exists us as well. The philosopher's concern with our language is a concern with us, with the things we talk about in it.[12] Thus, ordinary language philosophy will only be trivial or flat, or will only turn its back on the traditional questions and mission of philosophy, if *we* - the speakers of the language - talk only of what is trivial or flat, or if *we* turn our backs on the traditional questions and mission of philosophy. Still it is hard to see a Weltanschauung here. Is there one? Is this a Weltanschauung?

The answer, I think, is a qualified "Yes." Qualifications are needed because this ordinary language philosophy is not a Weltanschauung that a philosopher creates or that is forced on a philosopher. Seeing what is ordinary is not any special seeing. However, seeing what is ordinary *as ordinary* (not merely seeing the ordinary, but looking at it, noticing it), seeing it as the prevalent thread in the weave of our life, is a special seeing. It is a "way of looking at hings"; a "way of hearkening, [a] kind of receptivity" (*PI* 232). 'Hearkening' and 'receptivity' sound like echoes of a passage in *Walden* (often quoted by Cavell) in which Thoreau says:

> You only need sit still long enough in some attractive spot in the woods and all its inhabitants may exhibit themselves to you by turns.

I note that Wittgenstein's words echo Thoreau's because both put the premium on passivity, not activity. What is ordinary, as Wittgenstein reminds us in *PI* 600, does not

"impress us as ordinary." To notice the ordinary, to see what is ordinary as ordinary, requires us to reorient ourselves on our life and our language (our life with language). But this reorienting is not so much a matter of doing something as it is of refusing to do something (to "sublime the logic of our language," to try to get behind what is given; to ignore the necessities of life). It is a reorientation of the sort represented by choosing not to hunt for answers, but rather to sit still and let them come to us (by choosing not to explain but to describe).[13] The Weltanschauung of ordinary language philosophy is not something we create nor is it something forced upon us: it is given to us; it comes to us; we inherit it; it is our birthright. Too often however, it is something we must struggle to regain, because somewhere, sometime, we bargained it away - traded it for a bowl of alluvion.[14]

Notes

1. Putnam, H. *The Many Faces of Realism* (LaSalle, Ill: Open Court, 1987), 91.

2. I should point out that my reliance on the wording of Wittgenstein's remarks is the result of my belief that one can say of *Philosophical Investigations* what Cavell has said of *Walden*: That it "means every word it says . . . " Cavell, S. *The Sensen of Walden* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 33.

3. Harding, Walter. "Five Ways of Looking at Thoreau" in Meyerson, ed. *Critical Essays on Thoreau's Walden* (Boston: G.K. Hall and Co., 1988), 86.

4. The condition Thoreau calls "returning to his senses" is much the same condition Wittgenstein envisions when talking of "a sound human understanding." Neither condition is marked by an increase in acumen per se, or by an increase in knowledge, but rather by a heightened (if the near-circularity can be forgiven) sensibility, a greater attentiveness.

5. I cannot help thinking here of a line of Brian O'Shaughnessy's: "Do we turn towards the body, the flesh, as a salmon in spring will head up-stream?" "The Origin of Pain," *Analysis* (June, 1955), 129.

6. The temptation to ask the "chicken and egg" question about our talk of the world and our knowledge of it - namely: Which came first? - is a temptation that must be avoided.

7. By 'mock-formal distinction' here I mean that we can only imagine *imagining* knowing things and experiencing them in isolation from being able to talk about them. I am not at all sure we can imagine this. (I take something like this to be Wittgenstein's point when he says, of a person who imagines certain general facts of nature to be other than they are, that "*the formation* of concepts different from the usual ones will become intelligible to him" [emphasis mine] instead of saying that "the concepts *themselves* will become intelligible to him" (*PI* 230).

I want to say that our language, our nature and Nature are so tightly bound together that any command to imagine one in isolation from the other two is a command that leaves us at sea; if we are honest, we will admit that we have no idea how to go about obeying the command. (Think here not only of *PI* 230 but also of *PI* 19: "And to imagine a language means to imagine a form of life.")

8. This is the wrong way of responding to my suggestion, but the fact that it seems so appropriate needs to be accounted for. I think it seems an appropriate way of responding because it is an expression of the desire to escape the human predicament Schopenhauer describes as "knowing many things but being only one thing."

It is the desire to escape this predicament that (so often) warps epistemological inquiry. We want to be more than (at least other than) we are, so we try to make our knowledge of other things more than it is - we want knowing something to be tantamount to possessing it, to encompassing it. I take Santayana to be criticizing this desire and its

impact on epistemology when he notes that "Knowledge is not eating and we cannot be expected to devour what we mean"; and it is this desire and its impact that F.J.E. Woodbridge criticizes for leading to the confusing of "knowing a world" with "having a world to know." Cf. Adams and Montague, eds. *Contemporary American Philosophy* (New York: Russell and Russell, Inc., 1962), 416.

9. By ". . . and no mistake" I take Thoreau only to be saying "This is, and *I am not mistaken*" not "This is, and *I cannot be mistaken.*" Anytime someone claims to be representing a statement of Thoreau's or of Wittgenstein's and the claim is a necessity claim or an impossibility claim, there is most likely mischief afoot. (A classic example: If Wittgenstein is attempting to arrive at some "position" in the so-called "Private Language Argument" it is not that we cannot have a private language, but simply that we do not. And this looks like a description or a reminder, and not a hypothesis.)

10. We might think of the difference as that between the pure thinker and (Emerson's) Man thinking.

11. This distinction is one I have borrowed from Everett Hall. Cf. *Philosophical Systems* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 138ff.

12. As Cavell puts it, "Ordinary language philosophy is about whatever ordinary language is about." "Aesthetic Problems of Modern Philosophy" in Black, M. *Philosophy in America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1965), 96.

13. Cavell has also attempted to answer the question "Is this a 'Weltanschauung'?" (Cf. "Aesthetic Problems of Modern Philosophy," 87): "The answer to [the] question is, I take it, not No. Not, perhaps, Yes; because it is not a *special*, or competing, way of looking at things. But not No; because its mark of success is that the world seem - be - different." My answer to the question is obviously similar to Cavell's; I differ with him in that I think the Weltanschauung to be a special - a competing - way of looking at things. Cavell may be right that any person who has only looked at the world the way Wittgenstein and Thoreau do would be misdescribed as "having a Weltangschauung"; but the trouble is that few, if any, grown-ups are in that position, especially among philosophers. For these non-innocent (non-childlike?) folk, it is a struggle to find and to remain in the ordinary - it is a struggle to care about the ordinary: As Wittgenstein puts it, "Here it is *difficult* as it were to keep our heads up, - to see that we must stick to the subjects of our everyday thinking . . . " (*PI* 106) [emphasis mine]. In this sense, this way of looking at things is indeed a special or competing way of looking at things. (For me, and not, I think, for Cavell, 'the ordinary Weltanschauung' is a *special* way of seeing what is itself not special. It is not the innocent way of looking at things, but rather a way of looking at things as if innocent: Once we have cast ourselves out of "the garden of the world we live in" (Austin), we must struggle to feel at home every time we return).

14. My thanks to Tim Dykstal for comments on an early draft of this paper.

Liberalism and the Moral Significance of Individualism: A Deweyan View

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A liberalism which scorns all individualism is fundamentally mis-guided. This is the chief thesis of this paper. To argue for it, I look closely at some key concepts. The concepts of morality and individualism are crucial. I emphasize Dewey on the "individuality of the mind," and a Deweyan discussion of language, communication, and community. The thesis links individualism and liberalism, and since appeals to liberalism have broader appeal in the present context of discussions, I start with consideration of liberalism. The aim is to dispute overly restrictive conceptions and explore a broader perspective. To bring the argument to a close, attention turns first to Dewey on value inquiry, to Dewey's "democratic individualism" (cf. Dewey 1939, 179), and to the concept of moral community. Disputing the acquisitiveness of utilitarian influences in classical liberalism, a Deweyan argument from the nature of moral community supports re-emphasis on individualism in contemporary liberal thought.

1. The Ordinary Language of American Liberalism

Reigning confusions persist in contemporary American usage linking liberalism with a specific American form of the mid-twentieth century - and often with specific debates, issues, and campaign strategies. Liberalism as a leading principle, and its deeper meaning, are lost from sight. In popular perception, former Presidents Reagan and Bush are conservatives and other prominent figures such as the Kennedy brothers are liberals. "Liberal" is the opposite of "conservative," one point beyond dispute.

Liberalism favors an active role for government and scorns the "individualism" espoused by the conservatives, as an ideology of economic powers that be. Liberals hanker after the "Roosevelt coalition" including minorities, labor, and the "little man." Liberalism is against big business. It has, at least until recently, favored labor unions, the welfare state, and affirmative action programs. Liberals tax and spend. Yet, they feel guilty. They are soft-hearted but maybe hard-headed enough to have vested interests in expanding bureaucracy. Such is the picture.

At a higher level of sophistication, we recognized that some labelled "conservative" in the American political context have claims on the mantle of liberalism: the point is made by distinguishing modern liberalism from "classical liberalism." But classical liberals count as conservatives, and they stand on the right. Our classical liberals usually acquiesce in this classification (otherwise they are "libertarians" and do fit among the orthodox right). A problem for classical liberals irked by the label "conservative" is that "liberalism," as normally used, represents a movement of the orthodox left. But classical liberals usually stands in the orthodox right. Thus, paradoxically, a classical liberal is not

a liberal. Fuzzy adversarial thinking effectively insulates us from in-depth re-evaluation of the liberal tradition. Aim for an overview of liberalism: to recover the continuity of the liberal tradition.

The categories are strained to the breaking point. Part of the reason is that the US is founded on government of, by, and for the people. Thus, we would think that the established order (the right? . . . the left?) favors democracy and popular government. Moreover, America was largely peopled by emigrants seeking to escape economic, political, or religious oppression. That they came, and continue to come, is an affirmation of American ideals. But on the other hand, no diploma of moral virtues was required to get through Ellis Island. The conviction lingers that our established order requires opposition on the left to defend those exploited or discriminated against, though there is also much suspicion of ideology. The question arises: does "liberalism" now represent an elite antithetical to the origins and proper development of fundamental ideas?

Just how respectable is the orthodox right in terms of our founding traditions? If it fully owned up to them, we would have little need of an opposition to the left (cf. Dewey 1957). On the other hand, it's unclear what the orthodox left has to complain about. They seem to have the system (since 1933) which they want. Has this system failed to deal with the problems of abuse of power against the disadvantaged? What, by the way, does the left have to be so guilty about? Similar questions can be multiplied. But my point is to urge that the oppositions are fundamentally flawed: a "modern" liberalism with no room for genuine individualism has surrendered its soul (we suspect it has become the political representative of the bureaucracy and its retainers); a classical liberalism of atomized economic individualism undermines the independence which it claims to support. It provides no effective criterion of value beyond material success, fostering its purchase at too high a price.

All liberalism has lost its good name in American politics. Politics has often been paralyzed. We have repeatedly elected a Democratic congress and a Republican President in recent decades. The American people, in their wisdom, decided they wanted to have their cake and eat it too. The bills have been sent to coming generations. We may doubt that America knows what it stands for in the world - now that "real existing socialism" has failed. This is a potentially dangerous situation both for the US and for the rest of the world. Given that major political and social currents of American thought are rooted in the liberal tradition, but that "modern" liberal politics threaten to grind to a halt, we need to reinvent liberalism. What follows is a basic value-orientation for that goal.

2. Individualism and Early Liberalism

A central point of reference is the early modern movement in Western Europe and America connected with the revolt against oligarchical government and officially established religion. This movement is provided with historical identity by the "Glorious Revolution" of 1688 - though the "revolution" was more like a bloodless coup in which the people (including commercial interests) and the aristocracy rose against the absolutist pretensions of James II. 1688 established the predominance of parliament over the monarchy. In philosophy, this is the liberalism of John Locke (and later Montesqueiu), the liberalism

incorporated into the Declaration of Independence by Jefferson and into the US constitution. We think of it primarily in terms of government existing for the sake of the governed, the bill of rights, democracy, and the division of powers. We think of it too in terms of its continued development in 19th century Britain, J.S. Mill's *On Liberty*, and the progressive reforms of the liberal party during the last century. Somewhere in the nineteenth century it seems to merge with that "classical liberalism" which appears (not completely without justification) in the demonology of critics as the ideology of big business. This breach in the liberal tradition represents the intrusion of romantic collectivism (whether in the self-aggrandizement of the business world, as nationalism, or in the form of state socialism). This was a revolt against and within liberalism, symbolized by the effective dissolution of the British liberal party following World War I. To recover continuity in the liberal tradition, we must see through and heal this breach.

Liberalism originated in the demands of citizens and taxpayers to be free of arbitrary governmental actions ("no taxation without representation") and perhaps more basically with a demand by early protestants, and others, for freedom of religious confession - thus in opposition to established churches. In significant degree, the early victories of liberalism in Britain and in the US may properly be viewed as victories won by "non-conformist" protestants over established aristocratic-theological powers. The two demands are closely related, though we are now more concerned with freedom from the demand for ideological conformity that we are with religious freedom.

In pre-modern societies, government was often a matter of rule by self-selecting aristocracies which had a primary eye for their own narrow interests. Moreover, religion played a role binding populations and their local hierarchies, so that to "step out" of the established religion (as we so mildly put it today) was to effectively isolate oneself from society (cf. Dewey 1948, 46-47).

There can be no doubt that early liberal movements drew powerful support from new economic interests in commerce and from the early industrial middle classes. These people rose up against the hegemony of the landed aristocracy in Europe. If there had been no new economic forms to support their efforts, they would not have been nearly so successful. These economic developments - linked to fundamental discoveries and developments in science and technology - served to "empower" a religious expression (including, certainly "left-wing" protestantism) which emphasized each individual's personal relationship to God and the ideal of life based on a personal reading or interpretation of scripture. In contrast with traditional established religion (where interpretations are provided by the priesthood) this new expression was distinctly individualistic. In Catholic countries, similar attitudes to traditional religion and its place in social power structures took the form of anti-clericalism - including Marxist anti-clericalism. In Judaism, powerful movements toward reform and liberalization were also evident.

It appears that placing religion on a personal basis, as among the radical protestants, had the effect of de-politicizing basic value orientations. (If each is entitled to his or her own interpretation, then these interpretations become poor instruments for mobilizing great masses under opposing banners.) The development of religions of conscience also paved the way for greater individualization in other areas of life. De-politicalization of

deeper personal beliefs and values was needed in the victory of parliamentarianism: we require a certain detachment and tolerance to accept the notion of "loyal opposition" at all. In much of the world, "loyal opposition" has remained a contradiction in terms. Consider the prevalence and motivation of the one party state.

The point provides some insight into the origins of liberal tolerance out of earlier religious wars. We suspect that pre-modern religions played the role in the religious wars of prior centuries that various political ideologies have played in the present century: that of social-moral "justification" for collective conflicts and the static hierarchies required for their prosecution. If we are to avoid large-scale collective conflicts in the future, then a similar de-politicalization of moral conflicts recommends itself by its historic role in the origins of parliamentary democracy (cf. Russett 1993). I return to this point in my discussion of moral community.

It is difficult to imagine the prosperous members of the new economic class, in the early modern period, not feeling somewhat uncomfortable - still sitting in the lesser pews of the established churches - where a doctrinal twist favoring the aristocracy in the superior pews might have proved helpful in advancing a theological career and settling a local dispute. In opposition to the traditional (pre-industrial, pre-democratic) interrelations of church, aristocracy, and community, liberalism may be viewed as a political expression denying old and hallowed wisdom: "salvation" may indeed be found outside the established community religion and independent of the established forms of the political and social order. Dissent from the established order can empower itself, once tolerance is established, by means of social-political, religious, and economic reforms.

Liberalism became a political force instituting new forms of social organization (such as commercial and industrial enterprises, new religions, etc.) and ultimately defeated traditional aristocratic powers based upon the ownership and control of land. Still, it is the worst sort of Marxist pandering to resentment to see this as a purely economic movement, so that all talk of "the rights of man" and limited government is an excuse for the power of a new class. I have no doubt that these doctrines have been misused in this way, but to stigmatize early liberalism as *merely* a rationalization for power throws out the baby with the bathwater. This is not to deny that otherwise unemployed aristocrats may have continued careers of influence, or propagated typical attitudes, within the new forms of economic power. Instead the point is placed in an appropriate context of large-scale developments.

We need greater appreciation of the extent to which oppression of the many was a regular feature of traditional social organization. That this has been carried over into modern social forms, to some degree, is a point beyond reasonable doubt. However, modern social forms also allow for progressive liberation of human energies via reforms. In order to effectively reinvent liberalism, means must be found to further reforms. Supporting means of economic empowerment are central in this: it must be possible for people to become economically independent - to set themselves up in business for instance.

Reform is an unending enterprise. In a changing social world, new opportunities for abuse of power (niches for would-be aristocrats, one might say) are always with us. Innovation, insight, and reforms are needed to control these developments. Thus liberalism cannot put the requisite individualism aside, for extended periods, without risking retrograde developments - infestations of new forms of oppression. Still, there is reason to think this is just what we have done. From the Great Depression, through World War II, and 45 years of the Cold War, liberalism has been on a war footing (cf. the discussion of Hook and Niebuhr in Westbrook, 1990). We are yet to recover.

3. Science, Individualism and the Modern World

Individualism was en element in early modern science, and just as new economic forms must be viewed as the empowering condition of new, more democratic, and liberal political organization (people tend not to listen to the powerless), the new science of nature was the essential empowering condition of the new economic forms of early liberal society. As Dewey put the point, there is a "mutual interdependence of the scientific revolution and the industrial revolution" (Dewey 1948, 41). My point is to underline the role of independent judgment, or intellectual conscience, in these developments. I agree with Dewey in seeing political changes made possible by science and industry as "emancipating the individual from bonds of class and custom" and "producing a political organization which depends less upon superior authority and more on voluntary choice" (ibid, 44), and I want to focus on the role of individuality in scientific innovation.

Dewey argued that "the only creative individuality" is "that of mind" (Dewey 1930, 91). The point can be expressed by the opposition between individuality of opinion or viewpoint on the one hand and conformity or rebellion on the other. For, both conformity in opinion and rebellion involve an essentially "other-directed" element. Basically, to conform, one must conform to a particular group, and much the same goes for rebellion. It is essentially a reversal. There is no creativity in difference for its own sake.

The social benefits to conformists have never been easily overlooked. Insofar as we acquiesce in the views and purposes of those around us, we put ourselves into a position to take part in pre-existing joint activities and become part of a going social concern. Integration is vastly simplified where the accepted goal of the individual is to seek honor in the established terms of his or her own society. For social honor is the expected result of meeting (or exceeding) established expectations. Rebellion is the normal result, when social pressures for conformity become too great.

To think for ourselves, on the other hand, requires that we question and examine accepted belief, though this questioning tends to create a gap and tension between the questioner and social environment. The paradox is that viable community life requires both that conformity to established standards be rewarded and that critical insight not be destroyed.

Thus, the most profound social-intellectual accomplishments of humanity are closely connected to those institutional and political frameworks which enable the questions, doubt, and hypothesis formation of independent thought to proceed without generating

destructive consequences. The most profound questions of human nature are those which relate creative thought to its social and political expression and infrastructures. Whatever the established social and political structures of a time, there will always be temptation to insulate them from change (along with one's position) by means of control over the powers of innovation. Thus, there is good reason to insist that freedom of thought, and its expression in speech, are crucial to any viable, human political order, though this requires renewed elaboration in a technological setting where even the printed word seems under threat of obsolescence and communication has gone global and electronic. Freedom cannot maintain itself easily as something purely internal or spiritual, and there is good reason to insist that "we must turn to the general human struggle for political, economic, and religious liberty, for freedom of thought, speech, assemblage and creed, to find significant reality in the conception of freedom of will" (Dewey 1922, 9). Freedom requires outer expression, and it obtains a paradigmatic expression in science.

Modern science is a paradigm of undistorted human cognitive efforts and undistorted communications - science is rational, if anything is. Wherever it is threatened with censorship or distortions of any sort, social problems will be found brewing beneath the surface. For the impetus to censor the sciences and other scholarly disciplines arises primarily from the force of established patterns of thought - and the social and professional arrangements (including personnel decisions) erected upon such patterns. Just because there is no final and foolproof definition of good scientific practice and method (the methods of the sciences draw upon new paradigms of scientific success and thus evolve), they are ever open to tampering and slanted judgments which take more interest in who knows whom than in who knows what. Though not prominent, as Russell put it, "the element of individualism in scientific thought... is nevertheless essential" (Russell, 1945, 599)

When an investigator arrives at a new hypothesis or theory, the chief concern is that the idea seems right. The investigator does not surrender insight to the force of reigning doctrine, for if he or she did, there would be no venture into new possibilities. Moreover, the investigator hopes to persuade others by means of rational argumentation, experimentation, and evidence. (Or, in the extreme, to persuade others to accept new forms of evidence and argumentation.) Those who do otherwise are not practicing science. Though the forms of evidence and argumentation are variable, scientific practice - culminating in experiment and prediction - also provides a test of variations. Hence, however much evidence the history of science may provide regarding "irrationality" within science as institutionally defined, failing arguments to overcome our conviction of the reality and efficacy of scientific thought (thus upsetting our conviction of the lack of physical/natural efficacy in mere social connivance), history will produce no convincing grounds to question the potentiality of the investigator's novel insight. Individualism of the mind is crucial to science.

We retain good grounds for accepting modern science's self-description as a progressive liberation from prejudice and authority as the final tribunals of belief. It is still the independent variable in the expansion and correction of knowledge claims, and individuality of mind remains central in the potentialities of the modern world. Thus, we have an epistemic argument for individuality. It is required for scientific development and a key

to the human potentiality for control over nature. It is also a requirement of social-scientific understanding of the human world, its evolving problems, and the formulation of reforms. Individuality as required for scientific progress is a social good, a condition of human societies which we can preserve or destroy. It is a social condition of the possibility of knowledge - with definite normative implications.

The facilitation of individual differences by political and moral means, in the modern world, is doubtlessly a partial reflection of the role of differences in coming to know. In order to facilitate the preservation, development, and correction of knowledge claims, we are restrained from overly strenuous regulation of individual belief - regulation which cannot be effected by rational means. As the case of Galileo shows, neither can we expect some *a priori* limits on the kinds of beliefs which science may pronounce upon. It made no sense, in terms of traditional religious world-views, that God should create the world as the stage of our moral tribulations and *not* put us at the center of creation; but it was precisely such elements of human worth and dignity, as traditionally conceived, which were subverted by the Copernican theory of the heavens.

The example does not bode well for absolute or *a priori* distinctions between natural sciences and human sciences or *Geisteswissenschaften*. It is *not* that science prevents us from bestowing meaning on human life; but it does *constrain* us, in spite of all sentiment to the contrary, in what meaning we bestow. The meanings we create for human life and efforts (our values and value claims) are subject to correction in this sense. For science, and the progress of science, show us that even our values are no mere internal development of mind or spirit. We are in constant intercourse with a world we can never completely know or control. In Deweyan terms, science shows us that we can never completely escape contingency in favor of absolute security. Thus it advises that we accept the contingencies of human life which arise from within the thinker - freedom of thoughts and conscience - as the root of collective intelligence, as against collective egoism. This is clearly the paradigmatic attitude of liberal thought. Accepting these internal contingencies gives us a better shot at controlling external contingency.

Moral strengths exhibited by traditional empiricisms, realisms, and materialisms are evidence of the power over nature arising from acceptance and scientific conceptualization of its contingencies. Nature, to be controlled, must first be obeyed. In this way, the ancient conception of fate is shattered into a multitude of facts subject to control and prediction. Strongly rationalist and idealist philosophies, on the other hand, suggest a hopeful and hopeless acquiesence in community denial of contingencies - a romantic collectivism. Escape from contingency is sought in stability of beliefs and attitudes serving to support a given social structure (cf. Dewey 1929b, ch. 1). Thus undue emphasis upon security by means of preserving established values and beliefs is conservative in the most fundamental sense. Such conservatism is always with us, and requires the counterbalance provided by the liberal emphasis on the freedom of thought and action. For, where given free reign, this perennial conservativism, founded on "exisential" angst as one might say, (exaggerated fears of disrupting basic social and economic relations) is inconsistent with the development and maintenance of knowledge: it tends to undermine the social conditions

tions for the possibility of knowledge. Moreover, much of human history has been darkly ruled by this conservativism. We dare not ignore the danger of falling into it.

4. Creativity, Language and Community

A chief contemporary problem of liberalism is apparent conflict with the felt need for community; moreover this need for community is no phantom of the contemporary social imagination. It is a consideration forced upon American society, for instance, by the continual disintegration of our cities and corresponding social isolation of considerable segments of the population. It is a consideration forced on us by the persistence of racism and prejudice. America has always been a moral problem seeking a solution; and the sure sign of this problematic status is our history of slavery and the persistence of poverty and racial prejudice.

Before turning to these problems, however, I will sketch a conception of moral community and its relationship to individualism. This conception is modelled on the social character of language. It involves an epistemic concept of moral community in analogy with an epistemic conception of the social character of language.

It is a mistake to hold that either language or morality are social because "society" decides, once and for all, the rules of the respective "games." This I want to designate as the social-conventional conception. (It embodies a typically rationalist over-idealization in attenuated form). Just as semantic rules of language evolve in the face of social and cognitive development, so that definitions may be modified or thrown out and supplanted by others (cf. Callaway 1981, 64-67, 1985, 51-59 and 1988, 13-15) moral norms are subject to evolution and development.

More specifically, language is social, because it involves a concern for the beliefs and knowledge claims of others. Different and even conflicting claims may be mediated through language, and argumentation mediates this process. A special form of the mistake involved in the social-conventional conception of language is quite commonly expressed by over-reverance for conventions of everyday language. Over-reverance for existing semantic conventions has a special role in this. The point is closely connected with the decline of "ordinary language" philosophy.

Rather than thinking of ordinary language as isolated and insulated from language developed in specialized spheres of inquiry, e.g. within the natural and social sciences, I want to emphasize the mediating function of ordinary language. It is the broadest common forum of a society capable of mediating development of knowledge within specialized forums and capable of mediating our particular experience. It facilitates the interaction of individuals and subgroups and their differing contexts of knowledge. Mediation of differing contexts of knowledge is carried out by means of argumentation, and semantic rules slowly evolve to reflect conclusions established.

Similarly, according to Dewey, moral values are distinguished from values generally, not because "society" defines moral norms once and for all, as valid in all possible circumstances. (This is impossible, since we keep inventing new kinds of situations.)

Instead, moral values are distinct because they involve consideration of the interests of others. We each depend on cooperation in most areas of life, and this forces a consideration of, and concern for, the interests of others, as a condition of cooperation. Emphasis on potentialities for cooperative activities is fundamental in Dewey's conception of moral values. In contrast with prior liberal thought, Dewey's work involves a sharper focus on the value of cooperative activity, rather than the ends to be achieved in abstraction from social means.

5. Dewey on Utilitarianism and Value Inquiry

Dewey rejected the conception of values most closely associated with classical liberalism - the utilitarian calculus of pleasures (cf. Dewey 1939, 144-45; 1948, 180ff). His arguments serve as an antidote to narrowly empirical conceptions of values. The argument is partly historical. "Since pleasure was an outcome, a result valuable on its own account independently of the active process that achieved it," on the utilitarian view, Dewey argues that "the acquisitive instincts of man were exaggerated at the expense of the creative." Moreover, "in making the end passive and possessive, it made all active operations *mere* tools. Labor was an unavoidable evil to be minimized. Security in possession was the chief thing practically. Material comfort and ease were magnified in contrast with the pains and risk of experimental creation" (1948, 181). The point is that human *activity* is crucial to human good (a point appreciated by the unemployed), and that pleasures obtained without activity are ultimately corrupting of productive and creative powers. This is a point against welfare, and in favor of finding social arrangements which better integrate those now effectively excluded from employment. Welfare is no substitute for fuller social integration. (Similarly, foreign aid is no substitute for freer trade, and charity no substitute for collaboration.)

While utilitarianism and associated liberal movements did facilitate social reform by an attack upon the "evils inherited from the class system of feudalism," still, even where "property was obtained through free competition and not by government favor," the effect was that utilitarianism" gave intellectual confirmation to all those tendencies which make 'business' not a means of social service and an opportunity for personal growth in creative power but a way of accumulating the means of private enjoyments" (1948, 182-3).

The utilitarian conception of value tends to make competition destructive of higher values. It leaves too much scope for cyclical development of destructive forms of competition - prosperity has too often culminated in the recurrent phenomenon of the "gilded age" of conspicuous consumption and new forms of exclusion and class divisions (as "cleverer" forms of competition come to the fore). A deeper concern for liberty, however, provides grounds for Dewey's focus on equality and cooperativeness - "fraternity" in the classical French formulation. For, where legal protection of freedoms of thought and action tend toward empty formalism, undercut by the practices of exclusion and destructive competition, liberalism in outer form with an inner structure akin to feudalistic dependence and manipulation, liberties also come under threat.

A chief fly in the ointment of classical liberalism (as associated with Bentham and the Mills, for instance) is that though we cannot significantly choose whether we are

capable of pleasure and pain, we can significantly choose in what ways we will experience them. The capacity for pleasure and pain has its importance as an element of original human nature. Of greater importance are the various culturally developed and embellished derivative motivations. Utilitarianism provides no significant grounds for selecting among cultural developments of our capacity for pleasure and pain: all preferences count as equal. To the extent that this conception of value came to dominate liberal thought, it undercut higher values.

We choose among our pleasures by projecting values and realizing them. When the values projected depend upon the cooperation of others - as is the case with most basic values - then the values take on a social and hence moral character. What people value is a matter of fact, regardless of how difficult it may be to accurately ascertain these facts. But what is *valuable* is also a matter of fact - of a more theoretical character - and inquiry into the latter presupposes answers to questions regarding what people presently value. Our inquiry on the question of what is valuable (proposed reforms, for instance) presupposes original human nature and its cultural elaborations. We ask how realization of these values may be optimized, given the technological and social means at our disposal and our overall knowledge of the physical and social world around us.

An optimization may require us to introduce some new values and throw out some old ones. Thus, Dewey could write in his 1948 Introduction to the enlarged edition of *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, of his aim to "carry over into any inquiry into human and moral subjects the kind of method (the method of observation, theory as hypothesis, and experimental test) by which understanding of physical nature has been brought to its present pitch." For Dewey, there is no essential difference with moral inquiry, though the needed methods or "intelligence" are not something "ready-made" (Dewey 1948, ix).

We invent new forms of inquiry, and neither is there a once-and-for-all valid form for society. What we will regard as better depends upon a sound social-scientific understanding of existing tendencies and social developments, and we need to keep track of forces tending toward the intensification of destructive competition and deep social and economic inequalities. For the internal threat to freedoms develops out of these forces. We should expect such threats to first manifest themselves via social-economic suppression of critical perspectives and new social-economic formations.

6. Relativism and Value Inquiry

Alternative optimizations may be rendered plausible at a given point in time, calling for different prunings and developments of existing values. Still, Dewey sees this as not essentially different from developments in the natural sciences. When dualities arise, we live with them until further experience provides some resolution. To view them as unresolvable differences, is inconsistent with fallibilism. Tolerance of difference recommends itself but not an acquiescence in fundamentally "irrational" or "incommensurable" differences - which would exclude the possibility of criticism. The latter attitude blocks the road of inquiry. Dualities which arise in accounts of the valuable are a general reflection of our cognitive capabilities, like pluralities of explanation in science. Acquiesence is unalterable dualities, or pluralities of incommensurably different fundamental

values - the usual form this takes is "cultural value-relativism" - amounts to a sceptical stance. It has no greater cogency than a scepticism regarding decisions between scientific alternatives.

For Dewey, there are better and worse solutions to human and social problems (Dewey 1929a, 430), and solutions may require a revision of existing values suited to a superior overall optimization. Moreover, any optimization must reflect a continually evolving awareness of the world, and our means (technical and social) of accomplishing human aims. What was not possible yesterday may become possible today or tomorrow; prediction of the future results of value inquiry is, therefore, no more feasible than is prediction of the development of knowledge.

The evolution of values over time is no more proof of their subjective character than is evolution of natural science over time a proof of its subjectivity. Dewey's position is that value inquiry is empirical in character - much in the sense that inquiry on theoretical postulates retain an empirical character. It is only the failure to relate value claims to evidence which renders them incapable of selection on the basis of evidence. As he put it, "sentences about what *should* be done, . . . are sentences, propositions, judgments, *in the logical sense* of those words only as matter-of-fact grounds are presented in *support* of what is advised, urged, recommended to be done, . . . " (Dewey 1945, 686). Though neither theoretical nor value postulates are logically implied by evidence supporting them, such postulates are supported by the evidence which they systematize and comprehend. Just as a theory in the natural sciences may be rejected in light of the failure of its predictions, a value claim is reasonably rejected on evidence that it cannot be realized. Just as logical inconsistency between two theoretical systems in the natural sciences counts against their conjunction (whether or not they conflict as regards observable predictions), so inconsistency between value claims counts against their conjunction. Just as we have no right to claim an infallible knowledge of the ultimate truth concerning nature, we have no right to claim infallible knowledge of ultimate values. But this does not prevent our making sound judgments regarding better and worse.

The very distinction between "absolute" or "ultimate" values and instrumental values is one which Dewey rejects. (A point, by the way which cuts *against* the notion of pragmatism as mere expediency. First, because Dewey is against ultimate values as unrealizable ideals, thus against any unworldly or "other-worldly" conception of finalities or goals; and second because higher values must optimize and systematize more specific values.) Thus, his value-cognitivism, as we may describe it, does not depend upon any "metaphysical" (or metaethical) proof of the "absolute" possibility that "one form of social life can be better than another," except "relative to the principles and practices of some social world or other" (cf. Williams 1985; Putnam 1990, 1682). William's idea here is that we cannot prove that there is an absolute rather than a relativistic sense to talk of better and worse forms of social life. But Dewey (as Putnam argues) rejects this distinction. His "metaphysics" of values (or finalities) is empirical and anti-essentialist. Our knowledge of the "better" always depends upon empirical research.

Consider the parallel argument that physics does not allow of a "proof" that it is possible to unify the four known fundamental forces in a single theory. Clearly, it would

be silly for physics to give up the search for lack of a proof of the possibility of success. Nor is this conclusion dictated, because the search is only rendered plausible "relative to the principles and practices" of contemporary physics. It would be no less silly to give up moral inquiry while awaiting from metaphysics a "proof" that there exists an "absolute" distinction between better and worse. Proof comes in practice. As in science, the required practice involves room for innovations, and room for innovations requires critical tolerance of alternative proposals and claims: Dewey's "individuality of the mind."

7. Individualism and Moral Community

The argument for the connection between individuality and moral community seeks to show that genuine moral community is impossible without individualism. This is not to deny that moral community is needed to constrain the excesses of individual strivings, including acquisitiveness and destructive competition, it is crucial to see that similar excesses are not exclusively the errors of individuals. Historically, groups have been primarily guilty of them. All tyranny represents excessive expression of collective power over relatively unempowered individuals. (Though there is a blindness regarding this point induced by the inclination to blame great social evils upon those at the top (one thinks of Stalin or Hitler for instance), while forgiving or forgetting all those who cooperated or merely went along. The typical result of excesses on the part of groups and their leadership is to destroy or undermine moral community - to render independent judgment impossible.

Genuine moral community must sustain independent individual perspectives and judgments upon its operations and activities. Where this is not so, the community degenerates into a small-scale "block-universe." All essential questions are regarded as already answered and all chief issues are settled by a (more or less self-interested) conventionalistic-conformist consensus. Strongly ideological conflicts are the precursor of a single social "block universe."

It is a condition for the existence of genuine moral community that an individual in moral conflict within society be able to appeal to the independent judgment of various individuals for support. (This is the idea behind the judicial right to trial by a jury of "peers.") However, where relevant opinion is subject to manipulation and prejudicial pre-conceptions, especially as enforced by various forms of centralizing social-economic dependence, then appeal to independent judgment is pointless. Genuine moral judgment is no longer exercised where effective overall community opinion is dictated by conformity to reigning orthodoxies collectively enforced.

We do not expect a free and independent press where all economic activities, and thus all publication, falls under direct government ownership or control. Where the careers and prospects of editors are subject to governmental whim, we rather expect the public press to be excessively timid. Suspicions also fall heavily upon newspapers whose supply of newsprint is subject to administrative whim. This is a less direct but equally effective means of censorship. Private ownership is a means of empowering independent voices. It is not that control of the public press by vested interests becomes utterly impossible, but the problems are more manageable. We come to think of government and business as

being held up to public scrutiny by the press; and though the independent public press may have its own vested interests, still a division of powers facilitates freedom.

My point concerning the value of independent thought to moral community is essentially similar. Genuine moral community cannot exist where social-economic dependence enforces a uniformity of thought and feeling in conformity with the perceived requirements of an established system. Any social system or organization becomes impressed with the particular interests of those occupying its positions of power and influence. They resist developments which threaten those particular interests, so long as people in positions of power have effective control over the careers and incomes of anyone expressing contrary points of view. The problem is endemic to human organizations and societies: conflicts of interest. The classic liberal answer to this problem, in political terms, is to implement a separation and balancing of powers. However, separation of powers on the individual level will be ineffective where there is no moral empowerment of individual thought and conscience. Thus, individualism is crucial to political freedoms, because it is crucial to the existence of genuine moral community. Moral support for individuals, combined with needed criticism of acquisitiveness and destructive competition, is central to any viable liberalism. Where it is missing, liberalism has lost its soul.

It is only in the context of this conclusion, I believe, that the deeper significance of racism can be deciphered - in American society and elsewhere. It is the pervasive evidence of moral blindness and lack of genuine moral fiber in our communities. Genuine moral fiber, and independent judgment, would enable those treated unjustly to appeal to their peers for vindication and redress of grievances. The existence of racism makes clear that entire identifiable sub-populations are disadvantaged in this regard and treated as scapegoats - people made to suffer and carry the blame for the mistakes and errors of others. Racism, though, is a symptom of broader moral weaknesses, evidence of broader and diverse self-serving prejudices which operate to distort moral judgments to favor established powers and their supporting, and privileged, entourages (cf. Axelrod 1984, 145-50 on the relation of hierarchy, stereotypical labelling and collective identities, and Callaway 1992 for elaborations on the social conditions for the possibility of knowledge).

The existence of distortion and self-interested moral blindness is no news to anyone. What does seem like news, partly in view of the fall of "real existing socialism," is the near ancient liberal truth that suppression of individuality is the key instrument of collective moral blindness and distortion: that moral community requires individualism. It requires more, more realistic opportunities for economic independence, but the moral point has a certain priority. It represents the problem of social respect for independence.

8. Conclusion

If the classical liberal emphasis upon individuals and their rights is not *merely* an ideology, then there is some genuine point in their related critique of "modern" liberalism. I would emphasize, for instance, Hayek's disdain for administrative regulation of markets in favor of legal changes or reforms where they are genuinely needed. There is a justified fear of the paralyzing effects of administrative caprice, and a fear of the growing power of bureaucracy. The law is the legal infrastructure of the market, and established definitions

of property and its legal exchange cannot be viewed as immutable - since new forms of property and market transactions are being invented. These reflections provide room for much study of how redefinition of legal relations might "canalize" competition into more constructive forms.

The classical liberal emphasis upon individuals and their rights has a role to play in contemporary discussions of Dewey and Deweyan liberalism. Thus Westbrook, in his recent intellectual biography of Dewey, disputes the received wisdom (due in part to Arthur Schlesinger) that Dewey's liberalism was effectively criticized by Reinhold Niebuhr. As Westbrook puts the differences between Dewey and Niebuhr, "If Dewey flirted with sentimentalism about what might be, Niebuhr flirted with complacency about what must be . . . " (Westbrook 1991, 530). Though Niebuhr no less than Dewey "could declare his faith in an ethical ideal that tightly wedded self-realization and community" (ibid) differences in emphasis between the two figures was drawn upon to discredit Dewey's liberalism as unrealistic.

Niebuhr said Dewey lacked appreciation of "predatory self-interest." Failing to understand "the brutal character of the behavior of all human collectives, and the power of self-interest and collective egoism in all intergroup relations," Niebuhr argued that Dewey could not see that "relations between groups must therefore always be predominantly political rather than ethical, that is, they will be determined by the proportion of power which each group possesses at least as much as by any rational and moral appraisal of the comparative needs and claims of each group" (Niebuhr 1932, 135, cited in Westbrook, 525). The arguments above for a democratic individualism and Deweyan conceptions of cooperation and moral community show the limits of purely political approaches.

Individualism and moral community decline in plausibility in the kind of political situation which Dewey and Niebuhr faced - the great depression, threats to democracy from both right and left, and a growing threat of war. In these situations people feel the need to bury their differences and work in collective unity against outstanding dangers. But this tendency has its excesses. The present perspective is that "modern" or contemporary liberalism, "corporate-bureaucratic" liberalism, as it is sometime characterized, including a prevalent disdain for individualism, is a liberalism continually on a war-footing - and which seems to have reached a paralyzed dead end.

Dewey's thought holds out promise for reinventing liberalism: and this must include emphasis on the moral significance of individualism. It is precisely a great "complacency about what must be" at the root of recent political paralysis and America's inability to set domestic priorities. Dewey's democratic individualism is no call for the submission to the group. Individuals are to act in cooperative engagement for reforms and against established injustices.

"I should now wish to emphasize more than I formally did," Dewey wrote in 1939, "that individuals are the finally decisive factors of the nature and movement of associated life . . . " Contrary to Niebuhr, Dewey's does not ignore or underestimate the power of organized collectives of the subdued. In 1939, he was aware of the dangers, but still "led

to emphasize the idea that only the voluntary initiative and voluntary cooperation of individuals can produce social institutions that will protect the liberties necessary for achieving development of genuine individuality" (Dewey 1939a, 91-92. Cited in Menand 1992, 55).

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Nietzschean Individualism and Liberal Theory

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Abstract

Lester Hunt argues convincingly that Nietzsche should be taken seriously as a proponent of an ethics of character, and he attempts to show that a thorough explication of this ethics yields a distinctive justification for liberalism that avoids a major weakness of conventional justifications. After a detailed review of Hunt's insightful and often compelling arguments, this paper concludes that his Nietzschean justification may give rise to problems as formidable as those it solves. Moreover, Hunt's thesis is shown to depend on a questionable reading of Nietzsche's conception of human flourishing that obliterates the connection the latter makes between his critique of liberal freedom and his affirmation of life as will to power.

Nietzschean Individualism and Liberal Theory

Lester Hunt's *Nietzsche and the Origin of Virtue* (New York: Routledge, 1991) is a bold and original attempt to develop a new rationale for liberal theory based on an analysis of the ethics of Nietzschean individualism. In Hunt's view Nietzsche's advocacy of a higher human type is inseparable from his commitment to an ethics of character that is based on his own revalued conception of virtue. Hunt argues that the conditions most conducive to Nietzschean virtue would be those of a free society characterized by a competitive ethos based on a commitment to excellence.

Especially with its advocacy of "Nietzschean liberalism," this book is bound to provoke, but even readers like myself, who are uncomfortable with its conclusions will appreciate both the seriousness of its purpose and the thoughtfulness of its foray into regions that have known little scholarly traffic. Hunt's argument is of interest for two quite different reasons, suggesting two distinct lines of inquiry. There is, first, the question of Hunt's contribution to our understanding of Nietzsche and, second - irrespective of whether he gets Nietzsche right - the question of his contribution to liberal theory. I will address the second question first, summarizing and evaluating his explication of Nietzschean ethics as a basis for a kind of Nietzschean liberalism. Then I will go on to consider the merits of his analysis as a contribution to our understanding of Nietzsche.

A Nietzschean Ethics of Character

Given the illiberal tenor of most of Nietzsche's political commentary and the once popular association of his name with fascism, Hunt's repeated reference to "Nietzschean liberalism," requires immediate comment. There are no extravagant claims here. Hunt is not arguing that Nietzsche himself was a liberal but rather that liberalism can benefit from Nietzschean ideas. According to Hunt, Nietzsche was both apolitical and profoundly

antipolitical; politics were largely irrelevant to him, and the State in all of its forms was anathema. Nor is there any suggestion that if Nietzsche had been political he would have been a liberal, for Hunt also recognizes the authoritarian tendency of various Nietzschean views. Indeed, even Nietzsche's ethics of character, according to Hunt, require modification before they can serve as an acceptable basis for a new liberalism.

Hunt's "Nietzschean liberalism" is derived from Nietzschean ideas, in other words, but the phrase is something of an oxymoron in that it refers to a theory of politics that Nietzsche himself would have repudiated. This in no way vitiates Hunt's argument, however, and there is nothing wrong with using an oxymoron as long as its ironic implications are acknowledged. We must keep in mind that Hunt's avowed purpose is write for those "who want to use Nietzsche as a source of insight into ethical and political matters" (xviii). It is understandable, therefore, if his analysis results in a theory that reflects not only Nietzschean ideas but his own alternatives to Nietzschean ideas that cannot withstand critical scrutiny.

Some will also question the appropriateness of ascribing to Nietzsche any positive ethical doctrine, while others will want to limit the positive ethics to the imperative of intellectual integrity inherent in what they take to be an essentially deconstructive enterprise. Certainly, when Nietzsche turns to morality the emphasis is usually on undermining, repudiating, and negating. By his own account he is an "immoralist" who is engaged in a "campaign against morality."[1]

Nevertheless, Hunt is correct that Nietzsche at times draws a sharp distinction between those moralities he likes and those he despises. In passages like the following Nietzsche does indeed seem to be affirming an ethics as well as negating one:

> I am well disposed toward those moralities which goad me to do something and do it again . . . as well as I alone can do it . . . But...I do not like negative virtues - virtues whose very essence is to negate and deny oneself.[2]

Hunt argues convincingly that Nietzsche's campaign against morality is really an assault on "what moral philosophers today generally mean when they discuss 'morality'" (10). In particular, it is an assault on the Kantian ideal. Nietzsche denies that moral acts can ever be "disinterested" in the Kantian sense, just as he denies that the will is ever free or that individuals are ever morally responsible for their actions. Moreover, because he denies that judgments determining the moral worth of an action can ever be applicable to everyone, he denies the validity of universal moralities and opposes every universal code of conduct. A number of modern philosophers have challenged aspects of the Kantian moral ideal, but in Hunt's view Nietzsche is unique in that he appears to repudiate every prominent feature of that ideal without exception.

In Nietzsche's view neither the consequences of our actions nor the conscious intentions behind them are what is ethically most important. Rather, what matters ethically about an action is its unintentional substratum, the deep character out of which it arises. According to Nietzsche a virtuous character becomes possible not through surpressing one's passions in the name of some disinterested, universal ought, but through adopting

the kind of highest goal that enables one's passions to become virtues because they are capable of supporting this goal and promoting its realization. Virtues originate, then, when passions are reinterpreted in a manner that redirects their energies toward the attainment of the organism's highest hope, and a virtuous character originates out of a vital relationship between one's deepest passions and one's highest aspirations.

Because everyone is unique and because no two people have identical passions, Nietzsche cannot prescribe a highest goal or a hierarchy of values appropriate for all, nor can he prescribe a complete set of virtuous character traits for all. That is why Zarathustra says, "if you have a virtue and she is your virtue, then you have her in common with nobody."[3] According to Hunt Nietzsche's ethics of character combined with his conviction that everyone is unique commits him to a kind of ethical relativism, for he believes "that what counts as right or good varies from one individual to the next" (130).

There remains, however, an important sense in which Hunt's Nietzsche is not an ethical relativist. Hunt ascribes to his subject a commitment to "vitalism," which is the belief that "life is the only thing that is good in itself, and is the standard by which the value of everything else is to be measured" (112). Indeed, as Hunt acknowledges, life as an ultimate standard begins to look "suspiciously like the *summum bonum* of traditional philosophers," but there is in Hunt's view one important difference (153). Unlike the "traditional philosophers" Hunt's Nietzsche does not believe that life or anything else has *objective* value in itself. The objective evaluation of life in particular is impossible because there is no position outside of life from which to judge it. Things (including life) have value only to the extent that we attribute value to them, and our evaluations are never disinterested.

Life is the ultimate good for all of us only because it is the one thing all of us are ultimately interested in. Even those moralities that Nietzsche describes as "life denying" are at bottom vitalistic, according to Hunt, because their secret purpose is to make life endurable for the afflicated. As Nietzsche puts it, they are at bottom nothing less than "an artifice for the *preservation* of life."[4]

Of course the conclusion that life is the highest good only acquires ethical significance to the extent that we can ascertain what it means to engender or promote life. As Hunt notes, the promotion of the most extensive human survival possible is not necessarily coextensive with the promotion of the highest level of human flourishing or well being, and Nietzsche's own formulations of the implications of his vitalism "are all disappointingly sketchy" (112). Nevertheless, Hunt thinks it is possible to ascertain what Nietzsche must have had in mind by extrapolating from his many discussions of life as will to power. Nietzsche repeatedly suggests that life as will to power is not a mere will to survival but a will to "the consummate attainment of power," which Hunt argues is in Nietzsche's mind synonymous with human flourishing and well being (128). Self-preservation is merely one of the most common consequences of the fact that life is at bottom will to power.

What, then, is meant by "the consummate attainment of power," which is apparently the ultimate objective of all life? To achieve power, according to Hunt, is "to appropriate parts of the environment and incorporate them, along with other parts of the organism,

into a single hierarchical system" (129). An obvious instance of incorporating parts of the environment would be the physiological process of nutrition. An instance of incorporating "other parts of the organism" would be the process of turning a passion into a virtue by redirecting its energies toward the attainment of the organism's highest goal.

The virtue of the organism as a whole, according to Hunt,

> is a sort of integration of the parts of the self. It arises when one part of the self imposes order on other, potentially chaotic parts by successfully orienting the subordinate parts toward its own purposes. (128)

Putting it slightly differently, "virtue is a certain complete integration of the psyche in which one's passsions are directed toward one's highest goals" (141, 142). In the end virtue, flourishing, the attainment of power, and the enhancement of life are all indissoluably connected, for the integration of the self is power enhancing and therefore life enhancing and inseparable from human flourishing.

At the deepest level we are all interested in these things, which is why Nietzsche, according to Hunt, believes we are not only all interested in life but we are all interested in life in the same way. This is also presumably why, according to Hunt, Nietzsche evaluates the worth of persons according to a single standard - the degree to which they have attained power.

In a fundamental sense, then, Hunt's Nietzsche is not an ethical relativist. One ought to do whatever promotes one's own empowerment, which means whatever engenders one's survival, growth, and ultimate flourishing. In a more immediate sense, however, Nietzsche is indeed relativist or relational about what specifically one ought to do, because the values and goals that lead to empowerment will vary from person to person.

Unfortunately, most of us do not know ourselves well, which means the values and goals that would best promote our own empowerment are not self-evident. What is best for us "rests on deep facts about ourselves that may at present be unknown"(134). Herein lies the importance of Nietzschean experimentalism in Hunt's view. As Hunt explains it, one discovers what constitutes one's virtue only gradually "by *trying out* ideals on an individual basis . . . If we find that the experiment vivifies us, we grow into the next experiment; if we note the all-too-familiar symptoms of decline, we retreat from it and try something else" (135). We use vitalism, in other words, to evaluate our experiments until slowly and by degrees our virtues come into view, and the integration of the self is achieved.

Nietzschean Illiberalism and Hunt's Critique

The attainment of Nietzschean virtue, therefore, depends on both the inclination and the opportunity to engage in an experimental process and then to define one's life according to the dictates of that process. Hunt suggests that a society of people seeking excellence of character would resemble a "community of scientists," formulating hypotheses, conducting experiments and learning from the results (135, 178). Since the conditions most

conducive to this sort of experimentalism are those of individual freedom in Hunt's view, Nietzsche's ethics of character could provide the basis for a powerful argument for a liberal social order.

As we have seen, however, Nietzsche never makes that argument, despite a tendency to evaluate societies (as Hunt puts it) entirely according to whether they promote "the formation of virtue in those who are capable of it" (164). This is because there are a number of illiberal and even heroic authoritarian strands in Nietzsche's thought that work at cross purposes to the liberal implications of his ethics of character as described above.

First, there is Nietzsche's abiding preoccupation with the establishment and maintenance of order. To be sure, there is also an "anti-state animus" in Nietzsche's writings, but countering this is what Hunt describes as a "deeply ingrained notion that someone - or some group of people - really ought to be in control, somehow, of human life in general" (43). Nietzsche looks forward to a hegemony of "new philosophers" who would rule through the development of "law-giving moralities" as a means of shaping a higher type of human being. He also advocates social institutions dependent on "a kind of will, instinct, or imperative, which is anti-liberal to the point of malice: the will to tradition, to authority, to responsibility for centuries to come . . . "[5] Nietzsche clearly has little confidence in the beneficial effects of spontaneous social processes left to themselves, and this is especially true where the lower orders are concerned.

Indeed, Nietzsche displays an extraordinary low estimation of the average type, even to the point of arguing that "the great majority of men have no right to existence."[6] He opposes the kind freedom that is conducive to experimentalism for the majority because he does not believe the experiments of the majority typically lead to virtue. To the contrary he seems to believe that a loosening of constraints would only lead to a debilitating instinctual chaos in most people.

He does suggest, however, that in a rightly constituted society even mediocrities could play an important role. Although they would not achieve virtue themselves, they could nonetheless render conditions favorable for the emergence of virtue in the higher type of relieving it of the burden of earning a living. Nietzsche apparently believes that the highest enhancement of life occurs in aristocratic societies where exceptional human beings can give the creation of culture and the pursuit of virtue their undivided attention, freed from the distraction of having to provide for themselves. In Hunt's view that is why Nietzsche says in *Beyond Good and Evil*, "every enhancement of the type 'man'" depends on "slavery in some sense or other," and why he proclaims in *The Antichrist* that "A high culture is a pyramid: it can stand only on a broad base; its first presupposition is a strong and solidly consolidated mediocrity."[7] The relation of the elite to the majority, therefore, is essentially exploitative in Nietzsche's ideal order. As Hunt describes it, the elite lives off the labor of the many and gives them little of value in return. The virtuous do not work, and the workers do not pursue virtue (174).

Hunt briefly but effectively criticizes the views enumerated above from several directions. He argues, for example, that "the enhancement of the type 'man'" does not require the exploitative system Nietzsche envisions because there is no good reason to

believe that earning a living is incompatible with the pursuit of virtue, even in the Nietzschean sense. Indeed, because virtue "presupposes activities and interests other than virtue," he reasons, "it is arguable that productive work, or something relevantly like it, is actually necessary for the formation of virtue" (175). Nietzsche does suggest that his virtue seeking elite would be comprised of artists and philosophers, but as Hunt argues, "[t]here is no reason to think that philosophers and avant-garde artists can seek and achieve excellence while potters, farmers, singers, tycoons, scientists, and spotwelders cannot" (178).

Hunt also challenges Nietzsche's view that freedom is only appropriate for the few. Although Nietzsche suggests that the majority is incapable of pursuing virtue as a result of deep-seated physiological factors, Hunt observes correctly that Nietzsche offers no convincing reasons to believe these things, and therefore no convincing justification for denying the many the freedom he would accord to the few. Hunt notes, simply, that "most of us are probably liberal enough to think that there is some reason why everyone should be free" (54).

In keeping with the above, Hunt also rejects what he takes to be Nietzsche's fear of chaos and the essentially authoritarian overtones of his emphasis on order, institutional constraint and social control. Hunt especially rejects Nietzsche's advocacy of social control by a value-positing elite. According to Hunt, Nietzsche simply fails to appreciate the extent to which liberal social systems can generate salutory forms of spontaneous order that serve society's needs and that are quite independent of the conscious intentions of anyone.

These kinds of arguments, in Hunt's view, strongly indicate that a liberal order would best promote "the formation of virtue in those who are capable of it" (164) because "the quest for virtue as Nietzsche understands it would require an unlimited freedom to carry out vital experiments" (177). The social embodiments of the heroic authoritarian strands in Nietzsche's thought, therefore, could only frustrate the realization of the very ideal he propounds.

In a concluding section that he describes as "highly speculative," Hunt envisions a revisionist "Nietzschean utopia," based on a "social agreement" establishing a set of shared principles guaranteeing the freedom of the individual, recognizing the value of diversity, and making no judgments in advance as to who might pursue virtue and who might not. Because the quest for virtue requires not only freedom but "the will to use that freedom," (177) Hunt also envisions a social order self-consciously committed to the pursuit of virtue in much the way Nietzsche thought the ancient Greeks were as he describes them in his unpublished fragment, "Homer's Contest." In "Homer's Contest," Nietzsche accounts for the extraordinary excellence that seems to have characterized so many facets of life in ancient Greek culture by arguing that Greek society was characterized by a "contest ideal" which was attended by the popular belief that "every talent must unfold itself in fighting." This contest ideal permitted both a reinterpretation and a transfiguration of the most terrible passions, including cruelty and the "tigerish lust to annihilate," into the virtue of competitive striving, which in turn promoted excellence in all walks of life and the spontaneous creation of virtuous character (60, 61). In Hunt's view a free society whose

members perpetually "strive to equal and outdo one another in excellence" (178) would spontaneously generate character, quite independently of any value-positing elite. Because of its competitive ethos Hunt characterizes Nietzschean liberalism as a kind of "liberalism with teeth" (65, 179).

Hunt leaves us with two parallel images of his utopian ideal: one on the one hand, a competitive society inspired by the contest ideal and on the other a society which resembles "a community of scientists who formulate hypotheses, conduct experiments, and learn from one another's results" (135, 178). But unlike a community of scientists, the citizens of Hunt's utopia would not all arrive at similar conclusions because the diversity of their passions would promote a diversity of values and goals. It would be appropriate, therefore, if society were to split into subcultures, with each subculture "united by the values its members share" (135). Hunt's description of his ideal society is extremely brief, indeed, almost Nietzschean in its brevity, but in an important footnote he adds:

> The social agreement I have suggested as a basis for a Nietzschean utopia could be worked out in a way that strikingly resembles the "framework for utopia" with which Robert Nozick concludes his *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* . . . There would be one notable difference, however: Nozick, in the manner that is typical of traditional liberalism conceives of utopia as a place where everyone is as happy as they can be; the corresponding neo-Nietzschean utopia would be one in which everyone is as *good* as they can be. (196)

There remains one serious incompatibility between Nietzschean ethics and Hunt's neo-Nietzschean utopia. Because Nietzschean virtue, which is a matter of individual self-integration and empowerment, does not necessarily require a commitment to justice, and because Nietzsche's ethics of character prescribe no code of interpersonal conduct, the pursuit of Nietzschean virtue could conceivably entail the forceable exploitation of others, or even their annihilation - and certainly the abrogation of the "social agreement" mentioned above - insofar as such actions contributed on the balance to the self-mastery and empowerment of a dominant group or individual. This means that the widespread adoption of Nietzschean ethics would not necessarily lead to the widespread emergence of Nietzschean virtue, because those who pursued the Nietzschean individually would not necessarily engender the kind of society that is most conducive to Nietzschean virtue generally.

Hunt responds to this problem by arguing that Nietzsche pays insufficient attention to the social prerequisites of virtue. Whether virtue is fostered from competing with others or through learning from them, the pursuit of virtue is never a purely solitary affair. It depends on a multiplicity of social interactions within a social process that is itself dependent upon the widespread observance of principles of justice. In the penultimate paragraph of his book, Hunt therefore proposes another significant modification:

> If the connection between one's virtue and one's involvement with other people is sufficiently strong and deep, there might be good reason for revising Nietzsche's conception of virtue, so that it is not merely a certain integration of

> the self but, in addition, a certain integration of the self into the community around one. More precisely, the trait by which one observes the rights of others - that is justice - would in that case be a virtue. (179)

This commitment to justice, he goes on to say, should be regarded as a kind of second-order virtue, good because it facilitates the emergence of a generally virtuous character. In this way he attempts to dissolve the last incompatibility between Nietzschean ethics and his neo-Nietzschean utopia.

Nietzschean Liberalism as Liberal Theory

This section will offer an evaluation of Hunt's brief but provocative account of Nietzschean liberalism as a contribution to the liberal tradition. For the moment "Nietzschean" will continue to mean "Nietzschean as Hunt understands it," except where the meaning is obvious.

Hunt suggests that Nietzschean liberalism makes a valuable contribution to the liberal tradition because it provides an effective argument for individual freedom that is "free from some of the shortcomings of more traditional liberal theories" (179). Hunt complains that traditional theories seem willing to tolerate and even promote ethically second rate human types for the sake of merely practical ends. Free institutions are thought to work with only a minimum of government interference because they harness the selfish pursuits of private individuals in a manner that promotes the public good. "[T]raditional liberal social theories," in other words, "rely in order to work, on human drives which their authors seem to admit are shabby or, at best, second rate." But as Hunt also notes, "To rely on motives in this way is to reward them, an to reward them is to encourage and foster them" (65). Traditional liberal theories would appear, then, to foster the ethically shabby, and this puts them at a disadvantage when compared with authoritarian political theories which claim to foster genuinely good human beings. In Hunt's view Nietzsche's ethical and political ideas, once suitably modified, can be used to "defend free institutions, without appearing to foster the second-rate for the sake of the merely practical" (65). Nietzsche's ethics of character vindicate and affirm selfish pursuits that are selfish in the right way.

Nietzschean ethics, however, are by no means the only solution to the problem Hunt describes, nor is it clear that the problem is endemic to the liberal tradition. Many utilitarians, for example, would bridle at the notion that liberalism promotes the second-rate for the sake of the merely practical, arguing instead that there need not be anything ethically second rate about self-interested behavior that promotes the greatest happiness for the greatest number.

Moreover, various schools of liberalism would appear to reject the view that free institutions *merely* serve the practical. In this respect Hunt's Nietzschean liberalism, for all its originality, has points in common with existing theories. It is true, for example, that John Stuart Mill and Nietzsche are poles apart on ethical matters, which is probably why the latter calls the former a "blockhead."[8] Nevertheless, Mill does champion an ideal of individuality, which in his view is essential to well being and therefore inseparable from the good. Indeed, he champions an individuality of personal empowerment that in some ways anticipates the Nietzschean rationale for liberalism Hunt propounds. In *On Liberty*

in a passage that repeatedly draws from Willhelm von Humbolt with evident enthusiasm, Mill laments that few outside of Germany appreciate von Humbolt's doctrine that:

> "the end of man . . . is the highest and most harmonious development of his powers to a complete and consistent whole"; and that, therefore, the object "toward which every human being must ceaselessly direct his efforts . . . is the individuality of power and development"; that for this there are two requisites, "freedom, and variety of situations."[9]

In other words no new Nietzschean ethics is required to deliver liberalism from practical justifications with unethical consequences. The arguments of Mill, T.H. Green, and a number of others can be taken to mean that free institutions promote an individualism that is at the ethical core of the liberal ideal.

Nevertheless, a Nietzschean ethics would seem to avoid a number of problems commonly associated with Mill's modified utilitarianism and/or Green's Kantian ethics. Moreover, the Nietzschean ideal validates the untrammeled pursuit of self-empowering goals more assertively and with far fewer qualifications than the other approaches ever could. But coupling the Nietzschean ideal with liberalism may give rise as many problems as it solves.

Before he can use Nietzschean ethics to justify a liberal market society, for example, Hunt needs to show that working for a living can be generally conducive to the pursuit of Nietzschean virtue, and indeed more conducive than other alternatives. He does argue that virtue requires "something relevantly like" productive work, ostensibly because the formation of virtue involves working toward a highest goal. But as we have seen, the highest goal that leads to virtue must be specially tailored to the individual's unique array of passions. It is not clear that "becoming what one is" in the Nietzschean sense and toiling in the market place could ever really coincide for large numbers of people.

That many are challenged by their work and find meaning in it matters little if the challenge is not to become who one is but to conform to the dictates of economic institutions. And Nietzsche suggests that the pressures of the market place may be as subversive of genuine virtue as religion. That is why he inveighs against the tendency toward "blindly raging industriousness," which he calls the "typical virtue of an instrument." Indeed, at times he sounds almost Marxian in his depictions of the debilitating and pervasive effects on consciousness of the emerging economic order:

> Today one can see coming into existence the culture of a society of which *commerce* is as much the soul as personal contest was with the ancient Greeks and as war, victory, and justice were for the Romans. The man engaged in commerce understands how to appraise everything . . . *according to the needs of the consumer*, not according to his own needs . . . This type of appraisal he then applies . . . to everything, and thus also to the productions of the arts and sciences, of thinkers, scholars, artists, statesmen, peoples, and parties of the entire age: in

> regard to everything that is made he inquires after supply and demand *in order to determine the value of a thing in his own eyes.*[10]

As we have seen, Hunt proposes a return to the contest ideal alluded to above, because he apparently believes it would incite citizens to strive for an excellence consistent with genuine virtue. But he needs to respond to Nietzsche's arguments. To the extent market priorities define individual consciousness in the ways Nietzsche suggests - indeed, to the extent that "blindly raging industriousness" is mistaken for virtue - the contest ideal would only seem to exacerbate the conformist tendencies described above, thereby further distracting individuals from the discovery of their own uniquely appropriate goals.

This discussion highlights the fragility of the link Hunt forges between Nietzsche's ethics of character and justice conceived as a virtue. Hunt's argument suggests that justice is a virtue only because it facilitates the emergence of a generally virtuous character. If, however, self-integration were to require freedom, or partial freedom, from productive work and therefore the exploitation (or the expropriation and annihilation) of weaker individuals or groups by stronger ones, then a degree of rapaciousness might well qualify as a second-order virtue using the same kinds of arguments.

We might also ponder the meaning of Nietzschean ethics for other forms of moral obligation. Let us consider, for example, the situation of one who assumes responsibility for the care of ailing parents over a period of years and therefore must put to one side the various plans and projects most conducive to that individual's self-integration and empowerment. After an initial period, let us further assume that the self-sacrifice involved is motivated more by a sense of duty than by affection, spontaneous compassion, or any Nietzschean "gift-giving virtue." In this case Nietzschean ethics would seem to counsel one who wishes to become a better person to jettison the parents in the name of the pursuit of virtue. Adjusting the facts a little, one could readily develop parallel arguments for various forms of child neglect. Nietzsche's "campaign against morality," even as modified by Hunt, has disturbing implications for commonsense notions of moral obligation.

I am not suggesting that it is always wrong to neglect parents or children for essentially selfish reasons. Rather, I am suggesting there is something unsettling about an ethics that in case after case rebaptises selfishness as the pursuit of virtue by completely disassociating the ethical merit of an act from its impact on others.

Of course it is by no means a conclusive refutation of an ethical theory that it leads to counter-intuitive results, because our intuitions could be wrong. Nevertheless, we are warranted in demanding very good reasons for abandoning our deeply held intuitive judgments, and it is by no means clear that the reasons given by Nietzsche and/or Hunt are good enough.

Some final remarks are in order regarding the kind of liberalism Hunt deems best. As we have seen, Hunt's Nietzsche evaluates the goodness of a society entirely according to whether it promotes "the formation of virtue in those who are capable of it" (164). On this basis Hunt concludes that the best Nietzschean society would be a free one and, in a final footnote, adds that a "social agreement" forming "the basis for a Nietzschean utopia could be worked out in a way that strikingly resembles the 'framework for utopia' with

which Robert Nozick concludes his *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*" (196). The political structure of a Nietzschean utopia, then, would apparently resemble that of Nozick's minimal state.

Regrettably, Hunt makes no attempt to justify his tilt toward Nozick, and it is not obvious that it flows from the ethical arguments described above. Hunt's premises have little in common with Nozick's, as is evident from the difference in rationales for freedom. Nozick's argument grows out of a strong theory of individual rights, whereas Hunt's is based entirely on a theory of virtue, which trumps all other considerations. The meaning of this difference in rationales is suggested by Nietzsche's Zarathustra: "Free *from* what? As if that mattered to Zarathustra! But your eyes should tell me brightly: free *for* what?"[11] Nozick's freedom is primarily a freedom *from* others, including the sovereign, whereas Nietzschean freedom is a freedom *to* engage in experiments and pursue goals that lead to individual self-perfection. But it is not clear that Nietzschean freedom is best promoted by Nozick's minimal state.

Two years before *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, T.H. Green made a similar distinction between negative and positive freedom, which he incorporated into his theory of politics. While tacitly acknowledging that the goal of making citizens free *from* others can justify a minimal state, he argued that the true goal of a liberal order should be the promotion of genuine individualsm.[12] Although Green's ethics are in some respects diametrically opposed to Nietzsche's, he, too, makes an ethical argument which defines individualism as a kind of self-perfection that has to do with self-empowerment. And he reasons that if the rationale for freedom is individualism, then the state may have a positive responsibility to promote freedom by promoting opportunities leading to individual empowerment. In this way he develops a string of well-known arguments for health and occupational safety regulations, state sponsored education, etc. Because Hunt, like Green, starts with the goal of self-perfection for all who are capable of it - and because Hunt, too, argues that "exemplary virtue would seem to require that one have opportunities to pursue a relatively rich variety of activities" - he needs to refute Green's arguments, or demonstrate their irrelevance in the Nietzschean context, if he is to associate Nietzschean liberalism with Nozick's minimal state (176). He needs to show that a minimal state makes the greatest net contribution to positive freedom, or that other arrangements are too destructive of incentives or whatever. As it stands, his analysis does not require such conclusions.

Hunt as an Interpreter of Nietzsche: The Implications of Method

In assessing Hunt's interpretation of Nietzsche it is important to keep in mind the limited nature of his inquiry. At the outset he says, "my focus is entirely on ethical and political matters. Other themes are brought in only when they really seem necessary for an understanding of my central concerns." Moreover, Hunt's treatment even if Nietzsche's ethics is by no means comprehensive, nor does it aspire to be. His book, "is mainly an attempt to take Nietzsche seriously as a contributor to the ethics of character" (xviii). Other facets of Nietzsche's ethical views and many of his politically relevant passages are therefore passed over in favor of an interpretation of Nietzsche's ethics of character and the political vision that arguably flows from it, a vision that, by Hunt's own account, Nietzsche would have rejected.

The portrait of Nietzsche that emerges, therefore, is inevitably idiosyncratic. For example many will be surprised at a book on Nietzsche's ethics that never once mentions the doctrine of the eternal recurrence of the same. This doctrine is central to Nietzsche's later writings, and most would agree that it is central to his ethical ideal. Similarly, most of what Nietzsche does say about politics is ignored in favor of what Hunt thinks he should have said.

There is nothing intrinsically wrong with limiting one's focus and embracing Nietzsche selectively, especially if one's ultimate objective is not Nietzsche exegesis but the elucidation of some aspect of contemporary theory, as is the case with Hunt. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that such an approach can be used to justify a wide variety of incompatible ideals. If Hunt's account arguably legitimates a minimalist Nietzschean liberalism, Mark Warren's differing focus in *Nietzsche and Political Philosophy* equally legitimates a postmodern politics of the left, and my own analysis in *Nietzsche and the Politics of Aristocratic Radicalism* could with modifications be used to justify a Nietzschean fascism (although I would not go this route).[13] It all depends on what one emphasizes, what one explicitly rejects, and what one neglects.

Hunt acknowledges some of the ways in which his thought diverges from Nietzsche's, but he arguably overlooks others, and this too may be a consequence of method. Because of the ambiguities of Nietzsche's style and his penchant for at least appearing to contradict himself, one must take great care lest the themes one examines yield conclusions that are subtley undermined and even negated by themes one neglects. This is an occupational hazard for all Nietzsche scholarship, but it is a special hazard for any highly focused analysis that trys to incorporate Nietzschean themes into a non-Nietzschean theoretical framework.

Too often Hunt seems to neglect the implications of Nietzsche's critique of conventional philosophy. Those who have focused heavily on Nietzsche's epistemological ruminations (i.e. his perspectivism) have often interpreted him as saying that there are no universal truths, certainly none about ultimate questions, which means there are no reliable first principles and no firm foundations anywhere. Far from providing a ground for objective truths, the view that life is will to power is said to defeat objectivity, because it shows that the will to truth itself is will to power and as such irrevocably grounded in the subjectivity of the body. This means that the insistance on objective foundations is best understood in terms of the body and as a symptom of a certain type of life. Not surprisingly, Nietzsche views the quest for objective foundations and the will to system generally in much the same way he views the need for gods. They are all signs of a kind of weakness and/or sickness that requires the denial life as it is.[14]

Hunt deserves credit for recognizing what many who concentrate on Nietzsche's perspectivism ignore: that at some level Nietzsche does appear to believe in the truth, and even the objective truth, of a number of his own assertions. Moreover, Hunt correctly identifies Nietzsche's foremost concern as the enhancement of life and recognizes that this is fraught with moral and political implications. The particular focus Hunt has chosen, therefore, is of enormous importance, especially since it has long been neglected.

But too often Hunt's account makes Nietzsche look like a conventional philosopher despite the latter's critique of conventional philosophy. Instead of seeing life denial in the quest for firm foundations, Hunt finds what is, in effect, a firm foundation in Nietzsche's conception of life. It is, as we have seen, the Nietzschean equivalent of a "summum bonum," and a first principle of Nietzsche's ethical ideal. A universally dominant drive becomes the foundational principle that generates an ultimate good that grounds every argument.

Hunt acknowledges, as any reader must, that Nietzsche does not write like a conventional philosopher, but there is little appreciation of the relation between style and content. Rather, Nietzsche's style becomes an extraneous excrescence that the philosopher must work around to get at what is really being said. Since Nietzsche's books "contain rather few passages in which he appears to be offering arguments for the opinions he expresses in them," (1) Hunt suggests that it is incumbent on us to supply what Nietzsche omits. Moreover, he says, "I will be fairly free - some will no doubt say generous - in supplying Nietzsche with premises needed to make his arguments work," because this is "a necessary part of getting at what his ideas are and how they hang together" (5, 6).

Because Nietzsche is so cryptic, every interpreter must extrapolate freely from what is given, which helps to explain why there will always be wide latitude (although not endless latitude) for legitimate disagreement. This also helps to explain how I can hold Hunt's book in high esteem despite my various criticisms. But Hunt extrapolates from what is given more freely than most. He supplies not only the missing arguments and missing premises, but a missing analytical structure as well. There is indeed an intuitive coherence to Nietzsche's texts, which Hunt's formidable analytical powers often help to illuminate, but the tidiness of his account and the reductiveness of the analytical structure he supplies does Procrustean violence to the looseness of a body of writings which, after all, champions the body over abstract reason and illuminates with tropes more often than sustained analysis, and which generally seems to revel in the validity of disjointed intuition.

Can Life be Defined?

Let us now return to Hunt's handling of Nietzsche's view of life. The implications of Hunt's method are particularly important here because he argues that life is for Nietzsche the standard by which the value of everything else is to be measured. The specificity with which life can be defined ultimately determines the specificity with which Nietzsche's ethical ideal can be identified.

Others have concluded, in sharp contrast to Hunt, that Nietzsche's conception of life is simply devoid of specific content.[15] Hunt admits that Nietzsche's formulations of his vitalism "are all disappointingly sketchy," but he attempts "to determine what the principle must mean - or should mean" by teasing out the implications of Nietzsche's arguments in favor of it (112). As we have seen he concludes that for Nietzsche life is will to power, which is to say, a will to the "consummate attainment of power," a state reflecting the kind of self-integration Nietzsche calls the virtue of the organism as a whole. As we have also seen, Nietzsche can say that life is the ultimate standard only because he believes we are

all ultimately interested in life and interested in it in the same way. At bottom we are all interested in our own empowerment.

Hunt acknowledges troubling passages suggesting that the instinct of life may operate differently in different people. At times Nietzsche seems to say that the will to power of the strong is a will to the maximum enhancement of life, even if this requires living dangerously, whereas the will to power of the weak is a will to mere self-preservation. This suggests a problem. If the promotion of life can imply differing and incompatible goals, then life does not necessarily suggest a unitary good that all are interested in, and Nietzsche's vitalism fails.

Hunt argues, however, that he is operating under the assumption that Nietzsche is no fool. It would not make sense to predicate the Nietzschean arguments outlined above upon a chimerical conception of life. In Hunt's view there is no necessary antagonism between self-preservation and the will to acquire power, despite the misleading tendency of some of Nietzsche's remarks. At bottom, all are really interested in their own empowerment, and self-preservation is simply a frequent, though indirect result of this universal concern (129).

Hunt's position is by no means inevitable. The suggestion that Nietzsche would be a fool to predicate his vitalism on an indeterminate conception of life assumes, first, that Nietzsche really did have in mind the arguments for vitalism that Hunt attributes to him, and, second, that Nietzsche is not an ironist, and, third, that positing life as the ultimate standard is not simply a way of repudiating metaphysical alternatives.

For better or for worse, Nietzsche really does appear to say that the will to power generates different ways of being interested in life in different people. In some the will to power means a will to accumulate power in ways that could indeed promote self-preservation, but in great men will to power appears to mean a will to express power in ways that lead to its own dimunition and even extinction. As Nietzsche says in *Twilight of the Idols:*

> The great human being is a finale . . . The genius in work and deed is necessarily a squanderer: that he squanders himself, that is his greatness. The instinct of self-preservation is suspended . . . He flows out, he overflows, he uses himself up, he does not spare himself - and this is a calamitous, involuntary fatality, no less than a river's flooding the land.[16]

Nietzsche repeatedly praises this kind of recklessness.

The will to power as Nietzsche describes it is not simply one passion among many. It is the basic substratum of all life, including all of the passions, and Nietzsche was probably aware of the definitional problems monisms of this sort pose. Because the formulation of such a monism must be capable of embracing every conceivable manifestation of life, a formulation that reduces to a single clear principle is not likely to have the requisite comprehensiveness. The credibility of Nietzsche's view of life as will to power, in other words, depends in part on its irreducible ambiguity.

One of the most celebrated ambiguities concerning Nietzsche's will to power monism is its relation to the doctrine of the eternal recurrence of the same. Hunt propounds an ethic of individual empowerment, which is consistent with his interpretation of the will to power. But the doctrine of the eternal recurrence suggests a somewhat different ideal. As Nietzsche says in a note: "My teaching declares: the task is to live in such a way that you must wish to live again - you will anyway!"[17] Moreover, Nietzsche suggests that the goal is to will the eternal recurrence, not just of one's better moments or even of one's life taken as a whole, but of every moment of one's life, even those that have been devastating from the standpoint of personal empowerment. It is not at all clear how this ideal relates to the Hunt describes.

In a similar vein, Hunt declares that Nietzsche "evaluates the worth of persons on the basis of a single standard: the degree to which they have attained power" (131). But Nietzsche also clearly evaluates people according to a standard of health and sickness. Moreover, he repeatedly suggests that it is possible to be strong but sick,[18] thereby suggesting that the continuum of strength and power is not identical to the continuum of health and affirmation. In one area after another we find that, past a certain point, the more we try to pin Nietzsche down, the more elusive he becomes.

Nietzschean Freedom

Hunt attributes an inordinate degree of order not only to Nietzsche's thought as a whole but also to the psyche of the human ideal Nietzsche is trying to promote. According to Hunt Nietzsche believes "one's act will be virtuous to the extent that it indicates success in one's efforts to 'become master of the chaos that one is; to compel one's chaos to become form'" (170). Virtue, according to Hunt, "is a sort of integration of the parts of the self," whereas chaos is "a great evil" (128, 43). The more fully integrated the self becomes, the greater the enhancement of life (126).

Nietzsche repeatedly suggests, however, that human greatness is at least in part dependent on inner chaos and conflict. As Zarathustra says, "one must still have chaos in oneself to be able to give birth to a dancing star." And as Nietzsche says in a note, "[I]t is precisely through the presence of opposites and the feelings they occasion that the great man, *the bow with the great tension*, develops." In *Beyond Good and Evil* he argues that "magical, incomprehensible, and unfathomable ones arise" when internal "opposition and war . . . have the effect of one more charm and incentive of life." And in *Twilight of the Idols* he says, "The price of fruitfulness is to be rich in internal opposition . . . One has renounced the *great* life when one renounces war." It should now be clear why Zarathustra says to his disciples, "You should love peace as a means to new wars - and the short peace more than the long. To you I do not recommend work but struggle." Hunt's account neglects Nietzsche's emphasis on struggle as something that is intrinsically good and not just a means to an end. As Nietzsche explains, "The will to power can manifest itself only against resistances. Therefore, it seeks that which resists it."[19]

It may be as Hunt suggests that Nietzsche associates individual perfection with a state of full self-integration, (126) but as Zarathustra says, "What has become perfect, all that is ripe - wants to die." Similarly, it may be that in Nietzsche's view one transforms one's

passions into virtues by planting one's goal among them, but it is also clear that the objects of the passions do not endure. As Zarathustra says elsewhere, "Whatever I create and however much I love it - soon I must oppose it and my love; thus my will wills it." And he adds a few lines later, "good and evil that are not transitory do not exist. Driven on by themselves they must overcome themselves again and again."[20] For Nietzsche life at its best is that which continuously overcomes itself and continually sacrifices itself for more power. Chaos, tension, and dissonance can never be absent from this process.

I do not mean to suggest that organizing the chaos is unimportant. In order to function in the world and flourish, the underlying chaos of warring instincts that nature endows one with must be forged into at least a semblance of unity. But once a degree of integration is achieved, insurrection and upheaval become important as well. It would appear that the ongoing growth of the Nietzschean spirit requires a continual ebb and flow of integration and partial disintegration.

Hunt is also correct to emphasize the formative power of social institutions in Nietzsche's view. Because there is no order inherent in the nature of things, culture in the broadest sense and the institutions that serve it can play a crucial role in shaping the individual. Nevertheless, institutional order, like internal spiritual order, is not an unmitigated blessing. Nietzsche explains in *The Gay Science* that because "all ordered society puts the passions to sleep," "[t]he strongest and most evil spirits have so far done the most to advance humanity." By "toppling boundary markers" and "violating pieties," whether "by force of arms" or "by means of new religions and moralities" they have "reawakened again and again the sense of comparison, of contradiction, of the pleasure in what is new, daring, untried." They have "compelled men to pit opinion against opinion, model against model," and in the process they have "relumed the passions that were going to sleep."[21]

In *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche explains that if the tendency toward lawful order, identified in that book as the Apollinian tendency, predominates for too long, it can "congeal the form to Egyptian rigidity and coldness,"[22] thereby stultifying life's creative powers. In Nietzsche's view the Greeks became great only because their apollinian energies were periodically checked by wave upon wave of dionysian destructiveness, which swept aside lawful order in favor of a relapse into chaos and insight. The highest flourishing of life, in other words, requires a continual overcoming and renewal of the forms of its own manifestation.

Hunt suggests that Nietzsche's authoritarian tendencies stem from a misguided fear of chaos and a distrust of spontaneous natural processes, but that is debatable. Contrary to Hunt's view, there is a principle of spontaneous order that appears repeatedly in Nietzsche's writings, and it is the process of struggle itself. As Nietzsche says cryptically in his early essay called, "The Greek State," "War is Apollo." It is war and the threat of war that first turns a people into a hierarchically ordered social whole. According to both "The Greek State" and *The Geneology of Morals*, it is armed struggle (and not some social contract) that gives rise to the first state, and that makes possible the emergence of genuine culture as well.[23]

Nietzsche argues that the continuous struggle against severe constraint is what fortifies the will and unifies the self, and this is not without illiberal political implications. In his view the social and political institutions of the warrior aristocracies of antiquity provided the optimal conditions for the breeding of a stronger, more unified human type. This type emerged as a result of being locked "in a constant fight with its neighbors or with the oppressed who are rebellious or threaten rebellion."[24]

As a political corollary he argues in *Twilight of the Idols:*

> The peoples who had some value, *attained* some value, never attained it under liberal institutions: it was great danger alone that made something of them that merits respect. Danger alone acquaints us with our resources, our virtues, our armor and weapons, our *spirit*, and forces us to be strong. *First* principle: one must need to be strong - otherwise one will never become strong.

Paradoxically, Nietzsche argues that the genuine freedom of a people or an individual can be measured not by the absence of compulsion but, "according to the resistance which must be overcome, according to the exertion required to remain on top." As we have seen, Nietzschean freedom is a positive freedom. It depends upon the power to act, to command oneself and hold oneself accountable, which means it can be fortified by danger, warfare, and the long fight against severe constraint. This is why Nietzsche declares:

> The highest type of free man should be sought where the highest resistance is constantly overcome: five steps from tyranny, close to the threshold of the danger of servitude. This is true psychologically if by "tyrants" are meant inexorable and fearful instincts that provoke the maximum of authority and discipline against themselves; the most beautiful type: Julius Caesar. This is true politically too; one need only go through history.[25]

As several of the passages above suggest, politics are not wholly irrelevant to Nietzsche's thoughts on the enhancement of man. Just as he argues that "[t]here are no worse and no more thorough injurers of freedom than liberal institutions," he repeatedly associated democracy with "the diminution of man." Conversely, he proclaims:

> Every enhancement of the type, "man" has so far been the work of an aristocratic society - and it will be so again and again - a society that believes in the long ladder of an order of rank and differences in value between man and man, and that needs slavery in some sense or other.[26]

A long discussion would show that Nietzsche was indeed anti-political but in a limited sense only. Just as he declared himself an enemy of reason, science and morality, but nonetheless had a reason, science and morality he preferred, so too with politics. His blasts at the state as a "new idol" (and he associates our modern "apotheosis of the state" with the "the Hegelian philosophy") are of a piece with his opposition to idolatry of every kind. In his view the modern world is prone to new forms of idolatry because of the vacuum

left by the old God's death, and he denies that "the problem of existence" can be "solved" by any political event, just as he denies that it can be fully comprehended by any philosophical system.[27] Nevertheless, he has a politics of sorts, just as he has a philosophy, and the former is integral with the latter. Moreover, it is the politics - and not the anti-politics - that reveals the profoundly oxymoronic character of the phrase "Nietzschean liberalism."

Notes

1. *Ecce Homo*, "Dawn: Thoughts about Morality as a Prejudice," sec. 1. Where available, I have used the Kaufmann and/or Hollingdale translations. Elsewhere, I have used my own.

2. *The Gay Science* (hereafter cited as *GS*), sec. 304 (quoted by Hunt at 80). When citing Nietzsche, I will refer to the title, part and/or section number whenever possible.

3. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (hereafter cited as *Z*), pt. 1, "On Enjoying and Suffering the Passions."

4. *The Genealogy of Morals* (hereafter cited as *GM*), pt. 3, sec. 13 (quoted by Hunt at 119).

5. *Twilight of the Idols* (hereafter cited as *TI*), "Skirmishes of an Untimely Man," sec. 39 (quoted by Hunt at 45).

6. *The Will to Power* (hereafter cited as *WP*), sec. 872.

7. *Beyond Good and Evil* (hereafter cited as *BGE*), Sec. 257 (quoted by Hunt at 30); *The Antichrist* (hereafter cited as *A*), sec. 57 (quoted by Hunt at 103).

8. *WP*, sec. 30.

9. *On Liberty* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1956) 69, 70.

10. *GS*, sec. 21; *Daybreak*, sec. 175. For more on Nietzsche's critique of capitalism, see *Marx, Nietzsche, and Modernity* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1986), 169- 194.

11. *Z*, pt. 1, "On the Way of the Creator."

12. See generally "Liberal Legislation and Freedom of Contract," *The Political Theory of T.H. Green* (New York: Harlan Davidson, 1964), 43-74.

13. *Nietzsche and Political Thought* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1988; *Nietzsche and the Politics of Aristocratic Radicalism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

14. Eg. see *A*, sec. 54; *TI*, "Maxims and Arrows," sec. 26.

15. Eg. Allan Megill, *Prophets of Extremity: Nietzsche, Heidegger, Foucault, Derrida* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 30; J.P. Stern, *A Study of Nietzsche* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 106.

16. "Skirmishes of an Untimely Man," sec. 44.

17. *Nietzsche Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe* (hereafter cited as *WKG*), eds. G. Colli and M. Montinari (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1967-) III/2, 403.

18. See *GM*, pt. 3, sec. 15; *TI*, "Skirmishes," sec. 45.

19. *Z*, "Prologue," sec. 5; *WP*, sec. 967; *BGE*, sec. 200; *TI*, "Morality as Anti-Nature," sec. 3; *Z*, pt. 1, "On War and Warriors"; *WP*, sec. 656.

20. Z, pt. 4, "The Drunken Song," sec. 9; pt. 2, "On Self- Overcoming."

21. *GS*, sec. 4.

22. *BT*, sec. 9.

23. *WKG*, III/2, 265, 266; *GM*, pt. 2, sec. 17.

24. *BGE*, sec. 262.

25. *TI*, "Skirmishes of an Untimely Man," sec. 38.

26. Ibid; *BG, sec. 203; Ibid, sec.*

27. *WKG*, III/2, 200.

The Radical Feminist Attack on Reason

Steven Mandelker

It is fashionable in some feminist circles to argue that the struggle for freedom from male oppression is, in part, a struggle for freedom from rationality and intellectuality. Julia Kristeva, for example, attacks women writers who value "science, philosophy, [and] professorships," calling them valorizers of "phallic dominance" (1974, in Marks and de Courtivron, 1980, 166). For Kristeva, a truly revolutionary woman who wishes to succeed in exploding existing social codes must flee everything phallic, and this means that she must reject everything that is "finite, definite, structured, loaded with meaning."

In the same vein, Helene Cixous, in her influential essay, "The Laugh of the Medussa" (Cixous, 1976, in Marks and de Courtivron, 1980, 245-264), challenges women to forge for themselves, through writing, the "antilogos weapon." This weapon, supposedly the product of writing that "inscribes femininity," will be used to liberate women from the "phallocentric tradition," that is, the tradition of "male writing," which is the "effect" and "support" of the "history of reason."

Views such as these are very much alive today. That there is at present tremendous interest in Cixous' writings, for example, is made evident by the listing of no fewer than 160 citations of them in the *Arts and Humanities Citation Index* for the years 1990-2. To what extent do these views deserve our support?

It cannot be denied that some women are still oppressed today, treated unjustly and denied their rights, if not in the US, then at least in the Arab world, in other Moslem countries such as Pakistan, and in much of the rest of the Third World. We can agree that, from a "Eurocentric" viewpoint, many women are in need of liberation. Does this mean that women ought to fashion the "antilogos weapon" in order to liberate themselves from *reason*? Should women follow Cixous's advice to take up "the challenge of speech which has been governed by the phallus," to speak, in contrast, in a way that is "never simple or linear or 'objectified', generalized," to not deny their drives "the intractable and impassioned part they have in speaking," and thereby to become free of the phallocentric tradition, that is, the history of reason? (Marks and de Courtivron, 1980, 251).

Since the elimination of oppression is an eminently reasonable goal, Cixous's attack on reason is more apt to be destructive than helpful to the feminist goal of eliminating oppression. After all, the enormous success that feminism has already enjoyed is largely due to the fact that many people have become rationally convinced that the oppression of women is wrong.

Reason ought not to be identified with any sort of oppression; it is unreasonable, not reasonable, for example, for men to oppress women. Nor ought reason, or truth, to be identified with masculinity. The important nineteenth-century feminist Frances Wright

saw the matter rightly when she denied that "truth had any sex" (Wright, 1834, in D'Arusmont, 1972, 15).

In advocating a form of speaking that is not guided by the constraints of rationality, Cixous remarks that a woman who speaks in such a way "supports the 'logic' of her speech" with her body. "Her flesh speaks true." Consequently, feminists of this stripe encourage women to be irrational, to not think, but simply feel. Yet to put yourself into your cause, to speak with conviction and passion, does not guarantee that what you are saying is true, or that what you are advocating is any more rational than astrology.

How might Cixous have arrived at her misguided and self-defeating attack on rationality? The most obvious explanation is that rationality makes refutation possible, so that by embracing irrationality, she makes her views immune from refutation in the sense that nothing could possibly count as a refutation for her. She is thereby able to justify her failure to defend her views. Like any true believer, a "New Woman" like Cixous doesn't want to have to worry about her responsibility to provide reasons for her opinions. Only the "woman of yesterday" allows herself to be intimidated by "the builders of the analytic empire," she says (262).

But a male supremacist who advocates the enslavement of women has equal motive to attack rationality and abandon reason, thereby making his own view on women immune to refutation in the same way. Whose advice should be taken, Cixous's or the male supremacist's? Neither of the two could be presented with a rational refutation that he would accept. But in the same way, neither of them could give us a reason for preferring his own view, since in abandoning rationality, each abandons the giving of reasons.

Cixous wants women to write in a new way that will advance their "struggle against conventional man" (245). But since she gives them no reason for doing so, why should they? The "antilogos" or anti-rational stance is not a sensible one to adopt if someone is proposing change. Rather, the skeptical view that reasoning leads nowhere, that one should stay out of the intellectual battlefield, refusing either to accept or reject doctrines, leads naturally, as it did for Sextus Empiricus, to taking the path of least resistance and living in accordance with the customs of one's country, for one has, in this case, no reason to do otherwise.

On the other hand, when a sensible feminist such as Mary Wollstonecraft, in her classic eighteenth-century feminist polemic, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (Wollstonecraft, 1792), urged a change in the relations between the sexes, calling upon women not to allow themselves to become slavish prostitutes whose lives are devoted to the pleasures of men, but rather to develop themselves as fully rational persons, she gave them a reason: to become something more than the toy of man, to achieve dignity and virtue, to acquire wisdom and character. When another sensible feminist, Frances Wright, argued for equality for women in her 1829 lectures (Wright, 1834), she gave a reason deriving from Jeremy Bentham's principle of utility: equality for women leads to a greater amount of happiness for society as a whole than inequality. Elizabeth Stanton (Stanton, Anthony, and Gage, 1881-6) gave a good reason for equality for women: "The sexes are alike," she wrote; like men, women are moral, virtuous, and intelligent, and therefore they

have the same natural rights that men have. But these rights are violated when unmarried women are taxed without representation, when women die a "civil death" in the eyes of the law upon marriage, when women are not permitted a jury of their peers (1: 597-604). And Sarah Grimke (1838) gave a good reason for altering the balance of power within a marriage, which she regarded as normally a tyranny of the husband: in order to alleviate "the vast amount of secret suffering endured, from the forced submission of women to the opinions and whims of their husbands" (86).

Since those who, like Cixous, refuse to give reasons or to accept anything as a rational refutation of their views, or even to engage in rational discussion, you might wonder why anyone would bother to present them with a refutation. Why not simply ignore them?

The result that can be expected from ignoring irrational radical feminists is that dogmatism will continue to replace intelligent discussion in the universities, and those who shout the loudest, rather than those who have the best reasons, will be listened to, and their views will prevail. Confrontation with irrational feminists may slow the progress of their dogmatic attack on philosophy, science, and other rational pursuits.

Another reason for not ignoring irrational radical feminists is that they attempt to better the condition of women by committing injustices against men. For example, they advocate a hiring policy, known as "affirmative action," of systematic discrimination against men. As perpetrators of injustice, then, irrational feminists must be opposed, rather than ignored.

Irrational radical feminists also seek, by means of anti-pornography legislation, restrictions on one of our most fundamental Constitutional liberties, the First Amendment right of free speech, and to ignore them is to risk the loss of this precious freedom. According to Catherine MacKinnon and Andrea Dworkin, "Pornography is a systematic practice of exploitation and subordination based on sex that differentially harms women ... The bigotry and contempt pornography promotes, with the acts of aggression it fosters, diminish opportunities for equality of rights in employment, education, property, public accommodations, and public services" (Dworkin and MacKinnon, 1988, 33).[1]

The empirical evidence, however, does not support these claims. In a 1990 study (Baron, 1990) Baron found gender equality to be higher in states characterized by higher circulation rates of pornography. In a 1989 study (Padgett, Brislin-Slutz, and Neal, 1989), Padgett found that "exposure to nonviolent pornography had no significant effect on attitudes towards women and women's issues." In a 1988 study (Linz, Donnerstein, and Penrod, 1988), Linz found no "significant relationship between exposure to nonviolent pornography and either the tendency to view women as sex objects, or the belief in traditional sex roles." In another 1988 study (Demare, Briere, and Lips, 1988), Demare reported "zero-order correlations between use of nonviolent pornography and attitudes toward women." In a 1986 study (Garcia, 1986), Garcia found that "greater exposure to nonviolent pornography was not related to traditional attitudes toward women" (Cf. Baron, 1990, 365-6).

Dworkin and MacKinnon do not cite even a single competing study in support of their claim that pornography diminishes opportunities for equality of rights. They do cite

studies that purport to show a causal link between pornography and aggression, but they make no attempt to show a causal link between whatever aggression may be directly caused by pornography and diminished opportunities for equality of rights.

A fourth reason why irrational radical feminists must not be ignored is that they promote bigotry, anti-male sexism, and disharmony between the genders by negatively stereotyping men. A recurrent theme in Cixous's "The Laughs of the Medussa," for example, is the notion that men are sick, perverted monsters. She says, for instance, that men "need femininity to be associated with death; it's the jitters that give them a hard on . . . Not another minute to lose. Let's get out of here" (255).[2] Annie Leclerc writes that "what a man likes about himself and what he's made the object of his respect are the virtues of the conqueror and the proprietor. He needs the strength to conquer and the bulk to possess with impunity. [His virtue] . . . is force . . . There is courage also, but that's the same . . . [Courage] is wretched, hateful, swollen, puffy, deathly, since its mission is to subdue, oppress, and repress all living things" (Leclerc, 1974, in Marks, 82-86). A third example: Madeline Gagnon writes that part of the tragedy of the male sex is that men must become "Master of others. The phallus . . . represents repressive capitalist ownership . . . " (Gagnon, 1977, in Marks, 180).

This sort of anti-male polemic is rampant within irrational radical feminist literature. To condemn it is not to deny that a few men are sick, perverted monsters. Some men are monsters, and some women too. Lizzie Borden was no angel of mercy, and neither were Salome or Messalina. Sick, perverted qualities are no more a part of male nature than of female, and anti-male sexism is every bit as offensive, pernicious, and intolerable as anti-female sexism. Yet when a female academic stereotypes men in this way, she wins accolade and acclaim, while a male academic who does the same with respect to women risks general disapprobation. Feminists have benefited from men's reluctance to respond in kind to feminist hyperbole, as from other aspects of patriarchy, but have refused to acknowledge this benefit because to do so would be to diminish the bestiality of the beast.

Cixous recognizes that not all men are entirely evil. Her position is that their nature is to be evil. Only insofar as they repress their femininity and allow masculinity to dominate their personalities are they monsters. She allows that "there are men who do not repress their femininity" (Cixous, 1975b, in Marks, 93). This repressed femininity turns out to be "pederastic femininity," for a man who does not let his femininity be repressed, and who is therefore capable of invention, poetry, and fiction, is a man who does not repress his homosexuality (97- 8).

Cixous favors bisexuality; she does not urge an end to heterosexual activity. Neither does Simone de Beauvoir, even when she agrees with her interviewer, Alice Schwarzer, that "frigidity . . . is more prudent and reasonable" than finding great happiness in heterosexual activity, because such happiness makes women become "slaves of men and . . . strengthens the chain that binds them to their oppressor" (Beauvoir, 1976, in Marks, 152). De Beauvoir maintains that for a woman, "The ideal should be the capacity to love a woman as well as a man . . ." (152).

Many prominent radical feminists, however, such as Ti-Grace Atkinson and her group, The Feminists, take the further step of calling for the elimination of marriage, the family, and heterosexual sex (Feminists, 1970). Such feminists regard lesbianism as the "vanguard of feminism" (Wolf, 1980, 171). In her recent study of nine non-lesbian feminists (Silber, 1990), Linda Silber has discussed the manner in which among radical feminists during the mid-1980s, "women were judged by their sexuality, with lesbians seen as the more politically progressive . . . non-lesbians . . . were challenged to examine their own sexual histories and acknowledge their erotic same-sex attractions" (Silber, 1990, 132). Silber found that for the women she studied, "Sexual identity . . . is entwined with their ideological beliefs (radical feminism) . . . And sexual identity was regarded as political by many of the women: they did not want to be seen as being thoughtlessly heterosexual or bisexual" (137-8). These women felt that it was "morally good to be a lesbian, and . . . shameful to be involved with a man" (135).

Here we come to a fifth reason for not simply ignoring irrational radical feminists, for their recommendation that women should become either bisexual or exclusively homosexual is harmful advice. Women who do not have such inclinations should not be pressured to act as if they did. Under such circumstances they would be behaving in a self-demeaning manner, not for the benefit of a man, but this time for the benefit of another woman.

Feminists who advocate homosexuality for all women are in the midst of a flight from biology and genetics. In denying the biological function of female anatomy for the sake of ideology, they find it easy to slide into an opposition to all reason.

The irrational radical feminist, then, makes harmful recommendations and must be opposed. To improve our lives we must create a society committed to intelligent discussion rather than irrational dogmatism, to equality of opportunity for all rather than discrimination against men in the form of affirmative action, to freedom of speech rather than authoritarian censorship, and to tolerance and respect for others as individuals rather than bigotry and conformist pressure. Women will improve their condition not by listening to the voices of irrational radical feminists, but by listening to a feminist such as Wollstonecraft, urging women not to allow themselves to become ornaments, but to develop themselves as fully rational persons, to achieve dignity and virtue, to acquire wisdom and character.[3]

Notes

1. This claim is based on statements made in an Ordinance of the City of Minneapolis amending Title 7, Chapter 139 of the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances relating to Civil Rights, and in Chapter 16 of the Code of Indianapolis and Marion County, Indiana.

2. Cixous also alleges that men can't have orgasms unless assured "the old lady is always right behind them, watching them make phallus" (256). This obnoxious vulgarity betrays a murky psychological conception of one half of humanity and says more about Cixous than about the object of her polemic.

3. I am grateful to Michael Enright and George Bailey for helpful suggestions on an earlier draft of this essay.

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Habermas, Lyotard and Political Discourse[1]

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The debate over political modernity has in recent years been given fresh impetus in the form of an exchange between Jean François Lyotard and Jürgen Habermas concerning the nature and legitimation of political discourse. Lyotard, often taken as representative of postmodernism, offers a critique of the modern project of offering methodological guarantees of the normative status of our judgments and of constructing "metanarratives" purporting to ground all forms of discourse in a philosophy of universal history. The preoccupation with metanarratives, he argues, must end and be replaced with a conception of political discourse as a contest of local narratives and incommensurable language games - a contest oriented not toward final resolutions but toward creative and novel statements. Habermas, wishing to preserve and continue the modernist search for a universal and impartial theory of justice, regards Lyotard's proposal as irrationalist and conservative - as lacking the resources necessary for carrying out a systematic critique of local practices and in detecting ideological distortions in our forms of discourse. His communicative ethics may be instructively opposed to Lyotard's localism in that the former represents a nonfoundationalist yet universalistic theory of justice, the aim of which is to discover an impartial standpoint from which a critique of social norms is possible. Habermas's strategy is in turn dismissed by Lyotard as representing merely one more metanarrative to be cast to the winds, one more cognitivist, universalistic, and formalist social theory promising transcendental guarantees.

It is important to note that the differences which separate these two figures do not go all the way down: each is endeavouring to fashion a nonfoundationalist and pluralistic conception of political discourse, a conception which forbids the privileging of certain voices within our political conversations and which defends a view of politics as a forum for the uninhibited exchange of judgments and interpretations. Accordingly, this debate ought to be viewed as in important ways a family dispute, albeit a factious one. Their differences centre around the role of universal criteria in the legitimation of judgments - Lyotard arguing that all talk of criteria is hopelessly metaphysical, and Habermas arguing that such criteria are indispensable for any social theory capable of legitimation and critique.[2] After outlining the terms of the debate and the respective positions of these two authors, we shall see that a third conception of politics without hegemony recommends itself; from out of this exchange emerges another alternative which eludes each author's criticisms of the other, borrows insights from both, and is in the end altogether friendly to neither. From this third point of view, Habermas is correct in characterizing Lyotard's postmodernist politics as anarchic and irrationalist, but this need not require us to follow Habermas back into the realm of the metanarrative in order to account for the possibility of legitimation and critique. What is needed for such purposes are criteria; what is needed is a conception of normative rationality which incorporates universal principles (of the kind that communicative ethics is in the business of reconstructing) on the one hand and local traditions and social forms on the other into a unified and coherent picture. There is

no need to choose, I argue, between the legitimacy of universal principles of justice and that of local, historically contingent political concerns which function in our discourse as immanent criteria. On the contrary, understanding the conditions of the possibility of the application of universal principles to particular contexts brings to light the necessary limits of a universalistic conception of justice. It forces us to abandon Habermas's search for a universalistic theory devoid of local or provincial elements, and to posit a reciprocal view of the relation of universal normative principles and local culture. I conclude by arguing that what renders our political conversations unstable and open-ended is not (contra Lyotard) an absence of political criteria but precisely an overabundance of such standards, criteria which are a function not only of our membership in communities but of our status as communicatively rational political actors.

1. Pagan Politics

Lyotard's outline of a postmodern "pagan" politics begins with a distinction between modern and postmodern forms of legitimation. Central to all modern political and epistemic[3] modes of legitimation, Lyotard contends, is the hegemony of the "metanarrative." The metanarrative is a theoretical and teleological form of discourse capable of describing and evaluating all other forms of discourse and of grounding our political and ethical decisions once and for all.[4] As well, the metanarrative purports to have transcended the historicity and contingency of first-order narratives. In modernity the latter are typically regarded as mired in conflict and contingency, subject to potential distortion, and accordingly in need of the kind of grounding which can only be provided by recourse to an overarching philosophy of history, such as Marx's fable of the grand march of history culminating in proletarian revolution. Lyotard defines postmodernity, by contrast, as an "incredulity toward metanarratives,"[5] as a dethroning of privileged forms of discourse, an undermining of foundations, theory, and teleology, as well as a suspicion of the "great 'actors' and 'subjects' of history - the nation-state, the proletariat, the party, the West, etc."[6]

We can no longer believe, Lyotard contends, in the hegemony of the metanarrative, but must reinstate the rights of small and local first-order narratives; political legitimacy in postmodernity resides always within these various genres of discourse and never "outside" or "above" them. Lyotard's picture of political legitimation is one of a "perpetual sophistic debate"[7] between speakers telling often radically different stories, a free market of opinions and deliberations. All utterances in such a debate are seen not as arguments but as "moves" and "countermoves" within a context and within a particular genre of discourse; they represent not deductions from principles but tactical moves within a language game.[8] Normative statements are always situated within a framework of generally applicable rules: "[T]hese rules are specific to each particular kind of knowledge, and the 'moves' judged to be 'good' in one cannot be of the same type as those judged 'good' in another, unless it happens that way by chance."[9] There is no single discourse of legitimation, no common measure between these various genres of utterance; rather, in postmodernity there will be a plurality of such discourses, none possessing a privileged or "meta" status.

On this view, communication is far from a well-regulated and distortion-free exchange of arguments. "To speak," Lyotard dramatically puts it, "is to fight"[10]; communication is a practice in which "questions, requests, assertions, and narratives are launched pell-mell into battle. The war is not without rules, but the rules allow and encourage the greatest possible flexibility of utterance."[11] Political discourse is an unstable and unending series of gestures and utterances, "the trumping of a communicational adversary, an essentially conflictual relationship between tricksters."[12] Such debate employs many different types of statements and language games: "in the same discussion one goes, one leaps, from one language game to another, from the interrogative to the prescriptive, and so on."[13] The point in all of this is not to privilege one form of discourse over all others but precisely to "maximize as much as possible the multiplication of small narratives,"[14] to become conversant in various genres of discourse, and above all to invent new moves and "master strokes" within established discursive practices. "Progress" in political debate, if there can be said to be such a thing, consists not in producing "valid" deductions or in generating consensus, but precisely in upsetting consensus and destabilizing our political practices. Indeed, rather than privileging consensus, Lyotard suggests that the more inventive our move, the less likely it is to generate agreement, "precisely because it changes the rules of the game upon which consensus had been based."[15] Political progress consists either in inventing new moves within old games, in refining and modifying established rules, or in inventing new games.

In opposition to political modernity, Lyotard's conception of justice aims not at finality or convergence upon the "truth" - upon the last word in matters of justice - but at divergence, at inventing ever newer moves, more and more novel opinions without granting anyone the honor of having the last word. The aim, as one commentator puts it, is "simply to produce *more* work, to generate new and fresh statements, to make you have 'new ideas', or, best of all, again and again to 'make it new.'"[16] The modernist's search for ever deeper grounds is replaced with the postmodernist's search for creative moves, without criteria for judging the truth of our statements. Lyotard's position in this respect is perhaps furthest removed from that of Kant, for whom "the idea of justice is associated with that of finality."[17] Finality, Lyotard writes, "means a kind of convergence, of organization, of a general congruence, on the part of a given multiplicity moving toward its unity."[18] To the Kantian ideal of unity Lyotard opposes multiplicity and diversity of opinion, leaving us with the question of whether it would be possible to fashion into a moral and political law the maxim, "'Always act in such a way that the maxim of your will may, I won't say not be erected,' but it is almost that, 'into a principle of universal legislation.'"[19]

It is important for our purposes to note that for Lyotard political legitimation is not only a pluralistic but also a local and immanent matter. Contra Habermas, there is nothing inherent in the nature of normative assertions which requires that they claim for themselves universal authority. Rather, our statements have only a limited scope and are contingent upon a prior consensus on the rules which define the games we play and the rules playable within them. They are contingent upon the agreement of the game's current players, and are accordingly subject to future modification or cancellation.

Furthermore, Lyotard is emphatic in pointing out that pagan politics belongs to the order of opinion and not to the order of knowledge or truth. "There is," he writes, "no knowledge in matters of ethics. And therefore there will be no knowledge in matters of politics."[20] While following the Sophists in this respect, Lyotard also follows Aristotle in recognizing the priority of practical judgment over method and conceptual models.[21] In matters of politics and ethics, he argues, we are required to make prescriptive statements and to form judgments without the aid of criteria of any kind. This constitutes the very heart of pagan politics - that our judgments are neither determinate nor informed by training and habit, nor guided by a *sensus communis*, nor by concepts or criteria, but are instead (so it seems) essentially decisionistic. In Lyotard's words, "One is without criteria, yet one must decide."[22] All talk of criteria, Lyotard supposes, is illegitimate in postmodernity since

> [T]he idea of criteria comes from the discourse of truth and supposes a referent or a "reality" and, by dint of this, it does not belong to the discourse of justice. This is very important. It must be understood that if one wants criteria in the discourse of justice one is tolerating de facto the encroachment of the discourse of justice by the discourse of truth.[23]

We are faced, Lyotard argues, with two possibilities: either our prescriptive statements "come to us from elsewhere" or not.[24] Either we are the addressees of universal criteria of justice, mere conformists to standards and obligations "always" known (a view which he attributes to the Jews as well as to preliterate societies[25]), or such criteria are not "received," in which case we must be constantly amending our political code, deciding what our obligations shall be, and so on (a conception which Greek mythology discloses - one in which a society of gods is perpetually forced to redraw its code). Choosing the latter over the former, Lyotard pays homage to the Sophists and rhetoricians, arguing that our prescriptive statements are always subject to discussion and contestation: "between statements that narrate or describe something and statements that prescribe something, there is always some talking to be done."[26]

To the question of where our ability to judge comes from (in the absence of criteria and a *sensus communis*), Lyotard responds in a Nietzschean vein: it is the will to power which accounts for this ability, and not concepts or criteria of any kind.[27] As he goes on to argue, the speaker's affective response plays an indispensable role in political judgment: "I mean that, in each instance, I have a feeling, that is all. It is a matter of feelings, however, in the sense that one can judge without concepts."[28] The true function of the political philosopher, then, is to hazard opinions and submit judgments to the general discussion - and not to devise theories or learned discourses concerning the nature of justice.

2. Communicative Ethics

To all of this, Habermas's rejoinder is not unpredictable, especially to those familiar with the terms of the Gadamer/Habermas debate or with the latter's recent work on "conservatism" (new, young, and old). Habermas finds Lyotard's politics to be uncritical and conservative.[29] According to Habermas, Lyotard's preference for the Sophists over Kant, for diversity over consensus, for narrative over theory, and for judgment over method

renders his seemingly radical claims irrational and conservative since, despite the emphasis on novelty, Lyotard's postmodern critique of the modernists' project of constructing a neutral frame of reference in the service of political critique leaves us ill-equipped to challenge existing institutions and to distinguish legitimate argument from mere persuasion. Lyotard's postmodernism, relying as it does upon sophistic persuasion without the benefit of methodological guarantees, leaves us open to manipulation and oppression. As everyone knows, sophistic persuasion has a dark side best represented by Callicles's lust for power, a commonplace which Lyotard's conception of the Sophists as innovators obscures. Moreover, forces of institutionalized repression and ideology may systematically distort our discursive practices. In view of this, what is needed is the means to distinguish legitimate from ideological forms of agreement and to challenge existing institutions in a way which will command legitimate assent. We must, Habermas contends, construct an emancipatory and critical discourse which will compel rational assent, one which takes us beyond mere persuasion and counterpersuasion.

For Habermas, Lyotard's agonistic and fragmented conception of political discourse leaves a community with no place, as one commentator puts it, for it to "recollect itself and to think critically about its goals and practices."[30] Habermas agreed with Lyotard that political discourse must constitute a forum wherein an unconstrained exchange of opinions is possible and in which all speakers enjoy equal rights of participation. Habermas also maintains, however, that political discourse represents the means by which rational speakers become engaged in a process of coordinating action. Political actors are involved not only in a continuing search for interesting opinions but in a comprehensive process of mutual accommodation through collective deliberation on shared goals and on the proper nature and function of political institutions. Because discourse and action are tied to forces of ideology and power, it is a shared concern of political communities to institute forms of discourse free from domination and hegemony.

At work in Habermas's argument is a certain understanding of the nature of language according to which the many language games in which we participate are all part of a larger structure, a network of utterances, gestures, and interpersonal relations which binds language users into a community. This network of relations builds solidarity and allows us to speak and act collectively.

> Coordination action [David Kolb writes] is not simply a matter of arranging parallel responses to stimuli. In its fullest sense, such coordination demands that we all act, together, as rational agents. It is this conjunction of rationality and sociality that in various ways distinguishes Habermas from the Sophists, from Lyotard, and from Plato.[31]

Contra Lyotard, then, Habermas maintains that our various discursive practices do indeed display a common measure, namely that they bind participants in interaction into a community concerned with reaching an understanding about something in the world. We are involved in an overarching process of coordinating action, a process in which we must offer each other assurances concerning the truth, appropriateness, and sincerity of our statements. The necessity of coordinating action through communication reveals the inadequacy of Lyotard's vision of a community marked by divergence and dissent - or,

at any rate, places limits upon it by bringing to light the need for a degree of consensus in our conversations and dealings with one another.

Habermas's remarks concerning the necessity of coordinating action within political communities is no doubt a legitimate one, even if the theory of language underlying it be called into question. Solving coordination problems is undoubtedly an important part of political practice, and unconstrained dialogue aimed at reaching consensus is, as Habermas suggests, our best strategy in solving such problems. Lyotard's view of politics as a gay science, however, focusing as it does upon the role of novelty and dissent, runs the risk of overlooking a corresponding need for consensus concerning real problems of mutual accommodation. Seyla Benhabib makes this point as follows:

> But there are times when philosophy cannot afford to be a "gay science," for reality itself becomes deadly serious. To deny that the play of language games may not turn into a matter of life and death and that the intellectual cannot remain the priest of many gods but must take a stance is cynical.[32]

This raises the possibility that we need not choose at all between the value of consensus and that of diversity - between the need to harmonize our actions through dialogue aimed at consensus and the value of dissenting voices. While Lyotard is correct to warn us against allowing our various agreements to freeze over into customs to which we must blindly conform, he carries his warning much further than it need go and leaves us with a vision of political community which looks too much like a state of perpetual revolution with little capacity for formulating common projects and sustaining the kind of human solidarity which is a precondition for any viable society.[33] Lyotard is also mistaken to view (apparently all forms of) consensus as merely a temporary lull in the conversation - as an indication not that we have succeeded in accommodating each other's desires and generating a sense of political solidarity, but that we have lost our imagination.

Habermas's next move is to argue that implicit in all communicative action is an orientation toward rational legitimation. Implicit in our discursive practices is an assurance that the claims we make are capable of being validated with respect to the truth of what they assert, their appropriateness to the situation, and our sincerity in uttering them. Habermas rejects Lyotard's opting for opinion over truth and for dissent over consensus on the grounds that an orientation toward consensus and truth is an inherent part of communicative action (a claim which Lyotard rejects). Moreover, Habermas maintains that it is in the nature of validity claims that they "transcend any local context" and apply universally quite irrespective of all historical contingencies. In his words,

> [V]alidity claims have a Janus face: as claims, they transcend any local context; at the same time, they have to be raised here and now and be de facto recognized if they are going to bear the agreement of interaction participants that is needed for effective cooperation. The transcendent moment of *universal* validity bursts every provinciality assunder; the obligatory moment of accepted validity claims renders them carriers of a *context-bound* everyday practice. Inasmuch as communicative agents reciprocally raise validity claims with their speech acts, they are relying on the potential of assailable grounds. Hence, a moment of *uncondition-*

> *ality* is built into *factual* processes of mutual understanding - the validity laid claim to is distinct from the social currency of a de facto established practice and yet serves it as the foundation of any existing consensus. The validity claimed for propositions and norms transcends spaces and times, "*blots out" space and time.*[34]

What is needed in order to distinguish legitimate argument from persuasion, the argument continues, are universal criteria which only a theory employing a transcendental-pragmatic mode of justification can provide. Transcendental-pragmatic justification, while distinct both from an "ultimate" justification (*Letzbegrundung*) in Karl-Otto Apel's sense and from deduction from first principles, allows the theorist to demonstrate the rational authority of certain universal principles of justice and to formulate a neutral standpoint from which all agreements and social norms may be assessed, quite irrespective of the latter's historical location. Habermas does at times take the phenomenological concept of the lifeworld seriously, i.e. he recognizes that the individual is always already historically situated, employing and presupposing a reservoir of implicit knowledge in the form of language and culture. Habermas also acknowledges the ontological impossibility of taking a holiday from one's lifeworld, Cartesian style. He nonetheless proposes, however, that a truly universalistic, cognitivist, and formalistic theory of justice is possible and that, for this reason, the philosopher is indeed capable of remaining what he terms the "guardian of rationality."[35]

The methodology Habermas adopts in his "communicative ethics" involves reconstructing the normative presuppositions of practical rationality, understood as unconstrained communicative interaction oriented toward reaching understanding. Habermas proposes that communicative action contains within itself unavoidable operative presuppositions that have a normative content. Our ability to engage in discursive practices - our "communicative competence" - possesses a stable and universal core of structures and rules, some of which function as indispensable normative conditions of discourse. Anyone who engaged in argumentation has, it is claimed, always already presupposed and hence consented to certain normative rules of argumentation, rules which no speaker may contradict without falling into a performative contradiction. Habermas writes:

> Anyone who participates in argumentation has already accepted these substantive normative conditions - there is no alternative to them. Simply by engaging in argumentation, participants are forced to acknowledge this fact. This transcendental-pragmatic demonstration serves to make us aware of the extent of the conditions under which we always already operate when we argue; no one has the option of *escaping to alternatives*. The absence of alternatives means that those conditions are, in fact, inescapable for us.[36]

It is in these rules that communicative ethics is interested, for only rules of this kind furnish the philosopher with an impartial standpoint from which legitimation and critique of existing discursive practices is possible.

Communicative action, Habermas argues, counterfactually anticipates an ideal speech situation as its implicit telos.[37] The theorist's task is to specify the implicit and formal conditions of the ideal speech situation in order to function as universal and

quasi-transcendental criteria with which to critique any and all social norms. Any normative claim will be said to have failed if we can demonstrate that the asserted proposition is contradicted by noncontingent and inescapable conditions of discourse. The central principle of communicative ethis is that of universalization, which Habermas articulates as follows: a normative principle is universally valid only if

> *All* affected can accept the consequences and the side effects its *general* observance can be anticipated to have for the satisfaction of *everyone's* interests (and these consequences are preferred to those of known alternative possibilities for regulation).[38]

Habermas thus refashions the categorical imperative into the principle that all acceptable evaluative judgments must incorporate generalizable interests. He also replaces the Kantian model of solitary moral consciousness with a conception of normative rationality in which questions of social justice are subject to appraisal in public discourse. Habermas specifies three further principles, each designed to offset hegemony and ensure communication free from domination. These discursive rules ensure that all speakers enjoy equal rights of participation and that no force but the force of the better argument shall hold sway among a community of inquirers:

1. Every subject with the competence to speak and act is allowed to take part in a discourse.

2. (a) Everyone is allowed to question any assertion whatever.
   (b) Everyone is allowed to introduce any assertion whatever into the discourse.
   (c) Everyone is allowed to express his attitudes, desires, and needs.

3. No speaker may be prevented, by internal or external coercion, from exercising his rights as laid down in (1) and (2).[39]

While making no claim to have unearthed an exhaustive list of the normative presuppositions of communicative rationality, Habermas does propose to have discovered a neutral standpoint from which an impartial critique of all social norms, regardless of the traditions of which they are a part, is possible.

This transcendental-pragmatic methodology allows Habermas to sharply separate justification from social currency or the de facto acceptance of normative claims. Having grounds for our normative beliefs, on this view, has nothing whatever to do with the intersubjective recognition which certain beliefs and practices acquire.[40] There may be good reasons both to deny the rightness of socially recognized practices and to demonstrate that a principle which has not met with social acceptance is in fact rationally redeemable. This radical separation is owing to Habermas's rigorous conception of what it means to have grounds for belief. Having legitimate grounds is a matter not of a merely contingent consensus but of transcendental necessity.

Grounds have a special property: they force us into yes or no positions.

> Thus, built into the structure of action oriented toward reaching understanding is an element of unconditionality. And it is this unconditional element that makes the validity that we claim for our views different from the mere de facto acceptance of habitual practices. From the perspective of first persons, what we consider justified is not a function of custom but a question of justification or grounding.[41]

Habermas supposes that it is only this kind of transcultural validity which awards dignity to normative principles, while the contingent outcomes of communicative exchanges - irrespective of how much consensus they produce - stand in no obvious relation to the truth.[42]

More central to our concerns is a second dichotomy Habermas salvages from the legacy of the Enlightenment between justification and application. This second dichotomy is most apparent in Habermas's occasional (and brief) treatment of an objection stemming from hermeneutics and neo-Aristotelianism to formalistic and universalistic normative theory. The objection focuses upon the enabling conditions of the context-specific application of universal principles of the kind communicative ethics in the business of formulating. Recognizing that rules do not govern their own applications, Habermas heeds the hermeneutic insight that the practical application of universals to particular contexts requires a capacity for reflective judgment, but dismisses the conclusion some draw from this concerning the impossibility of an entirely formal and universal theory of justice.[43] Siding with Kant over Aristotle, Habermas contends that practical considerations regarding the application of rules in no way affect the matter of their justification since the transcendental nature of justification is logically distinct from and prior to all practical questions of implementation. The gap separating form from content, he maintains, need not be filled with Aristotelian phronesis since even the prudent implementation of principles makes use of second-order principles, or "principles of practical reason," of which he mentions as examples that means should be proportionate to ends and that all relevant aspects of a case should be considered.[44] Principles of this kind make for the possibility of impartial applications free from the workings of local traditions.

The obvious problem with this view, however, is that there is no rule for deciding what are to count as the relevant aspects of a case (much less its most salient aspects), or what is to count as a proper proportion between means and ends. Concepts such as relevance, salience, and proportion resist formal encapsulation. Moreover, as is now notorious, the appeal to meta-rules only leads to an infinite regress since second-order rules require further, third-order, rules to guide their application (for precisely the same reason that first-order rules require second-order rules), and so on.[45] The infinite regress thus entailed by conceiving of practical judgment as a rule-governed procedure is one from which Habermas fails to escape.

He nevertheless endeavors to defend his position on application as a subordinate and unproblematic matter by taking as an example of prudent implementation of universal norms the case of human rights legislation in modern democratic states.

> The history of human rights in modern constitutional states offers a wealth of examples showing that once principles have been recognized, their application does not fluctuate wildly from one situation to another but tends to have a *stable direction.*[46]

Finally, while granting the elusiveness of principles, Habermas nonetheless awards priority to general principles over particular contexts and reflective judgment. Practical application, while a necessary part of normative experience, can also "distort the meaning of the norm itself; we can operate in a more or less biased way in the dimension of prudent application."[47]

It seems, then, that our two authors have reached something of an impasse: for Habermas, Lyotard's pagan politics smacks of irrationalism while for the latter, Habermas's quest for emancipation merely represents one more ill-fated attempt to rescue the metanarrative from extinction. From where Lyotard stands, the metanarrative of emancipation - a story of the steady progress of communicative competence culminating in the universal emancipation of mankind - is no more hallowed than its Marxian and Freudian predecessors. It seeks merely to regularize the moves which are permissible within political discourse by privileging a certain narrative over all others. This conveying of privilege upon a single discursive genre is no longer credible.

> That would be like saying: The only important game, the only true one, is chess. That is absurd. What is pagan is the acceptance of the fact that one can play several games, and that each of these games is interesting in itself insofar as the interesting thing is to play moves. And to play moves means precisely to develop ruses, to set the imagination to work.[48]

The alleged "meta" status of the narrative of emancipation, he argues, is spurious; by rights it represents only one story among others, none of which alone represents the supreme seat of reason. As well, Lyotard holds that "theories themselves are concealed [first-order] narratives, that we should not be taken in by their claims to be valid for all time,"[49] and that the hegemony of seemingly unshakeable systems should not deter us from playing different moves and inventing new stories.[50]

3. Universality and the Problem of Application

Summing up, Lyotard and Habermas, while sharing a nonfoundationalist and dialogical view of politics, differ sharply on the matter of criteria and their role (or lack thereof) in justification, Lyotard viewing all talk of criteria as hopelessly metaphysical, thus limiting himself to local forms of narrative, and Habermas maintaining that universal criteria and principles are indispensable for any truly emancipatory social theory. There is more than a little room for doubt, however, that a nonfoundationalist politics must embrace either of these apparently polar opposites. Philosophical problems articulated in terms of rigid dichotomies are more often than not poorly formulated and ripe for deconstruction, and this includes not only the dichotomies which Habermas draws between transcendental validity and de facto consensus, and between the justification and application of normative

principles, but also the now commonplace opposition between universalism and localism or communitarianism. Habermas is essentially correct in characterizing Lyotard's localism as lacking the critical resources necessary for a theory of justice, and in pointing out the need for universal principles in serving a critical function. However, a close inspection of what is involved in the application of universal normative principles to particular contexts reveals the inadequacy of a purely universalistic and formalist theory of the kind Habermas defends, and suggests that a political theory employing universal criteria must, as a matter of necessity, incorporate local elements if it is to be capable of reasonable implementation. Out of this opposition, a more adequate position will emerge which incorporates insights from Lyotard and Habermas while avoiding the pitfalls of both; it avoids, that is, both the irrationalism and localism of Lyotard and the rationalistic universalism of Habermas, and it develops a conception of normative rationality which takes its cue from certain neo-Aristotelian and hermeneutic insights.

It will not be contested here that Habermas's reconstruction of the normative presuppositions of communicative action succeeds in generating criteria whose legitimacy is universal - or, at any rate, as universal as the practice of unconstrained dialogue aimed at reaching consensus (which may or may not be strictly universal). In those cultures at least which recognize and award some priority to the practice of free and uninhibited dialogue, the normative conditions of possibility of dialogue must be acknowledged as legitimate principles or criteria of justice.[51] What will be contested, however, is Habermas's privileging of such criteria over all local considerations, a move which overlooks the very factors which render the implementation of universals possible.

Habermas's response to what we may term the hermeneutic objection outlined above (to the effect that the practical question of context-specific applications of universal principles of justice in no way affects the prior theoretical question of their justification) is inadequate. If we are to take communicative ethics seriously as a plausible universalistic theory of justice, the question of application needs to be recognized as a genuine problem for any social theory which endeavours to be universalistic. Specifically, Habermas must meet an objection which I shall now briefly outline, an objection whose basis orientation is supplied by philosophical hermeneutics.

The argument begins with the premise that intelligibility is a necessary condition of rational justification; we cannot justify what we do not understand. As Gadamer recognizes, however, understanding is inextricably bound up not only with intepretation but with application as well. Just as understanding the meaning of a text involves applying the text to the reader's own situation, similarly an understanding of universal principles of justice necessarily includes knowing how the principles in question are applied in practical contexts. The meaning of a universal rule is never comprehended, as it were "in itself" or prior to its actual implementations; neither universals nor particulars can be understood in themselves and in isolation from each other, but only in a complex unity which includes a moment of application. In Gadamer's words,

> Application does not mean first understanding a given universal in itself and then afterward applying it to a concrete case. It is the very understanding of the

> universal - the text - itself. Understanding proves to be a kind of effect and knows itself as such.[52]

Hermeneutics maintains that application

> can never signify a subsidary operation appended as an afterthought to understanding: the object of our application determines from the beginning and in its totality the real and concrete content of hermeneutical understanding. Application is not a calibration of some generality given in advance in order to unravel afterwards a particular situation. In attending to a text, for example, the interpreter does not try to apply a general criterion to a particular case; on the contrary, he is interested in the fundamentally original significance of the writing under his consideration.[53]

It would be mistaken to regard application as a process in which an independently existing particular encounters and is subsumed under an independently existing universal. As Jeff Mitscherling has argued, universals (in this context, general principles) only come into being as such in the process of being instantiated in, or applied to, particular contexts; universal and particular (general principle and particular instantiation) exist only "as the two 'poles' of one and the same creative dialectical activity," and not as "separate and distinct" items.[54] This is the meaning of Gadamer's thesis that understanding and application (as well as interpretation) must be regarded "as comprising one unified process"[55] - that is, that the meaning of a universal is inseparable from its particular instantiations. To return to Habermas's own example of principles of human rights, the meaning of such rights is inseparable from the forms of legislation in which they have their being, or from the actual ways in which they govern and limit human action. We can neither understand nor justify human rights without comprehending their meaning, i.e. how they are given content in governing particular situations. Habermas implicitly recognizes this, writing that improper rule applications may distort the meaning of the rules themselves. However, he overlooks the analogous truth that proper rule application may disclose new dimensions of the rules' meaning. The rule itself is unintelligible until its meaning - and that means its meaning for actors in their concrete circumstances - is disclosed in practical terms.

Given this intimate connection between a principle's meaning and its implementations, we must now ask what makes the application of universal principles to particular contexts possible. Since principles do not govern their own applications,[56] it seems that we are left with two possibilities. The first is that further, second-order, principles make the application of first-order principles possible; the second is that reflective or practical judgment is required. (Habermas defends both possibilities). We have seen that the former is untenable on account of the infinite regress it entails. Moreover, it is normally a feature of general principles that they allow for exceptions, many of which cannot be spelled out in advance on account of the contingency and complexity of normative experience. This means that the practical application of principles must involve a reflective judgment with residual decisionistic elements in order to allow the speaker to see something as the kind of thing a particular rule picks out, to recognize exceptions, and to stop the infinite regress of rule governing rule governing rule. Judgment is a necessary skill for mediating between

universal and particular, rule and context - a skill requiring hermeneutic insight rather than methodological demonstrations.[57]

As Aristotle knew, practical judgment is neither a mechanical nor a neutral procedure which may be radically divorced from contingent, historical factors. It may be better be likened to a skill,[58] a capacity to see what is required and to respond appropriately; a skill which, like Aristotelian phronesis, is informed not only by universals but above all by particulars, by an understanding of particular features of actual cases.[59] More importantly for our argument, judgment is a capacity which always operates within a lifeworld. The competent political actor is educated not only by his own experience, but by that of the historical community to which he belongs. The connection between our capacity to arrive at prudent decisions and our training and education in the characteristic concerns and projects of a particular community is far from accidental.[60] Moreover, the capacity for practical judgment draws upon a tacit understanding (or preunderstanding) of ourselves and the historical community of which we are a part, upon the shared traditions, practices, and forms of life which describe our historical situation. A sense of the moral life of the community - a sense of what is possible and what is important here and now - always informs our reflective judgment, as does the moral character and training of the speaker. To return once again to Habermas's example of principles of human rights, a primary reason why the implementations of such principles do not exhibit an entirely stable direction is that local interpretations of human rights language - of concepts such as freedom, autonomy, and equality - tend to fluctuate considerably, depending as they do upon their function and relative priority within a broader fabric of local political concerns. The ways in which we understand the concepts of freedom and equality (whether we choose to emhasize the liberty of the individual or collective rights, "positive" or "negative" freedoms, or whether we seek equality of opportunity, of economic condition, or of something else) have far-reaching consequences on questions of political policy, as does the way in which we prioritize such values. The competent political agent is always oriented by such lifeworld considerations and not merely by universal and formal principles; this contrasts with Habermas's political actor, who runs the risk of becoming a homeless cosmopolitan.

This line of argument leads us to recognize the inadequacy of communicative ethics as it stands, i.e. as a purely universalistic and formalistic social theory devoid of local elements. It points out, in other words, the necessary limitations of a theory which awards priority to rules over rule-applications and to universal over local and historical factors. Because principles underdetermine practical rationality, leaving us as they do with an impoverished understanding of political discourse, a purely rule-governed theory of justice of the kind Habermas defends must fail as it stands, and any theoretical approach recognizing principles of any kind must not regard the practical matter of application as either rigidly separable from the project of justification or as a unidirectional and formal procedure. If our conception of justice is to contain principles of any kind, then we must recognize a dialectic between such principles and their practical implementations. We must recognize what Herbert Schnädelbach describes as an inevitable "feedback" between rules and their real-life applications. Applications, as he puts it, "possess a constitutive significance for the stock of rules in question."[61] Expressed differently, there must be a reciprocity or two-way illumination between form and content, rule and rule-application,

such that the practical circumstances in which normative rules see the light of day render the rules themselves changeable. The dialectical relationship spoken of here is, as Schnädelbach has pointed out, only a particular instance of a more general hermeneutic circle between the whole and its parts, the universal and the particular. On this account, it makes as much sense to say that actual cases are applied to our normative principles as it does to say that principles are applied to actual cases.[62] This leaves us with a less rationalistic conception of the justification and application of principles than that formulated by Habermas, one which recognizes the hypothetical and context-sensitive character of rules - and one which recognizes that problems of justification and application must be solved together or not at all.

The line of argument also forces us to abandon Habermas's faith in an entirely universalistic social theory. Because the application (and indirectly the justification) of universal principles must rely upon a practical judgment which is always already historically situated - which is necessarily informed by the practices, traditions, and forms of life specific to a particular historical community - a universalistic theory unmixed with local elements or values is incapable of practical implementation. It is unemployed and unemployable. If our conception of social justice is to include a place for universal principles (and I am arguing that it ought to), then it must also include the various local factors (practices, values, traditions) which always inform the speaker's moral character and judgment. Because the latter are indispensable in the practical implementation of the former, neither universal principles nor local values may be subordinated to the other; rather, both carry justificatory weight. The principle of democracy, for instance, while universalizable, will be applied in very different ways and involve different institutional arrangements depending upon the culture in which it is applied; it will depend upon a community's political concerns, values, history, and the various contingencies which characterize it. Whether we adopt a form of democracy following the American model, a parliamentary democracy, direct democracy, or some other form, will depend upon certain facts about our community, considerations which justify our opting for one set of institutional arrangements over another. This represents a view of normative rationality more in keeping with philosophical hermeneutics than with the Kantian tradition in which Habermas situates himself. It is in keeping with Gadamer's conception of an historically and situationally sensitive practical reason,[63] one which recognizes, in other words, the historicity and contingency of rationality.

If the above line of reasoning is correct, we have reason to reject Habermas's dichotomies between application and justification, and between justification and social consensus. It is, to say the least, odd that Habermas, who normally takes the phenomenological concept of the lifeworld seriously, should feel the need to radically separate philosophical or normative validity from the shared values and practices which constitute an ethos and to formulate a transcendental theory of justification which soars over the heads of existing, historical subjects. Is Habermas not still dreaming the rationalist's dream of leaping out of history and judging the sum of our practices and beliefs from a standpoint somehow outside of it, a place above the fray of the merely contingent? Is Habermas's universalism not lacking in historical consciousness, foregoing as it does any interaction with the historicial contingencies which inform who we ourselves are and what we care about? In order for communicative ethics to have any plausibility, it must abandon

Habermas's unqualified universalism and incorporate local criteria into its account of justification.

4. Splitting the Difference

It is possible to refashion communicative ethics to avoid the metaphysical and teleological trappings of the "ideal speech situation" while retaining a critical function. The ideal speech situation is a metaphysical embellishment which obscures the merits of Habermas's theory. The challenge confronting communicative ethics is to articulate a non-teleological and, to use Lyotard's term, "agonistic" narrative of emancipation which retains its universalistic ambitions without reverting to metaphysics. And this can be accomplished by, in effect, splitting the difference between Lyotard and Habermas.[64] What is needed is a theory of justice which avoids the wilfulness and irrationalism of Lyotard's paganism while abandoning the rationalistic universalism of Habermas, and this may be achieved only by incorporating universal and local criteria into a unified legitimation theory. Against both Lyotard and Habermas, we must be capable of legitimizing political judgments by employing criteria implicit in first-order discourse. While some such criteria will carry universal legitimacy (notably freedom, democracy, equality), others will not, and the legitimacy of both is a function of their import to our mode(s) of self-understanding. Contra Lyotard, the political actor is never without criteria. We are always already oriented as political agents by the traditions and forms of life to which we belong; as historical beings, our orientation toward practical situations is informed by the training and education we receive as members of an historical and political community. The political actor is always an historical actor, conducting himself within an ethos of shared understandings and preunderstandings, of habits and customs, an heir to traditions and forms of life in terms of which members of a community understand and orient themselves.[65] Appropriate forms of action involve appropriating, applying, extending and transforming our historical traditions in a creative and prudent manner. The political actor, as John Caputo expresses it, is no more an isolated subject, "looking helplessly about with the eyes of pure reason for rules of conduct and ethical criteria" than the "epistemological subject" is outside of an historical lifeworld.[66] Rather, political judgment - as Aristotle knew and as Lyotard forgets - is a product of training and education; while dispensing with the need for methodological guarantees, it is nonetheless oriented by the political ethos of which it is a part. For all the brave talk in Lyotard about invention and creativity, he overlooks the fact that invention does not begin from scratch. Even the most creative imagination never begins at the beginning but is always already under way, an heir to the projects and preunderstandings of the traditions to which it belongs.

The substantive content of our ethos - the characteristic concerns and common interests of the members of a community, the various political aspirations, practices, and preunderstandings which represent the normative dimension of the traditional fabric of a culture, and in terms of which the process of education occurs[67] - function as imminent criteria in the legitimation of normative judgments. We do not need to justify our political opinions from the vantage point of a Habermasian utopia. Legitimation, albeit of a more humble-hearted kind, is possible by making use of both universal principles of justice and the criteria furnished to us by the political traditions constitutive of our community. These criteria are most likely to be banal, and frequently outright platitudinous; they will include

the common good, freedom, equality, cultural autonomy, economic prosperity, national security, the emancipation of the oppressed, and so on - none of which is uniquely and supremely authoritative in the manner of so-called "first princples," and none of which functions as a grand telos representing the end of history. It is in the name of such shared concerns that judgments are legitimated and that a viable (albeit limited and provisional) social consensus is allowed to emerge. Lyotard, while acknowledging that "knowledge has no final legitimacy outside of serving the goals envisioned by the practical subject, the autonomous collectivity," fails to explain why such common goals do not qualify as criteria in the legitimation of judgments.[68] His response may be that all talk of criteria is hopelessly metaphysical, that it presupposes a "referent" or a "reality" of some sort, and thus belongs to the "discourse of truth." This statement, however, strikes me as spurious. If any of the standards I have alluded to carry an unsavory metaphysical baggage, then that would surely not count in their favor. However, it remains for Lyotard to argue that any of them in fact do.[69] Innovation and justification both presuppose a background of implicit understanding, a background which does not provide a stable foundation to guarantee the transcendental validity of our statements, but which does serve to inform our judgments by providing criteria which spare us from the licentious excesses of paganism.

Finally, while I take Lyotard to be correct in characterizing political discourse as open-ended and at time perilous, the reason is not that we are without criteria to guide our judgments, but precisely that we have too many criteria to allow our forms of discourse to be rendered stable - too many legitimate standards, all commanding some loyalty and displaying a troublesome habit of coming into conflict. Freedom and equality, for instance, are notorious for making awkward company; likewise the common welfare and individual autonomy. The briefest glance at everyday political practice and decision-making reveals that it is an overabundance rather than an absence of criteria which generates the kind of dissent Lyotard describes, and which prevents our discourse from being as well-orchestrated as Habermas wishes it could be. I hasten to add that this state of affairs is by no means to be regretted, nor should it prompt us to follow Habermas in privileging any single criterion or narrative above all others. Our practical task, rather, is to arrive at judgments while employing various standards and telling a variety of stories, deciding from case to case which criterion ought to take precedence in particular instances.

Nor is it to be regretted that such criteria are themselves contested; indeed one of the reasons why political debate is as open-ended and conflict-ridden as it is, is that in addition to the contested nature of political statements, the criteria whose function it is to legitimize such statements are themselves contested and subject to competing interpretations and applications. The standards which certify our opinions may themselves become a topic for debate, and may be replaced with new and more perspicacious ones. They are contested not only with respect to their meaning but also with respect to their relative priority within a broader fabric of political concerns. Whether we choose, for instance, to award a higher priority to individual liberty or to the common welfare, to equality of opportunity or of economic condition, will have far-reaching policy implications, as will the meaning that is ascribed to such concepts as emancipation or cultural autonomy (not to mention the meaning of such hermeneutic hot potatoes as "multiculturalism" and the "distinct society").

I maintain, finally, that we are capable of recognizing the legitimacy of dissent and novelty within our discursive practices without abandoning the need for legitimation. This is possible with the aid of criteria, universal and local, which provide us with the wherewithal for critique without transcendental guarantees and without recourse to metanarratives.

Notes

1. I wish to thank Greg Johnson, Jeff Mitscherling, and Gary Madison for their many helpful comments and suggestions in the preparation of this essay.

2. Although the need for and nature of consensus is at the forefront of this dispute, my discussion focuses upon criteria: specifically, whether we need any, and if so, whether such criteria be universal or local. On the question of consensus, both Lyotard and Habermas agree that de facto consensus is no guarantee of the legitimacy of our political judgments, however, Habermas does defend a counterfactual consensus theory of normative rationality, as we shall see.

3. I shall leave to one side the question of scientific and epistemic legitimation and focus entirely on Lyotard's treatment of political/ethical justification.

4. Jean-François Lyotard and Jean-Loup Thébaud, *Just Gaming*, tr. Wlad Godzich (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), 28.

5. Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trs. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), xxiv.

6. Frederick Jameson, "Foreword" to *The Postmodern Condition*, xii.

7. Lyotard, *Just Gaming*, 66.

8. Citing Wittgenstein's term, Lyotard writes that "each of the various categories of utterance can be defined in terms of rules specifying their properties and the uses to which they can be put - in exactly the same way as the game of chess is defined by a set of rules determining the properties of each of the pieces, in other words, the proper way to move them." (Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, 10).

9. *Ibid*, 26.

10. *Ibid*, 10.

11. *Ibid*, 17.

12. Jameson, "Forword" to *The Postmodern Condition*, xi.

13. Lyotard, *Just Gaming*, 93.

14. *Ibid*, 59.

15. Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, 63.

16. Jameson, "Foreword" to *The Postmodern Condition*, ix.

17. Lyotard, *Just Gaming*, 94.

18. *Ibid*, 94.

19. *Ibid*, 94. To the question of whether such a thing is indeed possible, of whether "a politics regulated by such an idea of multiplicity [is] possible," Lyotard responds: "And here I must say that I don't know" (*Ibid*, 94).

20. *Ibid*, 73. It may seem odd to postmodernists that Lyotard should buy into such an old-fashioned, Platonic dichotomy as that between knowledge and opinion, given that postmodernists normally seek to characterize a realm of opinion which is not radically opposed to a realm of knowledge, as David Kolb has pointed out. (David Kolb, *Postmodern Sophistications* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990], 36).

21. I make no effort here to defend Lyotard's reading - or better, appropriation - of Aristotle. Lyotard reads Aristotle as in all important respects in line with the Sophists in matters of ethics and politics. Lyotard's Aristotle looks more like a Sartrean existentialist than he normally does - or, at any rate, more French.

22. Lyotard, *Just Gaming*, 17.

23. *Ibid*, 98.

24. *Ibid*, 17.

25. *Ibid*, 17.

26. *Ibid*, 17.

27. *Ibid*, 17. I shall also make no effort here to defend Lyotard's questionable appropriation of Nietzsche.

28. *Ibid*, 15.

29. This comes as no surprise, given that Habermas levels an identical charge against everyone from Gadamer to Foucault to Bataille to Derrida.

30. Kolb, *Postmodern Sophistications*, 39.

31. *Ibid*, 39.

32. Seyla Benhabib, "Epistemologies of Postmodernism: A Rejoinder to Jean-François Lyotard" in *Feminism/Postmodernism*, ed. Linda Nicholson (New York: Routledge, 1990), 123.

33. Richard Rorty makes a similar point, arguing that we should replace Lyotard's conception of politics (and science) as aiming at a permanent state of revolution with a Kuhnian picture of a ceaseless alternation between revolution and normalcy: "To say that

'science aims' at piling paralogy on paralogy is like saying that 'politics aims' at piling revolution on revolution. No inspection of the concerns of contemporary science or contemporary politics could show anything of the sort. The most that could be shown is that talk of the aims of either is not particularly useful" (Rorty, "Habermas and Lyotard on Postmodernity" in *Essays on Heidegger and Others* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991], 166).

34. Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures*, tr. Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1990), 322-23.

35. Jürgen Habermas, *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, tr. Christian Lenhardt and Shierry Nicholsen (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1990), 20. Communicative ethics may best be regarded as a theory of social justice rather than a classical ethical theory. Habermas does not hold the view that philosophy can identify a single privileged form of life or find a systematic answer to the general question, "What should I do?" Neither is communicative ethics, as Habermas conceives it, interested in generating ethical norms or positions on practical moral issues. Following in the Kantian tradition, its central concern is with right or just action - with finding a method to rationally guarantee the validity and impartiality of socio- political judgments.

36. *Ibid*, 130.

37. Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, 323.

38. Habermas, *Moral Consciousness*, 65.

39. *Ibid*, 89.

40. It is of considerable methodological importance to Habermas to be able to separate normative validity from conventional agreement. As he puts it, "the 'existence' or social currency of norms says nothing about whether the norms are valid. We must distinguish between the social fact that a norm is intersubjectively recognized and its worthiness to be recognized." *Ibid*, 61.

41. *Ibid*, 19-20.

42. *Ibid*, 49.

43. As Habermas puts it, "The question of the context-specific application of universal norms should not be confused with the question of their justification. Since moral norms do not contain their own rules of application, acting on the basis of moral insight requires the additional competence of hermeneutic prudence, or in Kantian terminology, reflective judgment. But this in no way puts into question the prior decision in favour of a universalist position." *Ibid*, 179-80.

44. *Ibid*, 206-7.

45. This argument has been made in recent years by Ronal Beiner (cf. *Political Judgment* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983], 131) and Hubert and Stuart Dreyfus (cf. "What is Morality? A Phenomenological Account of the Development of Ethical Expertise" in *Universalism vs. Communitarianism: Contemporary Debates in Ethics*, ed. David Rasmussen [Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1990], 257), among others. Although the argument goes back to Kant and Wittgenstein, it also recalls the "third man" argument of Plato's *Parmenides*: that if an individual p is what it is only in virtue of its likeness to the ideal p, there must be a still more ideal p (a second-order p) to which both individual p's and the ideal p are similar, and so on *ad infinitum.*

46. Habermas, *Moral Consciousness*, 105. I shall discuss why this statement is clearly false toward the end of the paper.

47. *Ibid*, 105.

48. Lyotard, *Just Gaming*, 60-61.

49. Jean-François Lyotard, "Lessons in Paganism" in *The Lyotard Reader*, ed. Andrew Benjamin (Cambridge: Basil Blackwell), 130.

50. This is Lyotard's solution to the much-heralded problem of ideology - that if our forms of discourse are systematically distorted we ought to invent new first-order narratives rather than try to rise "above" them with the help of a totalizing metadiscourse. The proliferation of such stories would prevent any one of them from becoming monolithic and obscuring our critical faculties. No doubt Habermas would respond that following Lyotard's recommendation would merely multiply the ways in which we are capable of oppressing each other.

51. My endorsement of communicative ethics is not without several qualifications. The methodology of reconstructing the normative enabling conditions of discourse is indeed compelling. What is not compelling, however, are the unnecessary embellishments of Habermas's theory, the affiliations which serve only to clutter an otherwise plausible argument. I have in mind Habermas's problematic affiliations with neo-Marxian teleology and "evolution" as well as with Kohlberg's theory of moral development. Habermas does not always choose his friends carefully, and numerous such affiliations and embellishments add systematicity at the expense of plausibility. For an equally compelling but less grandiose/Germanic version of communicative ethics, see G.B. Madison's *The Logic of Liberty* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1986). Madison emerges from the hermeneutical and rhetorical traditions and unlike Habermas does not borrow heavily from the Frankfurt school or from Kohlberg's moral development theory.

52. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, Second Revised Edition, tr. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald Marshall (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Corporation, 1989), 341.

53. Hans-Georg Gadamer, "The Problem of Historical Consciousness" in *Interpretive Social Science: A Second Look*, ed. Paul Rabinow and William Sullivan (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987), 125-26.

54. Jeff Mitscherling, "Hegelian Elements in Gadamer's Notions of Application and Play." *Man and World 25 (1992), 65.*

55. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 308. Cf. also Gadamer, *Reason in the Age of Science*, tr. Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1989), 129.

56. I (together with Habermas) make this assumption since, as Charles Larmore expresses it, "it is not always true that moral rules have enough content to settle by themselves whether something falls under their concept. It is not always true that judgment has no other task than simply to *see* that moral rules indeed suffice to identify the things of which the concept may be predicated" (Charles Larmore, *Patterns of Moral Complexity* [New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988], 4).

57. As Beiner writes, "Application of a law or teaching is not like affixing a pre-given label to a pre-differentiated particular, but rather, involves a highly demanding hermeneutic discipline. The interpretation of legal or scriptural texts presupposes the culturally acquired attributes of taste, cultivation, and ethical habituation, and it is these qualifications of sound judgment that receive their classical elucidation in Aristotle's exemplary analysis of *ethos*" (Beiner, *Political Judgment*, 25).

58. Gadamer (*Truth and Method*, 31) and Harold Brown (*Rationality* [New York: Routledge, 1988], 165) have both likened judgment to skilful behavior.

59. In a recent discussion of Aristotle, Martha Nussbaum underscores the non-technical and flexible nature of moral deliberation: "This requirement of flexibility, so important to our understanding of Aristotle's non-scientific conception of choice, is then described in a vivid metaphor. Aristotle tells us that a person who attempts to make every decision by appeal to some antecedent general principle held firm and inflexible for the occasion is like an architect who tries to use a straight ruler on the intricate curves of a fluted column. Instead, the good architect will, like the builders of Lesbos, measure with a flexible strip of metal that 'bends round to fit the shape of the stone and is not fixed' (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, II37b30-2). Good deliberation, like this ruler, accommodates itself to what it finds, responsively and with respect for complexity. It does not assume that the form of the rule *governs* the appearances; it allows the appearances to govern themselves and to be normative for correctness of rule" (Martha Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989], 301).

60. This point has been argued by Larmore (*Patterns of Moral Complexity*, 18-19) and Gadamer (*Truth and Method*, 20-21), among others.

61. Herbert Schnädelbach, "Remarks about Rationality and Language" in *The Communicative Ethics Controversy*, Seyla Benhabib and Fred Dallmayr, eds. (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1990), 283.

62. *Ibid*, 283.

63. Gadamer defends an historical rationality, one for which all criteria are historically constructed and a function of the questions and characteristic concerns of the tradition in which one is situated. In opposition to the Enlightenment's conception of an absolute reason (one which disregards its own finitude), Gadamer, in *Truth and Method*, supports a practical rationality which is essentially tied to tradition, prejudice, authority, and language.

64. Rorty, in his discussion of this debate, likewise proposes to have things both ways (Rorty, *Essays on Heidegger and Others*, 164-76). For my part, however, the manner in which I split the difference between these two authors bears no obvious resemblance to Rorty's proposal, his concerns in this respect being somewhat different from my own.

65. Gadamer has similarly defended the historical character of ethical thinking as part of his wider project of characterizing the historicity of all understanding. As is well known, Gadamer argues that understanding is always situated within an historically constructed horizon - that prejudice, tradition, and authority constitute the necessary background against which interpretation occurs. In his words, "We are always dominated by conventions. In every culture a series of things is taken for granted and lies fully beyond the explicit consciousness of anyone, and even in the greatest dissolution of traditional forms, mores, and cultures the degree to which things held in common still determine everyone is only more concealed" (Gadamer, *Reason in the Age of Science*, 82).

66. John D. Caputo, *Radical Hermeneutics: Repetition, Deconstruction, and the Hermeneutic Project* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 247.

67. As Gadamer puts it, "But the most important thing in education is still something else - the training in the *sensus communis*, which is not nourished on the true but on the probable, the verisimilar. The main thing for our purposes is that here *sensus communis* obviously does not mean that general faculty in all men but the sense that founds community" (Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 20-21).

68. Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, 36.

69. What, pray tell, would be the metaphysical "reality" standing behind freedom? or emancipation? or indeed any of the criteria I have mentioned? Might it be a Platonic form, perhaps?

Discussions

On Kelley on Kant

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Randall Dipert, in a review of David Kelley's *The Evidence of the Senses: A Realist Theory of Perception* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1986 [henceforth: ES]) appearing in the Spring 1987 issue of *Reason Papers*, characterized it as "an important book," citing among his reasons the fact that ES is "a professionally competent defense of epistemological theses originating with Ayn Rand" (57). Dipert also, however, found Kelley's treatment of Kant "most bizarre" and "profoundly uninformed" and recommended that Kelley "should bow out of historical criticism" (60-61). In the Spring 1988 issue of *Reason Papers*, Robert E. Knapp attempted a defense of Kelley's interpretation of Kant. For reasons of my own, however, I find myself in agreement with the general thrust of Dipert's characterizations, both positive and negative.[1]

In this paper I propose to submit Kelley's analysis of Rand's and Kant's views of the activity and passivity of mind to a close and critical examination. Rand claimed that "[o]n every fundamental issue, Kant's philosophy is the exact opposite of Objectivism."[2] Even discounting for Rand's usual hyperbole,[3] this statement seems to be glaringly false in light both of Kelley's book and Rand's own *Introduction to Objectivist Epistemology* (New York: New American Library, 1979 [Henceforth: IOE]). To see that a universal affirmative proposition is false only one counterexample is necessary. That is, we need to find a fundamental issue upon which Rand and Kant agree (against the background of another philosopher who disagrees with both of them). Take the question: Does consciousness have an identity, i.e. does consciousness exist as a finite, determinate faculty? Rand's answer is yes. Indeed, the principle of the identity of consciousness is at the center of her system (IOE, ch.8). Her antipode, therefore, must say no. What does Kant say? Or, more importantly, what do Rand and Kelley say that Kant says? Rand writes that, for Kant, "Man is *limited* to a consciousness of a specific nature, which perceives by specific means and no others . . . "[4] According to Kelley, Kant rejects the notion that consciousness has no identity, which latter view Kelley baptizes the "diaphanous" model of consciousness (ES, 37-38). But if this is the case, then it would seem that Kant's philosophy is not "the exact opposite of Objectivism," at least not on "every fundamental issue."

Are there philosophers who *do* deny that consciousness has identity? G.E. Moore is one that Kelley cites in *The Evidence of the Senses*. Aristotle is another! (ES, 37-38). Although the evidence for the inclusion of Aristotle is a bit more tenuous, even John Hermann Randall, Jr., whose book *Aristotle* is cited by Kelley (ES, 38, n44), admits that had *noûs* an identity, then we could not know *without distortion*. Note that this is the very view attributed to Kant by Kelley and Rand. In fact, if one recalls Rand's assertion that the "hallmark of a mystic is the savagely stubborn refusal to accept the fact that consciousness, like any other existent, possess identity . . . " (IOE, 106) this would make Aristotle a mystic! Whether or not this latter claim ought to be pressed, we can see that on this interpretation, and restricted to this "fundamental issue," Aristotle (not to mention Moore), not Kant, is Rand's antipode.

This discovery makes one suspicious. What about other issues in philosophy? Specifically, what about the activity and/or passivity of consciousness? While this may or may not be construed as a fundamental issue, the purpose of the remainder of this paper will be to look at Kelley's exposition of both Kant and Rand on this issue to determine how "exactly opposite" they really are. I shall begin with Rand.

According to Kelley, Rand holds that consciousness is metaphysically passive but epistemologically active. To say that consciousness is "metaphysically passive" is to say that consciousness does not create its "contents" *ex nihilo*; consciousness, rather, is fundamentally *receptive*, receiving its "contents" from outside itself. Rand also calls this position "the primacy of existence," and she regards its truth as a self-evident axiom, a principle which must implicitly be affirmed in all acts of consciousness, even in the very act of denying it. (IOE, 79). (Conversely, a consciousnes that is metaphysically active would be one that *creates* its own objects. This is what Rand and Kelley call "the primacy of consciousness." It is this position that they ascribe to Kant, of which more in due course.)

Consciousness, while fundamentally receptive, is not, however, completely passive. Consciousness is active, but only in the epistemological sense. Once it is given the basic material of knowledge, it must process or - to use one of Rand's favorite metaphors - "digest" the material in order to know it. Rand claims, further, that the epistemological spontaneity or activity of consciousness follows from the fact that consciousness "has" an identity, i.e. that it exists as a finite, determinate faculty; it has a nature of its own. Kelley describes the epistemological spontaneity of consciousness as follows "[consciousness] responds in specific ways to external stimulation, processing in specific ways the material provided by the environment:" (ES, 40). Immediately after the colon we read the following quilt quotation from IOE:[5]

> All knowledge is processed knowledge - whether on the sensory, perceptual or conceptual level. An 'unprocessed' knowledge would be a knowledge acquired without means of cognition. Consciousness . . . is not a passive state, but an active process. And more: the satisfaction of every need of a living organism requires an act of *processing*[6] by that organism, be it the need of air, of food or of knowledge.

Then comes the "stomach" metaphor. "[Consciousness] no more creates its own contents than does the stomach" (ES, 41).

Now let us turn to the meaning of the word "create" here. Checking Rand's *Philosophy: Who Needs It* we find two senses of "create," viz. (1) "[t]he power to rearrange the combinations of natural elements" and (2) "the power to bring something into existence out of nothing."[7] We may call these two senses of creation the rearrangement and the *ex nihilo* senses, respectively. Rand regards the first form of creativity as possible and the second form as metaphysically impossible. The stomach, therefore, cannot be said to create its contents *ex nihilo.* But what about the other sense of creativity as rearrangement? In that sense the stomach *does* create its own contents. Returning now to the context of consciousness, one can say that Rand's concept of metaphysical passivity denies the creativity of consciousness in the *ex nihilo* sense. But her concept of epistemological

spontaneity *affirms* the creativity of consciousness in the rearrangement sense. Now this raises a question about Kant: In what sense did he affirm the creativity of consciousness? In the *ex nihilo* sense, or in the rearrangement sense? Obviously the exciting thesis would be that Kant claims that man creates *ex nihilo* the objects of experience. The important terms here are "create" and "object." It is to their examination that we must now turn.

Philosophers can be divided into groups. Some are reasonably consistent with respect to their usage of key terms. Aristotle and Hegel are two that come to mind here. Kant and Plato, however, belong in that infuriating category of thinkers who, even after expanding much effort to clearly define a term, will then go on to use another and sometimes opposite term in its place. In the famous divided line of the *Republic*, Plato uses *noésis* and *epistémé* to name indiscriminately the upper fourth section of the divided line as well as the entire upper half of the line itself. But with Plato the context is usually more than sufficient to set the wary on the right track.

Kant is worse. He will spill much ink to differentiate, say, "transcendental" from "transcendent" and then use the latter when the former is seemingly called for. His use of the words "create" and "objects" are in this category. Let us look at some uses of "create" in the Kantian system.[8]

It is surely strange that one clear use of "create"[9] (in the *ex nihilo* sense) in Kant's work is not even mentioned by Kelley. It is here that we find a consciousness that is truly metaphysically active, viz., God. God has, according to Kant, an intellectual intuition, i.e. he "knows" an object by creating it. In God, there is no distinction between receptivity and spontaneity, between sense and reason. When Rand defines reason as the "faculty that perceives, identifies and integrates the material provided by his senses"[10] she joins Kant against those who would deny the difference between sense and reason,[11] a difference not found in the Deity. (Here Spinoza can be taken as an example of the whole rationalist tradition wherein perception is understood as a confused conception.[12]).

Kant's position is interesting and, at least initially, puzzling. One might be tempted to guess that Kant would conceive of God as having a creative spontaneity, since receptivity by its very nature seems to be a dependent capacity. One can only be receptive to what is given to be received. (A wide receiver presupposes a quarterback). But in God's case, this assumption would be a mistake. God has an intellectual intuition. "A divine understanding" does not "represent to itself given objects, but through whose representation the objects should themselves be given or produced . . . the categories would have no meaning whatsoever in respect of such a mode of knowledge" (*Critique of Pure Reason*, B145). Since the categories are for synthesizing and organizing the material provided by the senses, and since God does not receive but creates the objects, spontaneity would be useless to God. (It would be, to use a metaphor from Kelley's *The Art of Reasoning*,[13] a filing system in an entity with nothing to file.) For Kant there is a major difference between God qua infinite knower and us qua finite knowers. And for Kant one of the effects of this difference is that we are metaphysically passive vis-a-vis the "object" of knowledge. This conclusion is, of course, directly contrary to Kelley's position on Kant.

Heinz Heimsoeth[14] is even more insistent on the importance of the distinction between an infinite and finite knowers, i.e. between God and us. He traces the source of this dichotomy back to Augustine[15] and the Augustinian tradition. This tradition equates knower and maker[16] in such a way that the maker is the privileged knower. So privileged in fact that knowing becomes a problem for any finite knower, i.e. any knower radically *dependent* on the existence of an object it *hasn't* created.

Heimsoeth doesn't mean to imply that, for Kant, *all* knowing is problematic for a finite consciousness. Kant notes and dismisses as unproblematic two kinds of knowing. First "sensible representation, where the object affects the subject; this is limited to the object of the senses and the representation only indicates the manner in which the subject has been affected by the object" and second, "where understanding creates objects as in mathematics."[17] No, for Kant the problem is how can we finite knowers have universal and necessary knowledge of objects we have *not* created, i.e. of objects that exist independently of us, objects over against which we are metaphysically passive. In other words, i.e. in (some of) Kant's words, how are synthetic a priori judgements of non-created objects possible?

If Kelley and Rand were correct vis-a-vis the metaphysical activity (in the sense in which God's consciousness is creative) of the Kantian consciousness, we would have no way of explaining Kant's entire problematic! Many of his moves would be simply unintelligble. The first *Critique* and the *Prolegomena* would be unintelligible.

But let us explore further Kant's notion of the radical finitude of human knowing. Man, according to Kant, is doubly passive (triply if you count his very existence which Kant tells us is dependent on the existence of given objects[18]). Man's receptivity is passive vis-a-vis objects being given to it, and man's spontaneity is passive vis-a-vis his receptivity.[19] (This is not to be interpreted to mean that spontaneity is epistemologically passive. It is not. That is Kant's very point in calling it *Spontaneität*.) Just as reason in Rand works only on the material provided by his senses, likewise, Kantian spontaneity only works on the material provided by receptivity, which, in turn, works only when material is provided to it by the (noumenal) world. That is, "intuition takes place only insofar as the object is given to us" (A19/B30). At B71 Kant tells us that thought "always involves limitations." He means by limitations the fact that we are metaphysically passive, we depend on an object being given to us. Heidegger, in his *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, agrees, writing that "Thinking is simply in the service of intuition."[20] It would seem that neither sense nor reason is creative (*ex nihilio*) for Kant.

But what about the second sense of create? The mathematical sense of "create" referred to above in the quotation from Heimsoeth brings little comfort to Kelley's thesis. According to Kant, we "create" mathematical objects. What this means for Kant can be seen from the following passage from the *Critique of Pure Reason.*

> We cannot think a line without *drawing* it in thought, (*ohne sie in Gedanken zu ziehen*) or a circle without *describing* it. We cannot represent the three dimensions of space save by *setting* three lines at right angles to one another from the same point. (B145-5 and A713/B741)

Needless to say, this "drawing," "describing," and "setting" has nothing to do with consciousness being metaphysically active in the *ex nihilio* sense condemned by Rand.

Let us draw a preliminary conclusion. Kant uses "create" in at least two senses, the *ex nihilio* sense and the mathematical sense. The first he attributed to God and never to man. In fact, it is because man does not create the objects of the world that Kant finds synthetic a priori knowledge (in mathematics and the natural sciences) a puzzle and a problem. The second sense is innocuous and need not detain us further.

But what about the concept "object"? We now have to place it under our glass. Perhaps Kelley is right after all, i.e. namely that for Kant consciousness does create its objects and we have missed this because of unclarity vis-a-vis the concept "object." Needless to say, Kant is not univocal in its usage either. Let us take a closer look.

According to Kemp Smith, Kant uses the term object (*Gegenstand*) in two senses. It may mean content (*Inhalt*) and it is clear that Kant "has in mind its distinction from conception (*Begriff*) which as expressing the universal is related to objects only indirectly . . . "[21] But as is clear to anyone familiar with Kelley's exposition in chapter one of ES, this is Rand's position, or at least her position according to Kelley. That is, perception is direct = non-conceptual; whereas the indirect knowledge of reality is conceptual. But more of Kelley's exposition below.

If Kemp Smith is correct here, it means that Kant rejects both the realist notion that direct perception is diaphanous and the representationalist position that the object of perception is in our heads or minds. We may supply the *form* of perception but the object or content (*Inhalt*) is given. "But intuition takes place only insofar as the object is given to us." How Kelley can go from "the object is given to us" to "we create the object" - a premise he must use in his attempt to saddle Kant with the primacy of consciousness error - is hard to understand. Nor is this an isolated expression in the *Critique*. In the first paragraph alone he uses these and equivalent words four times. Kant reiterates "the object is given to us," (line 5); "we are affected by objects" (line 8); "Objects are *given* to us" (line 9, emphasis in original), and "an object be given to us" (line 14). It is almost as if Kant did not want to be misunderstood here. Writing in Germany he had no empiricist tradition to count on - most of his readers were rationalists of the Leibniz-Wolff variety. So he had to beat them over the head - objects are given, given, given! That the readers of the first edition didn't get the message is evident in the long footnote in the second edition at Bx1 where Kant writes that the consciousness,"of my existence in time is bound up in the way of identity with the consciousness of a relation to something outside me, and it is therefore experience not invention, sense not imagination, which inseparably connects this outside something with my inner sense." But Kelley doesn't cite this passage. In the first sense of object, then, we can confidently say that humans do not create the object and in that sense Kant adheres to the primacy of existence, not the primacy of consciousness.

To continue with Kemp Smith. The second meaning Kant gives to the concept object is even more damaging to Kelley's thesis. If the first meaning emphasized object as content, the second emphasizes object as given. Since I have stressed this giveness in the

paragraphs above I won't repeat myself here. But there is an ambiguity in Kant's language that Kemp Smith points out, and it may be responsible for, and make understandable, Kelley's misinterpretation.

After exposing Kant's second sense of object, he goes on to distinguish between "object of intuition" and "cause of intuition," and it is the latter that has no tinge of the subjective. If by "object" Kelley means "object of intuition," (and it is clear that even if he doesn't he should) then a tinge of subjectivity follows. But even granting this usage of object, he still has a long way to go before demonstrating that, for Kant, we *create* the object of intuition. We contribute something to the *object* of intuition, but we are totally metaphysically passive vis-a-vis the *cause* of intuition. When Kant is being precise about this latter meaning of object, it is normally in sentences where he talks about us being *affected* by the object. For example, in the second sentence of the Introduction to the *Critique*, he writes "For how should our faculty of knowledge be awakened into action did not objects affecting our senses partly of themselves produce representations . . ." Likewise on the first page of the Transcendental Aesthetic he tells us that intuition takes place only "insofar as the mind is affected in a certain way" (A19-B33).[22] Kant even admits that "with long practice of attention" we may "become skilled in separating" any addition we make to what is given by extramental reality! (B2). Hardly the kind of admission that a primacy of consciousness philosopher should make. Finally, consider A19-B34 where he tells us that intuition can take place only "insofar as the mind is affected in a certain way."

Of course the above depends a lot on Kemp Smith. Let's consider Paton, who finds four usages of "object" in Kant.

> It is used for the thing as it is in itself, [this corresponds to Kemp Smith's second usage] and for the thing as it appears to us; or, in more technical language, it is used for the thing-in-itself and for the phenomenal object. Furthermore the phenomenal object is itself composed of a matter given to sense [this seems to be Kemp Smith's *Inhalt* usage] and a form imposed by thought; and each of these is called by Kant the object, the former the indeterminate object, or the object as appearance, the latter the object in general. Hence, he is capable of saying that the [1] object is not known, and that the [2] object must be known; and again that the [3] object is given to us apart from thought, and that there is no [4] object apart from thought.[23] (Numbers in brackets added.)

Now obviously there are senses of "object" suitable to Kelley's purpose in this paragraph. He uses sense [4] to establish Kant as an idealist - remember, the television screen is all; and sense [1] to establish that we can't know the object. "We can really know only our own manner of cognition" (ES, 22).

But what a different Kant emerges from an emphasis of [2] and [3]. Then we find him saying that even though objects are given to, and not created by us, we can, nevertheless, know them. Consider the following form A277=B333:

> For we can understand only that which brings with it, in intuition, something corresponding to our words. If by the complaints - *that we have no insight whatsoever into the inner (nature) of things* - it be meant that we cannot conceive by pure understanding what the things which appear to us may be in themselves, they are entirely illegitimate and unreasonable. For what is demanded is that we should be able to know things, and therefore to intuit them, without senses, and therefore that we should have a faculty of knowledge altogether different from the human . . . Through observation and analysis of appearances we penetrate to nature's inner recesses, and no one can say how far this knowledge may in time extend.

All human knowledge originates when the object (here in the sense of an independent extramental existent) affects the senses and gives rise to an appearance, and by patient "observation and analysis" we can know the "inner recesses" of nature. In fact, the only questions we shall never be able to answer are those that go "beyond nature" (A278=B334). But since, for Kelley, there is no "beyond" beyond nature, this is hardly a nasty consequence.

In other and more poetic words, Kant's words, the "light dove" is wrong:

> The light dove, cleaving the air in her free flight, and feeling its resistance, might imagine that this flight would be still easier in empty space. It was thus that Plato left the world of the senses, as setting too narrow limits to the understanding, and ventured out beyond it on the wings of the ideas, in the empty space of the pure understanding. He did not observe that with all his efforts he made no advance - meeting no resistance that might, as it were, serve as a support upon which he could take a stand, to which he could apply his powers, and so set his understanding in motion. (A5=B8)

The error of the light dove is to mistake that which makes flight possible - the resistance of the air - as a hindrance to flight. It is to mistake the enabling condition for flight as a disabling condition, and thus to hold that the removal of the air's resistance would liberate the power of flight, allowing the dove to soar even higher. In fact, however, such liberation would make flight impossible. It would be like liberating a goldfish by smashing its bowl. In the same way, the severing of the intellect from its dependence upon the sensible conditions of knowledge would not liberate its powers, but destroy them.

Both Kemp Smith and Paton, or at least what I have chosen to emphasize in my reading of those two commentators, make Kant sound like Kelley's kind of realist. A realist who would eschew all talk of finite knowers creating the (ultimate) contents of their own consciousness.

But if what I have said about Kant is near the mark, we might ask: Where did Kelley get this idea - i.e. the idea that, for Kant, consciousness creates *ex nihilio* its own objects?

Let us take a look at Kelley's text, especially the first chapter (and Preface) of ES where he tells us that his "defense of the primacy of existence will take Kant as its major foil," (ES, 27) and see where he goes wrong. The first question I propose to ask may seem, if not insignificant, at least irrelevant. And that question is, why does Kelley seem to prefer radio over television? In the Preface (and haven't we, since Hegel wrote his famous Preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, learned to worry about what goes on in this dangerous supplement[24]) Kelley waxes enthusiastic about how we humans are "high-fidelity receivers of astonishing range" and compares us to "radios . . . tuned to a portion of the energy that eddies around us." But by the time we get to page 7, the first page of chapter one, where he ranks realism, representationalism and idealism in order of descending correctness, representationalism is portrayed, metaphorically, as regarding the senses as television camera while idealism (hereafter the villain of the book) maintains that "the television screen is all" - and television (camera or screen) is *bad*. If one likens realism to radio, we then have a choice between radio, television cameras, or the television screen, and Kelley would have us choose the first, whereas he finds Kant and other idealists opting for the television screen.[25]

But isn't Kelley's choice of these metaphors rather harmless - harmless in such a way as to make my citing them at all seem rather capricious? What I find interesting is not so much the choices made, but the characterization he gives of them. As radios, we are wonderfully sensitive and complex (ES, 1) whereas, as television cameras, we are "subject to all the distortions that medium is prey to" (ES, 7). No proof is offered to show that radios are not subject to a similar distorting effect. I think one reason that the proof wasn't felt needed was a shift of metaphor to describe the realist position. On 7 our senses are no longer described as radios "bathed in streams of physical energy" but as "open windows." Open windows don't have wires and tubes and transistors to "distort" reality (this is almost a mediumless medium, which seems to be a version of the diaphanous model that Kelley wants to reject) - reality simply pops in through a window that just happens to be open, thus obviating the need for Windex to clean the glass and cut down on *distortion* caused by dirt, scum and bugs.

But what is accomplished by these four metaphors (and the switch from "radios" to "open windows")? One result is that the reader is being set up rhetorically for the logic to follow. That is the most benign possibility I can think of. Kelley, in cashing these metaphors out, will cash them in.

To see if this is so, let us turn to a case where his poetry turns to prose - his rhetoric to logic.[26] On 7 he uses the adverb "directly" three times (and I include the adjectivial form "direct" in this number). Does he manage to use it univocally? Let us see. When describing realism in the first paragraph, he writes that it (A) "holds that we directly perceive physical objects existing independently of the mind . . . " In the very next sentence, when describing representationalism, he tells us that this theory of perception (B) "denies that we can perceive this world directly : . . " And in the second paragraph, he tells us that he will be arguing for a theory in which perception is (C) "the direct awareness of objects in the physical world." He identifies his position as realism (First sentence, second paragraph).

I maintain that there is an equivocation in Kelley's use of "directly." Read univocally he seems to be saying "realism holds and representationalism denies that we directly perceive reality - and I'm on the side of the realists."[27] But the traditional realist meant by "directly" something different from an antithetical to Kelley's meaning. And the traditional representationalist meant by "indirectly" something similar and congenial to Kelley's meaning. By "directly," the traditional realist meant, at least in part,[28] an awareness that was diaphanous - a perception without the means of perception. Since Kelley will argue at length against any form of the diaphanous model, he can't agree with the traditional realists that we directly perceive reality.

As for the representationalists, when they use "directly" they also mean diaphanous perception and they deny it - they are aware that perception requires some "means" (to which Kelley agrees) and hence they conclude that perception must be indirect. So far so good. But when Kelley uses "direct" for the third time on 7, he shifts its meaning from "diaphanous" to "preconceptual." That he doesn't want to accept the "directly" = "diaphanous" equation should be obvious to anyone familiar with his arguments against the diaphanous model in Part I of ES. That perception for him is preconceptual is explicitly stated on 3 where he writes "perception is a preconceptual mode of *direct* awareness of physical objects" (emphasis mine). But note the problem with "direct" here. How shall we interpret its meaning? Given the thrust of Part I, it can't mean "diaphanous," and "preconceptual" is pleonastic - the sentence would mean that "perception is a preconceptual mode of preconceptual awareness of physical objects." Hope lies, no doubt, in exploring the umbra of "direct" as used by Kelley. It means more than "preconceptual." It also means an automatic (hence non-inferential) integrative process (ES, 3) providing access to physical objects. But all this business about automatic integrative process would destroy the diaphanousness that the traditional realist identifies with consciousness. So when Kelley says he sides with the realist in advocating the direct perception of physical objects he is guilty of an equivocation.

His position is really an amalgam of both realism and representationalism. From the former he takes the claim that we're aware of physical objects in the world (as opposed to "ideas" in our heads) and from the latter the claim that we have to access these items by some means (i.e. that consciousness has an identity). But, and this is a big but, from the former he rejects the claim that we're aware of physical objects diaphanously and from the latter he rejects the notion that we're directly aware only of ideas in our minds.

But then why call yourself a realist? Kelley certainly shares the realist's metaphysic. His main objection is to its metaphysic of perception, i.e. the view that man is the kind of being that perceives things diaphanously. The representationalist, despite his recognition that consciousness has an identity, is a villian because the position is a slope slipping into the dank march of idealism. With idealism, one no longer has an independent reality to account for the origins of our perceptions - hence "creation" is necessary. Enter Kant. But we have seen that Kant explicitly denies "creation" in any interesting sense to all finite knowers. This means that he is not an idealist in the "television screen is all" sense.

But surely he is an idealist in some sense. But here we must be careful. Any man who wrote *seven* different refutations of idealism[29] was a man trying to cover his aspirations.

He tells us in many places what kind of idealist he is and what kind he is not. Beginning with the latter we find Kant denying that he is either a genuine (or dogmatic or mystical) idealist, a position he identifies with the Eleatics and Berkeley[30] (and the position most near to Kelley's "television screen is all"), or a skeptical (or problematical) idealist like Descartes.[31] In the same second appendix to the *Prolegomena* just referred to, Kant terms his idealism "transcendental" or "formal" or "critical." And he tells us that his (supply your own adjective) idealism "does not by a long way constitute the soul of the system."[32] Kant admits that his usage is *directly contrary* to its usual usage, but he could come up with no better name. Moreover, Kant not only describes his position as transcendental idealism, but as *empirical realism* as well. The plot thickens. But enough said about Kant's "idealism." What is important for our purposes is to note that Kant's brand of idealism is *not* the "television screen is all" variety. Therefore, and for what it is worth, Kant cannot serve as the foil to Kelley's realist theory of perception.

Notes

1. Although I will be taking ES to task in most of what follows, I want to go on record as one who regards it as the book on epistemology that Rand promised but never wrote. I can't pay it a higher compliment.

2. Harry Binswanger, ed. *The Ayn Rand Lexicon: Objectivism from A-Z* (New York: New American Library, 1986), 235. This sentence originally appeared in *The Objectivist* 10 (September 1971), 4.

3. A habit from her earliest philosophical writings, cf. *The Objectivist Forum* 4 (August 1983), 1.

4. Ayn Rand, *For the New Intellectual* (New York: New American Library,1961), 32.

5. From IOE, 109.

6. I don't know if this is true of sleep.

7. Ayn Rand, *Philosophy: Who Needs It* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1982), 31 (paperback edition, 25).

8. Whether Kant has a system is something I have been led to question by Professor Ramirez of Duquesne University. He claims that Kant, along with only two other thinkers - Plato and Augustine - were seminal rather than systematic thinkers. That is, rather than having a vision of the truth early on and spending a lifetime developing the details of that vision, seminal thinkers spend a lifetime constantly rethinking their (non) positions and coming up with seminal ideas that others may or may not develop. But nothing hangs on this point for our purposes and hence its regulation to this endnote.

9. "For as he does not as it were create (*schafft*) himself, and does not come by the conception of himself a priori but empirically, it naturally follows that he can obtain his knowledge even of himself only by the inner sense . . . " *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals*, T.K. Abbot, trans. (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1952), 282.

10. Ayn Rand, *Atlas Shrugged* (New York: Random House, 1957), 1016 (paperback edition, 942). This definition has a history. The inclusion of "perception" as part of the differentia continued until July 17, 1962 when, in a newspaper column Rand wrote for the Los Angeles Times, it was unceremoniously dropped. This column has been reprinted in *The Objectivist Newsletter* 1 (Aug. 1962). (Occasionally the words "evidence of reality" were substituted for "materials" - cf. *The Objectivist Newsletter* 1 [Jan. 1962], 3.) In the *The Ayn Rand Lexicon*, Binswanger gives the shorter definition also, and cites the essay "The Objectivist Ethics" in *The Virtue of Selfishness* as his source. This is not quite correct. The earlier versions (I have the fifth printing) contain "perceives" while the later ones (of which I have the 29th printing) do not. The earliest copyright on the hardcover edition of *The Virtue of Selfishness* is 1964 and contains "perceives" in the reprint of "The Objectivist Ethics." Since no announcement was made, one can only guess why the differentia was

changed. Perhaps it was realized that since reason is volitional and perception is not, it would be inappropriate to have "perceives" as part of the differentia.

11. It is possible, however, to read Rand as closer to the rationalist thinkers than to Kant. What I mean is that one can see her endorsing a continuum view of sensation-perception-conception. On such a reading, percepts are integrated sensations and concepts are integrated percepts. For Plato, sense and reason are distinct, at least as concerns their objects, sense being concerned with the realm of becoming and reason the realm of being. Yet a closer reading of the divided line passage reveals that the various "sections" of the line differ in degree (rather than in kind) of clarity (*Republic*, 509d). If this reading of the line does not give the death blow to the idea of Plato as some kind of two worlds metaphysician, then a close reading of the *Philebus* would. Such a reading is provided by Kenneth M. Sayre in his *Plato's Late Ontology: A Riddle Resolved* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983) which makes the *Philebus* read as if it were written by Aristotle! To pursue this would take us too far afield. Kant, to get back to him, does suggest the possibility that sense and reason have a common root.

12. *Ethics*, Part II, Prop. 29, Schol., many editions. See Leibniz where every substance (monad) knows the universe in varying degree of confusion - not a difference in kind, but rather one of degree. See L. Couturat, *Opuscules* (Paris: Felix Alcan, 1903), 10. I owe this citation to Nicholas Rescher's *The Philosophy of Leibniz* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1967), 61. For a somewhat different view of the distinction, the interested reader is directed to Mortimer Adler's "The Intellect and the Senses" in *Ten Philosophical Mistakes* (New York: Macmillan, 1985). Adler does however, agree that the distinction is the correct move and that those who deny it are wrong.

13. David Kelley, *The Art of Reasoning* (New York: Norton , 1988), 12.

14. Heinz Heimsoeth, "Metaphysical Motives in the Development of Critical Idealism" in *Kant: Disputed Questions*, (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1967), 158-199.

15. Heimsoeth probably has in mind, though he doesn't say, passage like the one to be found in *De Trinitate*, XV, 13, where Augustine writes "Not because they are, does God know all creatures spiritual and temporal, but because He knows them, therefore they are." (In an interesting quotation from *The City of God* [not mentioned by Heimsoeth] we find the Saint on *both* sides of the primacy of consciousness vs. the primacy of existence question. The last sentence of XI, 10, says ."... this world could not be known to us unless it existed, but could not have existed unless it had been known by God.") I think Heimsoeth is wrong to restrict this distinction to Augustine and the Augustinians. Thomas Aquinas has written extensively on the same subject matter and arrives at the same conclusion. The most pertinent quotation can be found at *Summa Theologiae*, I, Q14, A9 where he writes "The knowledge of God is the cause of things. For the knowledge of God is to all creatures what the knowledge of the artificer is to things made by his art." See next note for the root of this Thomistic notion in Aristotle.

16. Who knows Galt's motor better than Galt, the man who made it? Cf. Aristotle when in *Metaphysics*, Delta 2, 1013a24-35 he uses the image of the maker to describe his four causes. Wilfred Sellars sees this image as the "root metaphor" of the Aristotelian system.

See his "Aristotle's Metaphysics: An Interpretation" in *Philosophical Perspectives* (Springfield: Thomas, 1959), 77. That the maker is the best knower is contested, however, by Vladimir Horowitz who claimed to know the "Moonlight Sonata" better than Beethoven. In a TV interview he pointed out that Beethoven bothered little with his sonatas after he composed them whereas he, Horowitz, had played and thought about this work for over 40 years and in that sense knew it far better than the Master. Kemp Smith says the same vis-a-vis his knowledge of Kant's philosophy!

17. Herman-J. de Vleeschauwer, *The Development of Kantian Thought*, trans. A.R.C. Duncan (London: Nelson, 1962), 59. The mathematical sense of "create" will be examined below.

18. See B72. Man is "dependent on its existence as well as in its intution, and which through that intuition determines its existence solely in relation to given objects."

19. " . . . one cannot assume human reason to be of one kind with the divine reason, distinct from it only be limitation, that is, in degree - that human reason, unlike the divine, must be regarded as a faculty only of *thinking*, not of intuiting; that is thoroughly dependent on an entirely different faculty (or receptivity) for its intuitions, or better, for the material out of which it brings forth knowledge . . . " (Brief 362: An Marcus Herz. 26. Mai 1789, XI, 54) quoted in John Sallis, *The Gathering of Reason* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1980), 183, n16. Cf. *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals*, p.282.

20. Martin Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, trans. James S. Churchill (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962), 28. Editor's note: Since this essay was written there has appeared a new and expanded edition of *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, 4th edition, revised and enlarged, trans. Richard Taft (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 15.

21. N. Kemp Smith, *A Commentary to Kant's "Critique of Pure Reason"*, 2nd edition, revised and enlarged (New York: Humanities Press, 1962), 79.

22. This word choice goes back to the *Dissertation* (Westport: Hyperion, 1979), 44: "various things which affect the sense," "objects . . . strike the senses" and "various things in the object which affect the senses," etc.

23. H.J. Paton, *Kant's Metaphysics of Experience*, 2 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1956), vol. 1, 51.

24. The reader who suspects an allusion to Derrida and Rousseau is correct. Cf. Derrida's *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakrovorty Spivak (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), part II, ch. 2, which bears as its title three words taken from Rousseau's *Confessions*, viz., ". . . that dangerous supplement . . . " In Rousseau it means both writing and, as Philip Roth might put it, "whacking off." In Derrida hand(s) (no pun intended) the meaning is of a supplement that subverts what it was intended to supplement, as well as that which *defers* access to what it purports to provide access to.

25. Since Kelley will argue in Part I of ES for a theory of perception as a "preconceptual mode of direct awareness of physical objects" I must confess I find the images he uses rather confusing - actually I know so little of the "innards" of radio and television that if Kelley had reversed the metaphors I still would have been confused.

26. Even here one has to be careful. For example, the same English word, "revelation," is used by Kelley in opposite senses and with contrary emotional designs. On 31 he uses it to describe, positively, his "direct" perception of his typewriter, desk, etc. Whereas on 37, he uses "revelation" to describe the diaphanous first person account of perception. In fact, it is in that very paragraph that he quotes Moore's use of "diaphanous" for the first time.

27. "The position I defend is a type of realism. I argue that in perception we are directly aware of physical objects and their properties, and that perceptual judgments about these objects and properties can be based directly on perception, without the need for any inference" (ES, 2).

28. This caveat is necessary because there is much more to the concept "directly" than its diaphanousness.

29. For details on these seven see the *Commentary* of Kemp Smith, 298ff.

30. *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics That Can Qualify as a Science*, 2nd appendix, any edition, Cf. "Refutation of Idealism" B274. Of especial interest is n49 where Kant explicitly connects genuine with mystical idealism and states in no uncertain terms that he is in no way a mystic and that his idealism is "solely designed for the purpose of comprehending the possibility of our *a priori* cognition of objects of experience . . . "

31. *Ibid.*

32. *Ibid.*

Response to Seddon

David Kelley, *Institute for Objectivist Studies*

Fred Seddon's paper seems carefully crafted to miss the essential point of my book - and, more importantly, of the Objectivist epistemology. I think the errors in his analysis can be reduced to three.

1) The diaphanous model of awareness is not, as he represents it, another name for naive realism. The diaphanous model is the view that direct awareness must be passive and transparent, a revelation of its object in which there is no possible distinction between the way the object is and the way it appears. Naive realists hold that the relationship between a perceiver and an external object fits this description. Everyone else realizes that it does not. But most theorists retain the diaphanous model as an implicit definition of direct awareness, and so deny that the perception of external objects is direct. The diaphanous model is thus not a theory of perception per se; it is a basic assumption that most theorists accept as a constraint on any possible theory. Rand's great innovation was to reject this constraint.

She did so because she rejected an even deeper assumption that lies behind the diaphanous model, the assumption that if consciousness has an identity of its own, operating in specific ways dictated by its nature, then it cannot grasp the identities of things external to it. This is the assumption which, I argue in *Evidence of the Senses*, Kant first made explicit in full generality. I believe this is why Rand said that her philosophy was the opposite of Kant's on every fundamental issue. Kant, like Aristotle, accepted the assumption I have just stated. As a realist, however, Aristotle accepted the primacy of existence, which is the single most important issue in epistemology; Kant did not. So even though Kant recognized that every faculty of awareness does have an identity, he and not Aristotle is Rand's polar opposite. To put it differently, the key claim is not the categorical proposition that consciousness has an identity, but the hypothetical proposition that if it does it cannot grasp the identities of external things. (See *Evidence of the Senses*, 39.) It is because Kant accepted this hypothetical claim explicitly, and drew the anti-realist consequence, that he is the perfect foil to the Objectivist approach.

2) I am well aware, and I stated in my book, that Kant believed in objects existing independently of consciousness. That is why I never refer to him as a metaphysical idealist like Hegel or Bradley. But he was an *epistemological* idealist, because of his view about the objects of cognition. The term "object" in epistemology is a correlative of "subject." It means: that which a cognitive subject perceives, knows, is aware of, describes, refers to, etc. So the key epistemological question to ask about Kant is: Does he believe that the objects of cognition exist independently of the subject? Or conversely: Does he believe that things existing independently of the subject can become objects of its cognition? Although Kant waffles on the issue, it seems to me his general answer is clear. He says repeatedly that of things as they are in themselves we know nothing. The objects of knowledge are all *phenomena*: appearances constituted by the operation of our faculties.

Kant's writing is murky enough that there are legitimate debates about what he meant. In particular, there is an alternative interpretation according to which Kant was merely a kind of critical realist, holding that noumena and phenomena are the same things under different aspects; the things we perceive are independent of us, but we perceive them only as they appear to us, non-diaphanously. I don't think this interpretation is supported by the text, although the text does not unambiguously rule it out. But these debates are not relevant here, because as far as I can see Seddon does not invoke this interpretation.

My understanding of Kant is completely in agreement with the summary formulation which Seddon quotes approvingly from H.J. Paton (Seddon, 91). Sometimes, (1) Kant used the term "object" to refer to things in themselves, which exist independently and operate on us in some quasi-causal sense, but whose nature is completely unknown to us. More often, 2) "object" refers to phenomena, indicating that phenomena are objects of cognition (and so must be known). Kant drew a further distinction between the faculty of sense (receptivity) and the faculty of intellect (spontaneity). Neither one gives us access to things in themselves, but they play different roles in constituting the objects of knowledge. Sometimes 3) Kant writes as if phenomenal objects can be grasped at the sensory level, prior to thought - i.e. prior to the categories imposed on them by the intellect. Kant's fully developed view, however, seems to be that 4) we don't really have an object of knowledge until both sense and intellect have worked their constitutive magic on it, so that there are no objects apart from thought.

In describing Kant as an epistemological idealist, I do not rely on point (4), as Seddon alleges. I relied on point (2). What makes Kant an idealist is the view that things constituted by our own faculties are the objects of awareness and standards of truth and objectivity. The distinction between sense and intellect - and thus between what can and cannot be known apart from thought - is simply a further division of labor in the way subjects constitute objects. Most of what Seddon says about Kant's insistence that we can know objects is irrelevant; it rests on an equivocation between things in themselves, which do exist independently and are not created by us, and phenomena, which can be known but are not independent. An especially gross example is his citation of the passage at A277=B333. Kant is concerned in this passage with the relation between sense and intellect. He is saying that pure intellect cannot give us knowledge of nature, whereas sense and intellect together can give us ever-increasing knowledge of nature. The term "nature" here refers, as it does elsewhere in Kant's writing, to the realm of appearances, not to things in themselves. Indeed, just prior to the passage Seddon quotes, Kant says "What the things in themselves may be I do not know, nor do I need to know, since a thing can never come before me except in appearance"(A276-B332; Kemp Smith translation).

3) Despite Seddon's complaints about my use of the term "direct awareness," I use the term consistently in the passages he cites and throughout the book. "Direct" means: without conceptual processing, including inference and the special forms of automatic inference involved in taking one thing as a symbol, sign, or representation of another thing. All realists in perceptual theory hold that we perceive physical objects directly in this sense. Some realists also hold that we perceive such objects diaphanously. Since I take great pains in *Evidence* to separate these two issues, I certainly *can*, despite Seddon's

claim (Seddon, 94), "agree with the traditional realists that we directly perceive reality" even as I disagree with them about whether perception is diaphanous.

Nor was I switching my meaning when I said that "perception is a preconceptual mode of direct awareness of physical objects." As Seddon notes, if "direct" means preconceptual (which it doesn't exactly, but that's close enough), then the sentence is repetitive. Well, yes. Repetition is a device writers sometimes use for emphasis.

Nor is representationalism simply the denial that perception is diaphanous. It is the view that we are directly aware only of internal sense contents, from which we must infer external objects. (And this view is adopted because the representationalist shares with the traditional realist the assumption that direct awareness must be diaphanous. Every argument for representationalism reduces in one way or another to the core argument: Direct awareness is diaphanous; the perception of physical objects is not diaphanous; therefore perception is not direct.) So my position is not "an amalgam of both realism and representationalism," as Seddon says. It is a new position based on rejecting the model of direct awareness that representationalists share with traditional realists.

A 231 Word Refutation of Churchland's "Vision"

Laurie Calhoun

P. Churchland has claimed that the human mind exhibits a sort of plasticity which makes it possible for us radically to refigure our conceptual frameworks. However, the manifesto to the effect that we should refigure our concepts in terms of the constructs of neuroscience is undermined by Churchland's claiming (incoherently) both that our current world view is radically false and misguided and that we should adopt the framework of neuroscience. Obviously if it is true that our current world view is false and misguided, then our normative theories, there subsumed, are too.

The blunder is irreparable, since even if we believed that, among our entire set of theories, only one (viz. the normative theory according to which we should switch our conceptual framework to that of neuroscience) was not false, that very belief would still be undermined by the first claim. Either every newly appended belief, purportedly true, would be undermined similarly, or a substantive set of our original beliefs would be recovered through the process of securing the needed vindication of our normative theory. So the manifesto, assuming its motivating premise, can be no more than an article of faith, *à la tertullienne*. And without that premise (that our current world view is radically false and misguided) the proposed course of action would be irrational, enjoining us to abandon a more or less correct theory.

The Non-Sequitur of Value-Relativism: A Critique of John Gray's "Post-Liberalism"

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In recent years, John Gray has transformed himself from a liberal theorist to a critic of liberal theory. Unlike most critics of liberal theory, however, Gray criticizes it not because it is *liberal*, but because it is *theory*. In fact, Gray is a strong defender of liberal society and practices, but his defense is self-consciously historicist rather than theoretical. The main statement of Gray's critique of liberal theory and defense of liberal practices is his essay "What is Dead and What is Living in Liberalism."[2] What follows is primarily an exposition and critique of this article's argument.

Gray's essay has two purposes. First, he wishes to argue that "liberalism, as a political philosophy, is . . . dead" (284). What Gray calls "liberalism as a political philosophy," he also calls "doctrinal" liberalism, "fundamentalist" liberalism, and "foundationalist" liberalism. This phenomenon is characterized by the ideas of universalism, individualism, egalitarianism, and meliorism. Doctrinal liberalism is the view that individual rights and human equality are universally valid moral principles, which serve as the standard for legitimating all political regimes, regardless of time, place, or cultural differences. Doctrinal liberalism, in short, is the view that liberalism is a rationally defensible way of life for all human beings and the yardstick for historical progress.

Gray's second purpose is to argue that what is living in liberalism is modern "civil society," a form of life characterized by individualism, egalitarianism, pluralism, tolerance, meliorism, and even a form of universalism. Now, at first glance, it seems that Gray has simply taken "liberal ideology" and renamed it "civil society," but kept all of its central features intact. The difference, however, is that doctrinal liberalism has universalistic aspirations, whereas Gray's concept of "civil society" is self-consciously historicist. Civil society is not a set of universally valid principles, but rather a set of concrete institutions and practices that evolved in the West and now embrace the globe. Gray's concern, then, is to defend the concrete institutions and practices of liberal civil society while deflating the universalistic aspirations of liberal ideology.

Gray claims that doctrinal liberalism is dead because it cannot survive the test of Isaiah Berlin's radical value-pluralism. Berlin's value-pluralism plays a dual role in Gray's argument. The first role is deconstructive. Value-pluralism is used to destroy doctrinal liberalism. The second role is constructive. It is used to offer a positive argument for historicized liberalism. For Gray, the way up and the way down are the same. I shall deal with each in turn.

Gray begins his critique of liberalism with an analogy which is offered to illustrate value-incommensurability.

> Consider the drama of Sophocles and of Shakespeare . . . In what sense are the plays of Shakespeare, say, better or worse than those of Sophocles or Racine? It is true that these art object belong to the same recognizable genre - that of drama; yet it seems thoroughly absurd to try to rank them on any single scale of excellence (289).

> The theme of incommensurability among artistic goods affirms...that there is no one form of great art that is best, since there is no overarching standard whereby such a judgment could be made. (*Ibid*)

Gray claims that this incommensurability is grounded in the fact that "the arts are not in the business of representation and of measuring, with ever greater accuracy, a wholly independent subject matter." The arts are, instead, "historic creations of a highly inventive species, embedded in and emerging from specific forms of social life..." Gray then draws his conclusion: "The analogy in ethics and politics should be plain" (290). That is: ethical and political values, like aesthetic values, are "not in the business of representation and of measuring, with ever greater accuracy, a wholly independent subject matter." Ethical and political values, therefore, are not commensurable, just as the plays of Shakespeare and Sophocles are not commensurable. Just as there is no single standard to which we can refer to rank Shakespeare over Sophocles, there is no single standard - eg. a "Platonic" Form of the Good or the Aristotelian "man's life *qua* man" - to which we can refer to rank ethical and political values.

Furthermore, the plurality of values is not just incommensurable, it is irreducible. Although Gray does grant that man's generic features limit the range of possible moral and political values, within these bounds there is no single touchstone for determining whether an ethical or political value is genuine or not, just as there is no single touchstone to which we can refer to determine whether or not a particular work is true art or not.

Now, this analogical argument for value-pluralism and incommensurability simply does not follow. Even if one grants that art is not in the business of representing reality and, therefore, cannot be measured by this criterion, "the analogy in ethics and politics" is not as "plain" as Gray thinks it is. Gray, for instance, simply begs the question against those Aristotelian naturalists who think that there is an immutable human nature which serves as the standard of the good, in virtue of which we can rank different values, virtues, and forms of life, ruling some of them out altogether. On this theory, ethical and political theory *is* in the business of representing reality - the reality of the human good. It should, furthermore, be noted that there is no necessary contradiction between "representing" reality and being "historic creations of a highly inventive species, embedded in and emerging from specific forms of social life..." For instance, such eminent philosophers as Heidegger, Gadamer, and MacIntyre stress the historical embeddedness and tradition-ladenness of knowledge, but they do not regard historicity as primarily an *impediment* to knowing reality, but, primarily, as a *means* of knowing it.

Liberal meliorism - the Whiggish view of history that ranks societies as they approach the liberal order - is the first casualty of value-pluralism (299). If Gray is right, then it makes no more sense to claim that the transformation from monarchy to democratic libralism represents progress than it would to claim that there has been progress from Sophocles to Shakespeare.

Gray then turns his attention to liberal universalism and egalitarianism (299-306). If the irreducible and incommensurable plurality of values and ways of life includes forms of life which require hierarchy and domination, then liberal egalitarianism cannot claim universal validity. Liberal egalitarianism is at best a local, Western phenomenon, not a universal value.

Liberal individualism is the view that only individuals and their actions have intrinsic value; all other values are derivative of individual values. Gray argues, however, that the plurality of values includes forms of life that are anti-individualist. Given this, individualism is not a universal value. Rather, individualism is but a local, Western phenomenon; individualism is, in short, the product of a particular - and individualist - form of life. But if individualism is itself a form of life, then the value of the individual is not intrinsic after all. Rather, it is conferred by the individualist form of life. What is of ultimate value, then, are forms of life - even when, paradoxically, these are individualistic.

Having used Berlin's value-pluralism to tear down doctrinal liberalism, Gray uses it to build up a self-consciously historicist liberalism. The core of this historicized liberalism is the idea of "civil society," a concept derived in part from Hegel's notion of civil society and in part from Oakeshott's notion of civil association. Gray holds that civil societies are "tolerant of the diversity of views, religious and political." In them, "the state does not seek to impose on all any comprehensive doctrine," thereby allowing "diverse, incompatible and perhaps incommensurable conceptions of the world and the good [to] coexist in peaceful *modus vivendi*" (314). Gray adds that "a second feature of civil society is that . . . both government and its subjects are restrained in their conduct by *a rule of law*" (315). A third characteristic of civil society is "the institution of private or several property" (315). Gray offers an Hobbesian argument for private property, claiming that, "given pervasive value-pluralism" a society "is most likely to enjoy civil peace" if it allows more individual than collective decision-making through the institution of private property (315). Gray correctly observes that civil society, though potentially global in extent, is compatible with many different forms of government. He also observes correctly that civil society cannot be identified simply with the capitalist marketplace. Civil society in the Hegelian sense, at least, (and possibly in Gray's sense) embraces labor unions, cooperatives, civic organizations, hospitals, libraries, foundations, churches, think-tanks, charities, and all other voluntary, spontaneously-ordered, non-governmental institutions.

Gray then turns to re-situating the four essential features of liberalism within civil society. Modern civil society is individualist - not because individualism is a universally valid form of life, but because it is a valid aspect of "our" form of life. Modern civil society is egalitarian insofar as it presupposes the rule of law, which presupposes equality before the law. Modern civil society is meliorist - not because it is the universal standard for all other forms of life, but because its own self-understanding serves as the standard by

reference to which it seeks constantly to improve itself through immanent criticism and reform. Modern civil society is universalist because civil society itself is universalist; civil association, unlike national sovereignty, is not confined by lines drawn upon the map; the free association of individuals and the free exchange of goods and ideas is spontaneously self-globalizing - unless suppressed or distorted by political intervention.

For Gray, modern civil society is also *libertarian*. Liberty is "the animating value of civil society, not in virtue of its foundational place in any liberal doctrine, but as a characterization of a form of life that can be realized fully only in a society constituted by autonomous institutions and activities" (322). The liberty in question is *negative liberty*: "a condition, status or sphere of action protected from interference or coercion" (322). Negative liberty is important because *autonomy* is important. In a section entitled "From Radical Value-Pluralism to Liberalism via Autonomy," Gray restates Berlin's case for liberalism, supplementing it with Joseph Raz's Berlin-influenced writings on autonomy. In Gray's words, Berlin's argument is that

> if there is an irreducible plurality of objective values that are sometimes incommensurable, then liberty may reasonably be privileged among these values, since when they possess liberty men and women may freely choose between uncombinable ends and make their own combinations of those conflicting values among which a balance may be struck. (323)

But why, one might ask, is it a value to freely choose one's own combination of values? Gray's answer is two-pronged. First, he replies, in effect, Why not? - "since there is no one rational ordering or combination of incommensurables, no one could ever provide any *reason* for a particular ranking or combination of incommensurables" (323). Gray's second reply, derived from Raz, is that autonomous choice is a value because autonomy itself is valuable. Why? Well, because "autonomy is accepted by most of us a vital ingredient in the good life" (324). For Gray, autonomy is valuable simply because "we" value it - simply because "we" *think* that it is valuable. (Note how Gray's language becomes cozy and familiar here. Apparently innocent of any conscious effrontery or presumption, he speaks of what "we" value; he speaks of - and on behalf of - "our" form of life.)

I discern three main problems with Gray's value-pluralism: (1) it is hard to know what, precisely, Gray means by value-pluralism and incommensurability; (2) the most plausible construal of Gray's position makes his opponent look like a straw man; and (3) his arguments for liberty and autonomy are non-sequiturs.

1. **The Problem of Meaning.** Gray does not merely claim that there is a plurality of different values. He claims that these values are *uncombinable* and (sometimes) *incommensurable*. The two concepts are distinct but overlapping. Combinable values can be realized together. One can, for instance, be both a husband and a Rotarian. But one cannot be both a husband and a Catholic priest. Commensurable values can be ranked on the same scale, in relation to the same standard. Incommensurable values cannot. Some values can be combined and commensurated. Some values can be commensurated but not combined. Some can be combined but not commensurated. Some can neither be commensurated nor

combined. The problem though, is just what is incommensurable here? Just what is uncombinable?

Gray speaks of values. He speaks of virtues. Sometimes he speaks of virtues as generic traits of character (e.g. charity), but other times he speaks of the virtues of certain social roles (the virtues of a mother or a nun). Gray also speaks of "ways" or "forms" of life. Sometimes he refers to different cultures, while other times he refers to particular ways of life within cultures or ways of life which cut across cultures. Elsewhere, Gray speaks of conflicts within values, e.g. between positive versus negative liberty and equality of rights versus equality of condition. Gray makes the intriguingly dark, Nietzschean claim that "In this pluralist view, not only are all genuine goods not necessarily harmonious, but goods may depend for their existence upon evils, virtues on vices" (291). Finally, Gray speaks of incommensurabilities and uncombinabilities between entire conceptions of the good - a category which overlaps with the others in ways that are unclear. How *all* of these fit together is unclear.

2. **The Straw Man Problem.** Gray's account of value-pluralism is not only muddled. When one tries to unscramble it and produce concrete examples, it also looks banal, trivial, even risible. For instance, Gray announces with great gravity that the excellences of a whore and a nun cannot be combined. This is true. But so what? Who would deny it? What traditional ethical theory depends on denying this obvious truth? What liberal theory depends on its denial? I can think of none. No serious moral theorist and no serious political thinker would argue that we can be all things at all times, so it seems that the opponent that Gray and Berlin contrast themselves with is a straw man.

Given the unclarity and banality of Gray's account, it is hard to credit the revolutionary, even apocalyptic implications that he ascribes to value-pluralism. Gray claims, for instance, that "In Berlin's theorizing, the pretensions of philosophy are radically humbled" (288). Pluralism destroys philosophical foundationalism, i.e. it "radically restricts the ambitions of 'philosophy' by denying to it any prescriptive authority," leaving it to the task of "clear[ing] away the illusions that obstruct a clear vision of practice" (321). Value-pluralism, moreover, "in its deepest implication . . . destroys the very idea of perfection" (291). Pluralism "strikes a death-blow at the classical foundation of our culture, expressed not only in Plato and Aristotle, but in the Stoic idea of the *logos* and Aquinas's conception of a world order that was rational and moral in its essence . . . " (291). Pluralism, finally, "undermines a no less foundational element in our civilization . . . the notion of the *meaningfulness of human history*, conceived in terms of redemption or of improvement" (292). All this from the observation that one cannot be a nun and a whore at the same time? An instance of the Law of Excluded Middle hardly qualifies as a death-blow to the intelligible structure of the universe.

3. **The Non-Sequitur Problem.** The most serious problem with Gray's arguments for liberty and autonomy is that their conclusions simply do not follow from value-pluralism.

First, the fact that many people have different values implies nothing about the nature of values. Yes, people hold a plurality of values. Yes, these values can be uncombinable and incommensurable. But so what? This fact does not phase the value realist. All the

Platonist or Aristotelian need say is that many of the values that people hold are *wrong*. Some people value things that are not *worthy* of being valued. These values can, moreover, be rationally shown to be wrong. And their adherents can be rationally persuaded to adopt better, truer values.

Reason can, in short, be used to reduce the plurality of values in the direction of unity. That's what reason does. Reason takes a plurality of competing accounts of a single reality and weeds out the false ones. Reason ranks competing accounts of reality in terms of their coherence, their plausibility, and their conformity with experience. Gray, however, simply *assumes* that the plurality of values is "irreducible." This implies, *a fortiori*, that it is irreducible by rational criticism and discussion. It implies that there is nothing that we can say about any particular value to recommend that it be adopted to the exclusion of other, incompatible values - nothing, save our arbitrary *choice* to value it, take it or leave it. Values, in short, are personal, idiosyncratic, not publicly-justifiable.

Let us label this theory of value for handy future reference. Since Gray holds that things become valuable by being valued, and since valuing something is an act of the subject, Gray holds that value is bestowed upon things by an act of the subject. Let us call this a "subjectivist" theory of value. A closely related, though less precise term is "relativism."

Given this starting point, Gray constructs an elaborate version of what I call, following Donald N. McCloskey, the "Valley Girl" argument for liberalism. There is a plurality of different values. All values are subjective. The conclusion is that it is wrong to take one's values and "ram them down someone else's throat." Rather, one should tolerate, respect, even cultivate the plurality of subjective values. *Ergo*, liberalism.

This argument for liberalism is a non-sequitur. The premises are (1) there is a multiplicity of values, and (2) they are publicly non-justifiable. But, from these premises, it does not and cannot follow that liberal values - e.g. tolerance, persuasion, and freedom of choice - can be publicly justified. No values can be publicly justified - given the premise that no values can be publicly justified.

To underscore the non-sequitur involved, let's look at another version of the same argument:

> If relativism signifies contempt for fixed categories and men who claim to be the bearers of objective, immortal truth . . . then there is nothing more relativistic than Fascist attitudes and activity . . . From the fact that all ideologies are of equal value, that all ideologies are mere fictions, the modern relativist infers that everybody has the right to create for himself his own ideology and to attempt to enforce it with all the energy of which he is capable.[3]

Here we have Benito Mussolini arguing for fascism from the plurality of subjective values. But, of course, his argument is just as much a non-sequitur as the liberal argument, for one cannot argue that fascist values - e.g. intolerance, violence, suppression of freedom

of choice, ramming one's values down another person's throat - are publicly justified by the absence of publicly justifiable values either.[4]

To this kind of objection, Gray might reply that there is no reason not to allow people to choose their own values, "since there is no one rational ordering or combination of incommensurables, no one could ever provide any *reason* for a particular ranking or combination of incommensurables" (323). The trouble with this reply, though, is it does not follow either. Mussolini could simply retort that, in the absence of a reason for any particular ordering of values, there is no reason *not* to force a particular ordering on people.

Gray might also reply, following Raz, that the autonomous choice of values is a value because autonomy itself is valuable. And autonomy is valuable, because "autonomy is accepted by most of us a vital ingredient in the good life" (324). But, again, this amounts to saying that autonomy is valuable simply because "we" value it - simply because "we" *think* that it is valuable. But this, too, is a blatant non-sequitur. The fact that we value something tells us nothing about whether it is *worthy* of being valued.

Gray's argument for liberalism from value-pluralism is, in sum, a species of the argument from value subjectivism or relativism. It is, therefore, a non-sequitur.

4. **The Problem of Objective Values.** Now, Gray's response to this critique is that it ignores the *objectivity* of his and Berlin's value-pluralism. Like Berlin, Gray recognizes that his position looks like relativism,[5] but he denies it strenuously because the values in question are not subjective, but objective.[6] In his essay "Berlin's Agonistic Liberalism," Gray responds acidly to Leo Strauss's accusation that Berlin is a relativist:[7]

> The distinctiveness and radicalism of Berlin's species of objective pluralism are easily missed. Its distinctiveness was missed by Leo Strauss, when, with characteristic obtuseness and perversity, he condemned Berlin as a relativist for whom all values were culture-specific and, in the end, subjective. Throughout his writings, Berlin has constantly stressed that, though their embodiments in specific forms of life will vary across cultures, ultimate values are objective and universal - as are the conflicts among them. Berlin's variety of pluralism is a species of value-realism, not of skepticism or relativism. (*Post-Liberalism*, 65-66).[8]

On both Berlin's and Gray's accounts, the objection of relativism simply misses the point. I disagree. The claim that Berlin and Gray are relativists is neither perverse nor obtuse - nor false - because Berlin's conception of objective value is so weak that it cannot be distinguished from subjectivism; therefore, it *does* reduce to a form of the subjective value argument and is, therefore, a non-sequitur. I have made the case against Berlin's account of objective value at length elsewhere, therefore I shall offer only a compressed critique here.[9]

In his essay "The Pursuit of the Ideal,"[10] Berlin offers three slightly different accounts of what constitutes an objective value. First, Berlin claims that objective values are those that can be understood by more than one person, whereas subjective values cannot: "Members of one culture can, by the force of imaginative insight, understand . . . the values,

the ideals, the forms of life of another culture or society, even those remote in time or space . . . "[11] Second, Berlin claims that the multiplicity of conflicting values is constrained by human nature, which is objective:"Intercommunication between cultures in time and space is only possible because what makes men human is common to them, and acts as a bridge between them."[12] Finally, Berlin claims that objective values are ends in themselves: "There is a world of objective values. By this I mean those ends that men pursue for their own sakes, to which other things are means."[13]

But this conception of objective value is not sufficient to deflect the charge of relativism. Berlin's first claim - that objective values can be publicly understood but subjective values cannot - seems to miss the point of the objection against him. Above I claimed that Berlin and Gray are value relativists and subjectivists because they hold that the multiplicity of conflicting values is *in principle irreducible.* To claim that the multiplicity of values is irreducible *in principle* implies, *a fortiori,* that it is not reducible through rational investigation and argumentation. It means that there is nothing about any particular value that can recommend its adoption to the exclusion of another, incompatible value. This amounts to saying that all values are equally groundless. The issue, then, is not whether values can be publicly *understood,* but whether they can be publicly *justified.* Berlin is a relativist not because he claims that values are not publicly intelligible - which he does not - but because he claims that they are not publicly *justifiable.*

Berlin's first account of objective value is, then, extremely thin. It completely leaves out the *normative* aspect of the claim that a value is objective. In ordinary usage, however, there is a more robust sense of objectivity at work in the claim that a value is objective. An objective value is not one that merely offers itself for public inspection and understanding; it claims rational credence as well. On Berlin's account, however, an objective value is indistinguishable from an arbitrary preference that can be publicly inspected and understood - take it or leave it.

Berlin's second account - that the variability of conflicting values is constrained by human nature, which is objective - fails as well. Just because the variability of values is constrained by something objective does not mean that the values themselves are objective in the robust, normative sense discussed above. *Everything* that human beings do is somehow conditioned and constrained by human nature, including the varieties of torture, murder, sado-masochism, and drug addiction. But that does not mean that everything that we do has something to recommend it to rational credence.

Berlin's final account - that objective values are ends in themselves - also fails. Simply because something is pursued as an end in itself does not mean that it is objectively valuable. Cocaine addiction can be the organizing principle of a life, the end in itself towards which all other values are subordinated as means. But this hardly implies that it is an objective value in the robust sense.

In sum: Berlin's claim that the starting point of his case for liberalism is the plurality of objective, not subjective, values founders on the thinness of his conceptions of objective value. On Berlin's account, an objective value is indistinguishable from an arbitrary preference that can (1) be publicly inspected and understood, (2) be held by a human being,

and (3) serve as the central organizing principle of a life. This, however, is value subjectivism and relativism. Gray's claim that he is an objective pluralist fails, therefore, his argument from value-pluralism to liberalism founders on the non-sequitur of value-relativism.

Notes

1. The author thanks Donald W. Livingston, Tibor Machan, and Glenn A. Magee for their help with this essay. The usual disclaimer applies.

2. John Gray, *Post-Liberalism: Studies in Political Thought* (New York: Routledge, 1993), henceforth cited in the text.

3. Benito Mussolini, *Diuturna*, 374-77. Quoted in Henry B. Veatch, *Rational Man* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962), 41.

4. In arguing that Mussolini's argument is a non-sequitur, I am presupposing that Mussolini's claim of "the *right* to create for [oneself one's] own ideology and to attempt to enforce it with all the energy of which he is capable" (emph. added) is the claim that there are *positive reasons* for this course of action. If, however, one understands a "right" to do X in a more Hobbesian sense, i.e. as something that one has in the absence of compelling moral reasons not to do X, then Mussolini's argument is not a non-sequitur, for value-relativism amounts to the assertion that there are no compelling moral reasons to do - or to refrain from doing - anything; therefore, we have the "right" to do everything.

5. *Isaiah Berlin, "The Pursuit of the Ideal," in his The Crooked Timber of Humanity: Chapters in the History of Ideas*, ed. Henry Hardy (New York: Knopf, 1991).

6. *Ibid.* For a discussion of relativism and pluralism more detailed than in "The Pursuit of the Ideal," see "Alleged Relativism in Eighteenth-Century European Thought" in *The Ctooked Timber of Humanity.*

7. Leo Strauss, "Relativism," in *The Rebirth of Classical Political Rationalism: An Introduction to the Thought of Leo Strauss*, ed. Thomas L. Pangle (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989).

8. Gray's essay was originally published under the title "The Unavoidable Conflict: Isaiah Berlin's Agonistic Liberalism," *Times Literary Supplement*, July 5, 1991, 3.

9. Gregory R. Johnson and Glenn A. Magee, "Berlin on Liberalism and Objective Value," under review.

10. "The Pursuit of the Ideal," 10-11. Cf. "Alleged Relativism in Eighteenth-Century European Thought," 80-84.

11. "The Pursuit of the Ideal," 11.

12. *Ibid.*

Are Functional Accounts of Goodness Relativist?

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The short answer, which will no doubt frustrate those who read to find the short answer, is *yes* and *no*. *Yes* in respect of the fact that all agents are not the same and so what is good for (or judged good by) one agent may be different from what is good for another agent. *No* in respect of the fact that normativity, or standards which range over agents relevantly similar, is still quite present. The point of this paper will be to unpack this position.

I

I want to begin by talking about functional accounts of goodness. Credit for their origination is owed to Aristotle.[1] However, I mean less to write about Aristotle and more about functional accounts themselves. My first attempt at such an account is the following:

(A1) X is good if X is a highly functioning one of its kind.

First note that this is an empirically-grounded definition because it relies on an empirically investigatable state of an object, on what that object is - of what kind it is a member - and to what degree its functions as what it is, for determination of what that object ought to be. It is an empirical question as to whether an object is one of a kind, and to what degree that object functions as one of its kind. A good knife is a knife that functions highly as a knife: it cuts well, is sharp, is balanced, is heavy or light enough to do the job. Whatever properties there are of a knife (in general) are what grounds the goodness of any particular knife. Within the kind 'knife' there is room for gaining precision: what makes a butter knife is possession of different properties from what makes a bread knife. A bread knife should be long and have a serrated edge; a butter knife ought not. So the first order in determining the goodness of an object, as specifically as needs be, is to *define the kind* under which the object falls.

(A2) X is good if (i) X is a member of a certain kind (kind K), and (ii) X is a highly functioning one of its kind.

How is an object's kind determined? A kind is determined not because of some essence that the object has or participates in.[2] Baggage of a nonnatural or a priori-discovered sort is unnecessary. Kinds are determined empirically, in terms of common properties. We determine what a feline is on the basis of shared characteristics; we determine a species to that genus on the basis of still further shared commonalities. But how do we know which properties to pick out as *relevant*? Color is not relevant to the classification of an object as a *house* cat. If we group all yellow/orange cats together, then lions, tigers and *some* house cats would be classed together, while black, white and grey (house) cats would be classed separately. It is in determining whether a given property is *relevant*, and

in determining how to define '*relevancy*', that we leave direct and immediate empirical examination.[3]

Kinds are determined, I suggest, on just the criterion we use to determine the goodness of an object. If an object is a member of a kind, then it shares relevant objective properties with others of that kind. But then how is relevancy determined? *Relevancy is fixed on the basis of functionality.* Relevancy is, I suggest, more a matter of what an object *does*, not what an object is. A property is relevant to the classification of an object under a certain kind if (and only if) that property contributes to the functionality of that object as one of its kind.

(A3) X is good if (i) X is one of a kind K, which is to say that it possesses relevant objective properties, properties whose relevance is determined on the basis of those properties contributing to the effectiveness/functionality of that object as one of kind K, and (ii) the level of effectiveness or functionality is high relative to the other members of kind K.

Kinds are determined on grounds of possession of certain properties, and the relevancy of these properties (to that kind) is determined on grounds of functionality. Then the degree of functionality is grounds for the goodness of that object.

Functionality is determined empirically, in the practical world of means-and-ends. If I wish to know if a certain object is a knife, then I investigate its properties to determine if it has the relevant objective properties that other knives have. Color, for one, does not matter. This is because it is irrelevant, and so on the grounds that it contributes not at all to the functioning of that object as a knife, defined perhaps in terms of the function of cutting - we could be much more precise with the function of a knife if we knew what sort of knife we were talking about - and dependent on certain objective properties of the knife such as sharpness, balance, strength. If the knife fails to accomplish the goals of a knife then it is either the case that it is (i) not a good knife, or (ii) not a knife at all. This decision is made on the level of functionality it exhibits.

We need be mindful of the fact that determining the kind of a given object is a two-tiered process. An object is a member of a certain kind first because it possesses relevant objective properties in common with the others of that kind. It is a secondary matter to determine relevancy. So this is why some objects continue to share in a kind despite their immediate practical-world use. For instance, I keep a meat cleaver with my gardening supplies. I use that cleaver as a small machete when I am doing heavy gardening. Now, while that meat cleaver has never been used for cutting up meat - and it has been used several times for chopping branches - it is still a meat cleaver on the grounds that it shares in common with other meat cleavers relevant objective properties. I might take a further step in saying that while it functions adequately as a small machete, it would have originally functioned much better as a meat cleaver.[4]

But what about *functions* themselves? Are *functions*, and so ultimately kinds, determined subjectively and individually? We can here disallow moves which render the determination of a kind merely a matter of individual subjective decision. If we relativize kinds to identification by individuals only, then the work the determination of kinds is

supposed to do is lost. Certainly, we can consider or regard an object which falls under one kind as falling under another. The Venus di Milo can be used as a doorstop. A butter knife can be used as a screwdriver. And if this is so, is it the case that the butter knife then *is* a screwdriver? This may suggest that how we here and now regard an object - what we actually do use it for - is of prime importance in the establishment of that object's classification. This suggestion, though, renders redundant any work the classification would do. If kinds are fixed in this way, then they are relative to time and to the subjective phenomenon of use or labelling. No determination of kinds would endure past the last use or labelling of any object. Every time someone used an object in a way other than how it was last used, the object would cease to be a member of the first kind and take on an identity as a member of some other kind. This makes kinds, dependent on their memberships for their ontological existence and status,[5] completely unstable. Since science does indeed determine kinds, and this classification endures, it seems a shame to lose the work they do by having them determined subjectively and individually.

Certainly a butter knife can be used as a screwdriver. But the butter knife does not function *best* as a screwdriver. Its properties are clearly those of a butter knife, because they contribute to its use as a butter knife. Whether or not it is ever used or regarded as a screwdriver or awl or symphony baton is irrelevant to what objective properties it in fact possesses. And these properties objectively fix what function that object will best perform. Since the object will perform best as a butter knife - and not as a screwdriver or baton - then we class the object as a butter knife.

My last attempt at fashioning a statement of a functional account of goodness was the best one. We must be mindful of how kinds are determined, and of how use or function plays a role in that determination, in order to understand how it is that a given object can be good. An object must meet a minimal level of commonality with other objects to be classed with them. This commonality is based on having certain objective properties in common with them, and the relevancy of those properties is determined against how well those properties function in meeting the uses to which that object is put. Finally, the higher the functionality of that object (as one of its kind), the better that object is. In short, a butter knife must have the features to function as a butter knife to be a butter knife, and the higher the degree of function of that butter knife as a butter knife, the better that object is. Butter knives are not screwdrivers because they do not share in the relevant objective properties that screwdrivers possess. And this is the case no matter how much a given butter knife is used as a screwdriver.

II

'Relativism' refers to the broad position that more than a single answer to a single inquiry can be equally true, with the (trivial) addition that there is no means available to adjudicate between the two (or three or more) competing answers. Moreover, 'relativism' is always relativism to *something.* One cannot be a sibling without, at least, a brother or a sister. So 'relativism' is the position that more than a single answer to a single inquiry can be equally true, but true *relative* to some, for lack of a more modest term, paradigm. Competing answers are true relative to some person, some group, some time, some locale, some species, some theory, some paradigm. This is the nature of *hard* relativism, that

there is no single right answer, no absolutely true answer - answers (plural) are only true relative to something else.

There is another sort of relativism, though, that bears explication: "Soft relativism" or "*indexing*." People are bound to view the world out of their own eyes, both literally and metaphorically. Literally, I can view some patch of bright blue for a time and then upon switching my gaze to a patch of bright yellow, see that patch - phenomenally - as greenish. Metaphorically, I (say) see the world through the eyes of a whitish Hispanic American male who is married, fairly well educated, socio-economically middle-class, protestant, more-or-less politically liberal, with a rather strong commitment to the arts, and who has made a life within the Academy.

Now, nothing follows from the fact that I see through my own eyes that I *must* see through these eyes and these eyes only: "soft" relativism, or indexing, does not entail "hard" relativism. On the face of things, it would seem that I can identify each of the various "lenses" through which I see[6] - to perhaps push the metaphor past prudence. And in recognizing my biases, partialities, and so forth, I can take steps toward further and further impartiality. At least all of this seems theoretically possible. Whether it is *actually* possible is another question (one of *skepticism* or *fallibilism*), and not less interesting and important than the theoretical move. Though I seem to be able to recognize where I am biased, and may take pains to remove or address that bias, I am still met with the empirical difficulty which is that I may not be able to identify *all* of the biases and prejudices - all of the "lenses" - through which I in fact view the world. If I am unable to identify all the lenses, I will be unable to address them all and compensate for them.

Part of what may impede my impartiality is the range of background beliefs that I have. What may count as evidence for me will in some measure depend on the beliefs that I already have. If shown, say, some streak in a cloud chamber, I may or not count that as evidence for the presence of some subatomic particle dependent on what subatomic physical theory I hold, or what scientific-philosophical orientation I have toward theoretical entities. If I am a devout Roman Catholic, I may view some phenomenon as an appearance by the Virgin Mary. If I am not religious, I may view that phenomenon as anything but an appearance by Mary. Again and again, my background beliefs will alter what I count as evidence, and what I discard as irrelevant. Starting from my root set of beliefs, using a criterion of coherence to determine which candidate beliefs I will accept and which reject, I may end up with a set of total beliefs rather different in nature from that set belonging to one who started with only a slightly different root set. In order to count something as evidence or not, and do so impartially, I must recognize that I have the background beliefs that I have and, moreover, must question the legitimacy of *those* beliefs.

The theoretical move of saying that there are impediments to impartiality that potentially can be identified and accounted for is a necessary part of a discussion of *access to (absolute) truth. And access to truth is precisely the motivation for seeking impartiality.* If there is such a thing as absolute truth, then it would seem that the only way to access it is to view the world impartially (or exercise our rationality impartially). However, apart from the question of the existence of absolute truth (a discussion outside our present

scope), there is the looming question about whether gaining the sort of impartiality necessary for accessing truth is *actually* possible. In philosophical terms, the problem of skepticism or fallibilism must be addressed prior to an addressing of the problem of hard relativism/absolute truth. The "access" problem is more immediate and pressing than the problem of what that access is access to. This is because the object of that access is determined against the very access itself. (Recognized) absolute truth is dependent for its very content on the intersubjective agreement of rational agents. Without that agreement, truth is a concept without a content. The content is dependent on its identification. And it is identified only on the grounds that it is what *impartial* rational agents see.

It is only through a *purity of sameness* that I may end up in the position of calling any one of my beliefs impartial. If being impartial means that all those "lenses" through which I look are identified and compensated for, then the goal of seeking impartiality is sameness. It is this sameness, this uniformity in viewing the world, that is the core of the search for impartiality and ultimately the core of how we (might) identify absolute truth. Absolute truth is what we decide is the case once we *see* impartially, once the evidence of our senses and our minds is arrived at in the absence of difference with other viewers. "Lenses" are essentially differences among us as epistemic agents. So sameness in view, by recognition and compensation for differences, seems the means by which we are able to access absolute truth (if there is any absolute truth to be had).

But again, the empirical problem of whether this sameness is actually possible faces us. There are, it seems, specific properties that I possess that stand in the way of the sameness that is necessary for impartiality *that in themselves do not seem to be specifics that I necessarily wish to exclude.* For instance, suppose that I have a certain talent to see very slight variations in color, and that this talent is rather unusual. Ought I suppress this talent in order to protect the sameness that seems at the heart of impartiality? If we identify impartiality with a loss of anything that would differentiate us, one from another, then the hallmark of impartiality seems to be sameness. But if I have unique talents and abilities, it would seem a shame to need to suppress them or deny them or order to claim greater impartiality.

Candidate beliefs will depend for their acceptance on my indexing. If I see the patch as greenish, if I see the presence of an electron or an appearance of the Virgin Mary, if I see one patch of orange as slightly different from another, if I can add numbers faster than you, or have a more assertive personality, it is unclear that (1) these can ever be completely identified and so completely attended to (in pursuit of impartiality), and (2) that it is necessarily a good thing to reach for the denial or suppression of unique abilities and talents. Instead of reaching for sameness, perhaps we ought to be content to be different. I certainly do not mean to be arguing for ignorance of differences. I support wholeheartedly being mindful of such differences. However, it is unclear that such differences should always - if that is even possible - be removed. *And removal is important if the goal is sameness (uniformity of view); sameness is important if the goal is impartiality; impartiality is important if the goal is access to absolute truth.*

As I mentioned, soft relativism does not imply hard relativism. The sort of indexing - of being mindful, though not suppressive, of individual differences - does not lead to

irreconcilable and unadjudicatable differences that render competing claims equally true. That is a slippery slope. Rather, the normativity that hard relativism denies or renders impossible is left in tact with a program only inclusive of indexing. The key is normativity. But we must be careful not to define normativity too broadly. If normativity refers to some standard ranging over *all* agents in *all* instances (whether aesthetic, moral or rational), then we have a normativity that is too broad. Consider the following case. Suppose that Fred has a certain rare disease - tropical, no doubt. And suppose that he visits a battery of physicians, and in the end they prescribe for him a very unusual medicine. Now, we can say with little fear of defining normativity too narrowly, that Fred *ought* to take the medicine. And moreover, we can say that with all the power of the normative behind that 'ought'. Fred, and all those with the similar ailment (all members of the kind "has that certain rare disease") *ought* to take that particular medicine. But suppose that Fred is the only person on earth who has ever had that disease. Would the normativity be lost in having only a single member of the kind "has that certain rare disease"? Of course not. Fred ought to take his medicine. And whether or not anyone else is relevantly similar - has similar relevant objective properties - such that the standard or prescription should range over her too, is unimportant.

Normativity need not be a matter of ranging over all agents (at least certainly not in every instance, that is, in the absence of clear relevant similarity). Normativity, the sort that stands against a hard relativism, may be the sort that ranges only over agents relevantly similar, given whatever topic is at hand. To impose relevant similarity on everyone in all instances seems not only artificial, but actually harmful in a majority of cases. Better we should instead simply be cognizant of the dissimilarities and make suitable allowance in order to establish a meaningful normativity. If I have a particular ability or talent, then we ought index normativity to that peculiarity. This is what we do in prescribing medicine. This is also what we do in prescribing certain lifestyles: I am okay as a philosopher (no comments from the audience, please), but would probably be less than adequate as a bio-chemist, because I have little patience for the sort of intricate carefulness called for in that vocation. Indexing normativity is also what we do in aesthetic appreciation. I do not expect any aesthetic appreciator who is not relevantly similar to me to match all my aesthetic judgments. While we may build a standard wherein there is a best position - an ideal judge (most practiced, most sensitive, most knowledgeable) - it is unclear as to whether this ideal judge *should* be more impressed with Eastern rather than Western art, with Abstract Expressionism rather than Cubism, with Arts- and-Crafts rather than with oils-on-canvas, and so forth. Some concerns may be matters of taste and may not admit an adjudicating standard such that one preference is better than another. Better then that we should index our normativities, our ideal judges, to particular tastes in matters of aesthetics.

Again and again this sort of indexing will be important to a non-artificial treatment of normativity. And in treating normativity non-artificially we not only achieve the avoidance of hard relativism, but we also realize the importance of difference between individuals. If I have unique talents and abilities - and I, like you, do - then there seems little reason to deny or suppress them in order to retain an outmoded sense of impartiality or normativity. This is the sort of position that I attribute, at least in origin, to Aristotle.

Through understanding that there are differences between individuals, and through understanding that some of these differences may actually be beneficial, we understand how it is that goodness - be it aesthetic or ethical - must be indexed to the *kind* in question. Kinds may include one another. The kind 'numeral' includes the kind 'odd number', and that kind includes the kind '7'. And if at base there is but a single instance of a given kind, the normativity involved in discussions of that kind is not lessened.

Furthermore, since kinds will include other kinds, broader and broader evaluations are possible. So long as there is some relevant similarity, no matter how broad, against which determinations of goodness may be made, we need not fear that human ideals will be lost. The kind 'human being' has the relevant similarity that each and every human being possesses the right to life. So the morality of murder is never justified. This sort of example can be multiplied as many times as necessary to show that many of the precepts of an absolutist ethic remain very much in tact in a functional system. The key is relevant similarity.

The same case can be made in defense of *excellence*. Excellence, and objective standards, are not lost in a program like the one I describe. This program is not an advocate of diversity for its own sake, or for a lessening of the standards to which some person, some group or some kind ought aspire. While global uniformity is artificial as a basis for normativity, creating diversity in the absence of relevant differences is equally artificial. My aesthetic judgments ought not be held to the same criteria as one with whom I do not share a common aesthetic taste; however, by the same token, I cannot claim that my aesthetic judgments are every bit as good as those of one who is more practiced, more sensitive, more knowledgeable in appreciating or criticizing art. There is a standard against which I can compare myself and to which I can aspire and train. Again, the key is relevant similarity, and to some large measure I can determine, against the kind 'aesthetic appreciator', an objective standard. What I cannot determine is an objective standard in matters of pure or simple taste (such as in preferring Eastern art to Western, or in preferring chocolate ice cream to vanilla); this is to appeal to a different kind from simply 'aesthetic appreciator'.

Whether we are talking about persons or butter knives, the point is the same. We do ourselves a disservice to think in terms of simple global commonality as the basis for normativity and the avoidance of relativism (*hard* relativism). This is artificial, and through an active use of indexing, in matters of ethics, politics or aesthetics, we may avoid that artifice.[7] What is sought is a ground against which determinations of goodness are made. This ground can be found in the natural world, the world experienced by our senses.

Are Functional Accounts of Goodness Relativist? Yes and No. Yes, insofar as the determination of an object being good is made against (and only against) the *kind* of which the object is a member. No, insofar as the normativity inherent in the notion of goodness is protected as the normativity appropriately ranges only over those objects relevantly similar. Any attempt, furthermore, to determine goodness apart from determining it internally, as against some particular kind or given some particular index, will fail. Given

that kinds can be included in still more broad kinds, this restriction need not be seen as limiting. What is limiting, in the final analysis, is the attempt to determine some unconnected, ungrounded, artificial standard of goodness whose use requires global uniformity.

Book Section

How NOT to Eliminate Discrimination

Antony Flew, *University of Reading*

> I want to be a man on the same basis and level as any white citizen - I want to be as free as the whitest citizen. I want to exercise, and in full, the same rights as the white American. I want to be eligible for employment exclusively on the basis of my skills and employability, and for housing solely on my capacity to pay. I want to have the same privileges, the same treatment in public places as every other person...
>
> Dr. Ralph Bunche (the first black American to serve as, among many other things, US Permanent Representative at the UN).

In his *Forbidden Grounds: The Case against Employment Discrimination Laws* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1992), Richard Epstein has produced a second fundamental study as comprehensive, systematic and overwhelmingly compelling as his earlier *Takings: Private Property and the Power of Eminent Domain* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1985). In his Preface he tells us that he "came of age during the debates" on the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. And at the time thought that the act was long overdue, that the patterns and practices of discrimination that existed in the South and around the United States were apt targets of legislative correction.

Epstein's present position is that "the entire apparatus of the anti-discrimination laws in Title VII should be repealed insofar as it applies to private employers - at least those who operate in ordinary competitive markets without legal protection against the entry of new rivals. My view is quite categorical: it is meant to apply to criteria of race, sex, religion, national origin, age and handicap" (9). The qualification "private" and the limitation to "those who operate in ordinary competitive markets" are, of course, absolutely indispensable. For "The temperaments, inclinations, and biases of those with monopoly power can exert an enormous influence over every person on the opposite side of the market. In this context some anti-discrimination norm becomes an integral part of the basic legal system, where its role is necessary, powerful - and problematic" (80).

Judged by the stated intentions of those who guided its passage through the Congress the introduction of the 1964 Act was a spectacular and immediate success. The barriers excluding blacks from supposedly public accommodations tumbled overnight, while all forms of open and systematic anti-black discrimination in employment seem to have been effectively abolished soon after.

But this success did not satisfy either the unofficial civil rights movement or the bureaucracy set up to supervise enforcement. The movement extended its ambitions beyond the elimination of merely negative discrimination against blacks,[1] while the activities of the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission (EEOC) have gone far to confirm the universal validity of Hastie's Law:[2] "For all societies the amount of perceived

racism varies directly with the number of those in that society generously paid and prominently positioned to discover racism." Hastie's Law thus constitutes a particular application of the wider sociological truth that, whenever a substantial bureaucracy owes its existence to a perceived problem, that problem rarely if ever goes away. Never ask the barber whether you need a haircut.

The other grounds of discrimination forbidden by the 1964 Act do not seem to have received much attention in any of the debates preceding its passage. But, once the general principle of legislating against particular grounds of discrimination in the making of hiring decisions had been accepted, age was quickly added to the list: 1967 saw the passage of the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA). It was, however, only in 1990 that this was followed by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Because there were in 1964 such overwhelmingly strong reasons for applying that general principle to the particular case of institutionalized discrimination against blacks - even if only for a limited period and to that case alone - the general principle itself came to be accepted without the extensive and fundamental debate which its importance demands. For, as Epstein says, "So great were the abuses of political power before 1964 that, knowing what I know, if given all or nothing choice, I should still have voted in favor in order to allow federal power to break the stranglehold of local government on race relations. History often leaves us with only second-best devices to combat evils that are in principle better controlled by other means" (10).[2]

For similar reasons very little seems at the time to have been made of the difficulties and costs involved in extending the list of forbidden grounds beyond that of racial set membership. (By Cantor's Axiom for Sets the sole essential feature of a set is that its members have at least one common characteristic, any kind of characteristic.[3]) As Epstein says "The mischief worked by an anti-discrimination statute is not constant across all grounds for discrimination explicit age classifications are common in all segments of the unregulated labor market. My educated guess is that the statutes that render these classifications illegal are apt to be far more instrusive than those statutes that prohibit racial classifications, which most firms would find largely irrelevant" (160 and 159).

For instance: the fact that women on average live a year or two longer than men provides a compelling actuarial reason why equal pensions for women must cost more than equal pensions for men. So, if employers are to provide the same pension benefits for their male and their female employees, then they will have either to bear the extra costs themselves or else arrange that the men somehow subsidize the women. Again, Epstein exploits his own experience of universities to show the harm which will be done when "the ADEA removes the mandatory retirement clause from tenure contracts. Let us hope that Congress in its ignorance does not engage in the gratuitous crippling of American universities, one of our last few areas of competitive advantage in world markets" (473).

Although Epstein makes no explicit examination of possible alternative devices, it is obvious that for him the ideally proper means of controlling racially discriminatory employment practices is the operation of freely competitive markets. The crux is that firms which persist in preferring to hire workers for reasons which really are irrelevant to the

Notes

1. "Every art and every investigation, and likewise every pursuit or undertaking, seem to aim at some good . . . It is true that a certain variety is to be observed among the ends at which the arts and sciences aim . . . But as there are numerous pursuits and arts and sciences, it following that their ends are correspondingly numerous: for instance, the end of the science of medicine is health, that of the art of ship-building a vessel, that of strategy victory, that of domestic economy wealth" (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, H. Rackham, trans., [Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1946,] Book One, Chapter One).

". . . if we acknowledge the function of an individual and of a good individual of the same class (for instance, a harper and a good harper, and so generally will all classes) to be generically the same, the qualification of the latter's superiority in excellence being added to the function in his case (I mean that if the function of a harper is to play the harp, that of a good harper is to play the harp well) . . . " (*Nicomachean Ethics*, Book One, Chapter VII).

2. It is important to be clear about Aristotle's position here. Aristotle was a teleologist. If we define a 'telos' in terms of the function of an object (the telos of a knife is to cut, and the better it cuts the better it is a knife), then we may use the term without difficulty. However, if we think of a telos in a more traditional way, such that the goal of cutting is a property of the knife, that the Final Cause of its cutting "pulls" the knife toward the cutting, then the metaphysical baggage of using the term 'telos' is too much. Aristotle was a teleologist in both of the above senses. I would only recommend as legitimate the first of the two.

3. However, it is not as though science does not make these determinations. Of course science does. To the point, the scientist need not make a priori decisions regarding relevancy and commonality. These decisions are based on less direct, less immediate empirical consideration, but empirical consideration nonetheless.

4. A colleague who proofread this paper pointed out that the majority of my examples have to do with knives. I assure you this is merely accidental!

5. This follows from my original avoidance of any metaphysical baggage not absolutely necessary to the discussion. I do not mean to be writing a paper on the ontological status of kinds; I mean to be writing only on how we determine kinds.

6. My goal in this paper is not to prove or disprove the reality of hard relativism or of absolute truth. My point is only to show that functional accounts of goodness, while necessarily involving soft relativism, or indexing, need not be hard-relativist.

7. I am indebted to those with whom I have had conversations about Aristotle's program and about non-artificiality: Kenton Harris, Ellen Klein, David Courtwright and John Maraldo.

performance of the work in question necessarily incur costs which their less prejudiced competitors avoid. So wherever, absent Jim Crow laws or other forcible racist interventions, firms are operating "in ordinary competitive markets without legal protection against the entry of new rivals" they will have a strong self-interest in eschewing occupationally irrelevant grounds of discrimination not only in their hiring and firing but also in their buying and selling and in all other business dealings.[4] In that case it is obvious that legislation becomes superfluous. But if and insofar as any of the grounds actually forbidden are not entirely irrelevant, and if for this or any other reason the enforcement of anti-discrimination laws imposes unrequited costs upon employers, then these laws will be arbitrarily oppressive rather than idly redundant.

Legislation which thus does good to some by imposing unrequited costs upon others - legislation of a kind of which rent-control laws or environmental and planning regulations probably constitute the most flagrant and widespread examples - has a very understandable appeal to members of elected legislatures. For it enables them to be seen to be doing good to (some of) their constituents but doing it without incurring unpopularity by taxing in order to compensate the unfortunates thus forced to bear the costs of this Congressional beneficence. The constitutionality of such uncompensated impositions was, of course, the topic of *Takings* - which Senator Biden famously brandished at the Judiciary Committee hearings, demanding that Clarence Thomas should repudiate its unacceptably strict constructionist teachings.

But in attacking what is now called civil rights legislation Epstein's appeal is to the fundamental principles of the Founding Fathers rather than to the actual words of the Constitution. His nearest approach to such strictly constitutional issues is in his assertion that "There is no question that the 1964 Civil Rights Act falls within the scope of the commerce power as it is currently understood, and none that it falls outside that power as it was originally written and understood." But "There is no turning back today. The Constitution is what the Supreme Court says it is, at least in cases of political moment" (140).

The key expression "civil rights" was originally used to refer to the "civil capacity to contract, to own property, to make wills, to give evidence, and to sue and be sued. These are rights all individuals can enjoy similtaneously against the state and against one another. Their accurate definition and faithful protection is indispensable for any regime of limited government and individual freedom, and for all persons regardless of race, creed, religion, sex or national origin" (499). But the development of what is now called civil rights legislation has progressively decreased the freedoms of all Americans to associate or to refuse to associate with whomsoever they may wish, and to make contracts upon whatever terms are mutually agreeable. In the name of diversity the drive is towards an enforced uniformity of personnel distribution across all firms and indeed all other associations and institutions.

This development was certainly not mandated by the 1964 Act. On the contrary: although much of what has since actually happened was foreseen by opponents, those steering the bill through the Senate insisted categorically and repeatedly, and in all sincerity and truth, that Title VII would prohibit rather than require, quotas in the name

of "racial balance" and various other outcomes feared by opponents. So critics of America's activist judges may find wry satisfaction in reacting, for instance, to the statement: "Title VII would not require, *and no court could read Title VII as requiring*, an employer to lower or change occupational qualifications because proportionately fewer Negroes than whites are able to meet them" (Quoted, 188; emphasis added).

Thanks however, to "The imperatives of bureaucratic expansion and majoritarian politics over the life of the Civil Rights Act the simple color-blind norm has yielded a massive, complex set of laws that has basically done two things: (1) made it permissible to discriminate at will against whites and men (especially white men), and (2) made it possible to charge race- or sex-neutral firms with discrimination on the strength of statistical techniques whose application is flawed at every crucial juncture" (78-9).

In terms of the crucial legal conceptions the development has been from disparate treatment, which was what and all that was explicitly forbidden by the 1964 Act, to disparate impact, the very different offence which has since become effectively outlawed. Disparate treatment cases, "which involve efforts to show that the defendant's conduct was actuated by some illegitimate motive, often raise very delicate questions of procedure and proof, but these difficulties are of a sort with which the legal system can ordinarily cope, at least at a price" (160). Disparate impact cases are an altogether different matter. These impose "intolerable and unnecessary demands on both the legal system and the affected employment markets." For they "allow courts to infer unlawful discrimination, wholly without evidence of improper motive, and solely from the (perceived) disparate consequences of certain hiring tests and procedures"(160).

Such was the success of that original 1964 Act in effectively eliminating anti-black discrimination that it very soon became impossible to prepare prosecution cases which would stand up in court. But, in obedience to Hastie's Law, the EEOC refused to entertain the for them uncomfortable idea that the difficulty of proving that discrimination was still widespread might arise from the fact that, insofar as this could reasonably be expected in an always necessarily imperfect world, it had in fact ceased. Instead, with the assistance both of an ever activist judiciary and the pressures of the equally expansionist civil rights movement, the EEOC met its difficulty by introducing the radically different conception of disparate impact.

Since this was introduced as an element of somewhat complicated case law rather than by (indeed flatly against) a clear-cut Act of the Congress it may be helpful to approach by way of a consideration of the offence of indirect discrimination introduced by the UK Race Relations Act 1976. Direct discrimination is there defined as consisting in "treating a person, on racial grounds, less favourably than others would be treated in the same or similar circumstances." Indirect racial discrimination is a more complex concept, consisting in "applying a requirement or condition which, although applied equally to all racial groups, is such that a considerably smaller proportion of a particular racial group can comply with it and it cannot be shown to be justifiable on other than racial grounds."

Obviously much must depend upon what is acceptable as adequate justification "on other than racial grounds."[5] But, quite apart from this, there are two most fundamental

objections to the statutory introduction of the offence of indirect discrimination. The first of these was put by a future Lord Chancellor in the original House of Lords debate. "It is a fundamental principle of English law, and one which is vital to the preservation of individual liberty, that a crime should consist of two elements: first there must be a prohibited act then there should be a state of mind quite deliberately the Government have created in this new Clause an indictable offence in which the mental element is removed altogether."[6]

The second of these two most fundamental objections is that, in order to secure convictions for the offence of indirect discrimination the prosecution is not required to prove the guilt of defendants "beyond reasonable doubt." Instead it is sufficient first to establish that the members of some racially defined set are less than proportionately represented in some enviable[7] sort of occupation, association or achievement. This done it is the defendants who now, if they are to escape conviction, have to prove their innocence; again, presumably, "beyond reasonable doubt."

This presumption of racially discriminatory guilt is obnoxious on two counts. In the first place, and generally, it is obnoxious for the same reason as any other presumption of criminal guilt must be. It is obnoxious, that is to say, in its abandonment of what has been one of the fundamental principles of British and American criminal law. As Epstein, who describes himself as originally "a common law lawyer" (xi), reasonably asks: "Why should the (assumed) importance of the anti- discrimination laws require us to slight the errors of over-enforcement? The consensus that murder is a grave wrong has never been regarded as a reason to make life easy for prosecutors: they do not get convictions on mere suspicion alone, or even on proof by a preponderance of the evidence. Quite the opposite" (225).

In the second place the same presumption is obnoxious, more particularly, in the inadequacy of the evidence actually required for it to be received as established. For it to become highly probable that defendants actually are guilty of hostile racist discrimination against members of a certain racial set, it has got to be the case that, absent such discrimination, it would be reasonable to expect members of that particular set to be more or less proportionately represented among those selected for appointments, promotions, awards or whatever else is the subject of litigation.

We should, however, in order to justify that expectation need to make an enormous assumption for which, as Thomas Sowell has so often insisted, evidence is rarely requested and never supplied. The assumption is that, as between the different racially or ethnically defined sets in question, and in respect of whatever are the relevant, whether hereditary or acquirable characteristics, there are *even on average* no significant differences across those entire sets.[8]

That emphatic qualification "on average" is crucially important, for two very different reasons. In the first place to say that something happens a certain way *on the average* is not to say that it happens that way *every time*. But discussion about affirmative action and litigation about disparate impact usually proceeds on the assumption that there is no such thing as statistical variance. "If Hispanics are 8% of the carpenters in a given town it does not follow that *every* employer of carpenters in that town would have 8% Hispanics if

there were no discrimination. Even if carpenters were assigned to employers by drawing lots there would be *variance* from one employer to another. To convict those employers with fewer Hispanics of discrimination in hiring would be to make statistical variance a federal offence."[9]

The second reason why the qualification "*on average*" is so vitally important is that it blocks certain inferences which might otherwise be legitimate. For if, and surely only if, it actually were the case that every member of some particular racial set was known to lack some characteristic essential to some kind of occupation or form of achievement, then membership of that particular racial set would for that reason become a properly relevant, indeed a properly decisive, ground of disqualification. But if, as surely is in fact the case, there is no or less than no good experiental reason for believing that there is any racial set all of the members of which both lack and lack the possibility of acquiring the characteristics essential to any kind of occupation or form of achievement, then no racial ground for disqualification can ever be legitimate.

The enormous and, as we have been urging, quite unwarranted assumption that, as between any different racially or ethnically defined sets, there are no significant differences *even on average* in respect of hereditary or acquirable employment- or achievement-relevant characteristics is not needed to justify Dr. Bunche's demand that the often very different claims of different individuals should be considered without regard to the racial set membership of those individuals.[10]

The question of the truth or falsity of that assumption becomes relevant only if and insofar as the very different ideal of racial equality which it is sought to realise is: not that of a color-blind society in which all individuals are judged on their own individual merits and irrespective of their racial and/or ethnic set membership; but instead that of an equality between racially and/or ethnically defined collectives, the members of which see themselves and are to be seen not as individuals achieving or failing to achieve on their own individual merits or demerits, but rather as the appointed representatives of the particular racially self-conscious and very far from color-blind sets of which they happen themselves to be members.

Because Epstein is concerned with *Forbidden Grounds* of employment discrimination in general, rather than with racist discrimination in particular, his emphasis throughout is upon how such laws and regulations restrict civil rights to freedom of contract, and in consequence burden the economy. It is both instructive and important to bring out also that and how measures originally intended to outlaw racist discrimination tend, it would seem inexorably and in the not very long run, to extend and institutionalize the very evil which they were introduced to outlaw.

It would seem that like the word "fascist" the word "racist" has come to be used, especially by those most eager to employ it, as a vehemently emotive term of abuse, but often one with precious little if any determinate descriptive meaning. Yet it only becomes properly a term of abuse insofar as it is construed to refer to a sort of behavior; namely, the advantaging or disadvantaging of individuals for no other and better reason than that they belong to this particular racial set and not that. Such behavior is (almost) always

wrong since it is (almost) always unjustly irrelevant to the making of the employment and other discriminations which are at issue.[11]

To all of us for whom the repudiation of racism, in this understanding,[12] is a matter of principle, rather than a question of whose ox it is which is being gored, it is immediately obvious that the criminalization of "disparate impact" and of "indirect discrimination" tends very strongly to promote paradigm cases of racism in the form of "positive discrimination," "race norming," and "racial quotas." For how else are employers and other appointers and awarders to secure themselves against conviction upon these counts?

The whole experience first of the US and then of the UK makes it absolutely clear that the way to reduce racist discrimination to insignificance is not the way of criminalization and quangos (quasi-autonomous non-government organizations such as the EEOC and the Commission for Racial Equality). On the contrary: that is the Royal Road not to a color-blind but to a "racially sensitive," indeed a racially obsessed, society.

Notes

1. Calls for "preferential hiring" as the means to achieve proportionate representation can be found in *Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1986). Compare Llewelyn H. Rockwell "The Economics of Martin Luther King, Jr.," in *The Free Market*, February 1991.

2. The original formulation of this sociological law was provoked by the activities of the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE), established under the UK Race Relations Act 1976.

3. The reason for introducing the word "set" in the present context is, as will later become clear, that such alternatives as "class" or "community" may suggest that the people concerned both do and ought to see themselves as members of an exclusive collectivity; something seriously inconsistent with the ideal of an integrated, color-blind society.

4. That is why the Editors of the notorious National Socialist anti-semitic and anti-capitalist weekly *Der Stürmer* used in almost every issue to publish cartoons attacking the racial insensitivity of business persons for whom payments from any source were equally welcome.

5. A recent Commission for Racial Equality circular distributed to all tax-financed schools in the UK warned all concerned of the dangers of indirect discrimination in education. Since they offered no example of what would be acceptable in a requirement or condition which happened to have this forbidden effect, and since they specifically stated that knowledge of the language of instruction is not an acceptable ground of discrimination, they have to be interpreted as demanding "race norming" to ensure proportionate representation. Compare Antony Flew *A Future for Anti-Racism* (London: Social Affairs Unit, 1992).

6. House of Lords *Hansard*, 14 October 1976, Column 1045.

7. We have to insert the qualification "enviable" since the Act reads only "less favorably" not "either more or less favorably." Certainly the agencies of enforcement have always been and remain at least as concerned about disproportionate over-representation in unenviable as about disproportionate under-representation in enviable categories. Thus the CRE document mentioned in Note 7, above, expresses concern that black pupils in Birmingham "were four times more likely to be suspended than white pupils." (As usual no comparison is made with the always significantly different track record of our Asians.)

8. For abundant evidence showing that the assumption is not merely evidentially unwarranted but demonstrably false, compare, for instance, Thomas Sowell *Ethnic America: A History* (New York: Basic Books, 1981) and *Preferential Policies: An International Perspective* (New York: William Morrow, 1990).

9. Thomas Sowell *Civil Rights: Rhetoric or Reality?* (New York: William Morrow, 1984), 54: emphasis original.

10. Those of us, therefore, who wholeheartedly concur with that demand need feel no compulsion to accept the evidentially unsupported 1965 ruling of the US Department of Labor: "Intelligence potential is distributed among Negro infants in the same proportion and pattern as among Icelanders or Chinese, or any other group. There is absolutely no question of any genetic differential."

11. The parenthetical qualifications are needed in order to admit, for instance, the choice of a black actor to play the part of Othello and a white actress that of Desdemona.

12. It is in a very different understanding, in which the word "racism" is apparently taken to refer to a kind of would-be factual but scandalously heretical belief rather than of any kind of actual misbehaviour, that those daring to deploy evidence against the doctrine proclaimed by the US Department of Labor in 1965 (see Note 10, above), have been in recent years denounced as racist and fascist advocates of genocide; and victimized as such. Compare the accounts of such persecutions in Roger Pearson *Race, Intelligence and Bias in Academe* (Washington: Scott- Townsend, 1991). Compare also the same author's edition of *Shockley on Eugenics and Race* (Washington: Scott-Townsend, 1992). For more on the key and customarily unmade distinctions in this area, see the pamphlet listed in Note 5, above.

In Search of a Liberal Sociology

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In recent years there has been a dramatic increase in fruitful interdisciplinary "trespassing" between economics and sociology. In spite of this, however, many contemporary classical liberal economists still assume that the mainstream of sociology is more or less Marxist in orientation, and that there is little to be gained from a specifically sociological approach to the study of modern capitalist society. Fortunately these assumptions are not accurate, as Robert Holton and Bryan Turner's recent book *Max Weber on Economy and Society* (New York: Routledge, 1989) illustrates. Holton and Turner attempt to outline an approach to social analysis that is both interdisciplinary and non-Marxist. They explicitly argue that their "interests have emerged both from our sense of the exhaustion and collapse of the intellectual and moral credentials of Marxism and state socialism, and from the interesting revival of liberalism and libertarianism" (11-12). It is their recognition of the relevance of liberal approaches to social analysis and their willingness to take seriously the work of some of liberalism's most serious thinkers that make this book an excellent contribution to social theory and a challenging critical read for those sympathetic to classical liberalism.

The heart of their contribution is their insistence that social analysis has to start with the recognition that modern societies are not the holistic, collectivistic *Gemeinschaft* conception of society envisioned by Marxism. Rather, modern society is more like the network of abstract relationships described by the *Gesellschaft* conception of society. This difference is a crucial one. A *Gemeinschaft* view of society sees the links between individuals as concrete, directive and specific. Members of such societies can comprehend the entire social structure and are assumed to be aware of how their actions must be consciously integrated into the collective aims and goals of the social group. A *Gesellschaft* conception of society is, by contrast, one where individuals are seen as acting in self-motivated ways and are related to other individuals through rules, signals, and institutions that are general and abstract. On this conception, society cannot be described in holistic terms, nor can the actions of individuals be understood as motivated by a comprehensive understanding of the effects of those actions on specific others. Holton and Turner argue that this distinction parallels Weber's concepts of "communal" and "associational" societies (74).[1]

With this distinction in mind, they set out to explore a number of important issues in social theory. The first chapter attempts to locate their project within the history of sociological thought. Much of this chapter is a fruitful review of the conflicts between Marxian and liberal analyses of social orders. Of particular interest here is the authors' attempt to draw on the liberal sociological tradition of Weber, Georg Simmel and Talcott Parsons. Holton and Turner argue that any modern understanding of society has to take seriously the importance of markets and their ability to coordinate human behavior:

> we do see [the market] possessing an evolutionary advantage in terms of the capacity to co-ordinate individual wants with resources in a non-ascriptive,

> relatively non-coercive manner . . . it is arguable that many alleged market failures have more to do with monopoly or political constraints on individual autonomy than with the market principle as such. (24-25)

Though they are careful to say that they see limits to this argument, they generally believe that Weber's sociology is consistent with a respect for market processes and an individualist conception of social order.

The second chapter picks up on these themes and explicitly links them to modern defenses of classical liberalism, specifically those of the Austrian school of economics. Holton and Turner argue that Weber's work has been influential in the development of modern Austrian economics and vice versa. They note that both share a form of methodological individualism, arguing that "the origins and persistence of . . . undesigned institutions cannot, however, be rendered intelligible without some reference to the activities of individuals" (41). As a result, both Weber and the Austrians would exclude social theories that see individuals as mere vehicles for acting out forces beyond their control. This, presumably, is crucial to the liberal response to Marxism.

Holton and Turner also understand the epistemological basis of the Austrian critique of social and economic planning. They rightly point out that the Austrian appreciation of uncertainty and real, historical time precludes any *ex ante* knowledge of social outcomes, thus also precluding successful social planning. Rather the *Gesellschaft* conception of society relies on rules and institutions to coordinate human behavior *ex post*. The authors note similar positions taken by Weber and his explicit approval of the original anti-planning argument of Ludwig von Mises. The second chapter also includes a wide-ranging discussion of social scientific methodology, with a particularly good section defending a sophisticated version of methodological individualism.

The third chapter covers some issues in modernism and world religions. This chapter seems to digress from the themes of the other chapters, although it does contain some interesting observations on Weber's work on religion and its link to modern conceptions (and criticisms) of rationality.

Chapter four picks the main theme back up by linking the earlier chapters to a discussion of the law and its role as a coordinator of the abstract social relations in a *Gesellschaft* conception of society. Holton and Turner argue that Weber's sociology of law is an extension of Georg Simmel's sociology of money, in that both law and money provide a "shell of calculated stability of economic processes" (111). Law and money provide the frame in which the mural of economic activity unfolds through time. Legal and monetary institutions *limit* economic activity by bounding the possible courses it can take and simultaneously *facilitate* such activity by serving as universal and abstract reference points through which economic actors can attempt to achieve their various ends.

Where Holton and Turner's discussion could be helped here is by more explicitly incorporating an account of how legal and monetary institutions perform these coordinative functions and in what kind of political-economic environment they are more likely to do this well. Specifically, Holton and Turner might reconsider their earlier dismissal of Hayek's theory of spontaneous order. Though cognizant of the value of Hayek's work,

in several places they are quick to paint his ideas as "mythical unreconstructed liberalism" (19), or as a "transcendental liberal Utopia" (26), or "nostalgia for a seventeenth-century world of sovereign producers" (53). In most of these instances, not much of an argument is presented, rather it is asserted and assumed that Hayekian liberalism and spontaneous order explanations are simply out-of-date with the realities of the Twentieth century. The problem for Holton and Turner, however, is how to explain how money and law perform their coordinative functions without recourse to spontaneous order explanations.

In recent years, a number of classical liberal scholars have pressed the case that both money and law are spontaneous orders and that political interference in their natural evolutionary processes undermines their ability to contribute to economic and social order.[2] The rationale for these arguments is that spontaneous evolutionary processes are better able to incorporate and diseminate knowledge (particularly tacit knowledge) to social actors than are politicized attempts at design. Despite Holton and Turner's general sympathy toward liberal ideas, this is one area where some additional work on the evolution and operation of these social institutions would have been helpful.

The fifth chapter covers what Holton and Turner refer to as "status politics." They argue that the politics of contemporary democracies can be called "administratively determined status-bloc politics" (148). The process they describe is one where particular interest groups attempt to persuade actors in the political process to grant them certain outcome-oriented benefits by virtue of some claim of "disprivilege [or] prejudice" (147). These groups are status blocs. Holton and Turner make two important and convincing arguments about this process. First, the result of this political competition is immense fiscal pressure on democratic governments:

> The very success of democracy produces clientelism which requires greater bureaucratic regulation and state intervention, bringing about further social control within the political sphere and also a greater tax burden on the economy (155).

Similar arguments have been raised by modern classical liberal economists, particularly those of the Public Choice school.[3] They have argued that the explosion of the federal budget deficit can be traced to politicians providing government benefits for organized special interest groups in exchange for votes. Although they are coming from a sociological perspective, Holton and Turner are on the same track.

A second important observation is their explanation of the cause of status-bloc politics. Holton and Turner point to the shift in liberalism's conception of equality (from equality of opportunity to equality of outcomes) as generating status blocs and their demands on the political process (147). Once the political process begins to do more than ensure equality of opportunity and attempts to legislate outcomes, various organized groups will try to claim their piece of the pie by presenting themselves as victims of some sort of inequality. Both the fiscal and social morass of contemporary democracies can be fruitfully understood as results of this philosophical shift. Holton and Turner nicely capture this process, though they present no clear way out of this dilemma. This is

particularly problematic because they argue for a non-minimal role for the state and must explain how *their* state would avoid this trap.

Holton and Turner conclude with some powerful criticisms of class analysis. Of particular interest here is the challenge they throw down to their fellow sociologists:

> Sociology has always contained traditions hostile towards individualism and market exchange and which advanced disbelief that the impersonal character of such relations could be consistent with community and social order . . . Impersonality and atomization are, however, enabling features of the marketplace, insofar as they permit the liberation of individuals from oppressive community sanctions and the limits of access to resources set by face-to-face contacts. (192-93)

The first part of this challenge is arguably the crucial issue for social theory. Are the abstract relationships of liberalism enough to cultivate social order and can genuine social interdependencies arise as the *unintended* consequences of largely self-interested behavior? To this I would add the comparative question of whether any achievable non-liberal social system is capable of equalling liberalism on these grounds. While idealized social systems might do better (a Marxian utopia, for example), they may not be humanly achievable. Given the limits of human capacities, liberalism is perhaps the best we can do, and that's not bad.

Holton and Turner's book is a challenge both for non-liberal sociologists and classical liberal social theorists. For sociologists, the book's defense of a broad liberalism should force them to grapple with a reasonably sophisticated understanding of the market and the social benefits it can provide. For classical liberals, the book validates a number of their insights from a non-economic perspective, but also forces them to consider more deeply many of their fundamental notions about liberalism in general, and capitalism in particular. Despite the need for some more thorough examination of some liberal arguments, and the propensity to dismiss classical liberalism as "nostalgic," Holton and Turner have produced an excellent book addressing the fundamental questions of social theory from a perspective quite sympathetic to modern classical liberalism.

Notes

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1. Similar distinctions are made by Hayek in *Law, Legislation, and Liberty*, 3 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973, 1977, 1979), where he writes of "face-to-face" societies and "the Great Society" and Don Lavoie in *National Economic Planning: What is Left?* (Cambridge, Mass.: Balinger Publishing, 1985), where he discusses "Tradition" and "Market" as alternative coordinating processes for societies of different degrees of complexity, size and homogeneity.

2. On money see George Selgin, *The Theory of Free Banking* (Totowa, New Jersey: Rowman and Littlefield, 1988) and Steven Horwitz, *Monetary Evolution, Free Banking, and Economic Order* (Boulder: Westview, 1992). On law see Bruce Benson, *The Enterprise of Law* (San Francisco: Pacific Research Institute for Public Policy, 1990). Benson's work owes much to the earlier work of Lon Fuller, especially *The Morality of Law* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969).

3. Interested readers should see the work of James Buchanan and Gordon Tullock, especially *The Calculus of Consent* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1962).

A New Look at the Anthropic Principle:

A Critical Study of Errol E. Harris's *Cosmos and Anthropos A Philosophical Interpretation of the Anthropic Cosmological Principle*

Marie I. George and Warren Murray

The Anthropic Cosmological Principle arose as a response to the question: Why is the universe the way it is? That is, why does it have the age, the size, the composition and the laws that it has? To this somewhat strange question philosophers have been attempting answers since antiquity, although the terms in which the question has been asked, and the kind of answers sought, have varied. Recent interest arises from the ever-more apparent realization that the existence of human beings endowed with consciousness and able to ask such seemingly senseless questions requires certain conditions of life: more specifically, the sort of habitat that is actually found on the planet earth. The constitution of such a planet depends on the processes of development which brought it about, and these in turn depend on the particular manner in which the universe developed. Finally, this latter depends upon the initial relations between the basic forces of nature. As Errol E. Harris sums it up:

> The currently accepted theory of the universe is that it began some eighteen thousand million years ago with a vast explosion. Its present age, size, and rate of expansion all depend upon the relation between the forces of gravity and of the initial propulsive outburst. Had the latter been weaker (Paul Davies tells us), the cosmos would rapidly have fallen back upon itself and contracted to a point. Had it been stronger, the cosmic matter would have dispersed at such speed that galaxies could not have formed. A difference of one part in 10^{60} would have been sufficient to bring about either of these two results . . . In short, the present structure of the universe is perhaps the ultimate example of sensitivity to initial conditions. (*Cosmos and Anthropos*, 48).

Thus, if the most recent cosmological theories are to be given credence, the universe could not be any younger or smaller, and the constants of nature responsible for this size and age would have to have certain determinate values, otherwise a planet inhabited by intelligent observers could not exist. If true, and put into categorical form, this becomes simply a statement of fact, and is what goes by the name of the Weak Anthropic Principle (WAP).

Another possible meaningful response to the above question, however, lies in there being a teleological relation between the appearance of intelligent life on the planet and the constitution of the universe. And this is what is suggested by the other versions of the anthropic principle (AP).

J.D. Barrow and F.J. Tippler's book, *The Anthropic Cosmological Principle* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1986) did much to synthesize the arguments for, and to create a more general interest in APs. The work presents an impressive amount of scientific evidence indicating that the appearance of human life required amazingly precise rela-

tionships between various physical factors. It also outlines a variety of other APs of a teleological character. One is reluctant to dismiss the evidence presented as ultimately failing to support any significant anthropic conclusion, yet the work leaves the reader of a philosophical bent with feelings of malaise: the principle in its so-called weak form seems to be no principle at all, only a truism, and the 'final' version has all the trappings of science fiction.

Cosmos and Anthropos, by the well-known philosopher of science Errol E. Harris[2], brought hopes of making sense out of the APs. A major problem with previous formulations of APs is their ambiguity, and thus Harris undertakes a much needed task in trying to define the pertinent notions. His stance is that in spite of shortcomings in previous formulations, the principle can be stated in a defendable form.

In the opening chapter Harris critiques the various versions of the anthropic principles enunciated by Barrow & Tippler, after defining them thus:

> The Weak Anthropic Principle (WAP): 'The observed values of all physical and cosmological quantities are not equally probable but they take on values restricted by the requirement that there exist sites where carbon-based life can evolve and the requirement that the Universe be old enough for it to have already done so.'(1)

> The Strong Anthropic Principle (SAP) 'The Universe must have those properties which allow life to develop within it at some state in its history.'(1-2)

Harris points out that both the WAP and one interpretation of the Strong Anthropic Principle do no more than assert that the present state of the universe cannot be accounted for by just any mathematical relations between physical quantities, but that whatever physical laws are discovered must be compatible with the development of life and intelligence, because we are here. In other words, an explanation must be consistent with the facts.

He proceeds next to expose the obvious flaw in the Participatory Anthropic Principle ("Observers are necessary to bring the Universe into being"), by pointing out that the development of the universe is necessary to bringing observers into being, and therefore it cannot depend on them (7).

As to the Final Anthropic Principle (FAP), ("Intelligent information-processing must come into existence in the Universe and, once it comes into existence, it will never die out"), Harris presents evidence supporting the view that we may well be the only intelligent life in the universe, the opposite view being based more on imagination than on fact. He then goes on to demolish the FAP further by evincing the possibility that just as we humans can become extinct, even at our own hands, so too could any other intelligent life form.

The Many-worlds interpretation of the SAP fares no better, in as much as it needlessly posits entities, the existence of which one cannot verify.[3]

Harris's critique, however, suffers from two serious shortcomings: the first is his unqualified acceptance of the AP as a heuristic principle. He gives but one example of such a use:

> [A given quantity of carbon] is available in the world, so there must be an energy level in the overtones of the carbon nucleus that resonates with beryllium. Fred Hoyle, arguing in this anthropic fashion, sought, and . . . found the missing resonance. (153)

Now this line of reasoning has nothing particularly anthropic about it. It illustrates a general principle of method that if something (anything) exists, it must be possible for it to exist. And thus if we do not initially see how it is possible, then clearly we must pursue our research until we do. This principle has nothing *specific* to do with us. Human existence in the world is one fact among many others to be explained.

The second shortcoming in Harris's critique is that he fails to point out that in most of its forms the AP is not a principle, but a conclusion. This is all the more surprising in that he himself recognizes this in arguing against the PAP, as was mentioned above.

The remainder of the book is devoted principally to elaborating his own AP, which he calls the teleological anthropic principle (TAP):

> There exists one, and only one, possible Universe *designed*[4] with the goal of generating and sustaining intelligent observers. (28)

Harris prefaces his presentation of this principle by pointing out that:

> . . . the latest advances in particle physics, approaching a unified field theory, have persuaded physicists of the undisseverable wholeness of the physical universe. Human and all other life is included in this whole in ways that make it intimately dependent on the fundamental physical constants of nature . . . It is this discovery of the unit of the universe, on which physicists now are becoming insistent...that is the really important feature of the principle's recognition. (15)

His interpretation of the world-view furnished by classical physics is quite accurate: a universe envisaged as a mere collection of diverse objects, having no intrinsic connection among them, independent mass points, moved by various forces and entering into chance collisions with one another. Such a vision of the universe made of it a heap, and not a 'cosmos'. It consequently took away the unique position which human beings occupied in the universe: not, of course, the physical one, which is inconsequential, but that which was accorded to them by the idea that the universe exists for their production and their conservation, and to be mastered and governed by them. Recognition of the inadequacy of this description of the universe was necessary, if questions concerning any ordering of the universe to the production of intelligent life were once again to be taken seriously. Modern science has brought a return to a holistic world view in which the parts of the universe are conceived of as interdependent.[5] Life becomes an attribute which the universe

itself gradually acquires, rather than being a phenomenon simply unfolding within the universe. The physical environment enters in some way into the very being of each individual and each species, and is not simply something which impinges upon them from the outside, as was thought to be the case before.

Having thus delineated the difference between the old view and the new emerging one, Harris proceeds to two things: he first examines the nature of wholeness (ch.2), and then the grounds for the physicists' new-found conviction of the unity of the universe (ch.3). It is in the philosophical discussion concerning the nature of wholes that is to be found the book's principal flaw, as we shall see:

> To say that anything is a whole is to imply that it is not a mere congeries of disconnected and separable items, nor even just a loose collection. It also implies that it is a unity of coherent parts. (17)

> Every whole is a system...every system is a whole, structured in accordance with a universal principle of order. (22)

From there Harris goes on to maintain that:

> . . . wholeness, by its very nature, involves dynamic and dialectical self-specification, by way of self-enfoldment (with consequent overlap of specific forms). It tends towards intensification of centreity, increasing self-sufficient and widening comprehension, and culminates as an all-embracing awareness of an all-encompassing world. (26)

And finally claims to have established,

> that the design of a systematic whole involves a dynamic principle of order that, by its very nature, tends towards completion of the whole, in and as an intelligent self-awareness. (28)

In other words, Harris contends that any universe must be a whole, for the entirety of any bunch of things that exist - no matter how separate in time, place, causality - constitutes a universe (cf. 11). Since he further adheres to the view that a whole must be complete, both in principle and in fact (cf. 146), and cannot be so unless it is self-aware (cf. 100), he concludes that the universe must necessarily develop self-awareness.

This same argument, repeated again and again throughout the book, suffers from two principal vices: the first is the failure to recognize the many related but distinct meanings of 'whole'. The only kind of whole which Harris acknowledges is the organic whole, characterized by an intrinsic organizing principle relating parts to one another and to the whole. Yet there exist other kinds of wholes which are not of this sort. Even a bundle of sticks (to use Harris's own example of a loose collection) is a whole, though not an organic one, as no one stick bears any relation to any other aside from their being held in contact by an extrinsic principle, the cord binding them together.[6] Harris is clearly ill at ease with

such examples, and insists that nothing less than an "interlock between parts that are systematically interrelated" (17), or an "ordered system" (33) is a genuine whole. Yet this is not the way we use the word, and Harris knows this, as his efforts to avoid a broader definition show only too well: a whole is simply anything that has all the parts that it should have to be fully what it is. Some wholes have this unity of parts from an intrinsic principle of order (as have organisms), and others only from some extrinsic principle (as have bundles, or things in containers). Of those wholes that are intrinsically ordered, some are so by reason of a quantitative principle (such as mathematical numbers and figures), and others by reason of some relation to a common goal or to common activities (such as a sports team). One simply cannot assume that the universe is one or the other of these wholes without first looking to see what evidence will support the claim one is making.

A further aspect of this problem is Harris's claim that disorder is parasitical on order (34). Now however true this may be in some sense, he has not substantiated the claim. Can it be inferred from science? This road might seem at first sight the most promising, but the fact that scientists investigate the universe and seek out its laws on the supposition that order is to be found there, does not prove that such order is ontological rather than purely methodological, nor, a fortiori, that any disorder is parasitical on it. Nor does the great success of science in discovering order and of reducing disorder to order constitute an absolute proof, and that for many reasons, one of which is simply that science is by definition ordered knowledge, and thus whatever is chaotic and disordered in experience must either be reduced to order or excluded from science. Even the new science of chaos, cited by Harris himself in defence of his thesis, bears this out: first, it makes us aware that scientists have been too readily disposed to ignore phenomena that do not lend themselves to orderly investigation, and this exclusion gives the impression of a universe much more neatly ordered than direct experience will allow. Second, it shows that science must always try to go beyond whatever radical disorder may exist, to find some underlying order. Such order may *appear* to the scientists to have ontological priority, but the problem is his methodological bias. Even the recognition of radically disordered (chaotic) phenomena, if such recognition were possible within the framework of science, would still leave intact the further ontological question of the dependence of this disorder on order. The only road open, finally, is that of an in-depth study of order and disorder from a solidly philosophical perspective. This Harris has not given us.

Thus we cannot simply conclude to the primacy of that organic kind of order which Harris is proposing from the fact that the universe is a whole, for the perfection of the universe as a whole may be only that of a quantitative fullness, such as possessed by a whole container of anything, as opposed to a partly empty one; it need not be the perfection of mutually interacting parts ordered in an organic way to the whole.

Harris is correct in thinking that the universe of classical physics was not a cosmos, but only a heap. What he has perhaps not seen so clearly is another fundamental problem with that universe, which was to explain how bodies which had no intrinsic relation to one another could interact. This was especially evident for action at a distance. Newton admitted to having no explanation of this causality, whose mathematical expression alone concerned him. Even positing a common kind of matter did not seem sufficient to explain action by contact, much less that at a distance, and it was this problem which pushed

Malebranche into occasionalism, and Leibniz into the theory of monads and of pre-established harmony. The bodies in such a universe should have been essentially independent of one another, but experience showed they were not. All of the commonly shared characteristics, whether physical, spatial, temporal or mathematical, call for some causal explanation, but the radical ontological independence of each mass point did not readily allow for any natural relation between the entities that compose the universe, and thus their interaction had to be explained from the outside.

Events in one part of such a universe should have had no relation to those in another part, however close, no more than events in novels written by different authors could be expected to have any relationship to one another. At least in novels by different authors there might well be certain things in common, such as there being written in the same language, being inspired by similar experiences and similar places, presupposing certain characteristics of people in the real world known to both authors, etc. These common features would not be due to the creative causalities of the individual authors, but would be rather the result of a higher level of reality and of causality presupposed to the writing of the novels. Thus not having the characters interact would be the result of the independence of the two authors as causes, whereas any interaction between the characters would have to suppose communication between the authors. Might not things in the universe share some things in common in a similar way, while being at other levels quite separate? This possibility Harris does not consider. If this common causality were not there, then how could things interact at all? Two morsels of independent matter floating through "space" could no more collide with one another, then Odysseus's ship could run into Moby Dick. The universe, then, must possess at a minimum a unity of material constituents, interacting according to some orderly causality.

A closer look at Harris's argument for the unity of the universe reveals that as a result of unduly restricting the meaning of 'whole', he unwittingly falls into equivocation, as can be clearly seen in the explication of the two syllogisms his argument implies: first syllogism: the universe is a whole; a whole is something complete; therefore the universe is complete. Second syllogism: Nothing is complete if it lacks intelligence; the universe must be complete; therefore the universe must develop intelligence. The first syllogism is materially correct, if the terms are properly understood. The second syllogism is doubly defective: first, in maintaining that completeness requires intelligence (the major term); second, in substituting 'develop' for 'have' in the conclusion. Either the universe is or is not a whole. If it is, it is by defintion complete and need not develop intelligence. If it is not, no reason has been given to show why it need develop intelligence. The equivocation lies in equating 'complete' with 'perfect', and then assigning only one possible meaning to 'perfect'. A plant lacks intelligence, and thus is less absolutely perfect than a human being. Still, it may be complete, (and therefore 'perfect' in its own way) if it has all those parts appropriate to it as a particular kind of plant. Harris is saying that the universe must be complete, since it is some sort of whole. For the same reason, even a universe devoid of intelligent life must be complete, for it too is some sort of whole. Yet he insists that a universe devoid of intelligent life is incomplete, meaning less perfect than a universe containing such life. Plainly 'complete' does not mean the same thing in each statement. And thus the conclusion drawn, namely that the universe must develop intelligence, does not follow.

The second major problem in Harris's basic argument lies in the assertion that the universe brings itself to consciousness. A thing acts insofar as it is in act, not insofar as it is in potency. The sort of universe Harris postulates throughout the book pulls itself up by its own bootstraps.

With such an unsound key argument, one might well wonder what further interest the book could have. Harris redeems himself to some large extent, however, in those susbsequent sections devoted to manifesting the unity of the physical universe, in part by tracing and explaining the complexification which has taken place in its evolution. While the various levels of complexification are always regarded by Harris as degrees of the universe's necessary self-realization, the attempt to identify and define these levels, and to criticize the inadequate explanations furnished for them, are not in every case colored by this viewpoint.

Harris begins by presenting the account of the production of the chemical elements proposed by the most recent scientific theories. He points out that complexification in the inanimate realm is not only a development from beings with fewer parts to those with more, but involves as well an increase in the intricacy of their structure: The more numerous parts of more complex things are not simply added on; they are arranged into patterns or determinate structures, the lattices of crystals being a case in point.

He then goes on to show how living things depend upon the inanimate physical universe. Convincing evidence is cited to support the contention that determinate characteristics of the physical universe are indispensable for the existence and support of life. For example:

> There is . . . a precise match between the temperature of the sun, determining the colour of its light, and the ability of chlorophyl to absorb it, without which there would be no photosynthesis, so completely indispensable to the existence of life and so necessary to the atmospheric balance of oxygen and carbon dioxide essential to life's support. (57)

A considerable amount of scientific evidence in the same vein leads Harris to conclude that:

> It is not just one or two notable coincidences disclosed among the scientific facts we have been reviewing that should excite our interest, but the ubiquitous convergence of conditions towards what is beneficient to the propagation and support of life. The unity of the physical world seems, as it were, to focus itself in this convergence, as if it were the implication of its intrinsic order from the start. The minutest divergence from the initial disposition of forces would have rendered the whole concatenation impossible. (59)

He goes on to add an additional nuance to this conclusion:

> "*[I]f there is only one primary equation from which all physical forces can be deducted* . . . then the delicate equilibria and the precise concurrence of factors that precondition the emergence of life must have been implicit from the beginning." (60, emphasis ours)

When he says that the emergence of life "must have been implicit from the beginning," by "must" he does not simply mean that as a matter of fact the universe must have allowed for the development of life, given that life is here. He means that the universe could not have been other than such as to have developed life. He repeatedly suggests that there is only one possible universe, and that this is the consequence of there being only one primary equation (51, 98, 155 etc). It is hard to understand the reason for insistence on these points. If several primary equations compatible with the appearance of life were possible, would the emergence of life have been any less implicit from the beginning? Why all these contortions simply to eliminate any element of contingency, unless it is because he senses that his basic argument about the wholeness of the universe is faulty?

Harris is aware of the possibility of holding that the initial conditions, although such as to allow for the development of conscious life, might not necessitate the eventual appearance of such observers (cf. 9, 10). In other words, this development of intelligent life may have been a matter of chance, rather than necessity. He never really faces this position head-on, nor does he adequately support his claim that there is only one possible universe, and this closes off to him interesting areas of investigation.

A large part of the wonderment underlying anthropic principles is the amazing number of coincidences involved in the developmental phases of the universe. The actual constitution of the universe is the result of laws of nature which in turn are the result of the initial proportion of total energy to mass. There is no reason to suppose that this initial proportion could not have been other, and thus that the laws of nature could not have been other. With a computer one can extrapolate what kind of universe one would have if, for example, the relation of the electromagnetic force to the weak nuclear force was other than it is. By varying relations between these and other fundamental constants, one can find out what kind of chemical elements would and would not have existed. Scenarios with a universe in which carbon-based life would be absent admit of description. We must be wary, however, of drawing any conclusions based on such extrapolations, for doing so amounts to an appeal to ignorance. If physical theories concerning the origin of the universe were better established than they are,[7] one might argue that some such extrapolations would involve detectable physical contradictions (such as would occur if we imagined a mosquito the size of an elephant), and thus if an extrapolation did not involve a detectable contradiction, this would be some indication that it was really possible. Physics at this point of its development is not able to exclude the possibility that the relations between the forces must be exactly what they are. It may eventually be found that all of them are forms of one basic force, and that this force is tied to the very structure of matter (which is the position Harris would favor). And then again, it may not be.

He is right in insisting that physicists are *unduly* surprised by the close relation between the conditions necessary for life and the constants of nature, for this is largely due to picturing things in a disconnected way characteristic of classical physics. However,

he is wrong in suggesting that they should not have been surprised by the extent of the "fine-tunedness" of the constants allowing for life, for this is not something which could be known in advance. Indeed, as noted above, he himself admits that this "should excite our interest" (59).

A serious weak point in regard to this question is Harris's failure to acknowledge that the coincidences necessary for our existence seem to be of two orders: 1) as already mentioned above, there are coincidences of a determinate nature, e.g. the constants of nature have determinate values which are conducive to life. This is to say, that the particular values are such than almost any others would render life, and especially intelligent life, impossible. 2) in addition to these determinate coincidences there are chance coincidences. It is no doubt these latter which we generally think of when coincidences are invoked, but the term does have a broader extension. A coincidence is the conjunction of two events, without there being a determinate cause of this conjunction. A determinate coincidence, then, is called determinate, not because it has a determinate cause, but because the things which happen together are not together due to chance (an event is chance when it represents an exception to the general rule, thus happening in the fewer number of cases).

Chance coincidences then, precisely insofar as they are due to chance, are unexplainable in terms of the general laws. This would not seem to be the case for the determinate coincidences, since often these may be brought under something more fundamental. Does such a subsumption necessarily always explain them? It would seem not. For example, the ratio of the mass of the electron to that of the proton (something which has extreme importance for the way the universe is), can be subsumed under the individual masses of each: given these masses, they necessarily have the ratio they have. Yet why do they have these respective masses? One could next turn to the properties of the subatomic particles, but then the question becomes: Why are the subatomic particles such as to combine in ways that give the electron a mass x, and the proton a mass y? And so on. Yet another example of this lack of adequate explanation through subsumption is to be found in the ratios between the fundamental forces of nature. One sees the consequences of their having these exact ratios, and one can figure out what would happen if they were other, but this in itself can hardly constitute a fully satisfactory explanation.[8] If, however, scientists were to discover a single equation from which all the others could be derived, then we would be in possession of the only scientifically satisfactory explanation possible. Harris knows that this must be so, if his position is to be vindicated within the explanatory framework he has accepted for it.

Even conceding such a fundamental equation behind the determinate coincidences, there remains the problem of the chance ones. Insofar as these chance coincidences cannot be immediately explained by the general laws of nature as now known, Harris would have to affirm that there are other laws as yet undiscovered, which would render such events highly probable, or even necessary. As already indicated, such a belief can find no justification in science itself unless and until such laws are discovered.

As an example of such apparently chance coincidences, we would cite the problem of our moon. Why does the earth have a moon the size it has? If this could be explained

as the result of the normal evolution of a planet like ours, we would have an answer. Yet the normal evolution of a planet such as ours does not seem to imply so big a moon; our moon is thus not normal.[9] This apparent chance coincidence plays a very important role in the evolution of life: without the moon there would be no large tides such as are necessary for the evolution of certain forms of marine life, and, eventually, of land animals. Numerous other coincidences of this sort are documented in scientific literature.[10] Harris, however, completely fails to recognize them as coincidences of a different sort from those which pertain to laws of nature conducive to life, and thus as requiring a quite different analysis.

What conclusions, if any, can one draw from such a concatenation of chance events, concurring to one and the same end? Can the conjunction of this huge number of coincidences be interpreted in any manner as an indication that the evolution of the universe had intelligent life as its goal? Can anyone (i.e. the human species) be so *lucky*? These kinds of interrogations, taken seriously by many critics of AP, are simply side-stepped by Harris. It has been objected, for instance, that whatever direction or form the evolution of the universe took, there would always be coincidences, and therefore any other scenario than the one which actually obtained would be just as improbable, statistically speaking. The defenders of the argument for goal-directed evolution then respond that the likelihood of things is not just a function of absolute mathematical probability, but must be determined in relation to the level of being and of order that are produced. A house is not as likely a thing as a random (non-orderly) pile of bricks. Put generally, order is far less likely than any state of disorder.

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After considering the evolution of the inanimate universe, Harris turns to the realm of living things. He defines life as "an open system of chemical processes in dynamic equilibrium capable of maintaining its specific form by spontaneous (autugric) adaptation to environing conditions"(65). He then asserts that living things are plainly higher or more complex than non-living things in that they have a capacity of self-maintenance, i.e. the ability to re-adjust themselves in response to external changes in such a way as to sustain their existence. Metabolism he regards as 'the first form of freedom', understanding freedom as self-determination (64).

At this point he asks a crucial question: Can the evolution of the various life forms be satisfactorily explained by random variation plus natural selection? What follows in this section constitutes some of the book's most compelling argumentation. To cite but one example:

> It is not just that the eye is a highly complex organ, but that its effective use is not possible without the coordinated functioning of associated muscles, glands, neural engrams and behavioral dispositions, involving numerous other . . . parts of the body . . . If all these factors were to be supplied piecemeal, by chance mutations, they must occur in the proper sequence and mutual association, which is not only stupendously improbable, but, if the mutations occurred in the wrong

> order, they would be disadvantageous and selection would eliminate them. (81, 82)[11]

While not denying any causality to random variation plus natural selection, he does insist that,

> they are not sufficient to account for the results, which are not additive accumulations of characteristics but intimately and integrally organized systems of structure and function. [A] more organismic account is needed. (83)

His "more organismic account" of things is only a reiteration of the notion of the self-specifying universal's expressing itself. This is followed, however, by a pointed criticism of the idea that evolution is not progressive, but is simply the constant change of living forms subject to natural selection under environmental pressures:

> It has been alleged that mosquitoes have been more successful in adapting themselves to wide difference of climate than have humans. No mosquito [however] is capable of making [such a reflection]. (87)

Such common sense is absent from ch. 7, however, which is devoted to developing the Gaia hypothesis, originally put forward in its modern form by James Lovelock. According to this worthy successor to the world's great myths, the earth is a single organic whole which progressively comes to life, and then maintains it. The earth is composed of living and non-living parts, (just as the body is of living and dead cells), and due to its living parts, it has the ability to re-establish equilibrium in itself, in this way preserving its life. Harris, not surprisingly, finds this a promising hypothesis, since it is similar to his own view that the earth is an individual capable of bringing itself to consciousness in the minds of its member organisms, and in so doing, accomplishing the coming to consciousness of the entire cosmos of which Gaia is a specific phase (cf. 100). While there are doubtless similarities between the earth and an organism, our experience clearly shows us that we are not parts subordinated to a greater whole, at least not in the way that parts of an organism are submitted to the organism. While organic parts such as white blood cells, appear to have a life of their own, in that they grow, reproduce etc., it is plain that they exist for the sake of the whole: they ingest germs not for their good (it generally results in their own death), but for the good of the whole. The relation of humans to the earth is quite different. One might also point out, along with Harris himself, that characteristic of living things is a certain independence or autonomy. Thus while an organic part is defined in terms of the whole, an organism is not defined in terms of its environment.

It also becomes plain that the self-organizing principle he refers to throughout takes its inspiration from the ancient notion of soul (98, 99). Just as the soul is conceived of as the organizing principle responsible for the development of an embryo, and moreover is held to be present in every part of the organism, so too the world soul brings the world to completion, and is implied in every part of it.

Subsequent chapters (8-10) discuss the nature of sensation, and of intelligence. For Harris, intelligence is defined by reflective consciousness or awareness of self. Much of what is said in these chapters takes its inspiration from German idealism, "Naturphilosophie,"[12] process philosophers such as Teilhard, Whitehead, Alexander and Bergson, as well as from Husserl and more recent thinkers such as David Bohm. This is hardly the place to take up possible fundamental objections against these position, most of which must already be familiar to our readers.

The later chapters (11, 12) leave one wondering to what extent Harris's conclusions are really based upon science, as he claims. Is what is being presented finally any more than the age-old idea that there is a hierarchy of being in the world, and a mutual dependence of one being upon another? Science may furnish the details of the mutual interdependence of beings on one another, but the idea itself stretches far back in time; it arises, in fact, quite spontaneously from more generally accessible evidence, such as that of a simple food chain. Furthermore, if science has made us aware that the complexification of beings is an historical process, it is still the task of philosophy to define the nature of this complexification, or of any resultant hierarchy. In *Cosmos and Anthropos*, science seems a kind of footnote to philosophical arguments, and Harris almost admist as much in the closing pages. Although this in itself is not a criticism, since philosophy does have something important to say here, it does suggest that Harris may be unsure from which quarter his arguments are, or should be, coming.

The final chapter (12), as is appropriate, re-examines the arguments from design. Although to be praised, among other things, for its attempt to define the different senses of design, the chapter is far too summary, and contains a number of confusions, such as those mentioned above in respect to the notion of whole. It is a bit ironic that Harris should spend all of three pages examining the possibility that the source of intelligence might be something outside nature, while finding the notion that the initially blind universe created intelligence is itself unproblematic. In the final analysis, Harris maintains that the universe designs itself, and in the place of a 'Supreme Architect' we are presented with a form of necessary emergent pantheism.[13]

In conclusion, we must pass a mixed judgement on this book. While it merits praise for attempting to eliminate ambiguities in previous formulations of the AP, its efforts to arrive at clear, coherent and satisfactory definitions of many key terms too often have fallen short. Moreover, the exact relation of AP to philosophical arguments from design has been left unclarified. Harris finally leaves us with more questions than answers: What is responsible for the ordered development he outlines? Is this movement inevitable or not? Is there a way of reconciling chance coincidences with a necessary movement?

Thus the challenge to vindicate any teleological form of the AP remains. The question of whether modern science supports the notion that the universe is ordered to the development of intelligence awaits those willing and able to grapple with the notions of complexity, finality, order, chance, consciousness, and intelligence.

Notes

1. The authors wish to thank Douglas B. Rasmussen for his helpful comments.

2. A full and nuanced understanding of Harris's philosophical position would require further readings in his other books, such as *Nature, Mind and Modern Science* (1954).

3. A similar critique is made by C. Brown in his review of Barrow and Tipler's *The Anthropic Cosmological Principle*, in *Reason Papers*, Spring 1988, 217-223.

4. In the last chapter, Harris discusses different meanings of 'design'. He concludes that natural forms are designed for the sake of human existence in the sense that "[t]he whole which contemporary physics has revealed . . . necessarily involves the generation of its own observation by intelligent beings, in whose minds it brings itself to consciousness." As to the sense of 'design' which implies a designer, Harris concludes that "If God is conceived as the absolute universal principle of order manifesting itself in and as the universe, and transcending all finite phases, the argument from design, as proof of his existence, can be justified in this, its modern form, without requiring any inference from a contrived plan to a Supreme Architect . . ." (171).

5. Although not necessarily hierarchical, as in ancient cosmologies. This difference would seem to be of some importance in the context in which Harris is working. Indeed, the hierarchical whole is precisely distinguished from the heap by the fact that its parts are unequal in function and value, whereas those of the latter are essentially interchangeable, and have no pre-eminence over one another.

6. Harris's efforts to find such a relationship (17), misses the point: the relationships he is talking about ("mutual effect or influence") are the effects, rather than the cause, of the sticks being together.

7. One problem inherent to speculation concerning the origin of the universe is that of ascertaining whether or not the laws of nature themselves have evolved since the beginning. If in fact physical laws have not always been the same as they are now, present theories which assume this would be seriously flawed.

8. The fruitless character of a question is not always obvious. On this point, see Paul Edwards on "Why" in the *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, xx.

9. Although there is yet no definitive answer as to the origin of the moon, its unique characteristics are readily acknowledged by astronomers. For a serious, but fairly non-technical discussion of this question, see William K. Hartmann, *Moons and Planets*, (Belmont, California, Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1983), 149-151.

10. For one recent, extremely interesting and important example of a coincidence affecting the extinction of many forms of life (including the dinosaurs) and the development of mammalian life, cf. Luis W. Alvarez, "Mass Extinctions Caused by Large Bolid Impacts," in *Physics Today*, July, 1987.

11. Even more developed and convincing arguments are given by geneticist Michael Denton in *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis* (London: Burnett Books, 1985), who argues convincingly that natural selection acting on random variation does not adequately account for evolution beyond the species level. Cf especially chapter thirteen.

12. For example, Harris cites with approval Schelling's views that an organism involves a concept, and that a concept implies the existence of a cognizing mind (103).

13. See note 2 above concerning Harris's views on 'design' and 'designer' in the universe.

"If You're So Rich..." The Economic Approach to Epistemology

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The benefits of reading Nicholas Rescher's *Cognitive Economy: The Economic Dimensions of the Theory of Knowledge* (Pittsburgh: The Univesity of Pittsburgh Press, 1989) outweigh the costs. It takes little time to read; it is clearly written; and many of Rescher's ideas are interesting and novel. Thus reading it is a rational economic decision. This may seem like an odd way of discussing a book, but it fits squarely with Rescher's thesis: Knowledge acquisition "is a human activity which, like any other, requires the expenditures of effort and energy in a way that endows the enterprise with an unavoidable economic dimension. Economic factors shape and condition our cognitive proceedings in so fundamental a way that they demand explicit attention" (150).

1. Descriptive vs. Prescriptive Epistemology

There are essentially two approaches to the theory of knowledge. The first conceives of epistemology as primarily *prescriptive* or *normative.* Epistemology does not begin by looking at how we actually know, but instead tells us how we ought to know. It does not begin by assuming the existence of actual knowledge, but instead places all of our knowledge in "scare quotes" until a norm of justification can be found a priori and a process of global justification can be carried out. Only after such a global justification is carried out can we make use of scientific discoveries about what actual knowledge "looks" like. Thus the normative approach is, overtly or covertly, connected with methodological skepticism.

Unfortunately, the historical trend seems to be that once methodological skepticism is granted and all of our knowledge is suspended in scare quotes, we appear to be bereft of resources with which to disquote our knowledge. Thus methodological skepticism tends to give rise to substantive skepticism and the slide down the slippery slope to solipsism. Indeed, Descartes, who is usually considered the father of this approach to epistemology, was capable of climbing back up the slippery slope only by arguing that complete methodological skepticism involved a performative contradiction: the famous "Cogito" argument.[1]

The prescriptivist approach to epistemology is connected to a particular model of the nature of philosophy and its relationship to the sciences, culture, and practice. In this view, epistemology issues judgments which determine the knowledge status of other disciplines. Philosophy is seen as a sort of hanging judge, requiring the sciences etc. to queue up to face judgment under philosophically legislated norms of method. Those sciences which measure up to these demarcation criteria are judged to be True, those that are not are forever banished to the realm of scare quotes.

As an alternative to a primarily prescriptive approach to epistemology, various pragmatists, naturalists, evolutionary epistemologists, and phemenologists have advocated an approach to knowledge that is primarily descriptive. This approach assumes

(overtly or covertly) that the problem of knowledge is not whether we have it or not, but rather what the knowledge that we do have is like. Knowledge, on this account, is a natural phenomenon. By and large, we have it. The task of epistemology is not to elaborate a set of tests or criteria to identify knowledge; rather, these tests and criteria are created by the inquirers themselves within the context of enquiry and are embodied tacitly in the process of enquiry itself.

Of course on this account epistemology's task is not purely descriptive, especially if "pure" description means simply "gazing" on knowledge without any presuppositions or theoretical constructs. Nor is it descriptive as opposed to practical. Indeed, the ultimate aim of epistemology is not contemplative but practical. Like medicine, which articulates and codifies norms of health which are implicit in actual healthy bodies, epistemology seeks to articulate and then to codify norms of rationality which are immanent in actual knowledge. These norms can then be used to pursue knowledge in a more self-conscious and effective manner. But it always should be kept in mind that these tools of art are based upon and complete the work of nature. They thus depend upon the prior existence and intelligibility of natural knowledge. On this model, philosophy is not the hanging judge of the sciences, but rather a midwife for knowledge.

One of the chief benefits of the descriptive approach is that it is open to being informed by the discoveries of the social and natural sciences. Each new discovery is an opportunity for further reflection on and understanding of the nature of knowledge. Whereas the prescriptive epistemologist must suspend all scientific knowledge in scare quotes until the task of epistemology has been completed, the descriptive epistemologist can accept the discoveries of the sciences as *prima facie* paradigm cases of genuine knowledge. Given this attitude, it is possible to go cheerfully about weaving the discoveries of psychology, neuroscience, evolutionary biology - and even the dismal science of economics - into the fabric of a theory of knowledge. Rescher's *Cognitive Economy* is just such a work.

2. Economics and Finite Knowers

Economic reasoning is very general and can be applied with profit to many different phenomena. Although this was recognized early on in the history of economics, only in the last thirty years has this generality been exploited.[2] The methods of economics are now used to study politics, crime, law, altruism, the family, and many other phenomena.[3] The essential facts which make economics applicable in all these areas are the existence of goals, scare means and choice. Economics applies where it is meaningful to speak of choosing scarce means in order to achieve goals.[4] To apply economics to epistemology we must begin, therefore, by asking: What are our epistemic goals? What means do we have of achieving them? And given that these means are scarce, how can we apply them so that our goals are best achieved? In other words, we want to compare the costs and benefits of knowledge acquisition using rational criteria, so that net returns are maximized.

The first half of chapter one introduces the basic components of Rescher's arguments: benefits, costs, and rationality. The cost of knowledge acquisition is the time, effort, and

resources which must be foregone in other endeavors. The benefits of knowledge are both practical and cognitive. Knowledge gives us a greater control over nature, which allows us to better achieve our ends. But it also brings purely cognitive or psychological benefits: "The basic human urge to make sense of things is a characteristic aspect of our make-up - we cannot live a satisfactory life in an environment we do not understand . . . cognitive disorientation is actually stressful and distressing" (8). Rationality is about acting efficiently; it is the process of maximizing net benefits (benefits-costs). Or, as Rescher writes, "Rational inquiry is a matter of epistemic optimization" (13).

3. Skepticism

Given Rescher's economic framework, skepticism is irrational. Typically, skepticism arises from judging the finite knowledge of human beings by standards which are appropriate only to gods, standards such as absolute, non-revisable, non-contextual Truth; absolute certainty; diaphanous clarity; total articulation, etc. When human knowing does not measure up to these standards, the standards are not simply revised to bring them in line with human capacities. Instead, knowledge and certainty, clarity and articulation are declared impossible for human beings.

As Rescher puts it, skepticism is a form of risk aversion. The skeptic will accept nothing which is not "ironclad."[5] Since little knowledge of interest is "ironclad," the skeptic accepts next to nothing. This, however, is foolish for two reasons. First, it results from the application of inappropriate standards to human knowing. Second, once knowledge is discussed in the context of finite human actors pursuing their ends, skepticism, in counseling risk aversion, ignores the fact that knowledge has benefits, whether psychological or practical. As H.H. Price puts it "Safety first is not a good motto, however tempting it may be to some philosophers. The end we seek to achieve is to acquire as many correct beliefs as possible on as many subjects as possible."[6] To this inevitably means that cognitive risks must be taken. Skepticism ultimately fails because it proposes that we act uneconomically. It proposes that we minimize risk instead of balancing costs and benefits to achieve maximum total return. But, as Rescher puts it, if "accident avoidance were all that mattered, we could take our mechanical technology back to the stone age, and our cognitive technology as well"[7] (24).

This argument, however, as Rescher recognizes, is not likely to convince a skeptic. But this is hardly a cause for surprise, for the argument is meant only to convince those who will reasonably weigh the benefits and the costs of accepting the argument as true.

4. Scientific Communities

Chapter two of *Cognitive Economy*, "The Economics of Trust and Cooperation," argues that it is in the self-interest of individuals involved in a cognitive enterprise to band together to form a community. While I believe this to be true, Rescher's arguments are not sufficient to establish this conclusion. He presents the following "interaction matrix" to illustrate the benefits of cooperation.

	You trust me	You do not trust me
I trust you	2/2	4/1
I do not trust you	1/4	3/3

The numbers are preference rankings, 1 being the highest and 4 the lowest. The ideal situation for me and the worst for you is if you trust me, but I do not trust you. Therefore, I rank this situation as 1 and you rank it as 4 (the lower left corner of the interaction matrix). Rescher argues that the final outcome must be symmetric since incentives are the same for both sides. He therefore eliminates the upper right and the lower left corners. It is then ("obviously") better for both individuals to trust each other because 2/2 is better than 3/3.

Unfortunately there is nothing obvious about this result. This game is known to economists and other social scientists as the "prisoner' dilemma."[8] It is a dilemma because the rational strategy for you and I as individuals leads to a situation that we as a community would find irrational. To see this, assume that I will trust you. What then is your best strategy? Since 1 is preferred to 2, you will choose not to trust me if you believe that I will trust you. Now assume that I will not trust you. What then is your best strategy? If I am not going to trust you, then you are better off not trusting me (3 is preferred to 4). No matter what you assume about my actions, your best strategy is not to trust me. This is also my best strategy since the game is symmetric. Our individual rationality thus leads us into a socially irrational situation.[9]

Economists and other social scientists have written a great deal about this problem and how it is solved. The Hobbesian solution is for you and I to contract with a third party to punish either of us if we depart from the cooperative outcome (trust, trust). By increasing the cost of not trusting, the punisher makes it in both of our self-interests to cooperate. If we substitute theft for trust in the interaction matrix, we can see that government enforcement of property rights and provision of jails are one way that we have gotten out of the theft dilemma.

Another possible approach is the evolutionary, or "tit for tat" solution. If you and I play the game repeatedly then we may eventually learn to cooperate. Deviating from the rational solution may cost a little bit on the first turn, but if I can signal to you that I am willing to cooperate and you respond, then we can both be better off in the long run. If one of us should then choose to deviate from the cooperative solution, he can be punished by not being trusted on the next round (hence "tit for tat").[10]

Another problem with Rescher's approach to these and similar questions is that he seems to have adopted the idea (popular among many economists) that "What is, is efficient." Communities are beneficial, but their creation, like everything else, involves costs. Communities, for instance, impose costs on those who do not cooperate, even when trust and cooperation may not be beneficial. Distrust, for instance, can create a competitive atmosphere which drives people to work harder and faster in pursuit of their goals. A brief review of James Watson's *The Double Helix* should disabuse anyone of the notions that the scientific community is always one of trust and cooperation, and that cooperation is always beneficial. Intellectual communities can also breed conformity. They are most

beneficial when doing what Kuhn calls "normal science," but in the face of paradigm shifters, innovators who break the rules, communities may retard progress. Obviously the benefits of communities outweigh the occasional costs they impose upon innovators, but we should recognize that these costs exist, for by being aware of them we may find ways of minimizing them yet further.[11]

5. Simplicity and Induction

Two of the most interesting chapters of *Cognitive Economy* are on scientific methodology, the problem of induction, and their relationship to economics. One of the most persistent errors in philosophy is to take methodological rules of thumb to imply something about reality. Why, for instance, is a simple and general theory to be preferred to a complex and specific one? "Realists" try to defend this preference by arguing that the fact that simple and general theories predict well can be explained only if the world is in fact governed by simple and general laws.

Unfortunately, once proponents of the principle of simplicity and generality claim that it is realistically grounded, the principle becomes open to empirical refutation. For instance, the overthrow of Bohr's model of the atom for quantum physics, or of Newton's theories for Einstein's, is taken as evidence that simple and general theories cannot be supported on empirical grounds. Therefore, one can reason, there is no rationale for preferring such theories.[12]

Rescher puts induction and our preference for simple and general theories on a firm epistemological basis, grounding them not in the way the world is, but in the economic nature of a finite knower's rationality. Regardless of "how complex or untidy the world may turn out to be," the commitment to simplicity "remains a methodological desideratum" (93) simply because the finitude of rationality requires that we resolve cognitive problems "in the most economic way compatible with an adequate use of the information" (88). There is no ontological claim being made when we prefer simple theories to complex ones. The only claim made is about the optimal method of acting in the face of scarcity.

The same argument justifies our use of induction. Induction always involves moving from limited information to general conclusions not "strictly" supportable on the grounds of that information. Should that fact disturb us? Do we need to underwrite induction with metaphysical argument? Not at all. Because of their infinite intellects, gods have no need of induction and may look down upon the procedure. Man, however, because of his finite intellect, must always begin with limited information and extend his conclusions beyond it. From a God's eye point of view, induction may make us uncomfortable, but perhaps then we should simply change our point of view. If we condemn induction from a God's eye point of view, we will be cognitively bereft. But if we abandon the standards of the gods and accept the risk of being occasionally wrong and having to revise our generalizations, then the possibility of - and the motivation for - discovering truth increases immensely. Rescher makes this point well:

> Induction is a method of question resolution in the face of imperfect information. It is a resource for use by finite intelligences, a process that yields not the best possible answers (in some rarefied sense of this term) but the best available answers, the best that we can realistically manage to secure in the difficult conditions in which we do and must conduct our epistemic labors. (87)

But although Rescher has gone a long way toward grounding epistemological principles in the nature of finite knowers rather than on metaphysical considerations, he does not go far enough, eventually trying to ground them in an evolutionary tale:

> To be sure, this methodological/procedural tale is not the whole story. There is also, in the final analysis, a substantive aspect to the matter of induction's justification. Our intellectual tastes (for simplicity, elegance, etc. as we naturally construe these ideas) are, like our physical tastes (palatability), the products of evolutionary pressure to prioritize those things that work - that prove effective and are thus survival conducive . . . The question of the seemingly pre-established harmony coordinating of these two theoretically disparate factors of convenience and effectiveness is ultimately resolved on the basis of evolutionary considerations in the order of rational selection. (102, 107).

There are several problems with these passages. Rescher is arguing that those theories we think of as simple, convenient, and elegant turn out also to be effective because evolution selected brains which found effective theories to be simple, convenient, and elegant as well.[13] To unpack this argument and see its faults, we have to define very carefully what is meant by a simple theory.[14] Our ordinary understanding of "simple" makes it a close synonym for "easy," but I shall draw a sharp distinction between these two terms. An easy theory is one that an ordinary person can understand with little mental exertion. Some things that make a theory easy are its amenability to being expressed visually, or with only a few variables, or with low-level mathematics.[15] A simple theory, by contrast, is (1) the easiest theory to understand which is also (2) *in accordance with the known evidence.* It is therefore no contradiction to say that quantum mechanics is a simple theory which is not easy to understand. A theory that is easy to interpret is not the same thing as a theory which is good at interpreting experience.

With this distinction in mind we can re-examine Rescher's argument. Does there exist a "pre-established harmony" between "convenience and effectiveness" which needs to be explained? I am assuming that by "effectiveness" Rescher means something like a theory's connecting, or "clicking," or "meshing" with the real world. The second condition of a simple theory - that it be in accordance with all known evidence - indicates that all simple theories must be effective, because if they are not effective, then we do not consider them to be simple theories at all. The fact then that simplicity and effectiveness are in harmony is on this reading tautological. A simple theory is always "effective" in dealing with the evidence.

But perhaps the harmony that Rescher is talking about is between easiness and effectiveness. If so, then this is clearly wrong. Newton's mechanics is much easier to

understand than Einstein's. Therefore, if our ideas of ease have been optimized with the environment, why isn't Newton's theory true? We would all have to be much better at stochastic calculus, finite element analysis, and topology to think that effective theories are also easy theories to understand.

We can concretize this argument through a foray into Martian epistemology. Suppose that we someday meet intelligent Martians, and that their idea of what is simple is somewhat different from our own. Due to the wiring of their nervous systems they are able to solve in a few seconds mathematical problems which take human super-computers months. Suppose that both humans and Martians were to originate theories explaining phenomenon X. There are three possibilities vis-a-vis the Martian theory: either it explains more data than ours; it explains less; or it explains (roughly) the same amount. If the last is the case, then there is no reason for either side to adopt the theory of the other. Let us say, however, that their theory explains considerably more than our own. Rationality would then require that we abandon our own theory and adopt theirs (or to significantly alter our own theory, which amounts to the same thing). Moreover, we must now judge their theory to be the simplest. But in virtue of what? Because of its advanced mathematics, their theory is not the easiest to understand. But presumably our own "simplest" theory was not the easiest to understand either, so this is no reason not to label their theory the simplest. And no matter how difficult to understand their theory might be, there is a potential infinity of even more difficult theories. Presumably, then, the Martian theory must be judged simplest not in terms of its ease, but in terms of its adequacy to the known evidence.

This discussion introduces another reason for economically rational beings to adopt simple theories, one which Rescher does not mention. Holding the variable of adequacy to evidence constant, we can see that there is a fundamental asymmetry between complex and easy theories - "complex" being used as the antonym for easy. While there is at most a handful of equally easy theories that explain all the available evidence, there is an infinite number of complex theories which do the job. By a complex theory, I mean one that is harder to understand (because it has more variables - or epicycles - for example) but explains the same amount of evidence. Given this potential infinity of theories of differing difficulties but equal adequacy to the evidence, the choice of easiness as a criterion of theory choice is sound. That is, given the finitude of our cognitive resources, this route minimizes cognitive costs, even though from the perspective of a rarefied epistemology such a criterion may appear arbitrary.

A final note on this issue. At the margin there is an economic tradeoff between easiness and adequacy to all known evidence. The simplest theory therefore has a fuzzy penumbra around it such that it would be legitimate not to abandon an old theory in favor of a new, more difficult theory, which explains only a little bit more of evidence. This coheres well with the above analysis of easiness as a criterion for theory choice. Since there is an infinite number of more complex theories, it is also likely that there is a large number of more complex theories which explain slightly more evidence. Given this we are right to be suspicious of such theories and to prefer instead the simpler theory which explains a bit less of the evidence. To put it in other terms, any basis of preference among

more difficult theories which explain a little bit more of the evidence is arbitrary, since we can expect that there is a great number of such theories.

In summary, we will always prefer a simple theory to a more complex one. We need not and cannot justify this on the basis of metaphysical considerations, whether these be direct or indirect, via evolutionary arguments. Simplicity is justified on economic considerations, which are in turn grounded in the finitude and active nature of consciousness.

6. Areas for Further Research

Thus far in discussing theory choice I have passed by the question: Who is doing the choosing? Whose benefits and whose costs are at issue? Yet if we are to apply economic insights to theory choice we must have a definite set of individual choosers in mind, people for whom the issue of costs and benefits is meaningful.

In the preceding discussion, I have had in mind a specific set of individuals, an elite of scientists at the cutting edges of their fields. For these people it makes sense to say that a complex theory which explains more evidence is to be preferred to an easier theory. The goal of such individuals is pure understanding and explanation, and if this comes at the price of complexity, so be it. But other individuals face different costs and benefits and must modify their decisions accordingly. A teacher, for example, will be willing to give up explanatory power in return for simplicity. Furthermore, the willingness to make such a tradeoff will depend on the teachers' audience. Moreover, applied scientists and engineers face similar questions when faced with differing practical contexts. An individual's choice of theory cannot be divorced from his or her goals.

Even for the pure scientist, it is unlikely to be rational to work with only a single theoretical framework, even if it is the simplest available. On the cost side there is always the possibility that new evidence will raise the value of previously inferior theories. A risk-averse individual does not put all of his eggs in one basket. On the benefit side, theories can be complements as well as substitutes. For instance, learning a second language often helps one to understand the subtleties of one's native tongue, and some ideas are easier to express in one language than in another. The same is true of scientific theories. Contra Thomas Kuhn, who argues that "the scientist does not preserve the Gestalt subject's freedom to switch back and forth between ways of seeing,"[16] a good scientist can develop the ability to move between different theoretical frameworks as the context requires. Learning neo-classical economics, for instance, no more requires that one forget Austrian economics than learning German requires than one forget English. The issue of theory choice is not, then, a matter of choosing the one right theory, but rather of developing a facility for employing different theories appropriately in different contexts.

An economic approach to theory choice also throws new light on Kuhn's "paradigm shifts." A common feature of paradigm shifts is that seemingly small confirmations of a new paradigm will result in the widespread abandonment of the old paradigm, especially among the younger generation of scientists.[17] New theories, in short, are often adopted

long before all the evidence is in. Many readers - Kuhn, however, not among them - have concluded from this that science is an essentially irrational activity, governed by fads, fashions, and mood swings rather than by hard facts. Kuhn himself likens a paradigm shift to a religious conversion or a Gestalt switch.

While we need not doubt that people experience paradigm shifts in this way, an economic approach suggests a different interpretation. It is interesting to note that similar arguments have been used to argue that the stock market is irrational. Economists, however, have argued compellingly that the stock market is efficient and rational,[18] and I shall argue on similar grounds that the scientific "market" is rational as well, i.e. that massive paradigm shifts based upon little evidence are not irrational.

A paradigm may be likened to a stock. The current price of a stock is determined not by its present dividends, but by its expected future dividends. Hence the well-known economic phenomenon that a small increase in the dividend of a stock, can have huge effect on the stock's price. Stock prices can swing wildly on seemingly small pieces of information, if those pieces of information raise expectations of permanent change. The case of paradigm shifts is directly analgous. A paradigm is accepted not because of its current evidence, but because of the expectation of future confirmations. A paradigm is adopted today not because it answers yesterday's questions, but because it is expected to answer tomorrow's - not because of what it did explain, but because of what it will explain.[19] Thus a single experiment, even if it provides only weak evidence in favor of a new paradigm, can result in mass conversions if the experiment is believed to indicate a permanent change. In short, the rationality of science, like the rationality of the market, is not "positivistic." That is: it does not base belief and action solely upon the data *presently given* (posited), but upon *expectations* of what is to come. Paradigm shifts with little supporting evidence do not, therefore, indicate any irrationality of the scientific marketplace. Rather, they indicate the economic rationality and entrepreneurial spirit of scientists questing for new truths.

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Ludwig von Mises once noted that economics is called the dismal science because its realist, bottom-line approach is forever throwing cold water upon the utopian dreams of would-be reformers, those who would attempt the "rational" reconstruction of society according to some plan of their devising. Rescher has begun the important task of throwing some cold water into the field of epistemology. The economic approach to epistemology turns our attention away from utopian questions about Truth and Justification to the bottom line questions of benefit and cost. What are the benefits of this procedure of enquiry compared to its alternatives? What are the costs? How can we achieve as much truth as possible, given our finite intellectual resources? Perhaps these questions are mundane, even dismal, but I suspect that asking them will be a profitable enquiry.

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Notes

1. For an account of Descartes's *Cogito* as a performative contradiction, see Jaako Hintikka, "*Cogito, Ergo Sum: Inference or Performance?*" in Willis Doney, ed., *Descartes: A Collection of Critical Essays* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1968). For a more recent discussion of this issue, see Margaret Dauler Wilson, *Descartes* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982).

2. Naussau Senior was one of the first economists to argue for the general applicability of economic reasoning. More recently Ludwig von Mises argued in *Human Action* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1949) that economics is simply the best developed part of a completely general science of human action which he calls praxeology.

3. Economist Gary Becker has been a key figure behind the new economic imperialism. See *The Economic Approach to Human Behavior* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976) and *A Treatise on the Family*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991). For applications to politics, see Gwartlney and Wagner, eds., *Public Choice and Constitutional Economics* (Greenwich, Conn.: JAI Press, 1988). On law, see Richard A. Posner, *Economic Analysis of Law*, 3rd ed. (Boston: Little- Brown, 1986).

4. Choice and goals must be interpreted broadly, since economics can apply to the actions of animals other than humans. See, for example, Kagel et al, "Experimental Studies of Consumer Demand Behavior using Laboratory Animals," *Economic Inquiry* 13 (1975): 22-38.

5. Rescher notes by way of contrast that radical Popperians such as Feyerabend are cognitive risk lovers, willing to gullibly accept just about anything (17).

6. Quoted in Rescher (21).

7. Rescher is categorizing epistemological theories on the basis of their approach to risk. Much the same thing has been done with ethical theories. In particular, Rawls's difference principle will not be unanimously accepted behind the veil of ignorance unless individuals are extremely risk averse. (See R.E. Howe and J.E. Roemer, "Rawlsian Justice as the Core of a Game," *American Economic Review* 71 [1981]: 880-895.) Introspection, causal empiricism, and experimental evidence suggest that this level of risk aversion is not the case. See N. Frolich, J.A. Oppenheimer and C.L. Eavery, "Laboratory Results on Rawls's Distributive Justice," *British Journal of Political Science* 17 (1987): 1-21. Dennis Mueller, in *Public Choice 2* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), ch. 21, summarizes this literature.

8. Rescher refers to the prisoner's dilemma as such in his notes, but nowhere does he recognize the paradoxical nature of the problem.

9. Note that the phrase "socially irrational" is not meant to suggest that society as such has preferences or rationality. It refers only to the fact that the outcome to which our individual rationality leads us is worse, from the point of view of each of us, than the outcome we would have achieved had we both acted "irrationally."

10. Robert Axelrod, in *The Evolution of Cooperation* (New York: Basic Books, 1984), explores in detail the tit for tat solution and its relevance to real world institutions. He also discusses the results of an extensive computer tournament which pitted prisoner's dilemma strategies against one another. Tit for tat is a very robust strategy. It performs very well in a great variety of environments.

11. As a minor step in this direction I suggest that we abolish a pet peeve of mine: single-blind refereeing. At present many journals have a single-blind system: the referee knows who the author is, but the author does not know the referee. Under a single-blind system referees may dismiss the work of an unknown author who departs from traditional analysis. And referees are also likely to be lenient to well-known authors, regardless of the quality of their present work. Under a double-blind system referees would have a greater incentive to review all work more carefully.

12. The nature of this debate is well brought out in Arthur Fine, *The Shaky Game: Einstein, Realism and the Quantum Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), though I do not subscribe to his solution.

13. One early sign that Rescher's argument may be awry comes in his use of the phrase "rational selection." The correct phrase is "natural selection." Although there is always a temptation to believe that evolution is necessarily a progressive and perfecting force, this must be resisted.

14. The other attributes Rescher mentions - convenience and elegance - can be defined in a manner similar to that of simplicity. The argument therefore applies to all of these attributes.

15. Note that some of these - such as visualizability - are specific to certain kinds of living things, while others - such as few variables - are more generally applicable.

16. Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 85.

17. The fact that a new theory is most readily adopted by the younger generation of scientists has a clear economic explanation. The older generation has developed human capital in the old theory; they know how to use it, what tools it requires, what predictions it makes, etc. The opportunity cost of changing is therefore higher for them.

18. The Spring 1990 issue of the *Journal of Economic Perspectives* has a readable symposium on fads, fashions, and "bubbles" in the stock markets.

19. Past success is, of course, a relevant factor for gauging future performance. But this is not always the case, for the emergence of novelty is an undeniable fact; new inventions may revolutionize a market just as new phenomena and new theoretical insights may revolutionize science. And the essence of novelty is precisely that it cannot be predicted, nor can it be calculated in advance in terms of known probability ratios.

moral and political "crisis," which has its source in the atomization of the individual, a severing of psychologically necessary communal ties which is unnatural and unhealthy. The growth of materialism and the decline of religious belief, they claim, have caused the alienation of the modern individual from society. Secondly, they blame liberalism for these developments and specifically target liberal political thought. The antiliberals see ideas as primary causal forces, and this assumption is central to their critique of liberalism: "That the modern 'crisis' has intellectual origins is crucial for all antiliberals . . . Some important spiritual truth, well known to preliberal societies, was repressed as lost. Social amnesia, with catastrophic consequences, was philosophically induced" (6-7). It is not simply that antiliberals place great weight upon, or overestimate, the power of ideas, though Holmes suggests that they do. What is of interest here is that they look to the preliberal past for ideas and modes of social interaction which they juxtapose with those of liberal societies. The third phase of the antiliberal argument follows with apparent clarity: "If the repressed truth can be retrieved, modern society will not only be diagnosed, it will also be miraculously or heroically cured"(7). This general outline, Holmes says, places a work in the antiliberal tradition.

The Antiliberals

Holmes divides antiliberals into two general types. Some accept unequal status and violence as political norms, and others tend to shy away from the more illiberal implications of their views.

> Antiliberals hostile to Enlightenment universalism can be grouped into hardliners and softliners. The former are ruthless, the latter are lax. Hard antiliberals damn liberalism from a wholly nonliberal point of view and dare to draw the shocking political consequences. Soft antiliberals malign liberalism verbally, but when faced with practical choices, reveal a fondness for liberal protections and freedoms (88).

Maistre, Schmitt and Strauss are hard antiliberals, and the remainder Holmes discusses are soft. One attribute hard and soft antiliberals share is a longing for communal solidarity. They hold a highly cohesive community essential, either for social order, individual well-being, or both, and reject liberal individualism as destructive, dangerous and unnatural.

Maistre contends that liberals have a naive understanding of the individual; there is no abstract individual or human nature upon which political theory can be founded. We rely on tradition because there is no such thing as a human being apart from inherited norms. The social nature of individuals is based in part on human psychology. People have an emotional need for community with others that drives all human beings into groups. Psychological gratification, however, is clearly not sufficient to morally oblige us to form or preserve communities. (Burke and Hume hold that such an obligation arises from a tacit contract to secure benefits from reciprocal cooperation under a framework of conventional rules, but this is a liberal view.) Maistre's argument is theologically grounded; God made human beings to live in society, and the Divine will is the source of

Book Section

The Anatomy of Antiliberalism

Stephen Holmes (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993).

Stephen Holmes' *The Anatomy of Antiliberalism* should prove a welcome addition to the debate between communitarians and liberals.[1] He defines the antiliberal style of thought and distinguishes its critique of liberalism from that offered by Marxists. While Marxists focus on alienated labor and inequality in liberal societies, nonmarxist antiliberals attack the individualist and universalist values of liberal political theory and view the degree to which these values are realized in liberal societies as a moral tragedy. Holmes traces the continuity of central antiliberal ideas over the last two centuries and subjects them to critical examination. He also appraises the antiliberal reading of liberal political theory and provides convincing evidence that it is faulty. Any student of political theory should find Holmes' book valuable and pleasant reading. It is informative, lively, and contains sharp political analysis.

Defining Nonmarxist Antiliberalism

The first part of Holmes' book is devoted to an examination of several major antiliberal theorists. It is not intended as a history of antiliberal thought; Holmes fixes his attention on six figures whom he believes display the essential attributes of nonmarxist antiliberalism: Joseph de Maistre, Carl Schmitt, Leo Strauss, Alasdair MacIntyre, Christopher Lasch, and Roberto Unger. Undoubtedly the last four would object to being thrown in with Maistre and Schmitt, but Holmes aims to show that these writers, enamored of community and tradition, have neglected their intellectual forerunners. Holmes in fact does an admirable job of tracing the persistence of certain themes in antiliberal thought. The bases on which they reject liberalism displayed shared assumptions about human nature and society; their account of the "crisis" of liberal societies grounds social criticism in analysis of liberal political theory, as if liberal principles have been fully realized; their policy prescriptions are either vague, impracticable, or nonexistent. Holmes says of his project that:

> I will have succeeded maximally if I convince the reader of nonmarxist antiliberalism's shortcomings.
> I will have succeeded minimally if I bring nonmarxist antiliberalism into focus as a unified subject for theoretical scrutiny and partisan debate. (xvi)

Holmes succeeds in illuminating the intellectual sources of nonmarxist antiliberalism, and he clarifies the questionable and sometimes disturbing views of social life and the individual that stand behind the critique of liberalism these writers present.

Holmes suggests that "antiliberalism is as much a mindset as a theory . . . their enmity is typically lavished on individualism, rationalism, humanitarianism, rootlessness, permissiveness, universalism, materialism, skepticism, and cosmopolitanism"(5). The antiliberals adopt a common strategy in their approach to liberalism. First, they identify a

our moral obligation. Holmes suggests that there is a logical gap in present-day antiliberal reasoning:

> Why do our contemporary "communitarians" habitually treat "the social" as a moral obligation rather than an inevitable condition? Here is a partial response: the antiliberal style of reasoning, which seems illogical today, originally depended on theological premises that later dropped from sight. When no longer based on the idea of a divine injunction, however, the claim that man's sociality is morally binding becomes unintelligible". (17)

Schmitt derives a communal value from intergroup conflict. Group conflict lends direction and significance to the individual's life. Nationalism and war likewise give meaning to politics, and liberals thoroughly misunderstand the nature of politics. Politics is conflict between groups, not simply social interests or ideas, and it must be resolved by the destruction of one side rather than by compromise, as liberals mistakenly believe. Schmitt's claim that liberal democracies cannot survive in a dangerous world is, as Holmes notes, thoroughly unconvincing.

MacIntyre derives communal obligation via Aristotelian teleology. The function of a thing is its good; a good person is one who serves the community through performance of a function specified by the traditions of the community into which they were born. Holmes points to a flaw in MacIntyre's argument. MacIntyre holds that in fulfilling social roles the individual realizes the human essence, but this idea conflicts with his claim that liberalism is wrong in its foundational assumption of the abstract individual. It is also a problem for MacIntyre because his functional concept of the individual fails to "define the human *telos* apart from actual social institutions and concrete social demands" (103). The manner in which Holmes moves from Schmitt, the legal theorist of National Socialism, to the "soft" antiliberal MacIntyre is thought provoking. Because antiliberals reject universal values, there is no reasonable ground on which a "soft" antiliberal such as MacIntyre could categorically reject a Schmittian view of politics. MacIntyre's particularism provides no basis for defying the collective purpose of one's group. Duty to the group lends moral meaning to the individual's life, but this provides no foundation for duties to members of other groups. Liberal universalism can supply a justification for duties to other societies and their members, but antiliberalism cannot.

Holmes presents an incisive critique of communitarianism. Communitarians claim that liberalism fails to provide the social cohesion essential to human well-being; a deep, comprehensive moral consensus is a psychological and political necessity for a healthy community. Communitarians, however, "never provide sufficient detail about the national political institutions they favor to allow us to compare the advantages and disadvantages of illiberal community with the vices and virtues of the liberal societies we know" (178). They say nothing of minority rights and toleration of dissent, presumably because that would commit them to liberal principles. Political history discloses innumerable cases of attempts to establish the solidarity and consensus communitarians admire, and these have been terribly destructive. If community is an overriding value, what means are to be excluded for the sake of attaining it? The communitarians' quiet on this point may reflect

the unwillingness of "soft" antiliberals to bite the bullet and accept the full implications of their political views. Liberals, on the other hand, have a clear position:

> Unlike communitarians, liberals view community discriminatingly. Solidarity is good or bad, depending on its results. Group identity is morally welcome when it supports the universalistic distribution of individual rights to all individuals regardless of the place of birth, race, ethnic group, religion, gender, and so forth. It is unwelcome when it inhibits such a liberal distribution of rights. (297)

Liberals possess universalistic standards to evaluate collective goals, but communitarians do not. Moreover, the absence of a Maistrean theological premise haunts present-day communitarians: "From the uncontroversial premise that 'man is a social animal', communitarians draw the highly controversial conclusion that a warm and solidaristic social order is morally obligatory. But the inference is bogus. They deduce a 'value' from a 'fact' only by a conceptual slight of hand" (179). Communitarians also employ their primary fact in confused ways. They maintain that liberals are wrong in (allegedly) ignoring the social nature of individuals, but communitarians also hold that liberal societies have produced atomized individuals. They cannot have it both ways; people cannot be social and asocial simultaneously. "It is obviously contradictory to say that liberal individuals do not exist and that the ones who exist are excruciatingly unhappy" (182).

Antiliberals attack their opponents for weakening authority. Maistre sees liberalism as a revolt against the Divine authority vested in political institutions; Schmitt sees it as the triumph of a greedy and disloyal middle class. Strauss and MacIntyre blame the conflictual politics of modern democracies on the absence of firm authority. Antiliberals tend to admire the politics of ancient Greece and medieval Europe, but as Holmes points out, they do not explain why the political conflict which occurred in these political systems was superior to that which we experience today. Antiliberals seem unperturbed by the presence of liberal states that wield authority effectively; liberalism, they contend, must erode authority. While liberals maintain that authority can be rationally justified, antiliberals hold that it must be supported by myths, especially religious belief. Science, which antiliberals associate with liberal rationalism, is particularly destructive in this respect. From Maistre to MacIntyre and Lasch, antiliberals charge science with fostering materialism, hedonism and doubt. The scientific world view supposes that nature can be understood and mastered, and thus destroys the myths on which authority and community rely. As Holmes points out, the attack on science yields no policy prescriptions. No form of government has proven able to guide technological progress in a particularly desirable direction and, even if one dislikes the cultural impact of scientific inquiry, it is difficult to imagine bringing it to a halt.

Roberto Unger stands out among the antiliberals Holmes examines. The others argue that liberalism is deficient for destroying communal solidarity, but Unger argues that liberalism is too repressive. Holmes here introduces another means of categorizing antiliberals by dividing them into "communitarian conservatives" and "counterculture radicals" (141). Unger holds that liberalism dulls the aesthetic sense and stifles self-expression. Liberal political thought, he contends, urges us toward the mundane and oppressively restricts our experience of life. Rule-bound liberal societies confine our

freedom to act as we will. Unger's policy proposals are incongruous with his concerns about liberalism. He wants a highly responsive majoritarian democracy with powers to control investment decisions and break up concentrations of wealth. It is strange that Unger believes this will promote defiant self-assertion. As Holmes indicates, this sort of critique ignores liberal claims concerning the significance of autonomy and self-development found in Kant, J.S. Mill and Humboldt, among others. Not every liberal will hold, with Bentham, that push pins are as good as poetry, and marginal utility theory is not the centerpiece of liberal political thought. If liberal citizens prefer potato chips to Picasso, liberal political theory is not to blame. Holmes has a purpose in examining Unger, the countercultural radical, along with the communitarian conservatives.

Both sides have grasped one half of the truth, as it were, and jointly they cancel each other out. Together, they suggest a position close to commonsense. Liberalism is neither anarchical nor tyrannical. It is both more constricting than communitarian conservatives charge and less constricting than countercultural radicals claim. It is a philosophy of limits as well as a philosophy of freedom. It imposes important constraints on individuals, including prohibitions against violent self-help and against self-exemption from laws that should apply to all. But it also helps preserve the fragile institutional preconditions for personal choice as well as for the democratic correction of collective mistakes (142).

Antiliberals fail to grasp liberal life and institutions, and they misunderstand liberal political thought.

Antiliberals attack liberalism through the device of "antonym substitution" (253). Where liberals wanted competition rather than monopoly, for example, antiliberals say they favored competition over brotherly love. Antonym substitution is not necessarily a conscious strategy pursued by antiliberal writers, but it is a means by which they misunderstand and misrepresent liberal ideas. Antiliberals take liberal ideas out of the historical context in which they emerged and systematically pervert them. In particular, they misinterpret the liberal conception of the individual and the meaning of liberal constraints on power. Antiliberals assert, for example, that liberals assume human beings are naturally asocial. As Holmes notes, one need only look to liberal texts, such as Hume's social and ethical thought, for evidence to the contrary. Moreover, contractarian arguments, such as Locke's and Kant's, do not presuppose the existence of social atoms. A liberal can consistently maintain that individuals' purposes ought not to be subordinated to those of others, and thus demand consent (actual or hypothetical) to authority, without denying that human beings flourish only in society. Nor is liberalism essentially hedonistic and acquisitive, as antiliberals hold. Instead, property rights, by decentralizing power, facilitate the individual and group pursuit of non-economic goals. Antiliberals maintain that liberals despise authority and reject any notion of the common good. Liberals such as Madison and Smith, however, believe that "justice, self-rule, and the fruits of peaceful coexistence are all common goods. They are enjoyed by individuals, to be sure, but jointly, not atomistically" (200). The procedural and substantive limits on power that protect these values are the source of a liberal state's authority; liberalism and anarchism are distinct political theories. Liberal individualism does not, as antiliberals claim, constitute a rejection of the public sphere. In fact, Holmes suggests, "liberalism might even be defined

as a systematic attempt to *restrict the private abuse of public institutions*" (207). The rule of law is not a purely private value.

A Note on the Communitarian Conservatives

One possible weakness of Holmes' book is that he does not discuss the differences between conservatives and traditionalist liberals, on the one hand, and the communitarian antiliberals, on the other. Some elements of the antiliberal critique might be found in the writings of a theorist who will not adopt the argument wholesale, and thus remains a conservative, or even a liberal. F.A. Hayek, for example, maintains that the mind is a product of accumulated tradition and sees in custom the source of human rationality and ethical obligation.[2] His political thought, however, is distinctly liberal. Tradition, for Hayek, is a means to material progress because it is more likely to be useful than the products of design. A conservative, such as Russell Kirk, may share the antiliberal's fear of atomization brought on by the market: "it turned the world inside out. Personal loyalties gave way to financial relationships. The wealthy man ceased to be magistrate and patron; he ceased to be neighbor to the poorman; he became a mass-man, very often, with no purpose in life but aggrandizement."[3] Despite his frustration, Kirk will not condemn the modern West as does the antiliberal; his very conservatism restrains him. Conservatism, as Oakeshott puts it, "is a disposition appropriate to a man who is acutely aware of having something to lose which he has learned to care for; a man in some degree rich in opportunities for enjoyment, but not so rich that he can afford to be indifferent to loss."[4] The conservative may bemoan and even resist change, but he will never seek to destroy what makes the present possible because he wants to retain what is valuable in existing conditions. The antiliberal, on the other hand, sees little of value in the liberal present, strikes at the heart of it and seeks to replace it with some long-forgotten truth. This is central to the antiliberal strategy as Holmes describes it.

Liberal institutions are the products of historical growth, and their development, which marks the gradual realization of liberal values, can be considered political and cultural progress. The rule of law and individual liberty are the legacy of political struggle by groups who sought relief from domination and arbitrary power in constraints on political authority. Because they are the results of conflict, there is nothing inevitable about the emergence of liberal social and political practices. Nevertheless, one can discern a general pattern of development. Herbert Spencer, a neglected figure in the history of political thought, treated the emergence of liberalism as the transformation of "militant" societies, based on status and compulsion, to "industrial" societies, characterized by equal liberty and voluntary cooperation. Militant societies are organized to achieve a collective goal: victory in warfare. Consequently, collectivist values, which subordinate the ends of the individual to those of the group, predominate. (That readiness for war is the collective goal of such societies is less significant than the fact that they are organized for the pursuit of a common purpose). Industrial societies are not organized to pursue collective goals, but instead to facilitate the achievement of individual ends through freedom and competition. Individualist sentiments, which resist encroachments on individual liberty, supersede the collectivist attitudes of preliberal societies.[5] As a matter of historical fact, the liberal societies we know have developed from what Spencer called the militant type, and

their transformation has seen the gradual (and imperfect) replacement of collective goals and collectivist values by individual ends and individualist values.

It is precisely this change that is the object of the communitarian antiliberals' disdain. They long for the communal solidarity, collective purpose and altruistic sacrifice of preliberal societies, and in this respect the antiliberals are reactionaries. The point of characterizing them in this way is not to give them an unappealing name, but instead to draw out some of the meaning of their critique of liberal political life and thought. Holmes' suggestion that we view nonmarxist antiliberalism as a mindset or attitude as well as political theory is significant. The collectivist values they wish to resuscitate were, as Hayek suggests, those of our primitive ancestors who were

> guided by concrete, commonly perceived aims, and by a similar perception of the dangers and opportunities - chiefly sources of food and shelter - of their environment . . . These modes of coordination depended decisively on instincts of solidarity and altruism - instincts applying to members of one's own group but not to others.[6]

Hayek argues that these primitive collectivist dispositions lay behind intellectual arguments on behalf of socialism and redistributionism, and he maintains that these are atavisms. Once economic development gives rise to a complex division of labor that supports a large population, the individual pursuit of self- chosen goals becomes necessary for group survival, and the collectivist mores of preliberal societies can no longer provide the basis for a viable social order.[7] The mindset that Holmes attributes to the antiliberals is similarly atavistic. The values antiliberals wish to substitute for the liberal ethos were the cultural products of preliberal societies. When they express admiration for the communal solidarity of ancient Greece and medieval Europe, the antiliberals are simply praising the sentiments that supported militant societies. In their appeal to these sentiments and values, the communitarian antiliberals are reactionary.

Recognizing the reactionary nature of the antiliberal critique adds another perspective on the weakness of the communitarian alternative. If it is true that group purpose and consciousness are essential to human well-being, then the policy proposals suggested by some of the soft antiliberals, such as "tightening up pornography laws," are much too mild (181). If community can be helped along by cautious tinkering, liberalism does not have a serious problem, even by communitarian standards. If, on the other hand, the realization of communitarian values demands that individual ends be subject to collective control, communitarians must answer the same practical questions that present difficulties to socialists. It may turn out that we need individualism and markets whether we like them or not.

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Notes

1. All page references are to Holmes' book.

2. F.A. Hayek, *Law, Legislation and Liberty*, vol. 1: *Rules and Order* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), 17-19.

3. Russell Kirk, *The Conservative Mind* 7th ed. (Chicago: Regnery, 1986), 228.

4. Michael Oakeshott, *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays*, with a foreword by Timothy Fuller (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1991), 408.

5. Herbert Spencer, *The Principles of Sociology*, 3 vols (New York: D. Appleton, 1900), 2:568-642.

6. F.A. Hayek, *The Fatal Conceit* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 11-12.

7. F.A. Hayek, *New Studies in Philosophy, Politics, Economics, and the History of Ideas* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 57-68.

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Being True to the World

Jonathan A. Jacobs (New York: Peter Lang 1990).

With refreshing clarity, Jonathan A. Jacobs tells us that the main aim of his recent book is "to defend the view that there is such a thing as moral knowledge, and that it can be action guiding." Jacobs stakes out a moral realist position where "realism" refers to facts in the world about human beings. Hence the title *Being True to the World* refers to the sense in which morally right actions are right. Correspondingly, then, immorality can be accounted for in terms of ignorance or error. A secondary goal, which occupies approximately one-fifth of the book, is a refutation of ethical relativism.

Perhaps because it is quite fashionable to be unsympathetic to this sort of argument, Jacobs wants to be very clear about the strategy he will use to defend the position. For example, when he first introduces the idea of moral realism, he denies that he is introducing a new entity called a moral fact (moral realists are often accused of doing this). "There are not two kinds of facts, 'ordinary' facts and moral facts. There is only one kind, but some of them are morally significant." This is not hair-splitting, but rather it is an important point. Jacob's argument is that facts about human nature have relevance to human action. In other words, "The moral facts just are the natural and social facts." Jacobs calls this approach a naturalist approach, however, he distinguishes the view he is promoting from the "naturalist" stance of utilitarianism. And indeed he is promoting nothing like utilitarianism, rather, the approach is neo-Aristotelian, by which I mean that the primary emphasis is not on actions but on character, and that crucial to developing good character is acquiring some kind of wisdom.

Jacobs wants to argue that if there *is* such a thing as practical wisdom, then relativism is false. Relativism also has, in his view, other considerations counting against it which, when recognized as flaws, encourage one to think about a naturalist realist approach. So Jacobs' critique of relativism is neatly bound up in his defense of practical wisdom. To begin, then, let us examine his objections to relativism.

Jacobs considers relativism "inadequate for the development of a moral theory." If relativism were the case, then all moral beliefs and practices would be "optional." Therefore there would be no reason for acting even on one's own ethic, and even less reason for expecting others to follow one's prescriptions. A related flaw, then, is relativism's inability to account for the "moral reality of people." Unfortunately, this is not a failing that is likely to convince a relativist of anything. Anyone with a conception of morality will see this as a flaw, but anyone who believes that there are no objective standards to begin with will simply agree with the statement. Of course, granting this means that the relativist will have no basis for criticizing the actions of others even when others are harming him, and few are sufficiently committed to the view actually to concede this. (I suppose we might say that relativists are fortunate that they are wrong, for if they were right, there would be no reason for the rest of us not to kill them.)

As even a casual reader of Plato will have noticed, it is always easy to criticize an attempt to provide an objective moral standard, typically with refutation by counter-ex-

ample. For instance, when Cephalus claims that justice entails always returning what one has been entrusted with, Socrates points out that it might not be just to return the borrowed weapon to its now insane owner. But such difficulties do not mean that no standards are available for evaluating human conduct. How can we arrive at such guidelines? A question like that is really a question about practical reason, or practical wisdom. Let us remember the distinction Aristotle makes between theoretical reason and practical reason. While the result of a theoretical syllogism is a statement, e.g. that Socrates is mortal, the result of a practical syllogism is an action. If I understand that when it's cold, I should wear a coat, and then see that it is cold, I do not simply produce a statement about wearing a coat, I actually do wear a coat. It is this type of reasoning that applies to the development of a virtuous character. Jacobs says that "Practical wisdom is the virtue that is needed to orient and guide the other virtues . . . One's ability to reason and to judge develops . . . and living a morally sound life involves *making right judgments.*"

Right judgments about what? At the very least, we might answer, right judgements about realizing ends. If one is interested in living well, then one must make correct judgments about what this means and what it entails. A relativist might at this point reply that living well might be different for everyone. The advantage of a *naturalist* realist response is that there are some features of human life that are common to all humans. Since being virtuous, or excellent, is being excellent *at* something, we can think about standards for correct judgments, and clearly reason will have a role to play in determining what these are.

Jacobs' next task is to explain how practical wisdom can be motivating, that is, how it can be action-guiding. The whole point of a realist approach is to show "how the knowledge of what we are can be efficacious in guiding action aimed at our good." Understanding what kind of knowledge this is makes things more clear. "This is not knowledge of a good independent of human emotions, appetites and inclinations. It is knowledge of what is good for beings (among other things) constituted to have the kinds of emotions, appetites and inclinations that humans have." It is in this sense that practical wisdom can be motivating. (Note that the claim is that practical wisdom *can* be motivating, since it is obvious that it is not always so for all people. The point is that one can learn to improve one's character if one wishes.) Jacobs here gives a full discussion of how the Aristotelian account of motivation differs from and is more satisfactory than other approaches, particularly the Socratic and Kantian conceptions. Yet the book never seems like a mere exercise in comparative exegesis. Such work is valuable, but often fails to provide philosophical insight. Jacobs' book, on the contrary, has the tone of a serious and honest discussion which attempts to explore an issue using the history of philosophy as a backdrop.

In the final analysis, Jacobs argues that practical wisdom can be motivating with regard to "moral" action in the same sense that wisdom in general is motivating to action in general. "[I]t is rational to act for moral reasons because of what they refer to, namely, factual considerations of value for anyone." Just as it is relevant to whether one strikes a match whether there is a gas leak in the kitchen, it is relevant to whether one robs a bank whether that is the sort of activity that is beneficial. "It is rational to hold beliefs because they are true and known to be, and it is rational to act on the basis of true beliefs about

objective value. Being moral is the practical dimension of being true to the world." Can we say anything intelligible about what is of objective value for anyone without sounding like Cephalus? Jacobs' attempt at doing so is Aristotelian at heart: what is good for people is what promotes self-development or well-being, and what diminishes these things is bad. If this is correct, then "to act rightly in a moral sense involves acting on the basis of understanding, being guided by truth." Of course this gives us slightly less specific guidelines than "always tell the truth." But wisdom is like that. Coming to this sort of an understanding about the good life takes some experience as well as some thought.

In the latter part of the book, Jacobs produces an interesting discussion of the formation of the character and the development of moral understanding. He argues that we must become self-determining in order to flourish, but he is also critical of the more radical conception of the "self-made self" which is claimed to arise *ex nihilo* in such authors as Emerson and Sartre. Jacobs calls "will" the name for "the interrelated set of abilities to construct ends, make reasoned decisions, evaluate actions and interests and so forth, and to act on the basis of these." But acquiring the understanding to do these sorts of things is a social process, even if it is, as Jacobs puts it, "minimally social." Jacobs refers here to Aristotle's account of the value of friendship for the development of virtue. But the discussion does not produce any conclusion of the sort that therefore moral standards are subjective, or that therefore the state must take an aggressive role in the inculcation of virtue. This is surely the sensible way to evaluate the role of friends (and enemies, I suppose) in the development of moral understanding. Jacobs stresses that, in his view, although moral objectivity is bound up with truth, moral rationality is not merely calculation. It involves knowledge of what is right from a human standpoint. Developing this kind of understanding must be a process of self-development, but it seems clear that if knowledge of one's own good is related to knowledge of the nature of people in general, then it is right to say that there is a social component to its acquisition.

An additional strength of the book is that while it is a serious and incisive work in moral philosophy, it should be accessible to philosophers in any field. Jacobs' work could therefore greatly improve the quality of contemporary moral discourse, since much bad moral philosophy comes from non-ethicists (although to be sure much of it does not). Through his incorporation of a non-question begging critique of relativism into a defense of a naturalist moral realism in the Aristotelian tradition, Jacobs produces a convincing and coherent discussion that deserves to be widely read.

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The Illusion of Choice: How the Market Economy Shapes Our Destiny

Andrew Bard Schmookler (Albany, New York: SUNY Press, 1992).

Readers drawn to Mr. Schmookler's work can look forward to a very engaging book. The pace and tempo serve to guide the reader along to the conclusion that the market economy is the principal cause of the destruction of traditional community structures. However, those looking for a truly challenging critique of market capitalism should look elsewhere. Anyone who has dieted upon Marxian critiques of the market is likely to find the "radical critique" offered by Schmookler to be rather disappointing. On the one hand, his arguments are superficial, replete with assertions and reflect little new scholarship; while on the other hand, he promises more than he delivers. Ironically, despite the author's hostility for the market, his book might actually become commercially successful due to the easy pace of a breathless string of simplistic assertions which he offers. Casual or sympathetic readers may not readily identify the blurred mix of emotion with rational argument. A complete riposte to these unsupported claims against the destructive impact of the market goes beyond the brief of a reviewer. Therefore, the comments which follow will be more general rather than detailed.

One is struck by the author's decidely negative tone, whether in the acknowledgments ("not-always-encouraging world," xi) or in the pessimism expressed in terms of the capabilities of personkind (". . . the circular logic of unnecessary labor straining after superfluous goods suggests that we are not the masters but rather the servants of our own creations," 234). Throughout there is an implicit and explicit focus upon mankind as destroyer, yet there is a total neglect of the positive side of mankind as innovator and creator. This is an important point to consider in light given the author's promise to provide insights through a spiritual quest. This negative tone is mixed with a frivolous vocabulary, especially when characterizing opposing viewpoints. A particular case is found in Chapter 5. Here the author ridicules the view that the inventiveness of personkind provides a means of escape from the effects of a degraded environment by dubbing it a "don't worry, be happy" mentality (104). Rather than the challenging rhetorical process and rigorous argumentation found in Marxian literature, we find here a panoply of pop expressions.

There is some attempt to develop a set of arguments which would have it both ways, viz. the market is our servant yet it is our master; living in America is a blessing yet it is a curse (11); the values of personkind are objectionable yet some similarly fallible persons are to be entrusted with powers to guide and to control the decisions of others, and so on. A glaring weakness of the book is that the arguments are not carefully defined in terms of an explicit methodological framework. As a consequence, ideological assertions are mistaken for rational discourse. Throughout, there are hints of the deterministic logic characteristic of historical materialism, (62).". . . the system makes it hard for us to be anything else . . . "; (71)." . . . so powerful does the market system remain in our society that it is able, in considerable degree, to **determine** our destiny . . . " (emphasis added). A particularly grievous error and annoying concept is repeated throughout which assigns anthropomorphic qualities to the market by asserting that it has a life of its own (e.g. "The

market prefers us as social atoms . . .," [65]; "This is the market's idea of 'progress'. . . ," [293]). Such remarks are symptomatic of an ideological (rather than methodological) holism which relies heavily upon references to social aggregates.

The author's criticisms of the market are often based upon spurious argumentation and inverted logic. His principal arguments are based upon his perceptions of both the poor qualitative nature of choice as well as a presumption of a limited range of choices associated with the market. This is rather like the proverbial tendency to shoot the messenger for delivering an unhappy message. It may be that markets tend to provide differential rewards for different choices, and this will seem unfair to those who wish the rest of the world would behave otherwise. Yet there is nothing about the market that prohibits one from making a choice, per se, even if one is piqued by the fact that choices made by others are inconsistent with your own ends.

Schmookler overlooks the fact that markets evolved to provide a means for minimizing information costs by delivering concise information in the form of prices to others. However, he suggests that markets exist separate from the action (choices) of people. The market is not, as supposed by the author, a "system" which is "organized" (12), at least not in the conventional sense of these terms. Most economists understand market activities as the outcome of voluntaristic and competitive which allows the coordination of the decisions of otherwise disconnected individuals. Market interaction then is "impersonal" in that there is no need to have discussion among the participants of their respective ends or means except for the terms of the transaction in question. However, it is an exaggeration to imply that the market creates or destroys values; it merely serves as a channel, a process by which values are revealed through human actions. Neither is there anything endemic to the process of the market to commodify "things." Although the market might be amenable to commodification, such outcomes arise out of the initiation of actions by individuals. To decry an absence of choice in this context reminds me of the complaint that the effect of alcohol or drug use caused some reaction. There may be a natural tendency to transfer blame, but it does not change the fact that a choice must be made to consume drugs which might in turn inhibit one's thought processes.

One repetitive complaint is the sin of materialism which the market is seen to promote. This is identified variously as an "escalating race for material wealth" or "lust for wealth." Materialism (like greed) seems to be a flaw which can only be recognized in the actions of others, which raises questions about the objectivity and moral content of such complaints. Unwittingly, the logic of Schmookler's objections imply a elitist evaluation of and a derision of the values and choice of life goals of others. Contrary to the author's view which condemns an apparent insatiability for things material is the understanding that such behavior can serve as a beneficial force by generating progress, innovation and the means for correcting some of the worst environmental problems. Another important oversight is that creation of material wealth also allows for extended generosity and altruism which eventually characterized many of the much-maligned "Robber Barons." In all events, the widespread demand for a clean environment is the result of choices of individuals to move from crass materialism.

Despite revealing a selective knowledge of the position of several supporters of the market order (Friedman, Hayek, and Mises), the author expresses disquiet over the uncertain outcome of a reliance upon the market in the present rush toward greater economic and political freedom throughout the world. Yet many of the reported objections to developments associated with the market are often based upon a misunderstanding of the means by which markets promote and underscore political freedom. For example, it is misleading to assert that the listed devotees of the market consider the problem of pollution, and other effects which economists identify as externalities, not to be of much "gravity" (60). It is simply that there is ample evidence that much of intervention by governments, though designed to correct so-called market failures, is likely to result in greater losses than gains. Net losses from public sector action arise from the loss of resources which are either diverted to inefficient use by lobbying groups or lost in a bureaucratic maze. On a somewhat esoteric note, Schmookler's interpretation of the functioning of the market is derived from neo-classical economics. An alternative view is expressed by Austrian Economists (including Hayek and Mises). This school of economic thought is generally critical of neo-classical economic models which they believe contribute to the sort of misunderstandings of market processes as are reported in this book. The neo-classical view of externalities is based upon a comparison of market conduct and performance with pure/perfect competition. From this approach, a contrived notion of a static optimum is derived, providing an argument for government intervention to guide the economy towards a well-defined equilibrium. As opposed to neo-classical economists, the Austrian School views externalities as being exogenous rather than endogenous to market processes, and that the vast preponderance of market-generated externalities are positive rather than negative.

In order to understand the market process, it is important to understand that one of the strengths of markets arises from the fact that they are impartial and impersonal. These characteristics are often confused with the detachment of economists in judging the nature of the outcomes of market transactions. On the contrary, "humanized" distribution is likely to involve rationing of goods and services based upon some discriminatory factor which is inevitably complicated by the operation of the political process. Criticisms of the impartiality of the market misinterpret certain results of market transactions with the processes and procedures of these actions. Observation taken by someone external to a market transaction will necessarily be forced to evaluate them only in material terms. Yet the operation of the market involves intensive and unobservable expressions of the human pursuit of goals which others may not be able to observe, much less to quantify or to understand. A suggestion that the market is blind (52) is both profound and banal. Despite the negative implications of this observation, it does not suggest anything negative about the functioning of the market. By being blind, competitive markets do not protect the status quo. Likewise, they operate in a manner which tends to be color-blind which undermines discrimination.

Contrary to Schmookler's interpretation, the operation of the market is decidely human and humane. The market is not mechanical in any literal nor figurative sense. Market exchange reflects individual choices as human actions. Indeed, these choices are constrained. However, it is the omnipresent problem of scarcity which is at fault, not the market. The market developed out of the reaction of individuals seeking a means for

expanding their choices under a regime of scarcity. In turn, the resilience of the market is really a function of its ability to reflect a multitude of simultaneous individual decisions. Competition is a necessarily dynamic feature of markets which might be described by Schumpeter's concept of "creative destruction" rather than a "destructive fatality" implied by many modern critics of capitalism. Non-economists have difficulty appreciating the "spontaneous order" of the market process, especially when they disapprove of the results. Modern society is rife with examples of preferences which seem puzzling, corrupt or fatuous relative to our own standards, such as a preference for rap over classical music. The market allows us to discover something about the values of fellow citizens.

The complaint that markets have no goal, no specific end, overlooks one of its greatest strengths. Markets allow for many different and disparate persons to coordinate and to achieve concurrently many divergent goals, resulting in greater freedom of expression rather than less. An advantage of the market might be seen by comparing it to institutions which set dominant and fixed goals. Such institutions are a source of oppression whether or not there are "admirable" collective purposes to be served. Freedom and growth are best served through the discovery of new goals and values whether in a competitive economic or political marketplace. Hugo's famous adage, "Tout cherche tout, sans but, sans treve, sans repos--," may be an apt description of the competitive market process.

A recurring message of this book is an assertion of a circular nightmare of the market which leads to the atomization of society and the destruction of the sense of community. Yet no clear direction is offered by the author to guide us in the formation of new communities. Brotherhood may be an overly ambitious goal in a world of such diverse cultures. Nationalist movements and the cultural binding of whites under apartheid suggests that brotherhood is not always a goal with desirable outcomes. Mutual trust and interdependency arising from free trade, though imperfect, may be the most feasible alternative to fraternity. In all events, most observers would point out that the decline in the sense of community pre-dated the upsurge in the market economy seen during the 1980's. An explanation for the destruction of the community not considered by the author is seen in the consequences of the politicization of life. Politicians have attempted to reduce the political dimension of life to the provision of material goods and services. In reaction to this new dependency relationship with government, individuals have abandoned traditional community institutions for guidance or fulfillment and turn to government officials. However, many of the most important needs of the community cannot be provided by government action, including a happy family life and a stable professional career. In the age of out-of-control government budget deficits, it is clear that political agents are increasing incapable of providing promised material wants. The disaffection emerging from unmet expectations introduces a self-generating cycle whereby the demand for government interventions creates new distortions in the economy or society which in turn creates a new round of demand for public sector action which generates new distortions which generates new demands for government intervention, ad nauseuam.

The arguments presented in this book also suffer from a narrow focus. In one example of the apparently destructive results of the operation of the market, there is a report on the development of "land trusts" (69) which is seen as a force contrary to the markets. However, economists and legal scholars have long been aware of "restricted covenants"

and see them as an important arrangement as a non-coercive alternative to government intervention. These non-governmental, voluntary agreements specify restrictions upon land use to satisfy community standards. Such pacts are consistent with markets and prove a means to avoid the legal compulson of zoning laws, in that they result from private and voluntary negotiations over marketable assets. Despite providing evidence of these covenants (also see 66), we are informed that." . . . government, in a democracy, is the only means a people has to make collective decisions which are not subject to veto by *any* of the parties whose cooperation is required . . ." (italics in original 72). There is nothing remarkable about these arrangements nor do they "stop the 'natural' course of market forces."

Finally, focusing the blame upon the market for the squandering of our natural resources or the degradation of the environment is unconvincing. When one considers the extent of environment degradation under authoritarian socialism in China and East-Central Europe, the market should seem more of a cure than a cause of waste. Similarly, the destruction of the tropical forests in Bolivia (69) arises out of government policies *not* the market. Private ownership within a competitive framework provides a strong incentive for proper husbanding of resources for the future. Likewise, bureaucratic policies (whether pursued by Democratic or Republican appointees) have resulted in the squandering of governmental-owned resources in the form of sales of timber or leasing of grazing land below market prices. Individual interests in the position of friends and family will induce them to protect or to enhance the value of resources as long as these assets can be transferred.

The upbeat use of popular language and light-hearted humor undermines the seriousness of the arguments which the author wishes to promote. A more reflective examination of the working and failures of representative democracy which serve to undermine traditional community structures might have provided some balance to this tirade against the market. Where the market is portrayed as a principally destructive force, we are provided with the incredible understatement that "government can be foolish" (74). In developing a mono-causal explanation of the demise of the community and other traditional institutions based upon the market, the role of politicization and bureaucratization is almost entirely overlooked. These features are unfortunate from an intellectual standpoint, but an audience sympathetic to some of the assertions will find it all rather entertaining. Indeed, at moments there are sparks of insight into the beneficial contributions of the market process. However, entertainment displaces the harder problem of prescribing explicit ways to resolve the complex issues of the restoration of community. Instead, we are offered metaphors of unquestioned bucolic splendor in the form of Wendell Berry's "principle of subsistence" (68) or an enigmatic comparison of our present state to the struggle of Pygmies to interpret the expansiveness of what lies before them (303). In the end, the critical reader is likely to find that the text offers some pleasures without providing intellectual substance.

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Resurrecting Marx: The Analytical Marxists on Freedom, Exploitation and Justice

David Gordon, (New Brunswick, NJ:Transaction, 1991).

Marxism and Austrian economics have an intertwined histories. Eugen Boehm-Bawerk provided the first thorough refutation of the Marxist theoretical system.[1] Rudolf Hilferding attempted to repair the damage. Nikolai Bukharin wrote a book criticizing the Austrian school "for it is well known that the most powerful opponent of Marxism is the Austrian School."[2] Ludwig Mises and F.A. Hayek spent their entire intellectual lives attempting to defeat Marxist ideas, both in theory and policy.[3]

> Whatever our view of its utility or its practicability it must be admitted that the idea of Socialism is at once grandiose and simple. Even its most determined opponents will not be able to deny it a detailed examination. We may say, in fact, that it is one of the most ambitious creations of the human spirit. The attempt to erect society on a new basis while breaking with all traditional forms of social organization, to conceive a new world plan and foresee the form which all human affairs must assume in the future - this is so magnificent, so daring, that it has rightly aroused the greatest of admiration. If we wish to save the world from barbarism we have to conquer Socialism, but we cannot thrust it carelessly aside.[4]

In addition to the well known clash between the two schools, there are a few points of commonality which are lesser known. Marx, for example, can be credited with introducing the problem of "disproportionality" in the capital structure into the German-language economics literature which later served as the basis of the Austrian theory of the trade cycle.[5] In addition, Marx portrayed the capitalist economic system as a disequilibrium process of competitive rivalry as do the Austrians.[6] But the positive and normative depictions of the capitalist process deeply divide these schools of economic thought.

Contrary to claims of some, like Louis Spadaro,[7] that Austrians "have spent an inordinately large part of their talents and resources in efforts to deal with the errors of others" and that it was a mistake to allow themselves to become "embroiled in time-consuming and largely inconclusive controversies" with Marxism, I think the historical record shows that the debates with Marxism and socialism has provided some of the most important positive lessons for the Austrians.[8] This continues to be the case.

Recent works and work in progress that self consciously advance Austrian arguments against variants of "marxisms" include: David Prychitko, *Marxism and Workers' Self-Management* which addresses the "Praxis" philosophers; Don Lavoie's forthcoming study, *Understanding Political Economy*, which grapples with the critical theorists; and my own *The Political Economy of Soviet Socialism: The formative years, 1918-1928*, which deals with Marxism-Leninism as understood and acted upon by the "old" Bolsheviks.[9] However, these works deal with *continental* Marxism; a Marxism in which Hegel

is fundamental. On the other hand, a school of Marxism has arisen that jettisons Hegelianism and adopts *analytical* philosophy.

These *analytical Marxists*, which count among their number such scholars as John Roemer, Jon Elster, and G.A. Cohen, have attempted to reconstruct Marxism in a way that answers previous logical flaws in the system. The labor theory of value is rejected, and Hegelian concepts of alienation are eschewed. But the assertion that capitalism is class system of *exploitation* remains. Israel Kirzner has attempted to address some aspects of Roemer's arguments in his *Discovery, Capitalism and Distributive Justice*.[10] But other than a few references here and there, the analytical Marxists have not received that much attention from Austrian economists. David Gordon, however, has attempted a serious study of the arguments of the analytical Marxists which should serve as a vital introduction to the issue at hand.

Gordon, a philosopher and intellectual historian who is deeply influenced by the Rothbardian strand of Austrian economics, confronts the analytical Marxists on their own philosophical terms. Gordon, like the analytical Marxists, does not have much patience with Hegelian dialectics and phenomenological investigations. For the current study that is perfectly acceptable, maybe even desirable, given his opponent.[11] In true analytic fashion, Gordon nicks and cuts his opponent's argument until it neatly bleeds to death.

Gordon is perhaps at his best in the chapter dissecting Cohen's argument concerning proletarian unfreedom (ch. 5). Cohen argues that workers' are collectively unfree under capitalism because they face no reasonable alternative but to work for capitalists. Even though individual workers may be free to exit or move, that individual freedom depends on others not doing the same thing collectively. Gordon points out that no matter how sound this argument may be, Cohen may have reached a triviality. In fact, as Gordon cites, this is how John Gray has attempted to deal with the argument. But Gordon goes further and demonstrates that even if Cohen's argument was non-trivial, it would fail to produce the results desired.

Workers' freedom, Gordon argues, is even more at risk under the socialist alternative than under capitalism. Whereas the argument for collective unfreedom under capitalism is found wanting, it appears perfectly acceptable under socialism (115). Under the planning system, workers are not free to bargain nor are they free to leave their jobs and establish businesses or cooperatives themselves. It is under planning - even democratic planning - where the workers' freedom is severely constrained. The proletarians are forced to work for the proletarian state.

Gordon applies razor sharp criticism throughout this work to the arguments and propositions of the analytical Marxists. However, while I am in general sympathy with his conclusions I think he makes a few crucial mistakes. First, he employs any and all arguments he can find to defeat his opponent, including arguments which may contradict one another. Second, his libertarian perspective is more or less asserted rather than argued (see chapter 2). This would be legitimate since we can only criticize from a perspective, but Gordon seems to claim at points that he has argued the libertarian positions rather than asserted its validity. I shall try to limit my comments to my first concerns.

Gordon, in dismissing certain variants of Marxism in Chapter 1, invokes Karl Popper's criterion that scientific statements must be falsifiable. If no empirical refutation of a statement is possible, then that statement cannot be considered scientific. Gordon concludes that according to this criterion, whatever else Marxism may be, it is not science. But ironically, from that perspective neither is Misesian or Rothbardian economics! But Gordon relies heavily on the Austrian *scientific* argument about socialist calculation to defeat the socialist alternative. As he writes in the last chapter:

> If, for example, capitalism turned out to be the only economic system capable of producing goods and services needed for a modern society, the fact (if it is one) that exploitation of labor could not be avoided would therefore be outweighed; better exploitation than chaos. (119)

But is the argument concerning economic calculation a result of praxeological reasoning or an empirical hypothesis? If a result of praxeological reasoning (as I would argue), then Popperianism would not admit to its *scientific legitimacy*. You can't have your cake and eat it too.

Another case where Gordon employs arguments that undermine his own adherence to the Austrian tradition is with regard to the marginal productivity theory of factor pricing. The "exhaustion theorem," which argued that all factors (at any point in time) are paid their marginal product, can only be established under conditions of general competitive equilibrium. Austrian economists, however, reject equilibrium economics. They hold, instead, that the concept of equilibrium at best serves to describe a tendency of market processes.

At any point in time market inefficiencies exist. The existence of such inefficiencies drive the entrepreneurial process of discovery that characterizes the competitive market process. "Scope for market discovery," Kirzner points out, "is present as long as unexploited opportunity for mutual gainful exchange exists between any pair of market participants, in regard to any pair of commodities they respectively possess."[12] The labor market is no different than any other market.

An Austrian argument against exploitation of workers must take into account the dynamic nature of market processes. The market is a process of learning and discovery. The exhaustion theorem simply does not capture this aspect of the market. It substitutes an equilibrium end state for a process story concerning factor pricing. This is unacceptable.

The Austrian argument for the market does not depend on the attainment of equilibrium optimalities or elimination of waste, but instead emphasizes the ability of the system to detect errors and generate systemic incentives to correct those errors. Economic calculation, for example, does not depend on "correct" equilibrium prices, but rather relies on disequilibrium money prices to serve their function of aiding entrepreneurs in separating out from among all the technological feasible projects those which are economic. Monetary calculation does not produce the best of all possible world, i.e. Paretian equilibrium, but it gets the job done. "Money calculation," Mises wrote, "does all that we are entitled to ask of it. It provides a guide amid the bewildering throng of economic

possibilities. It enables us to extend judgments of value which apply directly to consumption goods - or at best to production goods of the lowest order - to all goods of higher orders. Without it, all production be it lengthy and roundabout processes would be so many steps in the dark."[13]

In the factor market, monetary calculation provides market participants with guideposts by which the boundaries of orderly exchange can be established. The upper limit represents perceived marginal revenue product of the factor, while the lower limit represents the perceived opportunity cost of alternative uses of the factor. Within these bounds surplus is not so much exhausted as sought by market participants. The question that Austrian economists must concern themselves with is not so much whether surplus exists - it clearly does - but rather, whether alternative institutional arrangements to capitalism could provide coordinative properties in a manner that meets the demands of "practical life." As Gordon correctly points out in chapter 6 of his work, socialism certainly does not provide a workable alternative. But those Austrian arguments against the possibility of socialism need to be understood from a market process perspective or they lose much of their weight.[14]

We make a serious mistake if we slip into Panglosian equilibrium explanations of the market. As Kirzner argues with regard to distributive justice, "I should emphasize . . . that my disagreement with the existing literature is not, at the core, a disagreement on ethics." Rather, "the ethical assessments have misperceived the nature and mode of operation of the capitalist system."[15] Viewing the market in equilibrium terms "causes one to overlook a crucial feature of real world capitalism that is absent from the general equilibrium model, namely, the discovery character of capitalist incomes."[16]

Gordon, therefore, even though he seemingly raises several fundamental criticisms of analytical Marxism, fails to provide a sophisticated and subtle defense of capitalist processes from an Austrian perspective. Neither his Popperian dismissal of Hegelian Marxism in chapter 1, nor his equilibrium answer to analytical Marxism in chapter 3, can square with his reliance on Austrian economics. Nevertheless, Gordon has produced a valuable introduction to analytical Marxism from a libertarian perspective that will serve as an important first step in addressing this branch of modern "marxisms."

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Notes

1. Boehm-Bawerk, "Unresolved Contradiction in the Marxian Economic System," in *Shorter Classics* (South Holland, IL: Libertarian Press, 1962[1896]).

2. Bukharin, *The Economic Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: Augustus Kelley, 1970[1919]), 9.

3. See, for example, Hayek, ed., *Collectivist Economic Planning* (New York: Augustus Kelley, 1975[1935]); *The Road to Serfdom* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976[1944]); *Individualism and Economic Order* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980[1948]); and *The Fatal Conceit* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988).

4. Mises, *Socialism* (Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1981[1922]), 41.

5. See Hayek, *Prices and Production*, 2nd Edition (New York: Augustus Kelley, 1967[1935], 103. Also see Paul Craig Roberts and Matthew Stephenson, *Marx's Theory of Exchange, Alienation and Crisis* (New York: Praeger, 1983[1973]), 95-103.

6. See Don Lavoie, "Some strengths in Marx's disequilibrium theory of money," *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, 7 (1983). Also see Lavoie, *Rivalry and Central Planning* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 28-47.

7. Spadaro, "Toward a Program of Research and Development," in Louis Spadaro, ed., *New Directions in Austrian Economics* (Kansas City: Sheed, Andrews and McMeel, 1978), 206-207.

8. For a similar assessment see Kirzner, "The Economic Calculation Debate: Lessons for Austrians," *Review of Austrian Economics*, 2 (1988).

9. Prychitko, *The Essential Tension* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1991); Boettke, *The Political Economy of Soviet Socialism* (Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1990).

10. Kirzner, *Discovery, Capitalism and Distributive Justice* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1989).

11. Though one loses much of the reason for the Marxian desire to transcend the capitalist process of exchange and production and establish a system of central planning once alienation has been eliminated from study. See Paul Craig Roberts, *Alienation and the Soviet Economy* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1990), 1- 19.

12. Kirzner, 84.

13. Mises, *Socialism*, 100-101.

14. See Lavoie, *Rivalry and Central Planning*, and Kirzner, "The Economic Calculation Debate."

15. Kirzner, *Discovery, Capitalism and Distributive Justice*, 3.

16. Ibid., 96.

Quantum Politics

Theodore L. Becker, (New York, Praeger Publishers, 1991).

The theory of quantum mechanics has been of great use lately for all sorts of new world views and paradigms. With its alleged holism, indeterminism and complementarity it has been said to contain great similarities with eastern philosophy, environmentalism and The New Age. According to this book it also happens to have immense and world shaking implications for political science. And why not?

We all know that people's thinking is often influenced by science. Just think of what Copernican astronomy, Newtonian physics, genetics, Darwin, modern ecology and economics have done to our world view. Still, there is room for scepticism when it comes to mixing such diverse fields of knowledge as atoms and politics.

The main thesis of most of the contributors of this volume is that politics and/or political science (it is a bit unclear which is meant) will greatly improve by studying quantum physics. The old politics, and political science, are far too attached to Newtonian physics. And since science has moved from that old mechanistic, atomistic and deterministic paradigm to a new one in physics, then it is high time that political scientists do the same.

There are many arguments along these lines and I will only mention a few to show the general trend:

(a) The new QM emphasizes *relational* qualities more than atomic properties. This leads to the insight that relation is of greater explanatory and practical value in modern societies, where we cannot view individuals as isolated atoms.

(b) In QM the state of the system is dependent on how it is observed. In a similar way social facts are dependent on the observer and his, or her, background knowledge.

(c) QM teaches us that everything is dependent on everything else in the sense that many-particle systems must be viewed as wholes (the wave-function as a superposition of states). This is also what "green" political philosophy tells us.

(d) The quantum world is chance-like. So are human societies, and we ought therefore to have self-regulating institutions to make them work.

Unfortunately these arguments raise many more objections than they were intended to disarm.

For example, (a) is meant as a criticism against the classical liberal order which the authors see as typical of the Western World. But in order to view this as an argument for a new social order one has to accept 1) that the classical liberal order is "Newtonian" with respect to properties and relations, 2) that there really is such a difference between Newton's mechanics and QM as assumed, and 3) that the QM-revolution in physics has

any implications for what one should, or should not, do in politics. However, both Newtonian and quantum mechanics contain both non-relational properties, such as mass and charge, and relational ones, such as velocity and potential energy. Assumption (3) is of course fundamental to all the arguments (a) to (d), and indeed to the whole project. Seeing the obvious objection to (3) most authors explicitly reject any such normative claims. But if this is so, then why make such a big fuss over the fact that QM is new and Newton's theory is old and rejected?

Argument (b) is partly based on a mix up between the quantum phenomenon that measurement instruments physically interact with the measured system and the old philosophical and psychological insight that all observations are theory-dependent. The quantum world is sometimes said to be holistic as assumed in (c). But so is the Newtonian world since all material bodies are instantly connected with each other through the gravitational force. In this sense, Newtons mechanics is just as "green" as modern physics. In the Copenhagian interpretation, QM is also said to be chance-like as stated in (d). But statistical predictions can be made there with high precision. Besides, do we really need modern atomic theory to come up with the idea that there may be chance phenomena in the social and political spheres?

It might be objected that I do not give due credit to the social and political theories that are actually presented in the book. I agree, I do not do that. But the main theme of the book, and what motivates putting these papers together, is the alleged implications of quantum theory for social science. And that thesis simply does not hold. What may be done, and what in fact has been demonstrated, is that a handful of social scientist have felt inspired by quantum mechanics. Some of them have also been inspired by the theory of relativity and classical thermodynamics. So be it. I have no objections to that. I have even heard of scientists who got their inspiration from looking into the fire or sitting in the garden watching apples falling to the ground.

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Fuzzy Thinking: The New Science of Fuzzy Logic

Bart Kosko, (New York: Hyperion, 1993).

This very strange book of fifteen chapters is divided into four parts. The first part, "The Fuzzy Principle: Everything is a Matter of Degree," comprises three chapters. The remaining twelve chapters are equally divided among "The Fuzzy Past," "The Fuzzy Present," and "The Fuzzy Future." A helpful glossary, index and bibliography are included.

Part I

This part is a preview of the parts to follow, and as the title suggests, the central thesis is that everything is a matter of degree. The world is grey, not black-and-white. But Western scientists and philosophers have refused to face up to this fact; they persist in describing the grey world in black-and-white language. Their doing so is what the author calls the "mismatch problem," a problem rooted in the uncritical acceptance of two-valued logic - "binary faith." Binary logic, says Kosko, sacrifices accuracy for simplicity. Bivalence is a rounding off that works fine at extremes but fails everywhere else. Indeed, the core principles of bivalent logic - the Law of Excluded Middle and the Principle of Non-Contradiction - are merely limiting cases of a more proper multi-valued logic.

Kosko at once illustrates the awesome power of multivalent logic by applying it to Russell's barber paradox. The barber claims to shave all and only those who do not shave themselves. Does the barber shave himself? Outmoded Aristotelian logic tells us that if he does shave himself then he does not, and if he does not, he does.

> If for some cultural reason we limit what we say to the two bivalent options of all or none, true or false, yes or no, then we pay the price and have a real contradiction on our hands, a case of A AND not-A. (26)

The fuzzy solution, says Kosko, is superior to the traditional solutions, for it recognizes that the barber's claim is literally a half-truth lying exactly midway between the limiting cases, midway between 100% truth and 100% falsity. The traditional solutions, of course, contend that any claim that leads to a contradiction must be false. Hence, there can be no barber who shaves all and only those who do not shave themselves. (In set theoretical terms: there is no set that, without qualification, contains all and only those sets that do not contain themselves.) I see no merit in Kosko's "solution" for it makes no provisions for preventing the deduction of any and every well-formed-formula. As for the many degrees of truth allowed by Kosko's logic, we can easily accomplish the same things without sacrificing the standards by which good reasoning is judged. For instance, Kosko thinks that a half-filled glass of water is problematic for bivalent logic ("The water is 50% in the glass."), and he requires that we have a degree of truth for every degree to which the glass is filled. All we need, of course, is a proposition for each degree to which the

glass is filled. It is 100% true that the glass is half full, not 50% true that the glass is entirely full.

Analogous to degree of truth with respect to propositions, are degrees of containment in sets. Traditionally, sets are thought of as consisting of elements contained entirely in the sets. But fuzzy sets have members that belong "somewhat" to the sets. The degree to which a set belongs to another set is calculated using Kosko's awkwardly-named Subsethood Theorem. For sets A and X, the degree to which X is a subset of A is simply the elements in their intersection divided by the elements in X. Kosko spends pages relating the circumstance under which he conceived this theorem (he was in a state of zazen in a waterbed after bathing in a hot tub after a workout in the gym . . .) and concludes that it is proof that the part contains the whole and that that is what probability is. The claim that the whole is contained in the part is not as mysterious as it sounds. As best I can tell, choosing which set is the part and which is the whole is arbitrary, and as long as the sets' elements are somehow quantifiable (countable) it makes perfectly good sense to say that the sets intersect to the degree described by the Subsethood Theorem. But I see nothing new or interesting about this.

Part II

The battle between defenders of the binary faith and the more enlightened enthusiasts of multivalence is a battle between Aristotle and the Buddah. Kosko reminds us that Aristotle.". . . argued for the legitimacy of aristocracy and slavery and may have kept slaves," and was.". . . politically correct by the standards of his day . . . " (74). Buddah, on the other hand, relinquished his wealth and lived the life of a beggar. And though he was not a mathematician or logician in the strictest sense of the words,

> . . . he had the shades-of-grey idea: He tolerated A AND not-A. He carefully avoided the artificial bivalence that arises from the negation term "not" in natural languages. Hence his famous line: "The no-mind not-thinks no-thoughts about no-things." (77)

Existentialism, it seems, has a longer history that we thought.

In a chapter titled "What Is Truth?" Kosko defends in earnest the multi-valued logic of Buddah, and it is here that the author's confusion comes into focus. The confusion is this: Kosko conflates certainty with truth, the subjective with the objective. He is by no means the first to err in this way, but it is surprising to see a person of his ability commit such a fundamental mistake. A few passages show this: "Each factual statement is an inaccurate description, an inexact sensory hypothesis *that the next experiment may knock down"* (85). Likewise, "Positivists and scientists and physicians and the like accept the truth mismatch but deny it in practice by making all statements certain, by giving factual statements the status of logic statements" (89). Criticizing Tarski's acceptance of two-valued logic Kosko says, "The problem with this lies in tacking on the 100% *certainty factors"* (90) [all emphases mine]. These certainty factors Kosko refers to are simply Tarski's claim that "Snow is white," is 100% true if and only if snow is white. And of Kant, Kosko says that he," . . . claimed that there were 'synthetic *a priori*' statements,

statements both factually true and logically true" (89). Kosko does not seem aware of the fact that *'a priori'* is an adverb, not an adjective. To know something *a priori* is not to know something that is itself *a priori*; rather, it is to know something in a particular manner. Analytic statements are know**able** *a priori*, and synthetic statements are know-**able** *a posteriori.*

Kosko, of course, believes that it is the scientists who are confused - a situation he largely blames on the logical positivists who.". . . swallow the mismatch whole and use high-pressure sales tactics to get everyone else to swallow it" (89). In spite of his contempt for positivists, Kosko does agree with them that the truth of mathematics are tautologies, limiting cases to which the Aristotelean laws of thought do apply. This would also explain scientists' bivalent faith, because they are so infatuated with mathematics:

> They call fact statements true or false and mean 100% true or 100% false as if they were logical tautologies or math theorems. And they cover up and cloud the whole issue with probability disclaimers that all such black-and-white talk holds with "some probability" (89).

No one, says Kosko, has ever met the "Hemingway Challenge" of producing one 100% true factual statement. I take it that since this is itself a factual claim it is not 100% true, and therefore someone has produced a 100% true synthetic proposition. Perhaps that 100% true proposition is the claim that no one has ever . . .

Heisenberg's uncertainty principle is inevitably mentioned in fuzzy discourses, but it is to Kosko's credit that he does not exaggerate its role in fuzzy theory. It is true, says Kosko, that Heisenberg makes us question binary logic, and it is true that he "made doubt scientific" (103). However, the principle is itself only an approximation, for it is a linear theory about a non-linear world. Indeed it is part of the "linear package" of still another mismatch problem: the attempts by scientists to fit linear models to a non-linear world. Thus, says the author, uncertainty is not restricted to the realm of quantum mechanics.

Part III

> Consider the number zero. 0. It took some ancient societies thousands of years to find zero. Now we can find it at a glance as a spike on a number line . . . The spike means the number zero belongs 100% to the set ZERO and no other number belongs to it. Every number is either in the ZERO set or out of it. All or none. In this set sense the number zero alone belongs to the set ZERO.

> But what about the numbers *close* to zero or *almost* zero or *nearly* zero? These numbers, like big numbers or medium numbers or very small numbers, are fuzzy numbers. They define a spectrum of numbers near zero and some belong more in the set than others belong. The closer a small number to zero, the more it belongs to the fuzzy set of small numbers. The number 1 is close to 0 than the number 2 is, and 2 is closer than 3 is, and so on. Likewise the negative number -1 is closer to 0 than -2 is, and -2 is closer than -3 is, and so on. The number 0 belongs 100%

> to the set ZERO but close numbers may belong only 80% or 50% or 10%. We might draw the fuzzy number zero as a bell curve or triangle centered at the exact number 0. (124)

Similar arguments apply to any set of objects having a property that admits of degrees (and this is everything, says Kosko). Furthermore, a triangular set allows us to compute the degree to which an element belongs to the set. The set ZERO, above, is centered about 0 with its base extending from -2 to +2. If we designate the height of the triangle (at its peak, above 0) as 1, then that represents the degree (100%) to which zero belongs to the set. The number +1 belongs 50% to the set because a line extended upward from +1 intersects the triangle at height (y)=0.5. As we shall see, these triangular sets are the key to the success of so-called fuzzy systems.

Control systems that make use of fuzzy logic do work in a wide variety of applications including air conditioners, automobiles, office equipment, home appliances, elevators, and so on. According to Kosko, as of 1990 the Japanese held over a thousand "fuzzy" patents in Japan and thirty in the US. Surely the success of these many products is evidence enough that fuzzy theorists are right and their detractors wrong. But this argument is not available to fuzzy theorists because they say that conventional science and technology are ill-founded in spite of their success. Kosko is anything but politic in his indictment of conventional science:

> One day I learned that science was not true. I do not recall the day but I recall the moment. The God of the twentieth century was no longer God.
>
> There was a mistake and everyone in science seemed to make it. They said that all things were true or false. They were not always sure which things were true and which were false. But they were sure that all the things were either true or false. (XV)

One critic of fuzzy logic has said that it is an application in search of a theory. That assessment is correct, I think, and the theory that will do the job is none other than the Devil's own two-valued logic.

Consider the control system Kosko describes that regulates the operation of an air conditioner. The idea is to link varying temperatures to varying blower motor speeds rather than have the blower run at just one speed or not at all. Imagine five temperature ranges represented by five overlapping triangles arranged along a horizontal line (x-axis). From 40 degrees to 50 degrees is the COLD range, from 45 to 65 is COOL, from 60 to 70 is JUST RIGHT, from 65 to 85 is WARM, and from 80 to 90 is HOT. Along a vertical line (y-axis) are overlapping triangles that represent motor speeds. From 0 rpm to 30 rpm is STOP, from 10 to 50 is SLOW, from 40 to 60 is MEDIUM, from 50 to 90 is FAST, and from 70 to 100 is BLAST. (Note that the JUST RIGHT and MEDIUM regions are narrower than the others. This is to prevent "overshoot".)

Now the temperature triangles are correlated with the motor speed triangles by rules such as: "If the temperature is cold, the motor stops." or "If the temperature is just right,

the motor speed is medium." These rules can be represented graphically as rectangular patches formed by the intersection of columns extending out from the bases of triangles on the temperature line with columns extended out from the bases of (corresponding) triangles on the motor speed line.

But what happens when a temperature "belongs" to two triangles? Using a scheme for computing sort of an average figure that represents the amount of overlap of triangles, Kosko can "defuzzify" (!) the triangles to get a discrete motor speed. And as far as I can tell, this control would indeed work as well as Kosko claims it would but not the *way* he claims it would. I see absolutely nothing fuzzy about this "fuzzy" system. What fuzzy theorists call "degrees of membership" aren't really that at all - they are simply ways of measuring how close to a given number (the center of the triangle) another number lies. It's not that, say, 68 degrees belongs to the JUST RIGHT set more than 69 degrees does, or -1 belongs to the above-mentioned set ZERO more than -2 does; rather, 68 degrees is simply closer to the ideal center temperature of 65 degrees (by a measurable amount).

A refinement of the basic fuzzy control system is the adaptive fuzzy system which is able to learn the correlation rules (e.g. If the temperature is just right, then the motor speed is medium), by keeping track of how the user operates the system. After a person has adjusted the system a number of times the system "knows" the user's preferences and can take over unassisted.

Because fuzzy control systems do work, they will continue to find their way into more and more products. But they will do so, I think, in spite of some of the fuzzy theorists who promote them.

Part IV

The very short section of *Fuzzy Thinking* is a departure from the somewhat technical previous parts and consists primarily of the author's musings about life and death, right and wrong, and God. About life and death Kosko says they are both a matter of degree, each shading into the other. Concerning right and wrong, Kosko takes a position I can sympathize with - ethical non-cognitivism. Moral judgments, he says, can be neither confirmed nor disconfirmed by experiment and are therefore without truth-values. They function as exhortations and commendations, not as descriptions of matters of fact. And what about God? Kosko begins with the question, "Why is there something rather than nothing?" After some intolerably fuzzy and convoluted ramblings, Kosko concludes that if there were nothing, then mathematics would not work. So,

> God is He who wrote the math. Or She who wrote the math. Or It who wrote the math. Or the Nothingness that wrote the math. The Mathmaker. (281)

The book jacket of *Fuzzy Thinking* shows a picture of Kosko sitting in what I think is called the lotus position. Superimposed over this picture are a couple of yin-yang symbols and some Rubik's Cubes. There is nothing fuzzy about the book jacket - it is 100% truth-in-advertising.

David E. Walker