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Professor Spotlight: Steven R. Levy

Those of us who have had the pleasure of spending at least one semester with Dr. Steven Levy are familiar with his tongue-in-cheek humor and the care he has for his students. Steven is the kind of professor who will not only make time for his students but will leave his students with smiles on their faces, making our campus a better place for students to enrich their lives. Cal State LA students are lucky to have him working with our community. Steven's

journey to Cal State LA is one filled with fortuitous opportunities, good advice, and a willingness to adapt. This journey has instilled within him wisdom that he works to pass on to his students.

Early in his undergrad career at USC, Steven studied biochemistry with the idea that he would one day become a dentist. His plan was going smoothly until he realized that one of his graduation requirements was to take a philosophy class. Filled with rumors about how philosophy professors graded haphazardly, he decided to take the required class at a community college so he could transfer credit for the class to USC without a letter grade. Summer came around, and he found himself sitting in an Intro to Philosophy class reading Plato. This changed everything. The kinds of questions Plato asked fascinated Steven. Quickly, his future shifted from teeth to deep philosophical questions. The following semester, Steven changed his major to philosophy.

In 1974, Steven earned his Ph.D. from UCLA with his dissertation titled "Knowledge and Communication." He specializes in epistemology, mathematical logic, communication theory, and metaphysics; although, he enjoys teaching everything philosophy has to offer. Besides working at Cal State LA, Steven has taught philosophy at UCLA, Cal State Northridge, The University of Calgary, UCR, and Stanford University. After teaching at UCR from 1976-1979 and having been let go because of a lack of funding, he was on the hunt for work. Job offerings in academia were scarce so he had to leave the career he loved and think of other ways to support his growing family. Remembering advice given to him by his father, to make the best of any situation and to learn to enjoy it, he changed course and decided to work in the private sector. He found work in the computer science industry where he used the problem solving skills acquired from his philosophical training to manage and direct people. Because the work was consistent and there was a wealth of opportunities, he decided that his future was in the computer science industry.

After thriving in the computer software industry for over a

quarter of a century, Steven returned to academia with a goal in mind. Carrying the lessons of his mentors at UCLA, his father's advice, his experience in the private sector, and his philosophical training, he decided to return to the career that he really loved. Steven currently teaches at UCLA and Cal State LA with the goal of making his students "successful at life." He attempts to better his students by not only teaching them the skills necessary to understand philosophy and to think critically about philosophy, but also how to be articulate and how to speak intelligently. In his Introduction to Logic class, Steven teaches his students that how we use language matters because a loose grasp on language creates a gap between what we say and what we mean to say. In his epistemology class, Steven teaches his students how to speak intelligently in front of others by encouraging his students to formulate questions, comments, and arguments clearly. With these skills his students, philosophers or not, leave the halls of Cal State LA with the ability to enrich their respective communities.

I asked Steven what he likes about Cal State LA. He answered by comparing the two campuses he currently works for: Cal State LA and UCLA. The students at UCLA know "the game." Bruins know what to study and how to study it. Golden Eagles, as Steven points out, don't typically have the same backgrounds as Bruins. Because of this, he has seen that Cal State LA students have an appreciation for learning that he doesn't find among the students at UCLA or any other campus where he has taught. His students at Cal State LA have a deep awareness that their college education is a path to a better life than their parents had. Consequently, Cal State LA is filled with students that not only work hard but are appreciative of their professors. A professor who not only recognizes and appreciates what an education means for Golden Eagles, but also actively works to make Golden Eagles "successful at life," is an invaluable asset to Cal State LA. Professors like Steven are part of the reason why we see goodness in Los Angeles.

— D.V. et al

Deleuze, Nietzsche, and Nihilism: How Do We Say 'Yes!' to Life?

Gregory Alonge

Introduction

Front and center in the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche is the problem of Nihilism. At the core of his thought, Nietzsche wants to separate the life-deniers from the life-affirmers, categorizing the former as nihilists and the latter as superhuman. Perhaps his chief goal in all his writings was to illuminate a way beyond nihilism, a way for the nihilists to become superhuman.

However, did Nietzsche actually provide this path to overcoming nihilism? Many philosophers, the most famous of which being Martin Heidegger, claim that while Nietzsche may have believed that he succeeded in the task of overcoming nihilism, in reality, he did not. Then, in response to the doubters, philosopher Gilles Deleuze in his seminal book, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, asserted that Nietzsche did indeed successfully provide a recipe for true life-affirmation. But was Deleuze right? Modern scholar Judith Norman in her article, "Nietzsche contra Contra: Difference and Opposition," highlights where Deleuze succeeds in his interpretation of Nietzsche via his logic of difference. In response, scholar Ashley Woodward in her article, "Deleuze, Nietzsche, and the Overcoming of Nihilism," argues that this logic of difference alone, while necessary, is not sufficient to overcome nihilism. She also claims that Deleuze's interpretation beyond the logic of difference, rather than overcoming nihilism, reinstates it due to the metaphysical, 'extra'-worldly nature surrounding his conception of the eternal return as selective being. The result today is that the question of whether or not Deleuze articulates a successful

Nietzschean route to overcoming nihilism is still very much up for debate. The purpose of this article is to enter into that debate.

To do this, I will first define the different types of Nietzschean nihilism using Deleuze's terminology so that we can know what it is they endeavor to overcome. Next, I outline the Nietzschean concepts of the will to power and eternal return in the eyes of Deleuze. I then outline the scholarly debate on the matter, which ultimately concludes in Deleuze's failure to interpret Nietzsche in a way that provides a path to overcoming nihilism. I finish by arguing that Deleuze does indeed successfully provide that path because his interpretation does not reinstate nihilism as his critiques suggest it does. This is because his conception of the eternal return as selective being is not 'extra'-worldly, but rather, very much of this world as experienced, even if it devalues the nihilistic elements therein.

1. The Different Types of Nihilism

For this article, 'nihilism' refers to life devalued, or valued as nothing (Deleuze 1983, p. 147). Ultimately, anything rooted in rejection (negation) is defined at its core by nihilism. Thus, in order to find a way of overcoming nihilism, we must find a comprehensive method which is undeniably and totally rooted in affirmation. To accomplish this, I first identify all the different forms of nihilism as described by Deleuze, beginning with 'negative nihilism.'

1.1 Negative Nihilism

'Negative nihilism' is when a higher world is created and positioned as superior in relation to our own world. When this higher world is established, the implication is that our world is indeed lower, and therefore negated, or denied. For example, when a person suffers through this life as a mere means to the glorified ends of entering heaven, she is engaging in negative nihilism. As

Deleuze phrases it: "Values superior to life are inseparable from their effect: the depreciation of life, the negation of this world" (Ibid.). For Nietzsche, our world has been consumed by negative nihilism and its fruits ever-since the advent of Judeo-Christian values. While Judaism got the ball rolling with the conception of a perfect and singular God, Christianity took things to the next level by solidifying the idea of heaven, a place where those who righteously maneuvered through this worldly life would be rewarded with transcendent and eternal bliss.

In the tradition of Philosophy, it is Platonism that is guilty of positing a supersensible, heaven-like world towards which the philosopher strives. Nietzsche sees the entire history of philosophy since Plato as predicated upon this false negative nihilism that positions a higher world against our own base world of appearances. As he says in *The Twilight of the Idols*, "The real world, attainable to the wise, the pious, the virtuous man—he dwells in it, he is it" (Nietzsche 2003, p. 50). Here, Nietzsche is speaking directly about Platonism. For Plato, the 'true world' of essences is only attainable through philosophy. For Nietzsche, on the other hand, overcoming nihilism requires a philosophy (and way of living) that is not predicated upon this false and dangerous dichotomy of our world versus a higher world. If we are to overcome nihilism, our lives cannot be motivated by the promise of heaven (Christian or Platonic), eastern enlightenment (Nirvana or Moksha), or even scientific or logical appeals to the 'Truth.' For, to do so is to position a 'true' world in comparison to our devalued world of base appearance, a 'true' world that provides security and escape rather than danger and embrace (Woodward 2013, pp. 137-138). Instead, for us to overcome nihilism, we must meet our world head-on, as it is, and affirm it.

1.2 Reactive Nihilism

According to Deleuze, the next stage of nihilism that follows

negative nihilism is 'reactive nihilism,' when we come to reject the higher world. Reactive nihilism is when "[t]he supersensible world and higher values are reacted against, their existence is denied, they are refused all validity—this is no longer the devaluation of life in the name of higher values but rather the devaluation of higher values themselves" (Deleuze 1983, pp. 147-148). The atheist exemplifies the reactive nihilist. He denies God, he rejects the 'true' world beyond our world, and he denies the value of that world.

As Nietzsche infamously puts it, "God is dead! God remains dead! And we have killed him!" (Nietzsche 2001, p. 120) Indeed, Nietzsche expresses this idea several times throughout his corpus: 'God' (all higher worlds and their values) is denied. Keep in mind the time in which Nietzsche was writing. It was the late 19th century, and the Enlightenment-fueled scientific revolution was rationalizing many phenomena previously attributed to God. Even within the field of philosophy the idea of God was being devalued and humanized by the likes of Spinoza, Hegel, and Feuerbach. By the time of Nietzsche, many of the most fundamentally deified paradigms had been thoroughly humanized and rationalized, creating a crisis of confidence in the traditional ideas of God itself. For all these historical reasons, scientific and philosophical, God had ostensibly been 'killed,'—and we had killed him. And what a disillusioning reality this is! There is no longer a higher world which contains higher values. There is just our world, our values, and us.

Then why are our values still the values of the higher world? According to Nietzsche, the death of 'God' did not bring about the death of his higher values. As he puts it, "God is dead; but given the way people are, there may still for millennia be caves in which they show his shadow. —And we—we must still defeat his shadow as well!" (Ibid., p. 109) In other words, 'God is dead,' but his shadow remains. For example, we see this in Kant, who under the guise of 'pure reason alone' reinstates the very Judeo-Chris-

tian values he sets out to 'critique' (Deleuze 1983, pp. 1-2). We see this in the atheist who still holds Christian humility, modesty, and chastity as unquestioned and intrinsically worthy values.[1] The atheist denies God, yet blindly abides by God's values. In so doing, the atheist remains a nihilist, as he fails to overcome 'God's' shadow of life-negating values.

The result is a disillusioned value-set predicated upon a higher world that no longer exists. For Nietzsche, if we are to overcome nihilism, we must not only live free of the notion of a higher world, but we must also live free of the higher world's values. We must create *our own* values based on a method that is squarely rooted *in our* world, as it is.

1.3 Passive Nihilism

But what happens when we create values of our own that still deny life? This value-set defines 'passive nihilism,' the final stage of value-based nihilism. Here in the stage of passive nihilism, all human sensibility and pathos are shunned, our will is denied, and we as individuals fade into nothingness (Ibid., p. 151). The Buddhist or Hindu exemplifies the passive nihilist. In both religions, 'human, all too human' drives are combated against, and thus denied in favor of what Nietzsche calls an ascetic ideal. For example, human desires such as ambition are labeled as 'greed' and subsequently denied. The human drive of passion or retribution is labeled 'anger,' and seen as a problem that must be eliminated. To relinquish one's ties to these human qualities is to approach an 'enlightened' state, such as Nirvana or Moksha. These states are not 'higher worlds' per se, but they are 'higher' modes of existence that run away and shame our human nature in a fit of what Nietzsche calls 'bad conscience.' Again, we see the parallels to the scientist and philosopher (the logical positivist and stoic, for example) who seek an enlightened state via hyper-rationality and equanimity. As Nietzsche would put it, these passive

nihilists, '"from an impoverishment of life' make intoxication a convulsion, a numbness" (Ibid., p. 16).

Nietzsche refers to the passive nihilist as 'the last man,' and much of his work, especially in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, focuses on this character. In describing the last man, Zarathustra shouts: "[a]las! There comes the time of the most despicable man, who can no longer despise himself. Behold! I show you *the last man*. 'What is love? What is creation? What is longing? What is a star?'–so asks the last man and he blinks… 'We have invented happiness'–say the last men, and blink" (Nietzsche 2005, p. 13). The last man cannot even despise himself, for to despise is to feel. 'What is love?' 'What is longing?' To the passive nihilist, love and longing are nothing but shameful human drives—drives that must be relinquished and censured. For the last man, all of humanity's drives and desires are not only meaningless and empty but also dangerous and destructive; rendering him stupid and numb in their presence. When we make ourselves numb to life, we imply that numbness is required because life is painful.[2] It is not enough to deny higher values because we still need to *create* values for and from our world, but in our first attempt, we create values that deny life because we are still in the habit of thinking of our world as unworthy.

For Nietzsche, this is the last stage of nihilism before we even have the chance of overcoming it. Humanity *must* descend into these depths for us to soar out of them. In *Zarathustra*, the German word *untergehen* has a constant and fundamental presence. According to Martin Clancy, the word translates to 'going under,' as well as 'perishing,' or 'dying' (Ibid., p. 283). Nietzsche sees this 'going under,' or 'dying' as a necessary stage to overcoming nihilism. We must first descend into passive nihilism (where we die) before we can transcend it (be reborn as superhuman). This is why on the very first page, Zarathustra tells us, "[l]ike you I must *go under*—as men say, to whom I shall descend" (Ibid., p. 7). Like us, he must perish. In other words,

the western trends of subscribing to logical positivism, eastern religion, stoicism, science-worship, and forced 'positivity,' was inevitable, and only from here can we emerge into an authentic stage of full life-affirmation.

1.4 Logical Nihilism

'Logical nihilism,' the last type of nihilism, is unconnected with the progression of the first three value-based types. To understand logical nihilism, we must once again go back to Plato. Perhaps Plato's most significant influence on philosophy was that of the dialectic. In brief, Platonic dialectic involves two people, one offering definitions or arguments, and the other offering counterarguments (negations) in response. As such, dialectic is a form of logic operated by negations. Now, as Heidegger claims, Nietzsche's philosophy is a counterargument to Plato's philosophy, and as a mere counterargument, it is defined by nihilistic negation, dialectically (logically) speaking (Norman 2000, pp. 190-191).

Two millennia later, Plato's negation-based dialectic was followed up by that of Hegel's. In short, Hegel believed that every idea (argument), eventually breaks down due to its instability and intrinsic contradiction, therefore turning into its own negation. This negation (counterargument) would also negate itself, turning into its own reconciliation (new argument). The result for Nietzschean philosophy under this paradigm is similar to that of Platonic dialectic: his ideas are merely a contradiction to that which came before him, and as a contradiction, it is defined essentially by negation, *not* affirmation.

The problem becomes clearer when we pose a fundamental question of this article: did Nietzsche succeed in illuminating a path to overcome nihilism? Well, if he sees all philosophy before him as nihilistic, and he is opposing that nihilism, is not his task defined by opposition, and thus negation? Is not Nietzsche merely

negating negation? Opposing opposition? Seen in this light, Nietzsche's task seems bound to fail due to an inescapable contradiction, one that we must address (Ibid., p. 190).

However, importantly, we must keep in mind that *logic itself* is a form of both negative and passive nihilism, because the scientific search for the Truth, "is born of a 'poverty of life' in the face of suffering"[3] (Woodward 2000, p. 138) Perhaps Kafka put it best when in *The Trial*, he said, "Logic is of course unshakeable, but it cannot hold out against a man who wants to live." Indeed, a triumph over nihilism would entail a different mode of thought, one that is distinct from those defined by logic at their core.[4]

2. Deleuze's Interpretation of Nietzsche's Will to Power and Eternal Return

Now that we have an understanding of that which we aspire to overcome, we can move on to Nietzsche's concepts of the will to power and eternal return as Deleuze interprets them. I will start with the concept of the will to power.

2.1 The Will to Power

Nietzsche's metaphysics is essentially that of Heraclitus, who believed that the world is composed of constantly changing and battling forces. Deleuze's interpretation of the concept of Nietzschean 'will to power,' is that within each human, there exists a differential panoply of these competing forces, some active and others reactive. Simply put, active forces are active insofar as they affirm life, while reactive forces are reactive insofar as they deny life. For example, love is an active force, while chastity is a reactive force. Now, according to Deleuze, "[t]he essence of man and of the world occupied by man is the becoming reactive of all forces, nihilism and nothing but nihilism" (Deleuze 1983, p. 169). It is the essence of humanity to descend (*untergehen*) into nihilism via our reactive will to power which is dominated by reactive

forces. This inevitable becoming reactive of the will to power is the metaphysical engine that drives us into nihilism, beginning with negative nihilism, phasing into reactive nihilism, and ending in passive nihilism. At the point of passive nihilism, the reactive will to power becomes what Deleuze calls, 'the will to nothingness.' Recall that the passive nihilist suppresses his will and thus has a nothingness of will.

This last phase of passive nihilism is when, reactive forces, "…break off their alliance with [the will to nothingness], they want to assert their own values on their own account" (Ibid., p. 174). Here, the reactive forces want to exist on their own, independent of any will. But at this point: "[t]he will to nothingness continues its enterprise, this time in silence, beyond the reactive man. *Reactive forces break their alliance with the will to nothingness, the will to nothingness, in turn, breaks its alliance with reactive forces*. It inspires in man a new inclination: for destroying himself, but destroying himself actively" (Ibid.). The will to nothingness returns the favor and breaks its ties with reactive forces, and in so doing, 'destroys itself, but destroys itself actively.' Actively, because it destroys all reactivity. This is the moment Deleuze calls 'transmutation,' the moment when not only the values are transformed from reactive to active, but the element from which they derive (the will to power) transforms itself from reactive to active. Deleuze describes it like this: "Active destruction means: the point: the moment of transmutation in the will to nothingness. Destruction becomes *active* at the moment when, with the alliance between reactive forces and the will to nothingness broken, the will to nothingness is converted and crosses over to the side of *affirmation*, it is related to a *power of affirming*, which destroys the reactive forces themselves" (Ibid.).

However, for Deleuze, "…transmutation depends more profoundly on the eternal return" (Ibid., p. 192). It is the eternal return as both physical doctrine and selective being that provides the engine for the above-described transmutation.

2.2 Eternal Return

Nietzsche's concept of the eternal return is of the utmost importance in his philosophy. This concept takes on two different forms: one, as a physical and cosmological theory, and the other, as selective being.

2.3 Eternal Return: A Speculative Physical and Cosmological Theory

The first element of the eternal return I will discuss is that of a speculative physical description of time itself. The claim is that "…time itself is circular"[5] (Nietzsche 2005, p. 136). There are several reasons why Nietzsche subscribed to this thought. First and foremost, Nietzsche believed that our existence was a being of becoming (Deleuze 1983, p. 47). In other words, our existence, our being, is in a constant state of change and development. Therefore, it is always becoming. Consider the aging process. All of us are constantly *becoming* older with each passing moment. As such, our existence, our being, is in a constant and never ceasing state of becoming. *It is a being of becoming*. Indeed, this is the nature of time as we experience it. Time itself is in a constant state of becoming—it never ceases, and continuously moves the past into the future. Here again, we see Nietzsche's fidelity to Heraclitus, who saw all of existence as being in a constant state of flux. Now, seen this way, Nietzsche makes the argument that time must be circular. "That everything recurs, is the very nearest approach of a world of becoming to a world of being" (Nietzsche 2019, §617). In other words, for our world to be a being of becoming, time must be circular. "*Returning is the being of that which becomes*" (Deleuze 1983, p. 48).

Let us make more sense of this. Nietzsche argues that if time has an infinite past, then there could never have been a starting point. Moreover, if time were ever going to reach a final state, having an infinite past, it would have already achieved it.

Why? Because past time is infinite, and if a final destination were possible, it would have already been realized in the infinity of the past. Therefore, there is no beginning state of, nor final destination for, time itself (Ibid., p. 47).

The eternal return also explains the passage of time (Ibid., p. 48). Nietzsche and Deleuze point out that the passage of time itself must be a circular motion because, linearly, time would not be able to pass. Deleuze tells us that if the present moment had to wait until the next present moment for it to pass, it would never pass, because there cannot be two present moments at the same time, and as such, there would never be a future or past. This demonstrates why, "[The present] cannot wait, the moment must be simultaneously present and past, present and yet to come, in order for it to pass. The present moment must coexist with itself as past and yet to come" (Ibid.). On some level, the present must be present, past, and future for the passage of time to make sense, and the only way the present can be present, past, and future, is for time to be circular. This is because when time is taken as circular, each current moment in time has already been, and will be again.

Importantly, Deleuze wants us to see this circular motion as a repetition that repeats difference. Yes, time repeats in a circle, but that circle itself changes with each repetition (Ibid., pp. 48-49).

2.4 Eternal Return: As Practical Mode of Thought and Selective Being

Before Nietzsche's idea of the eternal return ever became cosmological, it was merely a practical and selective mode of thought (Nietzsche 2001, p. 194). Under the first selection, Nietzsche is asking us to live as if our lives will be repeated in perpetuity (Klossowski 1997, p. 60). When submitted to this selection, the actions that we select are active and affirmative, while all the timid half-measures are selected against and eliminated. Here, Deleuze draws a parallel to Kant's categorical imperative but reframes the maxim

in a Nietzschean manner: "…*whatever you will, will it in such a way that you also will its eternal return*" (Deleuze 1983, p. 68). In other words, before doing something, ask yourself if you would do it over and over again for eternity. The only actions that pass this selection are actions in their full force, while things you would only do once or twice are canceled. If you are going to do something, *do it!* "Laziness, stupidity, baseness, cowardice or spitefulness that would will its own eternal return would no longer be the same laziness, stupidity etc." (Ibid., p. 69). Base human impulses become less base when approached with this affirmative vigor. The lazy man becomes less lazy when he commits to his laziness.

However, the fully committed lazy man is still lazy at his core. As such, the first cycle of selection, while driving his reactive forces to their fullest potential, is not enough to eradicate them from his will to power. "But reactive forces which go to the limit of what they can do in their own way, and which find a powerful motor in the nihilistic will, resist the first selection. Far from falling outside the eternal return they enter into it and seem to return with it" (Ibid.). What we need is yet another, second selective cycle of the eternal return.

For Deleuze, it is this second selection which destroys the reactive will to power, the reactive forces it generates, and the nihilism it constitutes. As stated above, in this second selection, the reactive will to power separates itself from reactive forces entirely, thus destroying the negating element within it. "Only the eternal return can complete nihilism because *it makes negation a negation of reactive forces themselves*" (Ibid., p. 70). And this is what Deleuze means when he says that the eternal return is a selective being that overcomes nihilism: the first selection drives reactive forces to their fullest extent (passive nihilism), and the second selection drives the reactive will to separate from all reactive forces because the reactive will has nothing left to separate from other than itself (transmutation). The will to power *becomes* active via the *being* of eternal return's double selection. For

example, in the first selection, the lazy man turns his timid laziness into full-fledged laziness as he enters into passive nihilism. But then, in the second selection, his inner will to power continues its enterprise of laziness to the extent that it refuses even to generate the forces that make him lazy. He becomes too lazy to continue being lazy, and at this moment, his laziness transmutates, or turns into something else. It turns into action. His negation becomes so extreme that it negates itself into affirmation.

3. The Problem of Nihilism, A Scholarly Discussion

We now have an understanding of the major concepts surrounding the scholarly debate at hand. Primarily, we are exploring whether or not Deleuze's interpretation above provides a real path to overcoming nihilism.

3.1 Judith Norman on Deleuze's Logic of Difference

Judith Norman tackles the problem of what I have labeled above as logical nihilism. This is an appropriate first move, for it is a necessary condition for Deleuze's Nietzsche to overcome nihilism. Norman discusses Heidegger's claim that Nietzsche reinstates negation at the very point he wishes to overcome it. As outlined above, Heidegger argues that Nietzsche contradicts himself by being opposed to the oppositionality of Plato and Hegel, which seems to entail an inherent logical inconsistency.

However, Norman points out that Deleuze solves this problem of logical nihilism by articulating that Nietzsche does not stand in opposition to Platonism or Hegelianism; but rather, in *difference from* them. In the relation of two parties, she asks us to, "imagine a case where one side experiences opposition—and the other side experiences not opposition, but—*difference*. This model can be used to describe a situation in which a relation of enmity is perceived by only one of two related groups" (Norman 2000,

p. 195). A philosophy like Nietzsche's that aspires to be void of a defining negation must use this logic of difference as distinct from a Platonic or Hegelian logic of opposition. As Deleuze puts it, "Negation is opposed to affirmation but affirmation differs from negation. We cannot think of affirmation as 'being opposed' to negation: this would be to place the negation within it" (Ibid.). Simply put, the philosophy of Nietzsche is not opposed to that of Plato or Hegel; instead, it is a *different* philosophy. As such, any negative element is "a secondary and derivative product of [its] existence" (Deleuze 1983, p. 10).

3.2 Ashley Woodward's Response to the Logic of Difference

Ashley Woodward responds to Norman by claiming that while this logic of difference may be a necessary condition for overcoming nihilism, it is not a sufficient one. As she points out, the logic of difference merely *permits* affirming interpretations of life to compete for dominance, but it in no way guarantees that they will (Woodward 2013, p. 122). We need something more: the transmutation of the reactive will to power and eternal recurrence as selective being.

However, according to Peter Hallward, whom Woodward cites, Deleuze's metaphysical interpretation of the eternal return as selective being fails to overcome nihilism. She argues that Deleuze's ideas are God-like abstractions that devalue and escape from the world of lived experience. Woodward tells us that, "[f]irst, Deleuze's speculative metaphysics…stands in a position radically distanced from life as it is experienced. As such, it constitutes a world of values beyond this world, thereby reinstating [negative] nihilism" (Ibid., p. 135). This is because, they argue, Deleuze seems to nihilistically put all importance in an impersonal and speculative world of eternal return at the expense of the real world and the people who occupy it. According to Woodward,

"…Deleuze's eternal return places all value on creative processes themselves, while created things [people] are entirely devalued. Thus in Deleuze's philosophy value is separated from this actual, created world—value is attached solely to the virtual world of…being as creative process" (Ibid., p. 136). Here, Hallward and Woodward are arguing that Deleuze places greater, 'extra'-worldly value in his selective process, which in turn devalues the things of our world which the process creates.

Woodward's second problem is that in reality, Nietzsche's overcoming of nihilism involves an embrace of uncertainty and suffering, while, as she sees it, Deleuze's interpretation of eternal return creates certain, deterministic destruction of the reactive will to power. A such, she claims that Deleuze creates a comfortable haven where all negation necessarily transforms into affirmation, which seems explicitly anti-Nietzschean. Woodward points out that, "while Deleuze's philosophy overturns those categories which have traditionally provided a sense of security, he gives us new categories, both of metaphysics and ethics of which we may (supposedly) be certain" (Ibid., p. 138). In other words, Deleuze's metaphysical interpretation claims to provide a guaranteed escape of nihilism, but this creates a nihilistic sense of security that in reality constitutes the very fleeing that he set out to overcome.

4. My Response

If we accept Woodward's representation of Deleuze's analysis, we are forced to conclude that Deleuze fails to interpret a Nietzschean path to overcome nihilism. However, I will now argue that an unsafe, this-world reading of Deleuze's interpretation is the more tenable one.

4.1 Practical Abstract Thought and Metaphysics *Within* our World

There is no doubt that Deleuze uses abstract language in his inter-

pretation of Nietzsche, language that in many cases, Nietzsche himself never used. However, is it possible for abstract language to be of practical import to this world? What about metaphysics? I suggest that both can be, and often are.

So, what does Nietzsche himself have to say about this? Heidegger points out that Nietzsche says, '"For many, abstract thinking is toil; for me, on good days, it is feast and frenzy" (Heidegger 1991, p. 5). This indicates that Nietzsche not only does not have a problem with abstract thought, he actually embraces it. He does not see anything necessarily nihilistic about abstract thought, if anything, he sees it as an exciting element of life. This is because abstract language can be and often is, used to describe this, our practical and real world in illuminating ways.

The same goes for metaphysics. On pages 137-138 of Woodward's article, she takes a long excerpt out of an aphorism in *The Gay Science* entitled "What is Romanticism?" to demonstrate why logic and metaphysics are both examples of security-seeking and other-worldly negative nihilism. In that aphorism, Nietzsche says, "…for logic soothes, gives confidence—in short, a certain warm, fear repelling narrowness and confinement to optimistic horizons" (Nietzsche 2001, p. 235). About this, Woodward states, "…Nietzsche sees metaphysics, logic, and much of philosophy… as driven by the desire for the feeling of security provided by conceptual certainty" (Woodward 2013, p. 138). Importantly, Woodward implicates metaphysics in Nietzsche's excerpt, even though Nietzsche himself never mentions metaphysics even once in the entire aphorism. He only implicates logic as serving the role of a pacifier. As such, we have no good reason to classify metaphysics as necessarily nihilistic.

4.2 Is Deleuze's Interpretation 'Extra'-Worldly, Escapist, or Safe?

Deleuze's interpretation is not 'extra'-worldly because Deleuze

himself orients his entire project around this, our world, and the contents therein. While there are numerous examples throughout the book, it is seen clearly in his discussion of what he calls 'sense' and 'body.' When discussing 'sense,' he declares that "[w]e will never find the sense of something (of a human, a biological or even physical phenomenon) if we do not know the force which appropriates the thing" (Deleuze 1983, p. 3) Humanity, biology, physical phenomena: these are all facets of this world *par excellence*. We see more of the same when he discusses the 'body:' "Every relationship of forces constitutes a body—whether it is chemical, biological, social or political" (Ibid., p. 40). Here he has added the important facets of chemistry, society, and polity: three more critical elements of *this* world. Deleuze is indubitably analyzing this world, and any suggestion to the contrary is a misreading of the text.

Deleuze's interpretation is not escapist because it never uses deductive, inductive, abductive, or probabilistic methods to establish conceptual certainty; and, it never sets up any 'extra'-worldly realm. Moreover, he emphasizes the importance of chance over necessity, which I explore further here.

Deleuze's interpretation is not safe, because it hinges upon the embrace of chance, which is explicitly antithetical to the safety of certainty. In his chapter, "The Dice Throw," Deleuze explains that "[t]he dice which are thrown once are the affirmation of *chance*" (Ibid., p. 26) Further down the same page, he says, "[t]o know how to affirm chance is to know how to play." Indeed, this entire chapter is dedicated to a theme that reappears throughout the book: that overcoming nihilism requires an embrace of chance over necessity because embrace of chance is an embrace of life—life that is inherently risky and dangerous. This also applies to the concept of the eternal return as selective being, because Deleuze makes it clear that the eternal return embodies the qualities of chance over necessity—*necessity belongs to chance* (Ibid., p. 189). As Deleuze says, "Destiny in the eternal return is also the 'welcoming' of chance"

(Ibid., p. 28). Perhaps Woodward is concerned with statements that Deleuze makes like this: "Only that which affirms or is affirmed returns" (Ibid., p. 189). Maybe she reads this as Deleuze painting a picture of a mechanism that necessarily produces affirmation, which would take the chance out of it. But here, Deleuze is merely saying that the fundamental drive of the will to power is to destroy itself in a transmutation, but, that process is never guaranteed to happen in someone's lifetime, and even if it does, that process will in no way be safe or easy.

4.3 The Being of Creative Eternal Return versus the Being of Created Bodies, and Lived-Experience Import

Lastly, I will address the more specific concerns mounted by Woodward and Hallward: that Deleuze places greater importance into the creative process of eternal return, thus devaluing the bodies created by that process; and, that Deleuze's metaphysics is radically different from life as experienced.

To this first objection, I respond that Hallward and Woodward are creating a spiritual world out of Deleuze's interpretation where there is none. As elucidated throughout this article, Deleuze's transmutation of the will to power, and the eternal return as double selection, both exist *within this world and the created bodies which inhabit it*. Therefore, Deleuze is indeed placing a higher value in the eternal return as a creative process and selective being, *but that process of creation exists within us—it is us* (Ibid., p. 197). Therefore, placing value in the creative process is tantamount to placing equal value in the created bodies that interact with that process. The only thing Deleuze devalues is the reactive will to power which itself devalues life.

I believe one passage in particular drives this message home. When discussing the nature of the second selection as being, Deleuze tells us that:

> It is no longer a question of the simple thought of the

> eternal return eliminating from willing everything that falls outside this thought but rather, of the eternal return making something come into being which cannot do so without changing nature. It is no longer a question of selective thought but of selective being; for eternal return is being and being is selection (Ibid., p. 71).

This excerpt hammers down the relationship between the being of created bodies and the being of creative eternal return. I believe that Hallward and Woodward are focusing on the phrase, "for eternal return is being," without placing it in its proper context. Notice that Deleuze also says, "but rather, of the eternal return making something come into being which cannot do so without changing nature." When put into context, this passage is telling us that *both* selective eternal return, *and* the transmutated body, have being—and this is crucial. Deleuze is not placing the being of selective eternal return above that of the created body, but rather, *on an equally lifted footing*. Only the known being of the reactive will to power which devalues life is devalued before it transmutes into the existing being of affirmation (Ibid., p. 173).[6] Furthermore, what gives the selective eternal return its being is its ability to create being within the body. Therefore, the being of the created body and the being of the selective eternal return are *interdependent*, and on the same plane of existence. In other words, no one being is placed above another or separated into two distinct worlds. Rather, they make up an interrelated distinction on the same plane of existence and within the same world. There is nothing 'extra'-worldly about it.

Lastly, I contend that Deleuze's analysis is squarely rooted in, and relevant to, life as we experience it. Recall the examples of love as an active force and sexual shame as a reactive force. Also recall the lazy man whose will transmutates, turning him into a man of action. Or, take a drug addict, or alcoholic, who destroys her reactive will to power of addiction, transforming it into an

active will to power of strength over that which she was formerly under control. These are just a few examples of the many real-life, practical ways in which Deleuze's representation is rooted in life as we experience it.

Conclusion

Thus concludes my examination of whether or not Deleuze successfully interprets Nietzsche in a way that provides a path to overcoming nihilism. I argued that Deleuze does succeed in his endeavor, because he never engages in negative nihilism, despite the claims of some scholars. This is because his metaphysics and abstractions pertain to this, our world. His analysis is not safe or escapist, because it embraces chance over necessity and destruction over preservation. It never sets up an 'extra'-worldly preference of creative selection over created bodies, because the creative process and its created fruits are interdependent—a process that only devalues reactive, life-denying bodies prior to transmutation. Lastly, I demonstrated that his interpretation is indeed firmly planted in this life as we experience it because it can be applied to countless real-life phenomenon.

Notes

1. The operative terms here being 'unquestioned' and 'intrinsically worthy.' It is not that the Judeo-Christian values are necessarily life-denying values. However, if we simply assume the *a priori* worth of these values, we only do so because of its importance in higher world belief systems. For a value to be confirmed as one that is life-affirming, we must evaluate it squarely within this world. This is why Nietzsche saw himself as doing what Socrates did even better than Socrates himself. Nietzsche wants us to actually question all values from a worldly framework, and not just assume their worthiness based upon the existence of a higher world (as Plato and St. Paul did).
2. This is why Nietzsche famously drank only water and milk. Drugs and alcohol are nihilistic in that they paint the world as something for which to be numb. Something that requires a panacea for the pain.
3. At this point, one might object by claiming that my article is reliant upon logic at its core, even though it classifies logically rooted thought as nihilistic. This is undeniable. But indeed, this is the nature of all scholasticism. If

my article was not primarily driven by logic, the editors would not publish it. Interestingly, Nietzsche's thesis out of university (*The Birth of Tragedy*) was frowned upon by those to whom he submitted it because it was not based on logic. It is also well known that this was a large contributing factor to his leaving academia shortly after entering it.

4. To be clear, life-affirming thought can entail logic; but logic cannot be at the core of that thought. It cannot be the main driving mechanism. Moreover, this is not to say that all thoughts driven by logic are bad. Rather, Nietzsche is merely asking us to understand them for what they are.
5. "The wheel of the world swings through the same phases again and again." — Rudyard Kipling
6. He devalues nihilism as our *ratio cognoscendi*, but he values affirmation as our *ratio essendi*. (Deleuze 1983, p. 173)

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Illuminating The Black Box of Education

Jalen McLeod

Introduction

Social, economic, and political poverty is largely recognized as one of the greatest problems in our world. Urgent solutions are needed, but there is much dispute among ideological camps regarding the best course of action we should take to combat this problem. Within this debate, one of the most prevalent disagreements is as follows: which principles should we prioritize to frame our conception of distributive justice? And effectively, what implications do these principles have on public policy?

One response to this question is to improve the redistribution of wealth (RoW from hereafter), which is the economic principle concerning how an economy transfers wealth from one source to another through economic transactions. In this context, the transfer of wealth that is called for is from concentrated sources to impoverished sources. RoW is regulated by public policies such as taxation, deficit spending, public services, social welfare programs, monetary policies, land reform, and/or philanthropy, among many others. To prioritize RoW is to increase the scope, rate, or inclusion of these policies (Barry 2018).

An opposing position to the above approach, maintains that to combat poverty we should prioritize economic growth so that there is more wealth created, thus more wealth to be enjoyed by everyone. And economic growth is best achieved through supply side economics, i.e. prioritizing capital investments into business production and capacity. This view posits that capital investments must be high in order to have the greatest impact on economic

growth; the bigger the investment entails the bigger the development of production capacity. The increase in production will create a need for more workers, thereby creating more jobs. Thus, "trickling down" the wealth, stimulating economic movement and growth simultaneously; as the workforce becomes wealthier, people will have more resources to consume more products, which in turn makes businesses more profitable and capable of expansion. Therefore, investors and business executives must retain and even increase their stock of wealth for this to all to be possible. Therefore, by prioritizing redistribution, we will inhibit our ability to foster economic growth because there will be less concentrated capital to fund large investments. Therefore, this approach requires policies such as lowering corporate, capital gains, and wealth taxes to incentivize larger business investments (Britannica 2018).

Despite the apparent tension between these two positions, there is a third middle ground position under which the other two can coexist, and more importantly, be augmented. Namely, through the framework of human capital theory (HCT from hereafter). HCT is an economic theory that maintains that optimality of long-term economic growth is primarily determined by the amount of investment into human capital (defined as the collective stock of skills, knowledge, and welfare embodied in the labor force that facilitate the creation of personal, social, and economic well-being). The investment required to strengthen human capital is that of education, health, and physical capital. Education is the development of skills, while health ensures those skills are protected, and physical capital is needed for those skills to have the means of being utilized. Thus, the policy implications of HCT extend to educational policy, economic policy, and social welfare policy (Goldin 2016). A basic justification for this theory is that humans are more fundamental to the economy than production. People are responsible for creating and innovating the products in demand. Therefore, by better equipping people to create and

innovate, we in turn get more valuable products and services in our markets.

If HCT is true, then both the first two positions can be made compatible, as the policies advocated by the former fulfill the latter's priorities. But firstly, we need to reconcile the problem that caused most economists and social planners to question HCT's viability; namely, the black box problem of education. That is, HCT leaves us to assume that the education system is to be understood as a converter, in which human capital is input and then increased when output; however, it doesn't explain how. Using production function analyses (analyzing the outputs of production relative to the inputs of production), this assumption by HCT proved untenable, as different attempts to verify this notion produced varying results despite similar inputs (e.g. increasing school funding for various educational resources). This led analyzers to conclude that education's effect on human capital was more complex than originally postulated, dubbing education as a black box converter whose powers on human capital were unknown (Vandenberghe 1999).

Failed attempts to understand this complex relationship correlated with the rise of alternative approaches for increasing human capital through education. One of these approaches is the marketization of education, which infuses the market forces of supply and demand into education to encourage competition among schools for students in an "education market," thus incentivizing these schools to improve. The best schools that emerged would help to identify the best methods of improving education and understanding education's effect on human capital (Vandenberghe 1999).

Despite this shift however, many researchers continued the search to understand the black box, and then began to factor into their studies the social conditions of the student outside the classroom, e.g. their economic standing, parental and household circumstances, etc. Over the decades there has been a vast amount

of studies factoring in nearly every possible combination of influences. Much of it suggests that there is a connection while others suggest that there is no such connection. I attribute these varying results to the methodological assumption that students' cognitive abilities are constant (in the scientific sense) and that only external factors influence their performance (Harris 2010). I will argue here that this assumption causes inaccurate results and thus inhibits our ability to understand education's effect on human capital.

In section 1 and 2 of this article, I will argue that production function analyses (PFA from here on), operating under the aforementioned assumption are incapable of producing accurate results because human nature is functional (in the mathematical sense of the term). Meaning, human nature (defined here as a person's psychological and behavioral tendencies/characteristics) is a function/product of her intrinsic qualities (e.g. epigenetic code, endocrine and nervous system) and extrinsic factors (e.g. social-environmental factors). Thus, no two humans can ever have the same nature because no two humans can have the same set of intrinsic and extrinsic factors. These sets can be very similar, but never identical. The various individual differences between one person's factors and the next person's may be small in some cases, but when all factors are considered in their totality over the course of a lifetime, a profound difference manifests between individual people's natures. Therefore, every person will have different cognitive ability and require different needs/inputs in order to output educational and economic success. Moreover, the most causally efficacious inputs of human nature are incapable of being inserted into PFA. Therefore, we should consider alternatives to PFA as a method of measuring the educational-economical success of policies. Lastly, in section 3, I will argue that because we all have numerically different cognitive abilities, we all have a unique cognitive contribution to contribute toward innovation. Thus, all the human capital in the economy (meaning every person) must be maximized so to optimize these unique cognitive

contributions toward innovation. Doing so is a necessary condition to realize the most optimal levels of economic growth. I will argue that this understanding allows us to illuminate the black box of education—making explicit the link between human capital, education, and economic growth.

The Human Nature Function

The history of the concept of human nature consists of a wide array of views, largely centered on the determiners of human nature. We can roughly reduce all of these views into three mutually exclusive categories, namely intrinsic accounts, extrinsic accounts, and accounts considering both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Intrinsic accounts maintain that human nature is solely determined by qualities that are innate to the person, such as their genetics or their mental capacities (Allen 2018). Extrinsic accounts maintain that human nature is solely determined by factors outside the person, such as culture and familial relations (Britannica 2016). The third view maintains that both intrinsic and extrinsic factors determine human nature, and recent advances in science have demonstrated that it is very likely that this third view is true and the other two are not (Moore 2016). There are many different theories that can be subsumed under the third view, but in this section I will only outline the epigeneticist's theory and call its implication the *human nature function*. To do so, I will only provide a few crude descriptions of the main factors determining human nature; we will see each factor contributing only a slight variation among humans, but together, these many slight differences amalgamate, translating to a wide difference between each person. The most important difference we're concerned with here is that between our cognitive abilities.

The most foundational intrinsic factor determining human nature is our genetics—the blueprint for our biological systems. All humans have nearly identical genetic codes, but there are very

slight differences in those codes that are responsible for the variance apparent in human populations. Thus, we all have the same biological system, but there is slight difference in how each of those systems functions. The most important of these systems for our purposes here are the endocrine and nervous system. Generally, the human endocrine system is responsible for producing the hormones which regulate our bodily processes, while the nervous system is responsible for sentience—communicating stimuli throughout the body. Particular hormones communicate different signals to the neurons, causing different sensations. And vice versa, neurons—as a result of some stimulus—communicate signals to the endocrine system to produce particular hormones based on the stimuli. The specific difference among humans is our level of hormone production and secretion, as well as different levels of nerve sensitivity to stimuli. As a result of this difference, people can have different moods and behaviors when experiencing the same external stimulus.

We will deem these experiences of external stimuli as the most foundational extrinsic factor (let us bar the fact that experience isn't purely extrinsic). Examples of these factors are our personal relationships, our activities, and cultural/societal norms. All of these factors play a role in conditioning our psychological and behavioral responses to these very factors. This conditioning occurs by affecting the memory bank of the nervous system. That is, memories of repeated experiences accumulate, and then create standards for our biological processes (standards likely are guided by pleasure and pain). Therefore, the set of memories, i.e. the relationship between all of a person's memories plays a role in determining our psychological and behavioral responses.

Conclusive accounts of the nature of memory are still being developed, however recent advances in the study of epigenetics (the study of the materials on top of and around our genes) illustrate that this conditioning is exhibited at the epigenetic level. Epigenetic material controls the expression of the underlying

gene; these materials act as on and off switches for the gene. Thus, a person can be born with a particular genetic code, but their epigenetic materials determine how the code will express. Unlike our genetic code, epigenetic materials can change over the course of a lifetime. Epigenetic materials are subject to change based on many external factors; such as our diet, drug usage, exposure to environmental chemicals, and our experiences with stressful and joyous situations. These external factors cause particular neural firing patterns, which correlate with particular endocrine responses (based on our genetic makeup), and these firing patterns and responses will change based on what is deemed best for the body, by the body. This optimality is partly determined by the relations between other responses, what we may call our network of biological/psychological customs and responses; i.e. if a particular operation such as the production of stress hormones is occurring in relative excess compared to the production of pleasure hormones, then the body will adjust some other response(s) to counter this imbalance. We can imagine another person who produces these same hormones at a more balanced rate, thus not having a need for any compensatory operations in this regard. Since these firing patterns and responses are determined by a person's unique intrinsic and extrinsic factors, everyone will have a different blueprint for optimality, as individual factors (internal and external) can diminish, constrain, facilitate, or augment the influence of others.

This network determines all our moods and behaviors, as well as how our moods and behaviors interact with our environment. But it is also the case that our behaviors have causal powers over the same external factors that are conditioning us. For example, on a micro-level, how we treat the people closest to us affects how they treat us, and thus, how much stress and pleasure those relationships bring us. And in turn, how our network of customs is shaped. The same phenomenon occurs on a macro-level, as the careers we undertake can shift the very norms which

govern our lives in society; e.g. a social planner writes the very laws that govern the society she/he lives in. On both levels, our actions influence how extrinsic factors will influence us in return.[1]

Human nature then, should be understood as a function of whatever the current standing is between a person's intrinsic and extrinsic factors. When one of these factors changes for a person, so then does her/his nature. Thus, there are no essential psychological and behavioral characteristics of human nature, because no two humans can have the same set of intrinsic and extrinsic factors. For example, no two people can ever share the same space-time location, and by extension, cannot share the same experience of some extrinsic factor at the same time. Thus, no one can share the same set of memories, and thereby cannot have the same memory bank governing their network of customs.[2] There is only an essential structure determining human nature, namely the cyclically influential relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic factors. This crude structure I have outlined can be considered as the basic structure determining human nature. Though I have only named a few intrinsic and extrinsic factors playing a role in determining human nature, an exhaustive list is outside the scope of this article. But I hope that I have shown there does exist this cyclical relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic factors. And that both of these factors are determining human nature. Thereby, every human throughout all time will have a different human nature.

When analyzed individually, the space-time/experiential differences, the endocrine and nervous system differences, and the epigenetic differences will all seem to account for minor variation among human natures. However, the culmination of all of these differences over the course of a lifetime causes profound differences in humans—differences that are unquantifiable by PFA.

Production Function Analyses & Cognitive Ability

PFA used to measure the requirements for educational success assume that every students' abilities (specifically cognitive abilities) are constant, i.e. the same. But given our account of human nature, this assumption cannot be true since cognitive ability can be affected by mental health, which just is our network of psychological customs held to a particular standard.[3]

To make this clear, let us first understand what exactly cognitive ability is. Consensus regarding this matter is also still in development, but most cognitive theories generally hold that the mind is like a computer, and that learning is basically defined as how we construct, develop, and manipulate the concepts created from our memories/experiences (Britannica 2017). Thus, learning/cognitive ability depends on (1) how many memories or bits of information the mind can store (2) how quickly the mind can retrieve those memories (3) the vivaciousness of the memory/how well the memory resembles the actual experience. Given this, it is clear that cognitive ability is heavily dependent—but not entirely—on the set of memories created from the experiences we have and the relations of those memories to one another. For example, a child who has only abusive experiences will likely construct particular concepts of reality (e.g. the trustworthiness of humans or human nature generally) in a pessimistic or fearful way. All else being equal, a person who has more pleasant experiences will likely construct those same particular concepts more optimistically. Therefore, every student is constructing new concepts according to different patterns—that are guided by our set of memories and existing concepts; everyone is literally learning in numerically different ways, as the information being transmitted in a classroom will be filtered through the individual's psychology and take on a form that is unique to her/him. Thus, it can be said that everyone has different cognitive ability, because cognitive

ability just is the way information is processed. And the content of the information we store plays a large role in determining the very processing of that information. Thus, we see the cyclical element of functional human nature arise again. Therefore, we can conclude that everyone's ability and needs will be different based on their unique nature, rendering PFA in this regard ineffective and illustrating the need for alternative or reformative understandings and approaches.

One might object on the grounds that the differences between people's natures aren't significant enough to affect the analyses in question and that there is more substantial similarity than difference; PFA gets us close enough to real world representation and is the most effective method available. However, most PFA aggregate multiple student data/inputs into the analysis; sometimes the entire classroom, the whole school, and even whole districts (Vandenberghe 1999). In doing so, analyzers are aggregating human nature variation, making the differences more substantial. Again, all of the variations I described may by themselves seem marginal, but when a person's stock of differences and their relations are considered in their entirety, and over the course of a lifetime, it is likely that every person experiences the world very differently, and is thereby developing/learning in the world according to differing guides. The more aggregation done by PFA entails the more nuances of individual natures that are ignored.

Another objector may argue that there are PFA that already consider this human nature variation by factoring in conditional factors outside of the classroom that affect the student (such as parent's level of education, parent's level of income, and the property value of homes in the community). However, these inputs cannot possibly represent the psychological influence that these factors may have on the student's mental health. The education level of a student's parent says nothing about the potential abuses that may occur in a home. Property value of a community says very little about the fear and stress brewing in a person when they're

walking home from school at night in a neighborhood where criminal activity is relatively high. These kinds of trauma profoundly affect a student's success and cannot be revealed through vague conditional factors. The effects of these factors aren't binary; we have already seen that different people will be affected in different ways even when experiencing the same stimuli—thus, the effects of these factors can only be understood in terms of a spectrum, with countless points in between.

The strongest objection against my argument is that I cannot claim that there are substantially different cognitive abilities without understanding all the determinants of cognitive ability, as it could turn out that despite all the experiential variation among humans, there is still only a handful of possible outcomes every person can realize. That is, there is no necessary connection between the premise that there is a wide variety of paths and the conclusion that there is a wide variety of destinations; the wide variety of paths very well could lead to only a handful of destinations. However, I would argue that reducing human nature variation into a handful of possibilities will ignore the countless and meaningful subtleties in between these handful of possibilities. Using the example from earlier, of the two people who construct the same concepts, one in a pessimistic way and the other in an optimistic way—we must understand that even this dichotomy isn't binary, there is likely a spectrum with countless points in between, i.e. levels of pessimism/optimism in between the most extreme versions. And these spectrums would apply to all kinds of possible ways of constructing all kinds of concepts. The variation would be vast and an attempt to outline such an account is beyond my imagination.

Thus, instead of offering alternatives to PFA here in this article, in this last section I would like to address the issue that brought on the need for PFA, namely the black box problem of education.

Illuminating the Black Box of Education

HCT seems intuitively very plausible, yet identifying clearly the logical connections between its premises and conclusions is difficult. To begin to understand this connection, we must first understand a little about the nature of economic growth. For some market product or service to have economic value, it can be simply said that it must have a high level of demand. Something comes into demand based on its usability, i.e. how well it functions in relation to other things of value, and additionally how much resource it costs to create. The improvement of usability is called innovation, and is the most immediate cause of economic growth, i.e. innovation is the final step in the casual chain of economic growth. This was first formally articulated by endogenous growth theory (EGT from here on), which also maintains that innovation is best promoted by the investment into the advancement of knowledge, specifically though investing into the funding of research and development (R&D). And the innovation that results from this will "spillover" into society's stock of knowledge, allowing other entities and industries to utilize and transform these new technologies. This spillover causes a ripple effect that will help to spur innovation elsewhere, which will also spillover, causing a cycle that results in theoretically infinite innovation (Shaw 1992).

I mostly agree with EGT, however I will argue that the account of knowledge advancement is inadequate and translates to a weak implication. In revealing more details of an account of knowledge advancement, we can illuminate the black box of education and argue for the strong policy implications of HCT.

We can make our argument in three steps: (1) innovative concepts—and by extension, innovative technologies—cannot be created without attaining the requisite knowledge and requisite cognitive ability for a given concept; (2) We saw in the previous section that everyone has numerically different cognitive abilities, and we defined cognitive ability simply as one's conceptual

creation, development, and manipulation processes. Let us also remember, we argued that cognitive ability in this sense is determined by the stock of memories a person has, and thus no one can have the same cognitive ability; (3) if 1 and 2, then it follows that everyone potentially has the privileged ability to create particular innovative concepts because only they have the requisite cognitive ability to do so. By *privileged*, I mean that only this person can reach it without being shown the way by someone else. Others can attain this knowledge, but must be shown the way in order to do so because they do not have the requisite experiences to get there on their own—their human nature/set of intrinsic and extrinsic qualities (their extrinsic factors in this sense) lacks the same space-time experiential conditions that led to that particular cognitive ability. Therefore, we can conclude that everyone has something to contribute to the advancement of knowledge. Again, even if these contributions are small, they amalgamate and develop into something more substantial. Once a particular amount of these new pieces of knowledge spillover and are ingested by others for development, there will eventually be some new piece of knowledge in the cycle that will be valuable enough to be called innovation. Thus, we see explicitly the cycle of spillover effects as described by EGT. But moreover, we see reason for stronger implications than what EGT maintains. Namely, society's innovative capacity is optimized only if (1) everyone's skills, knowledge, and welfare is maximized; and (2) everyone has the physical capital needed to utilize their skills and knowledge (especially having the capability or the networks to communicate their innovations to the proper channels for spillover effects). Thus, a justification for prioritizing the maximization of human capital through education, social welfare, and economic opportunity.

An objection to step 3 can be made along the following lines: how do we know that some human natures—and by extension, some cognitive abilities—aren't potentially capable of attaining all innovative concepts without being shown the way by others to

those concepts? And also how do we know that all cognitive abilities are capable of producing innovative concepts? I admit that my account of human nature rests on a critical assumption, which I cannot empirically or logically prove, but can only appeal to reasonable speculation to show its plausibility. Namely, that every added unit of experience has causal powers on human nature and cognitive ability. A simple thought experiment will help my case: let us imagine two individuals who have nearly identical (as identical as logically possible) intrinsic and extrinsic factors determining their nature for the first ten years of their life, and then begin to have different experiential factors after.

Given our view of human nature, it is likely that these two will have nearly identical natures for the first ten years, but will become different thereafter because they will have different experiences affecting their nature. But at what point after these ten years can we say their natures begins to change? That is, at what unit of experience can we non-arbitrarily say that they no longer have nearly identical natures? One might claim that the first significant experience will cause their natures to change, but this response doesn't escape the problem, since how can we non-arbitrarily determine what counts as a significant experience and what doesn't? Logically, I think it is impossible, but empirically this last response can be proven true if it does turn out to be the case that there is a criterion for what kinds or degrees of experiences can affect our intrinsic qualities. Further advancement in the study of epigenesis will likely give us the answer. If every added unit of experience does have causal powers on human nature, then it would be very unlikely for someone's cognitive ability to be incapable of producing innovative concepts if cognitive ability is heavily dependent on experiential factors. In regards to the first part of the objection, it could be possible for some cognitive abilities to attain all innovative concepts without being shown the way by others to those concepts, but it is certainly the case that their attainment of all innovative concepts will be much more efficient

if they receive the most developed knowledge (e.g. through books or teachers) as opposed to gaining all their knowledge from first-hand experience.

Conclusion

In conclusion I have argued that the human nature function proves PFA of education cannot produce accurate results while operating under the assumption that students' abilities are constant. This is due to the fact that no two people can ever have the same human nature, because human nature is determined by intrinsic qualities (e.g. epigenetic code, endocrine and nervous system) and extrinsic factors (e.g. social-environmental factors), of which no two people can share identical versions. Thus, PFA that aggregate student data will eliminate human nature variation from factoring into how we evaluate educational policy and student performance, and for this reason, alternative or reformative methods should be considered to ensure greater accuracy. I did not go that route in this article, rather I attempted to illuminate the black box of education, i.e. make explicit the connection between human capital, education, and economic growth. I made this argument in three steps: (1) innovative concepts require a particular cognitive ability to create it; (2) everyone has different cognitive ability; (3) everyone potentially has privileged access to creating a particular innovative concept. Thus, by maximizing human capital, we optimize our capacity for innovation, which is the most immediate cause of economic growth. The implications on public policy call for extensive reform; i.e. high-quality progressive education for all, Medicare for all, social security for all, to name only a few. And we are justified in declaring the need for these policies as vital based on our illumination of the black box of education, showing there is a necessary connection between human capital, education, and economic growth.

Notes

1. This cyclical element of human nature is explicitly missing from both philosophic accounts of human nature (e.g. Marx, Hume, and Aristotle) and psychologist accounts of human nature. This cyclical element is critical because it illustrates that the betterment of humans is not just to change social systems as Marx claims, and not just to develop the self as Aristotle claims. Betterment of humans requires the concerted improvement of both individual natures' and society.
2. It is incredibly unlikely for two people to be able to have the same intrinsic qualities, but this is not a logical impossibility like two people sharing the same space-time location. This point does reinforce my argument, but can be objected on these grounds.
3. Obviously, there will be a difference in ability between people with and without psychological disorders. However, what is often overlooked is that this dichotomy is not binary in many types of mental illnesses, it is a spectrum. Different people will fall at different points on this spectrum of mental healthiness. And this can affect cognitive ability if not compensated for (internally or externally).

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The Problem of Reification in Lukács and Heidegger

Zack Ford and Bryan Knittle

Introduction

In this paper we are concerned with the problem of reification as it is described by Georg Lukács in *History and Class Consciousness* and alluded to by Martin Heidegger in *Being and Time*. First published in 1923, *History and Class Consciousness* contains Lukács attempts at expanding upon the notions of reification, alienation, and class consciousness as developed by Marx in the first volume of *Das Kapital*. In *Being and Time*, published in 1927, Heidegger makes reference to the notion of reification on three separate occasions, including multiple mentions on the last page.

We will discuss these infrequent remarks when we examine Heidegger's project in the third part of the paper. For now, it is important to note that Lukács and Heidegger are both critical of the dualistic separation of subject and object and see this distinction as contributing to reification. How the problem of reification itself is thought to be overcome by the two thinkers, however, is radically different. Whereas Heidegger understands the problem as stemming from a strictly philosophical basis, Lukács argues that the fundamental problems of philosophy are, in reality, social problems abstractly conceived. Although no mention is directly made of Lukács (he is never explicitly named), we contend that he is undoubtedly one of the thinkers that Heidegger is responding to in *Being and Time*. It is clear to us that *Being and Time* ought to be read, at least in part, as a phenomenological response to the problem of reification as articulated by Lukács in *History and Class Consciousness*.

We begin by discussing the phenomenon of commodity fetishism that provides the foundation for the problem of reification as Lukács conceives it. Lukács argues that it is the economic structure of a society that informs the values, beliefs, and ideas of its members. Afterwards we show that, for Heidegger, it is the stance a society takes towards Being that determines its economic and political commitments, not the other way around. We then critically evaluate the possibility of overcoming reification by rethinking one's relationship to Being under the reified conditions of capitalist society from a Lukácsian perspective. At this point the inadequacies of both the phenomenological and dialectical methods become clear. Finally, we conclude by briefly suggesting an alternative interpretation of Lukács that is potentially consistent with Heidegger.

Commodity Fetishism

The concept of reification describes the moment a process or relation is generalized into an abstraction, and thereby turned into a 'thing' or object (Bewes 2002, p. 3). For Lukács, the phenomenon described by Marx in the chapter on commodity fetishism in the first volume of *Das Kapital* is not only a paradigmatic instance of reification, but also its origin. Marx employs the concept of fetishism to capture the way in which the products of human labor assume the form of alien things in the production process. Historians and sociologists of religion at the time utilized the concept of fetishism to describe 'primitive' religious practices in which human products gain power over their makers. A totem, for example, is a product of human labor, but it is thought by some to be the direct incarnation of godly powers and is therefore worshiped.

Like the totem, the commodity acquires a life of its own and moves in accordance with forces that appear to exist independently of human beings. According to Marx, "a commodity

appears at first sight as an extremely obvious, trivial thing. But its analysis brings out that it is a very strange thing, abounding in metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties" (Marx 1990, p. 163). On one hand, commodities are the products of human labor intended to satisfy human needs. When wood is transformed into chairs or tables through human labor these products remain tied to their material uses as objects to sit in and dine at. As long as commodities remain tied to their use-value, the commodity remains a simple and trivial thing. The 'mysterious character' of the commodity emerges once it is severed from the human beings responsible for its production. In other words, once it assumes the commodity form, it changes into a thing which "transcends sensuousness" (Ibid.). The moment the commodity itself becomes connected with money as the universal equivalent of exchange, the use-value of the commodity is cut-off from its exchange-value, which then appears as an objective characteristic of the commodity itself, as "socio-natural properties of these things" (Ibid., p. 164-165). The social relations between people from which the commodity emerges assumes the fantastic form of a relation between things (Ibid., p. 165). Put differently, the moment the social relations between capitalists and exploited workers are generalized into an abstraction represented in the form of 'price,' the commodity no longer appears to be a product of human labor but its own self-sufficient object.

In a capitalist society the relationship between producer and consumer is not direct but, rather, mediated by the exchange of money (consumers relate to producers by purchasing the products of their labor with money and producers relate to consumers by selling their labor power in exchange for money/wages). Consider the way in which consumers confront only the price when purchasing a commodity and not the human beings responsible for the object's production. The relationship between individuals is thus conceived atomically and the real producers of commodities largely rendered invisible. The money form "conceals the

social character of private labor and the social relations between the individual workers by making those relations appear as relations between material objects instead of revealing them plainly" (168-169). Marx calls the result 'fetishism' because the human relations of producers and consumers appear not as such, but as relations between economic goods and categories—the latter of which seem to have an effective dynamism independent of the individuals (Feenberg 2014, p. 88).

Lukács and Reification

Drawing on Marx's analysis of commodity fetishism, Lukács conceptualizes reification as the process by which "a man's own activity, his own labor becomes something objective and independent of him, something that controls him by virtue of an autonomy alien to man" (Lukács 1971, p. 87). While Marx's analysis of commodity fetishism is limited to the realm of production, Lukács defines reification as a "universal category of society as a whole," both objectively and subjectively (Ibid., p. 86). The progressive separation between workers and the means of production becomes the 'objective' model not only of production, but of (reified) society itself. As a result, individuals adopt a 'contemplative attitude' towards the world. As commodities in the realm of production become reified (i.e., severed from the social process of their production), the social world and the relations it embodies begin to appear as always already given or 'natural' and, therefore, as immutable and permanent. The relations between people thereby acquire "a 'phantom objectivity,' an autonomy that seems so strictly rational and all-embracing as to conceal every trace of its fundamental nature: the relation between people" (Ibid., p. 83).

In every instance where social events appear to be determined by quasi-natural laws, an example of what Marx refers to as mystification, Lukács finds evidence of reification. Lukács argues that reification penetrates every sphere of capitalist society,

including consciousness. Neither the capitalist nor the worker believes in any ability to transform their social reality so they each conform to it and its seemingly natural laws in order to realize its potential benefits. Both the capitalist and the worker confront 'the market' as something permanent and do not recognize it as their common creation.

For Lukács, this conception of things is entirely understandable from the standpoint of the worker or capitalist. The value of an object is determined in part by the cost of its production. In a capitalist society, workers are given a fixed wage in exchange for their labor power. Insofar as the wage is determined beforehand it becomes possible to calculate the value of the object produced. This calculation, however, requires a separation of the worker from the object produced since the cost or value of one is not commensurate with the other (the prudent capitalist is, after all, in pursuit of profit). The worker thereby gets construed as a wage, an abstract placeholder in the process of production. Labor power gets factored in as a mere cost of production instead of being seen as a *cause* of the production. Rather than being the source of the process the worker is reduced to an individual part in the mechanism, a cog in the machine as replaceable as any other. The process of production becomes a closed system to which the worker must mechanically conform. Labor power, once separated from the individual worker, becomes mediated by the laws of the mechanism of production.

The bourgeois ideology of the capitalist conceives of the world as ahistorical and deterministic. The objective laws of production are calculable and, thus, rational. This appeal to immutability prevents the bourgeoisie as a class from recognizing the contingency of social relations and the problem of reification. Lukács claims that it is a mistake, however, to speak of society as a collection of individuals. This atomization of humanity is precisely what is expressed in the notion of alienation, or the self-objectification just mentioned. Following Marx, Lukács argues

that the human being must be conceived of as a fundamentally *social* being. Humans do not fit in society as objects in a box; rather, human beings are *essentially* social. Sociality is a necessary part of our nature, not merely an accident we endure.

Class consciousness involves recognizing the fundamental sociality of human beings. It entails recognition of the interrelatedness of economic, political, cultural, and historical modes of being (Ibid., pp. 76-77). Lukács writes that a "worker can only become conscious of his existence in society when he becomes aware of himself as a commodity" (Ibid., p. 168). In order to recognize (or, perhaps more accurately, to become cognizant for the first time of what was previously only a tacit form of life) the sociality of being, it is important to be clear about the process of reification previously described. As Lukács observes, it is quite difficult for the proletariat to do this on their own, particularly when they are already busy selling their labor power in order to survive. As the market fluctuates and commodities increase in price, it becomes increasingly difficult for the worker (who is on a fixed wage) to afford the products of her own labor. As a result, the worker herself begins to conceive of her labor power as a commodity (and, too often, as her *only* commodity). It is the only 'thing' which the worker has to offer the capitalist. As Marx put it, the worker is effaced by her labor (Ibid., p. 89). This self-objectification only enforces the 'objectivity' of the capitalist mode of production.

Thus, for Lukács, the proletariat must look to the revolutionary party, which provides the means of educating the proletariat and guiding them towards liberation. In dialectical terms, class consciousness is the actualization in praxis of the proletariats immaterial will (by way of a subservience to the guidance and actions of the party). After the proletariat becomes aware of their role in society and place in history, they must place their faith in the theoretical and practical strategy of the party. Only then will society be able to overcome the problem of reification.

Heidegger and Reification

The problem of reification as Heidegger articulates it is in many ways consistent with Lukács' formulation. Both thinkers conceive of reification as an objectification that strips human beings of their fundamentally social nature. To be a human being is to be in the world with others. In Chapter 2, Part One, Division One of *Being and Time*, Heidegger remarks that the "compound expression 'Being-in-the-world' indicates in the very way we have coined it, that it stands for a unitary phenomenon" (Heidegger 1962, p. 78). In other words, the hyphens in being-in-the-world indicate the intimacy with which human beings and the world (including other people) are intertwined.

Lukács and Heidegger both emphasize the fundamental sociality of human beings in order to combat reification. Heidegger writes: "By 'Others' we do not mean everyone else but me—those over against whom the 'I' stands out. They are rather those from whom, for the most part, one does not distinguish oneself—those among whom one is too…. The world of Dasein [(human beings)] is a with-world" (Ibid., p. 155). Being with others is a necessary feature of being human. It is inescapable; even the hermit begins her life with others and lives in the same kinds of ways that others do. I am never entirely free from the world or from others, and they are never entirely free from me. In other words, human beings are neither entirely 'subjects' nor 'objects.' I am in the world as "an individual with interests, expectations, and cognitive instruments that [I] inherit from a world, culture, and language" (Vattimo and Zabala 2011, p. 92). Thus, although there is some degree of freedom in how I go about my business, I nevertheless have to draw upon the tools, practices, values, concepts, and so on that I have inherited from the cultures and society in which I find myself.

Moreover, like Lukács, Heidegger emphasizes the primacy of labor or practical activity in everyday existence. Labor is the

driving force or 'substructure' of history insofar as human existence is a primarily practical engagement with and in the world, rather than against or outside of it. Human beings encounter the world neither by way of fixed and identical *a priori* structures (cf. Kant) nor as disinterested mental spectres (cf. Descartes). Given our finitude and temporality (the fact that we exist in and because of time), the ontological constitution of human beings is unstable and indeterminate. Although we are primarily engaged in the world in a practical way and we fundamentally exist in the world with others, nothing authoritatively *determines* how we go about our practical business or relate to others. This means that it is, to some degree, up to me to determine how I, say, build a house or interact with or conceive of this or that person.

For Heidegger, the entities that populate the social world acquire meaning through the practices of that world. A hammer, for example, is not properly understood as a hammer (as opposed to some piece of wood with metal attached) in isolation from the materials with which it is involved (nails, boards, the practice of carpentry, etc.). Since these materials provide the contextual conditions of its meaning, when isolated from these materials the hammer would simply be an oddly shaped thing whose practical capacity is lost to us. It is the totality of involvements that gives meaning to entities.

Thus, both Lukács and Heidegger want to resist any conception of human beings as fundamentally distinct from the world and others by showing that such a conception is not only inaccurate but misleading. Such a conception becomes problematic to the extent that it fosters or directly causes undesirable effects in society. For Lukács, it is the marginalization and exploitation of the proletariat by those that control the means of production that inevitably occurs under capitalism that is, perhaps, the biggest undesirable consequence of reification. But the "increased rationalization, mechanization, and quantification of the world" that Lukács identifies as contributing to commodity fetishism is not,

for Heidegger, merely the result of capitalist economic conditions (Lukács 1971, p. 171). For Heidegger, economic and political oppression are merely *symptoms* of a repression, or what he calls a 'forgetting,' of Being. The reification that Lukács is concerned with only occurs *after* the world and others are already conceived of as that which stands against us, as something we confront as an adversary, rather than as that with which or with whom we dwell cooperatively (Steiner 1989, p. 139). It is only when beings are abstracted from their interrelatedness that people and things get conceived of reductively and in oppositional terms.

Reification is thus, for Heidegger, primarily an ontological problem about how we conceive of existence and only secondarily an economic or political one. Capitalism holds no special place in the mystification of being-in-the-world. Heidegger would argue that even under the dictatorship of the proletariat there is still a danger of misconceiving of Being and, thus, of reification. It is the stance a society takes towards Being that determines its economic and political commitments, not the other way around.

It is not enough that the proletariat become conscious of the social character of labor and, thus, of their privileged place in history under capitalism. The reification that Lukács identifies as a result of the capitalist mode of production is, for Heidegger, a derivative kind of reification. In the first of only a few passages in which Heidegger explicitly mentions reification, he writes: "The Thinghood … which such reification implies must have its ontological origin demonstrated if we are to be in a position to ask what we are to understand *positively* when we think of the unreified *Being* of the subject, the soul, the consciousness, the spirit, the person. All these terms refer to definite phenomenal domains which can be 'given form'" (Heidegger 1962, p. 72). Overcoming reification requires a rethinking of one's relationship to Being. It requires a resistance to the reductive tendency that posits incompatible categories like 'subject' and 'object.'

The reification of social relations presupposes a reification

of Being. In order to overcome the problem of reification we must rethink what it means to *be*. Hence, Heidegger writes: "At any rate, the doctrines of action and the conceptual ideologies that are commonly subscribed to never utter that which *is*, and which is therefore happening" (Heidegger 1977, p. 101). Likewise, in the final pages of *Being and Time*, reification is mentioned for the last time. There Heidegger asks: "What *positive* structure does the Being of 'consciousness' have, if reification remains inappropriate to it? Is the 'distinction' between 'consciousness' and 'Thing' sufficient for tackling the ontological problematic in a primordial manner? … And can we even seek the answer as long as the *question* of the meaning of Being remains unformulated and unclarified?" (Heidegger 1962, p. 487). We can take these questions to be suggestive that, for Heidegger, it is not entirely clear that the Lukácsian position is even intelligible without one already holding on to a certain conception of human existence and 'thinghood.' Even if that conception is a tacit assumption or unarticulated presupposition, one must have a view of being-in-the-world *against which* the reified conception is then able to be shown to be false. Thus, before an economic or political problem can be identified, one must already have some sense of what it means to exist in an 'appropriate' kind of way *prior to* or *outside of* the particular economic or political system being criticized. Without a certain ontological stance (tacit or otherwise) there would be no basis upon which a mode of production or political regime could be criticized for endorsing a distorted view of how the world and its inhabitants are.

A Lukácsian Response

Indeed, Lukács does hold on to some prior ontological conception. Moreover, he would certainly agree that overcoming reification requires rethinking one's relationship to Being. After all, it is only after the proletariat become aware of the artificiality of

existence under capitalism that they can overcome the problem of reification. Lukács would argue, however, that such a rethinking of Being is ultimately precluded by the reified conditions of capitalist society. Reification provides the model of the forms of objectivity and subjectivity in capitalist society. It therefore constitutes the horizon of possibility for both thought and Being. Thus, the rethinking that would be required to overcome the problem of reification is foreclosed under capitalism. For Lukács, since consciousness is grounded in social reality, the reified conditions of capitalist society must be overcome through social transformation if such a rethinking is to present itself as a real possibility.

As a form of objectivity, reification governs not only practical activity, but theoretical activity as well. Following Marx, Lukács maintains that consciousness itself is a reflection of the social reality from which it emerges. So long as thought emerges from a reality which itself is reified, thought will necessarily take on a reified form. For Lukács, as for Marx, it is the material conditions that are the ultimate determinates of human existence since they involve human and social needs, the relations of production and reproduction that satisfy them, class domination, and ideological systems which together in their totality constitute the individual's human life-world. Under capitalism, these material conditions are essentially alienating and, thus, the possibility of rethinking one's relationship to Being is forestalled by the reified reality from which thought emerges. Theoretical and practical liberation are thus predicated on a transformation of these conditions.

While Lukács shares with Heidegger the idea that the meaning of each social entity is determined by "its relation to the whole," he adds that "the intelligibility of objects develops in proportion as we grasp their function in the totality to which they belong" (Lukács 1971, p. 13). Since the totality to which objects belong is characterized by the reification associated with the commodity form, social entities must be understood in terms of their economic involvements no less than their practical ones.

As a form of objectivity, reification is that which gives meaning to social entities and practices. Commodities acquire meaning the moment their exchange-value triumphs over their use-value. In other words, commodities acquire meaning only insofar as they 'fit' the reified form of objectivity particular to capitalism—only insofar as they take on the form of alien 'things' instead of as products of human labor. Furthermore, members of a capitalist society live the reified relationships that construct that society through the buying and selling of commodities and engaging with bureaucratic administrations which reinforce the form of objectivity and gives coherence and meaning to that society. It is not simply that social entities take on the appearance of fungible 'things'; it is also the fact that these entities feed back into the practical relationships as 'things' that reproduce the reified form of objectivity and shape the corresponding subjectivity of the atomized actors (Feenberg 2014, p. 77).

Lukács' primary aim in *History and Class Consciousness* is to rescue Marxism from the mechanistic, deterministic, and 'vulgar' interpretations that prevailed during the Second International by returning to Marx's Hegelian roots. Lukács utilized dialectical materialism as a method of critically analyzing the dialectical relationship between bourgeois consciousness and material social conditions (Buck-Morss 1977, p. 25). He revealed that even in their most honest intellectual efforts, bourgeois thinkers are necessarily limited in their attempts to know reality by the class situation itself. In accepting the given social reality as *the* reality, the bourgeoisie come up against a barrier of irrationality that cannot be overcome, because that barrier cannot be removed from theory without also being removed from society (Ibid., pp. 26-27).

Since the existing social conditions are intolerable only from the perspective of the proletariat, Lukács' method reveals the proletariat as the only agent capable of seeing through the reified appearances and hence the agent (or "subject-object") of history.

The problem during Lukacs' time was that many of the existing workers did not see the world from the standpoint of the proletariat class and therefore had to have the world as it was revealed to them by the revolutionary party. The danger, of course, is that once theory is manipulated by the needs of the party, truth itself is transformed into an instrument of revolution. History provides a glimpse of the danger of such a transformation.

Conclusion

The question that Heidegger might ask at this point is how it is possible for the revolutionary party to have insight into the 'truth' of the world if they, too, are merely products or effects of the same social conditions as the proletariat. What is it about the vanguard that allows them to overcome the material conditions whilst being entrenched in them no less than the proletariat? This lacuna in Lukács' account might suggest that Heidegger was correct to insist on the primacy of rethinking Being in order to overcome reification. Perhaps the revolutionary party is able to educate the proletariat and lead them to liberation only because the party has already reconsidered their relationship to the world and what it means to exist *before* changing the oppressive social structures. If this is correct, then Lukács must agree with Heidegger that the problem of reification must be addressed at the level of consciousness rather than at the level of social reality.

Indeed, a more charitable reading of Lukács suggests a kinship between Lukács and Heidegger with respect to overcoming the problem of reification. Despite the primacy Lukács places on overcoming social problems, such problems are not wholly distinct from philosophical problems, and it is the duty of philosophy to overcome the dualistic separation of subject and object. The concept of reification as developed by Lukács brings awareness to the dialectical interpenetration of consciousness and reality, thought and being. If philosophy itself is to overcome

subject-object dualism, it must emerge from a consciousness that has the *potential* to recognize the interpenetration of consciousness and reality, the potential, in Lukács' words, to 'grasp the totality.' Since members of the bourgeois class do not labor in any substantial way, that is, do not participate in the transformation of material reality, they do not have the potential to recognize reality itself as the product of human labor. As Lukács puts it, the limit to bourgeois thought is "objective; it is the class situation itself" (Lukács 1971, p. 54). Therefore, any philosophy that has the potential to overcome reification must emerge from the consciousness of the proletariat and not that of the bourgeoisie.

Although Lukács seems to insist that the development of proletariat class consciousness is contingent on being informed by the vanguard party, this more charitable reading does not necessarily give primacy to overcoming the existing social problems over and above philosophical problems. It suggests not that the vanguard party already possesses a kind of 'secret' that is to be revealed to the proletariat, but merely that a 'dereified' philosophy which does not begin from the tacit acceptance of subject-object dualism can only be derived from the consciousness of the proletariat. Since only the proletariat participates in the material construction of social reality, only they have the potential to grasp the connection between theory and practice. Once they realize the way in which their practical activity contributes to the reproduction of reified social conditions (both theoretically and practically), they can alter these conditions through their own practical activity.

This interpretation brings Lukács closer to Heidegger in that overcoming the problem of reification *begins* with rethinking one's relationship to the world and not with overthrowing the social relations of capitalism by virtue of political revolution. For Lukács however, such a rethinking must inform practical activity in order to combat the oppressive social structures that reproduce reification and maintain the status quo. Although Heidegger and

Lukács both emphasize the unity of theory and practice, Lukács' conception of practice remains wedded to a Marxian interpretation of social revolution whereas Heidegger's remains open ended.

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A Challenge To Adorno's Position On Jazz

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Introduction

In 1960, Max Roach's record *We Insist!* was released. The cover of the album positions three black men at a restaurant being served by a white waiter. The image refers to the tactic of "sitting-in," which aimed to desegregate segregated spaces. The content of the album includes descriptions of slavery, emancipation, protest, and civil rights. It was a controversial album that led to discussions about race relations in the United States. It seems that an album like this challenged the status quo of 1960s America because it was critical of the status quo.

Theodor Adorno would reject this idea. Adorno believes interpretations of jazz that don't describe jazz as a tool of the status quo to keep jazz consumers uncritical of the status quo are fooled by the clothes jazz wears. In his 1937 paper "On Jazz," Adorno argues that Jazz wears a cloak of difference (relative to popular music) and free expression to hide its affirmation of the status quo.

In this paper, I will utilize feminist philosopher Angela Davis' text *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism* to argue against Adorno's notion that jazz doesn't have the ability to challenge the status quo. I will do this by first detailing Adorno's views on jazz within his larger concept of *the culture industry*; then I will show how Davis' work in *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism* reveals that at least one jazz musician has already challenged the status quo through jazz.

The Culture Industry

Before zeroing in on Adorno's views on Jazz, it's important to first understand the intellectual and historical space in which he thought. Adorno was a member of the Frankfurt School. Founded in 1923 as the Institute of Social Research, the Frankfurt School is known for its development of Critical Theory, a term referring to theories that are critical of society—opposed to theories that merely describe society. Max Horkheimer, the first to define Critical Theory and one of the directors of the Frankfurt School (1930-1933 and 1949-1958), describes critical theories as theories that aim "to liberate human beings from the circumstances that enslave them" (Horkheimer 2002). These theories combine the social sciences to formulate critiques of the values and norms of society with the aim of changing society.

This focus on critique was motivated by what the Frankfurt School saw as the failure of German workers to instantiate the revolution theorized by Marx and liberate themselves from the total power of capital. Even after the harsh conditions experienced during and after the First Word War, Germany didn't step away from the conditions that led to the First World War, but rather doubled down their commitment, which led to National Socialism. This alarmed Adorno and the other thinkers of the Frankfurt School. What was causing Germans to be satisfied with destruction? Could culture be used to open a path towards liberation? Does a path towards liberation still exist? Adorno had a pessimistic approach to the problem. He and most of the Frankfurt School became "virtuoso critics of a world that they could not change" (Jeffries 2016).

Adorno theorized that Germany didn't experience a Marxist revolution because capitalism's grasp on Germany was totalizing: to Germans, revolution seemed both impractical and unfavorable to capitalism. A tool of the capitalist apparatus that conditions the minds of not only Germans but others under capitalist powers to

think in such ways is what Adorno and Horkheimer call *the culture industry*. Adorno describes the culture industry as the result of interests manipulating reality to continue their own survival. These interests are the interests of producers and the interests of consumers. The end result of these interests is a set of values that are found in all cultural artifacts produced by the culture industry.

Though both groups (producers and consumers) create the culture industry, the content of culture, when produced within the culture industry, is created to primarily serve the interests of producers. That the content of culture serves the interests of producers isn't a conspiracy, but is rather a side-effect of the interests of producers (who hold more power than the consumers): "The dependence of the most powerful broadcasting company on the electrical industry, or of film on the banks, characterizes the whole sphere, the individual sectors of which are economically intertwined" (Horkheimer & Adorno 2002). For a jazz record to reach a club, it must be deemed economically viable by a record label, which is motivated to be deemed economically viable by their investors, who want to make as much money as possible. A jazz record will be deemed economically viable if it is similar to what has historically sold well. This process of referring to what has historically sold well to create the culture of tomorrow narrows the creative possibilities of producers to minor differences. This results in cultural artifacts that have minor ideological differences and all of these minor differences ultimately support the survival of capitalism. The idea that the content of culture supports capitalism makes sense because producers aren't incentivized to create cultural artifacts that will eventually lead to their inability to make money in the future.

Consumers on the other hand are incentivized to fit into the narrative produced by the culture industry (a narrative that assumes the system that supports the producers to be good). Because the culture industry produces the narrative of the producers, the narrative produced by the culture industry is, to put it simply, the manual

that describes how to fit in with those who hold power within a capitalist society i.e. the producers. The narrative produced by the culture industry contains what is accepted and not accepted by the status quo. A simple example is this: when Frank Sinatra sings "hold my hand" and "darling, kiss me," consumers learn that these are accepted ways to act romantically with another person. Consumers act out these accepted behaviors so they can acquire resources to prolong their physical survival. The relationship between abiding by the rules of the status quo and the ability to acquire resources manifests itself in class differences. Adorno and Horkheimer write "The gradations in the standard of living correspond very precisely to the degree by which classes and individuals inwardly adhere to the system" (Ibid.). This makes sense. Businesses, universities, bureaucracies, churches, etc. hire people that fit in with their respective tribes and these tribes (businesses, universities, bureaucracies, churches, etc.) are incentivized to fit in with the macro-tribe, the capitalist society, so that they don't get shut down. Those who don't learn and perform the rules of the macro-tribe can't fit in with any of the sub-tribes, thereby being excluded from resources that prolong their physical survival. Because the physical survival of consumers relies on how well they follow the narrative produced by the culture industry, consumers don't seek culture that doesn't affirm the status quo. Consumers seek culture that gives them the latest set of rules to follow.

To summarize how the culture industry is formed, producers narrow the content of culture because they refer to what has historically sold well when creating "new" products. Consumers narrow the content of culture because they want to understand the prerequisites for physical sustenance. These two forces, over time, narrow the accepted ideological content of culture or, as Adorno and Horkheimer put it, these forces are "a cycle of manipulation and retroactive need" that "is unifying the system ever more tightly" (Ibid.). This allows the system to run more efficiently (efficient at producing and consuming) over time—people, work, and

relationships become streamlined like parts of a car—but at a cost.

The result of the exclusionary and rigidifying nature of the culture industry is the inability of a society to self-critique. The Frankfurt School, in particular Herbert Marcuse, pointed out contradictions like "the sale of equipment for relaxing entertainment in bomb shelters" (Marcuse 2002) to reveal that even a society built on reason (evidence of scientific reason is the bomb itself) cannot assume perfection, but rather must be looking for ideological blind spots. Similarly to Adorno, Marcuse blames the existence of these contradictions on how people are conditioned to think. "[What] is taking place is a sweeping redefinition of thought itself, of its function and content. The coordination of the individual with his society reaches into those layers of the mind where the very concepts are elaborated which are designed to comprehend the established reality" (Marcuse 2002). Without perspectives that are different from the dominant ideology, the dominant ideology doesn't have tools for self-criticism. This leads to contradictions and problems that are blindly accepted. "The machine is rotating on the spot. While it already determines consumption, it rejects anything untried as a risk" (Horkheimer and Adorno 2002). This is important for Adorno because the inability to critique the given reality is what, according to Adorno, led to Germany devolving into Nazism and the unprecedented death toll of World War 1.

Further, Adorno saw fascism occurring not only in Germany, but also in the United States. Consider the following quote and how it compares to American culture: "If the German fascists launch a word like 'intolerable' [*untragbar*] over the loudspeakers one day, the whole nation is saying 'intolerable' the next. On the same pattern, the nations against which the German blitzkrieg was directed have adopted it in their own jargon" (Ibid.). Similarly, if Frank Sinatra sings "darling", the men who listen to Sinatra will use the word. More to the point, people today *consume* "Sinatra Select" whisky because Sinatra did. Adorno, living in the United States at the time of writing the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, felt

that he was exiled from one kind of fascism (Germanic) to another kind of fascism in the U.S. As a Jew exiled from Germany during World War II, Adorno was sensitive to the rigidifying nature of ideologies. We need to keep this sensitivity in mind when we analyze Adorno's views on jazz in the next section.

Adorno on Jazz

We can now approach Adorno's answer to the question of whether jazz can or cannot open a path for minds to escape the narrative produced by the culture industry. Can jazz usher those under capitalism's ideological grip to a world outside of the status quo? Adorno emphatically answers this question with pessimism "[…] the use value of jazz does not nullify (*aufheben*) alienation, but intensifies it" (Adorno 1989-90). He arrives at this answer by looking at what jazz claims to offer (the ability to transcend the status quo through *difference* and *free expression*) and what it actually offers. Essentially, Adorno critiques qualities of jazz that claim to give musicians both access to a theory of music that's different from the status quo (*syncopation*) and free expression (*vibrato* and *improvisation*). Whether musicians can express ideas that challenge the status quo while utilizing the infrastructure and power of the status quo is important because if popular musicians can challenge the status quo, then it's possible for musicians with large audiences to pour challenging messages into the ears of their audiences. If jazz can't produce messages that challenge the status quo, then jazz's claim to be messages for the foundation of change is merely clever marketing by the culture industry.

Let's take a look at what Adorno thinks about jazz's use of syncopation—the *swing* of jazz.[1] This quality seems to be radically different from, for example, John Philip Sousa's military marches. This difference from other music produced by the culture industry makes jazz seem like a challenge to other culture industry music. In "On Jazz," Adorno has his audience observe

that "the fundamental beat is rigorously maintained; it is marked over and over again by the bass drum" (Ibid.). So, even though jazz seems to have a radically different rhythmic structure, jazz's swing doesn't fully break away from its reliance on the beat and is deemed "subordinate" to the bass drum (the expression of the beat) by Adorno. Further, Adorno notes that jazz's syncopation swings on top of simplistic groupings of beats, "their authority unchallenged" (Ibid.). He sees this simplicity as a regression from the work of not only *avant garde* classical music, but also the works of Romantic composers that utilized more complex forms of compositions like the sonata form. Jazz's use of beats and rhythms, the core of jazz's structure, affirm the status quo, which means jazz's claim to being different from other culture industry music can't be found within this dimension of jazz.

The next quality we'll take a look at is vibrato, which is claimed to give musicians access to free expression. Vibrato "causes a tone which is rigid and objective to tremble as if on its own; it ascribes to it subjective emotions without this being allowed to interrupt the fixedness of the basic sound-pattern" (Ibid.). Adorno sees vibrato being used to create the illusion of a "coming liberation" (Ibid.) and that this liberation can be expressed with culture produced by the culture industry; specifically, jazz music. Though, Adorno reveals that this vibrato is used on melodies and harmonies that are, like the grouping of beats analyzed above, simplistic. This is a sign, for Adorno, that this music affirms the status quo. Because the vibrato sits upon melodies, harmonies, rhythms, and compositional forms that affirm the status quo, the vibrato doesn't actually do the work of liberation, but does the work of the culture industry. The vibrato is a distraction from the non-radical elements of the music (i.e. melodies, harmonies, rhythms, etc.) and doesn't free the musician from the grip of the culture industry. The subjective element of jazz (vibrato) is to be "understood strictly in the sense of a social product and as something which has been reified into a commodity" (Ibid.). Jazz

claims to be able to produce culture that transcends the interests of consumers and producers, but the claim itself, when examined closely by Adorno, is merely a marketing scheme of the culture industry and so free expression can't be found within this dimension of jazz.

If there is a dimension of jazz that can allow for free expression, seemingly it is the improvisational element of jazz. At face value, it seems as though a musician creating music in the present moment allows the musician to infuse their own messages into the music. It is believed by proponents of jazz that these messages can challenge the ideology that supports the culture industry. Adorno describes the phenomenon of improvisation as an attempt to create *immediacy*. What Adorno means by immediacy is the infusion of music with content that challenges the status quo; where the content of the music is filled presently by the soloing musician. Immediacy promises to create a space for the musician and his/her audience where ideas outside of the culture industry can be expressed. If this is true, then jazz can be used to escape the messages of the status quo. Adorno believes that the element of improvisation in jazz is a mere ornament on music that affirms the status quo. The improvisational elements of jazz are "never part of the overall construction or determinant of the form" (Ibid.). Further, Adorno points at the similarity between improvised soloes. He sees these similarities as representative of stereotypes, or "a rigid system of tricks" (Ibid.), that are produced by the culture industry. So, even though a jazz artist may be improvising music, the melodic tools they utilize are tools crafted by the culture industry. This notion, that jazz soloes are constructed by putting together "tricks," has long been noted by musicians. Jazz musicians actively borrow from the solos of other musicians and integrate these techniques into their own work. Non-musicians can experience this notion by searching for "the lick jazz" on Google. Like the vibrato and syncopation of jazz, improvisation is a distraction from the elements of jazz that affirm the status quo.

Jazz's pretension, that it is different from other culture industry music and allows for free expression, is a tool of the culture industry to control dissidence. Having an outlet for dissidence allows the culture industry to control dissidence. "Something is provided for everyone so that no one can escape" (Horkheimer & Adorno 2002). This control is not only instantiated through sating the desires of dissidents, but also by shaping what dissidents are. The "common determination" of the producers "to produce or let pass nothing which does not conform to their tables, to their concept of the consumer, or, above all, to themselves" (Ibid.) shapes what a dissident is. A dissident doesn't listen to Coleman Hawkins. A dissident listens to Charlie Parker. A dissident doesn't buy Apple. A dissident buys Android.

DAVID ON JAZZ

Before we dive into Davis' views on jazz, here is a summary of what Davis is up against: jazz's dimensions of apparent difference and of apparent free expression affirm the values of the status quo, therefore jazz doesn't contain messages that challenge the status quo. Further, if one wants to unlock humans from the grips of the culture industry, then jazz shouldn't be consumed because it doesn't keep its promise of liberation. What Davis needs to show is that jazz can contain messages that allow people to think critically about the status quo. In her book *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism*, Angela Davis does exactly that. *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism* isn't a direct reply to Adorno's views on jazz. She doesn't mention Adorno in the book nor does she seem concerned about Adorno's views on jazz. Nevertheless, Davis' text describes an example of a jazz musician successfully subverting the narrative of the culture industry (while utilizing the culture industry) with a critical message.

Davis has the ability to highlight historical figures in a way that gives us concepts that can be applied today. During her

famous "Lectures on Liberation," she told her students "History, Literature should not be pieces in a museum of antiquity, especially when they reveal to us problems which continue to exist today" (Davis 1971). This appreciation for the tools history gives us is felt in her book *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism* where she shows that Billie Holiday is an example for artists that seek to challenge the status quo:

> By and large, critics who appreciate Holiday's work have delved no more deeply into its meaning than to demonstrate her pivotal contributions to the evolution of modern jazz. I want to examine her work as an effort to transform social relations aesthetically beyond the shallow notions of love contained in the songs she remade through her art. Regardless of her conscious intent, her musical meditations on women's seemingly interminable love pains illuminated the ideological constructions of gender and the ways they insinuate themselves into women's emotional lives. (Davis 1998)

In *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism*, Davis agrees with Adorno that the status quo seeps into the behavior of people ("the ideological constructions of gender and the ways they insinuate themselves into women's emotional lives"), but disagrees that jazz doesn't allow for a way out of status quo thinking.

"How can we interpret the creation of complex works of art that work with and against the platitudinous ideological content of undistinguished love songs?" (Ibid.). It seems Davis is talking directly to Adorno here. How can a product of the culture industry work with and against the ideological content of the culture industry? Davis points to a feature of American slave music to prime our minds for Holiday's work:

> They [American slaves] created a language whose meanings were indecipherable to everyone who was not privy

> to the required codes. And, indeed, white slave owners and overseers often assumed that work songs revealed an acquiescence to slavery. In fact, slaves often used these songs to hurl aesthetic assaults at the slave masters and to share with one another a deep yearning for freedom. (Ibid.)

If slaves can subvert slave owners who are consciously controlling their slaves, Holiday can subvert the culture industry, an unconscious object created by the incentives of producers and consumers. According to Davis, Holiday appropriates the status quo's stereotypes to reveal new ways of thinking. Specifically, Holiday personalizes popular songs to subvert the messages of the culture industry. "She therefore was able to create gems like "You Let Me Down" in which she established an almost magical control of the tired words, revitalizing them and pushing them toward a criticism of the very cultural context out of which they were born" (Ibid.).

Here are the lyrics of "You Let Me Down" (I recommend listening to the track yourself to fully understand Davis' analysis of the lyrics):

> You told me that I was like an angel
> Told me I was fit to wear a crown
> So that you could get a thrill
> You put me on a pedestal
> And then you let me down, let me down
>
> You told me that I'd be wearing diamonds
> I would have the smartest car in town
> Made me think that I'm the top
> And then you let the ladder drop
> You know you let me down, let me down
>
> I walked upon a rainbow
> I clung onto a star
> You had me up in heaven

That's why I had to fall so far

I was even looking for a cottage
I was measured for a wedding gown
That's how I got cynical
You put me on a pinnacle
And then you let me down, let me down
How you let me down!
(Dubin & Warren 1935)

Holiday transforms this popular song into critiques of itself; the critiques in this case being a critique of the status quo's ideal woman and a critique of American slavery. If you listen to Holiday's "You Let Me Down" and can't hear subversive messages, then that's evidence of the efficacy of her subversion. Davis writes that these messages would have been easily grasped by the black middle class of the 1930's that had a relationship with Holiday's use of language. Through the blues, which was heavily influenced by the subversive slave music mentioned earlier in this paper, Holiday's listeners were experts at cracking her code before coming into contact with her music. Like the irony of Plato's Socrates or the coded language of American slave music, there's an understanding occurring that goes over the heads of the uninitiated. The initiated listen to Holiday's delivery of the status quo words and hear her making fun of its values, questioning its values, accepting the status quo words in novel ways, etc. By playing with the tone of her delivery, Holiday "pushes the ideological content of the song to the surface" (Davis 1998). Holiday tears away the distractions that clothe the ideological content of the culture industry and positions this content in a way that allows for critique rather than blind affirmation.

So what separates Holiday's kind of critique from the other critiques of the status quo found in culture industry artifacts? Let's look at another example of a culture industry artifact that critiques the status quo and compare it to Holiday's critique. In their track

titled "Worms of the Senses/Faculties of the Skull", the Swedish punk band *Refused* states:

> I've got a bone to pick with capitalism
> And a few to break
> Grab us by the throat
> And shake the life away
> Human life is not a commodity, figures, statistics, or make-believe
> (Refused 1998)

These lyrics state both the problem and solution explicitly: the problem is capitalism and the solution is violence. Adorno is thinking about this kind of critique, which offers specific problems and solutions, in his paper "How to Look at Television":

> The ideals of conformity and conventionalism were inherent in popular novels from the very beginning. Now, however, these ideals have been translated into rather clear-cut prescriptions of what to do and what not to do. The outcome of conflicts is pre-established, and all conflicts are mere sham. Society is always the winner, and the individual is only a puppet manipulated through social rules.
> (Adorno 1954)

Just as consumers are molded by incentives to seek molded entertainment, consumers are molded to seek molded problems and solutions. The problem with providing clear problems and tools to solve those problems is that it doesn't allow for radical thinking to occur, i.e. thinking that doesn't affirm the status quo. When both problems and solutions are provided, this not only weakens the consumers' ability to think, conceive, and solve problems that exist outside of the culture industry matrix, but also doesn't allow consumers to realize there is a culture industry matrix in the first place. Refused makes a piñata in the shape of capitalism and gives their audience bats in the shape of criticism. This scheme allows

people to feel radical without their actually thinking outside of the culture industry matrix. Holiday's kind of critique is different because she alludes to problems without defining problems or solutions. When her audience hears her messages they are being encouraged to conceive problems and solutions on their own. Rather than building piñatas for her audience to vigorously think upon, Holiday merely suggests that thinking should be occurring. This allows people to find understandings of their own rather than being administered status quo understandings.

Though, it may be asked, isn't the support of Holiday's music by music executives proof that the culture industry co-opted Holiday's message? From the perspective of producers, Holiday's music is created because it matches what historically sells well (status quo lyrics that will be consumed by black Americans). Furthermore, according to the producers, the content of Holiday's music isn't different from the content of the music produced by her contemporaries—she sang pop songs that most singers sang at the time. Though, because her subversive message wasn't perceived and curated by the producers of the culture industry, Holiday's music successfully subverted the narrative of the culture industry.

With an analogy, we can see this subversion. Let's imagine a coffee shop selling a drink called "jazz." The owners of the shop have been successfully selling "jazz" for years and so they don't want to change their recipe. They hire a woman named Billie Holiday who is taught how to make "jazz." Holiday learns their recipe and can make "jazz" taste like it always has, so the coffee shop owners continue paying her to produce "jazz." Though, unknown to the coffee shop owners, Holiday has been dropping pills into her "jazz" that allow those she sells "jazz" to critique the recipe itself. We can say that Holiday's skills have been co-opted by the coffee shop owners because she sells "jazz" for them, but the "jazz" she's selling is (1) not the "jazz" the producers think they're selling and, (2) is not conducive to the selling of their "jazz" in the future. This is evidence that jazz can be used in a way

that doesn't affirm the status quo, which is evidence that cultural artifacts produced by the culture industry can be used to challenge the status quo narrative.

This kind of subversion seems to be a kind of subversion the Frankfurt School would be sympathetic to because they utilized this technique. When the Frankfurt School moved to the United States, the language they used lost its radical tone. They did this so that their work would be deemed scholarly in the United States and so their work wouldn't be shut down by the status quo of the United States. The Frankfurt School utilized the language of status quo academics to critique the status quo itself. Still, those familiar with the work of the Frankfurt School were able to see the Marxist foundations of the Frankfurt School's work. Similarly, Billie Holiday utilized the language of status quo culture to critique the status quo itself and those familiar with how she was using language were able to see the critical foundation of her work. If we say that Holiday didn't subvert the culture industry because her work was happily produced by the culture industry, then we must say that the work produced by the Frankfurt School didn't subvert the status quo of the United States because it was allowed to be produced within the United States' intellectual status quo.

It may also be said that the existence of capitalism today is proof that jazz doesn't actually challenge capitalism. This claim assumes that a challenge to the status quo will create immediately noticeable effects. This is unrealistic. If we are to take seriously the grip capitalism has on human behavior, then we cannot expect the system to immediately dissolve from a Billie Holiday verse. There will never be a jazz album that, when released, will immediately overthrow capitalism. Further, a revolution won't occur solely because of jazz. Jazz produced by the culture industry can be a tool to build proto-critiques of the status quo—the critical position. What Holiday's approach to jazz can do is create within consumers a critical position that is the foundation of a revolution. More work will have to be done after the minds of consumers are

in this critical position. Jazz is a drop in the bucket that, with other tools, can produce a revolution.

Conclusion

In this paper, I described Theodor Adorno's views on jazz. According to Adorno, jazz markets itself both as *different* from other products of the culture industry and as a medium for *free expression*. These features of jazz are merely ornaments on top of what are, in essence, products that affirm the status quo. Angela Davis' *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism* describes an example of a jazz artist, Billie Holiday, subverting the ideological content of the culture industry. Holiday's challenge to the status quo wasn't created by positioning her work as different from other popular music or by utilizing the kind of free expression Adorno had in mind. Holiday utilized the ideological content of the culture industry in a way that allowed her audience to see the ideological content nakedly. Through her coded use of popular songs, she was able to use the culture industry to challenge the ideological content of the culture industry. Holiday's work, an example of jazz being used to subvert the culture industry, challenges Adorno's claim that jazz cannot be used to challenge the status quo.

Notes

1. "Swing" is a rhythmic quality of jazz. Using as little of the language of music theory as possible, "swing" is produced by making notes on *the beat* last longer than notes that are not on the beat and by accenting the notes that aren't on the beat. We can visualize swinging by first visualizing traditional rhythms as such: 1 "and" 2 "and" 3 "and" 4 "and." The numerals are the beats and the "ands" are the "off-beats." Within a traditional rhythmic idiom, the space between the beats and the "off-beats" are even and there is no emphasis on either the beats or the "off-beats." A visualization of swinging looks like this: 1…"AND" 2…"AND" 3…"AND" 4…"AND." Notice that there is space between the beats and the "off-beats" and that the "off-beats" are emphasized.

   A simple comparison of a traditional approach to rhythms and the jazz approach to rhythms can be heard in the difference between two popular melodies that begin with notes that ascend in pitch. The melody that kicks

off Holst's "Second Suite in F" starts with 5 notes that ascend in pitch. The notes are evenly spaced and evenly expressed. In contrast, the melody of Brubeck's "Take 5" begins with 6 notes ascending in pitch that are unevenly spaced. This uneven spacing is what is called "swinging."

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Social Membership and Integration

Meelaud Pourmehr

Introduction

Immigration has undoubtedly developed into one of the key political issues of the twenty-first century. Unsurprisingly, academic literature on the subject has grown considerably in recent years. Philosophical discourse on immigration latches onto the ethical or political factors that, if not overlooked, are often under-discussed in much of the empirical studies done on the subject. One of the most notable figures on the topic, particularly since his paper *Aliens and Citizens: The Case for Open Borders*, is Joseph Carens. In his latest work, *The Ethics of Immigration*, Carens provides compelling arguments, not only his often cited position of open borders, but to the inefficiencies of current border regimes. This work is by far Carens' most comprehensive as its attempts to consolidate decades of reflections in the field, so it should come as no surprise that it raises as many pertinent questions as it does substantive arguments.

The Ethics of Immigration is split into two parts, the first dealing with those migrants who have already arrived, and the second with those who wish to emigrate. In this first half, Carens makes a provisional concession to traditional views on immigration, hoping to make his case—that is, towards relaxed immigration policy—by making a strict adherence to broad democratic principles. Not for nothing, he presents two notable concepts in this first half in order to stake his position, *social-membership theory* and *the firewall argument*. My paper will focus on the former. In that regard, I will spend a decent portion of this paper discussing what exactly this theory of social-membership is and what it entails. I will then take a look at objections raised by

perhaps the most prominent academic in favor of closed borders, David Miller.

What is Social-Membership Theory?

Social-membership theory is a rather simple normative formulation for social integration with far-reaching conclusions. Simply put, living inside the territorial boundaries of a certain state's polity confers the status of membership, this social membership then "give[s] rise to moral claims in relation to the political community," and these moral claims become entrenched over time— Carens expresses this in the form of a neat slogan: "social membership matters morally" (Carens 2013, p. 158). This definition is provided half-way through the book, but it is the driving force of the majority of his arguments situated within the current border regime. Given the programmatic nature of Carens' work, and its emphasis on building "political theory from the ground up," it becomes clear why he structures the book in this way. Carens is not starting from some general theory of what grounds valid norms as a way to answer certain questions regarding immigration, rather he wants to look at the moral judgments made in different cases and work backwards to identify their normative principles (Abizadeh 2015, p. 384). More abstractly, Carens is identifying from particular principles and extracting out general principles, rather than going from general principles to their potential application to particular cases.

How this social-membership theory is then *discovered* is by looking at instances of moral judgments as they relate to migration, such as birthright citizenship, legal residency, temporary workers etc. The first example of birthright citizenship is where Carens begins to set the framework for social-membership theory, so it is worth understanding Carens' justifications here to better understand the theory as a whole, since the overall, admittedly narrow, criteria are best exemplified in this first scenario. That is

to say, since Carens' goal in this first half of the book is to undertake a "logic of discovery," his goal is to tease out the underlying norms which animate birthright citizenship to promote his argument for social-membership.

Carens understands birthright citizenship—at times referred to as *ius soli*—as perhaps the most indicative of how our current national citizenship policies operate. He views birthright citizenship as not only a result of the international order of nation-states, which grant citizenship and legal rights to their members, but, at base, a recognition of the inevitable integration into a political community for those who are born in a state's territorial jurisdiction. That citizenship is bestowed upon those born in a country such as the United States—whereby birthright citizenship is embedded into the Fourteenth Amendment—is a tacit acknowledgment of the social reality that comes with living in a particular political space. As Carens understands it, we are embodied creatures who reside within a particular space and within that space we come to develop and maintain various rich social networks. This occurs not only with the children of native-born citizens, but with the children of migrants families, regardless of how they enter the country. These lasting social networks are what give rise to Carens' theory of social-membership and the moral claims to citizenship which come as a result.

It must be noted, however, that it is not the birthplace itself that gives rise to social-membership. Rather, it is the expectation of living in a territory for an extended period of time (Caren 2013, p. 36). Which is to say, under this view it would not be unjust to withhold citizenship from a child born to tourists as there is no expectation of longevity. Though, as Carens notes, plans do change and it can be reasonably expected, under this framework, that were the family to stay in the country for an extended period that the child would establish the requisite connections which would normally entail citizenship for a child of native residents (Ibid.). Carens identifies this emphasis placed on the expectations,

which grow out of residing in an area for an extended period of time, as laying down normative principles that get at the heart of his theory of social-membership. As such, he views the granting of birthright citizenship as making sense only if we view it as recognizing the child's social membership (p. 158). There is an expectation that the child will grow in the country of his birth, and that this is the primary animator in conferring citizenship, be it the child of native-borns or resident immigrants (Ibid.).

However, Carens takes this a step further and insists that this social integration is applicable just as well to adults. To return to the tourist example, social-membership would be conferred to someone who arrives as an immigrant, whether through regular or irregular means, and stays within the territory for an extended period of time, but not to a tourist. Carens points out the common practice of bestowing permanent residents with greater membership rights (such as security of resident and redistributive rights) just by their length of stay. Conversely, the limits of length of stay for temporary workers is a tacit acknowledgment of the importance of length of stay in the moral claim to membership rights. Somewhat worryingly, and somewhat understandably, Carens does not pose a straight-forward delineation of the period of stay required in order to confer social-membership, but when he attempts to it rounds out to a period between five to ten years.

If that seems rather vague that is because the theory itself is based on two fairly restricted criteria—"residence and the passage of time" (p. 164). Carens believes these two criteria of membership serve as relevant proxies for "richer, deeper" indications of what constitutes belonging in a society, though he believes that judging membership vis-a-vis potentially narrower indicators is not necessarily appropriate (pp. 164-165). Carens provides a comparable, but admittedly dissimilar example in order demonstrate how these two criteria contribute to a sense of social belonging. Carens draws a parallel to how we use age as a proxy for granting legal rights. States recognize that any attempt to grant

legal rights based on subjective capacities is ultimately far too strenuous. Rather we use age as a means by which to grant legal rights. All the while there is full recognition of the fact that some individuals mature faster than others—conversely, some slower—but the proxy of age as a means of indicating when an individual is capable of taking responsibility is a particularly apt parallel to how we can measure the depth of one's social membership, according to Carens (pp. 165-166). Additionally, Carens feels that these criteria are quite noteworthy as he believes that the proxy allows an avoidance of discriminatory practices based on arbitrary biases (Ibid.). That being said, the general thrust of the argument is that as we reside in a society we develop significant networks of relationships and associations, and the best way of identifying whether one has developed these networks is to use time passage as a proxy.

There are two rather notable implications to take into account based of this theory, as identified by David Miller. If we accept that the rich network of ties developed over time are a meaningful indicator of one's membership, then the act of forcefully removing individuals is a breaking of those ties with potentially disastrous consequences, particularly if offspring are involved (Miller 2015, p. 123). More importantly, if we give clout to the theory, we are also left in the position where we must recognize that immigrants, by their very identification as such, have likely set aside and broken meaningful ties to their country of origin (Ibid.). This can either be a result of unendurable conditions, or, as Miller puts it, more "innocent and perfectly understandable desire" to maximize opportunity (Ibid.). That the latter is potentially the case for some is a knock against the whole theory that social networks are key, though he recognizes that there is a remarkable difference between electing to leave your country of origin and being forcefully removed and returned back to your country of origins (p. 124). Here, Miller actually provides a more theory-laden background by which to place social-membership theory than Carens.

Miller's idea of the importance of residence over time is more centered around the value of work. Not only in the Lockean sense that one's engagement in work confers a sense of ownership, but that work entails a social cooperative nature which outgrows the bounds of the workplace and into leisurely activity (Ibid.). Furthermore, based on Miller's own emphasis on the norms of reciprocity, it would be an undermining of the "associative obligations among [...] participants" to expel those who have upheld their end of obligations—such as paying taxes (Ibid.).

Returning to Carens, the question then centers on how social-membership is entailed out of what he refers to as "membership-specific rights," as opposed to human rights. Though Carens ultimately supports open-borders, and argues for it in depth in the last few chapters of his work, he wants to distinguish membership-specific rights as those which grow out of the idea of being a member of a society, such as the right-to-work and access to social programs. Strictly speaking, Carens understands these legal rights to be universal, but only insofar as they are conferred by the act of being part of a political community (Carens 2013, p. 161). That being said, being a social-member of a certain polity includes certain restrictions upon the person as provided by the law of the state. It is popularly understood within liberal theory that to properly interact and work in reciprocal schemes, such as paying taxes and receiving benefits, the right to be able to participate in shaping the laws that govern them must also be included (Ibid., p. 50). How we define this polity is often a difficult question, most notably posed by Michael Walzer's "boundaries of the demos problem." If we are to understand the polity as those who fall under the coercive actions of the state, then, according to Carens, by applying social-membership theory we can see where claims of citizenship, and their entailed legal rights, begin to appear. However, there are additional problems posed by other political theorists, most notably David Miller.

Objections and Responses

Miller raises two particular objections to Carens' social-membership argument, though he agrees with the general thrust of the argument. First, he disputes the emphasis placed on the deep social ties that are constitutive to the theory. Second, he raises the concern that social-membership theory has embedded within it a notion of automatic inclusion for migrants, and that this would be unjust towards those who apply to immigrate through legal channels.

Miller claims that the emphasis placed upon the importance of rich social ties is undermined by the fact that immigrants are willing to tether ties with their own native communities in order to migrate to a new country (Miller 2015, p. 124). Miller is here admittedly not speaking of refugees, whom he is often sympathetic towards, but rather migrants who self-elect to migrate to another country for economic reasons. This is an odd argument from Miller as it seems to assume that one's social network is strictly that of physical contact, and that leaving one's country of origin is a ceasing of ties with their past. More often than not, family and friends at home remain an integral part of an immigrant's social network, even if the only mode of contact is through long-distance electronic communication. More to the point, it also assumes that an immigrant who arrives in a country is entering into a void with no other connections. As is the case with many migrant communities there are delineated waves of migrants who arrive at different time periods. This newly migrated individual can either be entering into an already established network of migrants, or operate as a means of access which other family and friends will use as a nexus to establish foundations for more economically secure modes of living. To claim that the action of immigration undermines the social-membership theory's emphasis on social ties is to misconstrue many of the circumstances which underlie economic migrants. Understandably, as I mentioned above, Miller

is not keen to set aside the veracity of social ties entirely, and he makes clear concessions by acknowledging the difference between those who elect to leave their social ties and those who are forcibly removed from them.

A more substantive disagreement is Miller's discomfort with social-membership theory's call for automatic inclusion. Social-membership theory is already fairly constrained compared to the other arguments that Carens has made, such as the oft cited argument for open borders. However, social-membership theory brackets off that discussion in order to deal with what Carens believes are the outcomes of the underlying normative principles of inclusion which are already part of our current border regimes. Most notably, the theory is only concerned with those who are already present within a nation, not with who should get in. Though this is a concession on Carens' part as he is ultimately for open borders, its outcomes include automatic inclusion for those who have been present in a nation for an extended period of time. Miller thinks this is unjustifiable as it allows a path to citizenship for irregular migrants that is quite different from those who are attempting to enter through legal channels. Carens makes way for a broad theory of who should be included, using time as a proxy, because he wishes to avoid potential discrimination which may come as a result of more subjective means of inclusion. Carens is wary of allowing more exhaustive measures such as investigating individuals to see how well they have incorporated themselves into their new surroundings, as it has often been the case that characteristics of gender, race, and class have been used as means of discrimination in the past when interviewing migrants (Carens 2013, p. 166).

Miller claims that current immigration authorities purportedly act on a criterion of impartiality when selecting which immigrants are allowed to enter through legal channels, whereas automatic conclusions give irregular migrants already situated in the country "cast-iron safeguards against discrimination that are not

available to new immigrants" (Miller 2015, p. 125). There are few things wrong with Miller's claims. First, it implicitly entails that there are already potential possibilities for discrimination which could plague applicants who are attempting to enter through legal channels. If that is the case then why would Miller not just ask for greater impartiality on the side of immigration authorities? Second, and this is a point Miller recognizes, there are notable qualitative differences between the circumstances of someone attempting to enter through legal channels and someone who is already residing in a country. A denial of legal residence for an individual already situated in the state bears the possibility of deportation and a severing of ties. Miller himself argues that the losses suffered from being forcibly removed from a place of residence where you have established social ties is harsh enough to be considered an injustice (Ibid., p. 124). Recognizing this Miller, understandably, provides a caveat that such a system would only work with greater safeguards, such as the United Kingdom's temporary right to leave process (Ibid., p. 202). However, even with this caveat, Miller is ignoring the precarious position of irregular migrants and why they would elect to enter countries through non-legal channels.

The potential means that Miller puts forward to help discern who should be considered for legal residence are often the characteristics that bar irregular migrants from legally entering another nation in the first place. It assumes a social reality far different from our own, particularly as it concerns how admissions work. Setting aside those with family ties or special credentials, there is "no effective line for admissions" as it concerns other applicants (Carens 2013, p. 154). For those who work in occupations that are considered low-skill there is just about *no* immigration line whatsoever for admission (Ibid.).

That social-membership theory entails a measure of amnesty, however, is something that Miller can live with, as he is ultimately in favor of amnesty for irregular migrants. Though he still retains a

concern that automatic inclusion is unfair to those who attempt to enter through legal channels, and that certain practices may help ameliorate this lack of fairness, such as having irregular migrants enroll in part-time military or civilian service (Miller 2015, p. 126). This seems to ignore the basic thrust of social-membership theory, in addition to being a straightforwardly objectionable imposition put onto irregular migrants. Here, Carens makes the more substantive point, and a line that Miller again agrees with, that to treat irregular migrants as criminals is improper (Carens 2013, p. 155). Laws that treat irregular migrants should be understood to be akin to those which are concerned with traffic violations, rather than murder or theft (Ibid.). These laws maintain order at sufficient level by dint of their presence, and for Carens that is the same as what immigration laws provide (Ibid.). We should then consider social-membership theory as entailing something like a statute of limitations for the actions of those who break the law by entering. As Carens notes, we already do this within our current legal system, as persons are no longer pursued for less serious crimes after a period of three to five years of time (Ibid.). If one is to take the arguments of social-membership theory seriously then it would be unjust to enact punishment for a crime which took place many years in the past on individuals who have established themselves and developed ties in their new place of habitation, particularly since the consequences potentially entail deportation.

Conclusion

Social-membership theory is a theory with limited aspirations. Though it entails at times a radical rethinking of how current border policies operate, it is not a theory of open borders, nor is it a theory in line with cosmopolitanism. At its core it attempts to illustrate many of the implicit normative principles which animate much of our current border policies throughout the world,

and it also attempts to discover their logical outcomes. Carens' particular take on the theory is notably different from someone like Thomas Nagel's, in that it attempts to work only from broad democratic principles which Carens takes for granted throughout his paper, though he is not so crass as to admit that these principles are always present in the minds of demos or the government. To that extent, Carens sets out the goals of the theory from the outset, in addition to the particular set of presuppositions that bind it. All theories have commitments and, admittedly for Carens, he is not partaking in discussion of immigration by just taking an abstract principle from the outset, applying it, and seeing what it entails (Carens 2015, pp. 409-410). Rather, the point of this work in particular is what Carens understands to be a project of *discovery*, by which he can descriptively identify norms that surround our current practices towards citizenship and see how they relate to the legal position of migrants (Ibid.). It attempts to get across to actual citizens, by appealing to those very norms rather than by abstraction such that only academics would be able to analyze the arguments. Miller's objections fall in lockstep with his basic line of thinking for the last few decades, and his solutions are often ad hoc and tend to ignore the more salient facts of immigration and the potentials for abuse on the part of immigration administrators. Social-membership theory attempts to ameliorate these problems by sticking to its narrow criteria, which are at the same time simple and expansive in their reach. That being said, though it is meant to be an argument grounded in factual reality, it is taking a position that can be construed as idealized for those who are not interested in grounding theories of immigration in liberal theory. It has, however, since its first appearance become one of the standard lines in the literature and is often taken for granted, even by people such as David Miller—though he has obvious objections. On that front, it has been a success. How viable it is in application comes only as a result of socio-political trends.

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Anarchy and Justice: Economics and its Ontological Commitments

N. E. Stevens

Introduction

There is no view on society or economics that does not come with some view on justice. Whether that view is explicit or implicit is of no matter. Whether or not the authors of such views have justice in mind are also of no matter; and, if justice is ignored in the discussion of society and/or economics, this is to the detriment of the author's view.

The natural implications that systems of society and economics have on the distribution and inaction of justice must be considered; for, after all, both societies and economies deal only with the persons that dwell within the systems. That is to say that they serve no other purpose to any other benefactor than the persons who are directly (or, possibly indirectly) related to them. Therefore, justice must be discussed. And, when justice is not discussed by the authors of a view on society or economy, then it is up to others to divulge to what ends these systems are aimed. It is up to others to inspect, theorize and critique the systems in place, and measure the adequacy of these systems against views on justice. For, if a social system or economy serves the distribution of injustice, there must be a careful analysis as to why this is the case, and there must be energy put towards correcting the injustices.

Justice, as John Rawls puts it, is the "arrangement of major social institutions into one scheme of cooperation" (Rawls 1971, p. 47). He also notes "the principles of social justice is the basic structure of society" (Ibid.). It seems obvious what is meant here

when referring to one's own experience; however, it is important to think critically about what this means. If, after all, Rawls is correct, we must then consider what major institutions are cooperating together and to what ends they serve. It may be easy to say, for instance, that in the United States the obvious institution is the United States justice system. But, that is not necessarily the case. There is a distinct difference between the procedural inaction of established laws and the actual distribution of justice qua *justice*.

Without giving an ontological account of justice, as in the Platonic Ideal of Justice, let us consider justice in the following way. Justice can be thought of as an instrument for the distribution of goods to those to whom justice is relevant. Those to whom justice is relevant are all persons, anywhere. Whether these persons happen to live in one society or another is irrelevant. After all, persons everywhere require—more or less—the same basic needs for survival and flourishment. Namely, persons everywhere require, at the bare minimum, nutrition, safe dwelling, education and good health care.

Given the above definition of justice, we can now begin the discussion at hand. Justice in the above way can be socially thought of in the following two ways. First, it can be thought of as a natural byproduct of the predominant system of society. This is the view that Adam Smith had in mind when he wrote that, "by pursuing his own gain, rather than the public interest, the self-interested businessperson promotes the public interest" (Klein 2003, p. 388). The term "public interest" is here inferred to mean those positive results of the distribution of justice. Thus, those things that interest businesspeople such as production, economics, industry, and so on, will first serve the interests of the businesspeople, then, as a *natural* result, serve all others. This view will be unpacked further in the following section on Capitalism.

Second, justice can be viewed as the primary function of society. That is to say that any major social institutions that are constructed serve only one purpose: the distribution of justice

to all persons. Then, the way that economies, infrastructures, production and all the rest that is common to societies of persons will serve the interests of justice, or, put another way, will be constructed with the public interests considered first, before the interests of individual persons. This view will be more thoroughly unpacked in the Left Anarchism section.

Capitalism

As mentioned above, Adam Smith had a view of society that held that by the pursuit of one's own interests in business endeavors, the general interests (justice) will be a natural byproduct of such activity. The emphasis that this would be a *natural* result is paramount to Smith's view. For it seems that Smith's views of nature qua *nature* are of great influence on his socioeconomic views. He believes there is something that is referred to as the "Invisible Hand" (Klein 2003, pp. 388-89), which is the action that nature takes whenever a businessperson acts to serve their own interests.

This invisible hand aids in the distribution of justice. "The rich," Adam Smith says, "consume little more than the poor, and in spite of their natural selfishness and rapacity, though they mean only their own conveniency, they divide with the poor the produce of all their improvements. They are led by the invisible hand to make nearly the same distribution of the necessaries of life" (Ibid., p. 388) This, coupled with the motivating virtues of "self-command, conscience, and a desire for justice" (Ibid., p. 390), create the society in which justice "is the main pillar that upholds [human society]" (Ibid., p. 391).

However, staying consistent with earlier assertions, a business person does not act in the interest of others, they will only act to serve their own interests and nature will take care of the rest. There is one assumption held about a self-interested business person that must also be recognized in this discussion. The self-interest that one has ought to be moderated by what is referred to

as prudence. That is to say that one's actions ought to be tempered by the virtue of prudence. Smith makes reference to a classic view of prudence, in that it affects the happiness of a person (Ibid.). This prudence seems to be that which will guide one to act—albeit for their own interests—with sympathy for others and with a sense of justice (Ibid., p. 390-91). This seems to suggest that, although the businessperson is acting self-interestedly, they are acting rightly and are to be considered (at least ideally) as a person who commits acts of good and not of evil.

Pursuing one's own self-interest, then, is aligning one's self with nature. That is to say, that pursuing a capitalist endeavor will allow this invisible hand that Smith speaks about to carry out the residual goods that serve the public interest. Then, pursuing the public interests rather than one's own interests can then serve as detriment to the public interest. For, after all, this is not the way that nature works in these regards (Ibid., p. 391).

There is another view that Smith holds, that "human beings are innately equipped to be social, trustworthy, and cooperative" (Ibid., p. 393) and it is through markets and trade that trust is developed, and "trust is the foundation of virtue" (Ibid.). So, again, Smith's attempt at understanding human nature and the nature of nature, as such, seems to be that which leads him to a view that capitalism is the primary way in which societies ought to structure themselves. Through mutual cooperation between equals societies will prosper. And, he adds that government institutions should be in place to help develop the natural instincts of human nature, which are again: being social, trustworthy, and cooperative (Ibid.).

Klein notes that this view of nature has been, in large part, rooted in a view of social Darwinism that understands the struggle for survival in the following way, quoted from a lecture given by Thomas Huxley at Oxford University in 1893:

> Just as animals and plants move towards perfection by means of the struggle for existence and the consequent

> survival of the fittest, so human beings, as ethical creatures, will progress by the same means. Darwin's 'fittest,' [Huxley] insists, is not to be equated with 'the moral best.' Indeed, under certain cosmic conditions, the 'fit' organisms are 'lower' types. While human beings struggle competitively for survival, and those who more readily adapt are more 'fit,' social and moral progress demands that human beings combat, not imitate, the cosmic process. Huxley claims that moral and social progress demands the substitution of goodness or virtue for 'ruthless self-assertion,' which tries to crush the competition in an attempt to be one of the 'fit' that survives. Civilization advances because human sciences and arts subdue the nastiness of nature (Ibid.).

This view of human nature seems to insist that those who are the "best competitors will win, and that this process of human competition leads to continuing material and social improvement" (Ibid., p. 394).

However, Klein does not believe this connection between economic competition and the Darwinian struggle for existence is a good, or even helpful, connection, as it does not support the views that Smith actually held in regards to nature's involvement with human progress. Furthermore, if one believes that in order to survive one must disregard their morality, then humanity is lost, which is counter to the capitalist's pursuit on Klein's view.

Rather, Klein promotes the view that "cooperation and competition need not be separate[d]" (Ibid., p. 395) from one another. And that, although this cooperation may not be driven by a sense of altruism, and instead by a sense of completion, that in the same way that Smith claimed that pursuing self-serving public interests will also be met; so, too, by giving into competition, cooperation toward furthering public interests will be accomplished (Ibid., p. 396).

Left Anarchism

There are many forms of anarchism ranging from political, religious and strictly philosophical anarchism. Within each of these anarchist's positions there is also a range of how anarchy might be applied. Political anarchism has a distinct form of anarchism known as Left Anarchism that promotes the liberty of individuals and theorizes society from a position of absolute autonomy of persons and freedom from state. It also holds particular views of how social institutions are formed and employed.

The very concept of a social institution may suggest some sort of government imposition. Therefore, at the start, it will be good to think differently about social institutions, what purposes they serve and how a social institution might exist void of any government influence. For, after all, one of the tenants of anarchism is that "all forms of government rest on violence, and are therefore wrong and harmful, and also unnecessary" (Goldman 1911, p. 50). Due to the nature of anarchism, then, we must reframe the concept of what a social institution is, what motivates it and how it would serve the general interests of a society.

There is a view of human nature in left anarchism that holds that people are indeed self-interested. It seems to be the case that it would be easy to find examples confirming this view from personal experience. However, there is a more robust understanding of human nature that does not ignore the fact that persons live within societies, and are therefore socialized. That is to say that what human nature *a priori* might be, does not aid in the discussion of human nature in a socialized environment. Therefore, what human nature is, is affected by society and society has the ability to affect the nature of a person either positively or negatively. In a society wherein persons are dominated by the power of a government, or state, their nature is molded by the coercive and violent power of the state (Wolff 1971, pp. 4, 11, 18).

Given this view, it may be irrelevant whether or not one is

more self-interested or one is more others-interested. The values that one has and understands are highly influenced by the values that a society has adopted. If one lives in a society whose primary obligation is the well-being of its citizens, then certain values will follow out of that. Namely, a focus on education, welfare, and justice. And, it's social institutions will be constructed to reinforce these values.

Social Institutions

Both Smith's capitalism and Wolff's left anarchism mention social institutions. Social institutions are extremely important within any society. However, the purposes that these institutions serve depend on the overall goals of a society. This is why it is important to determine the ends of a society when discussing social institutions. It is also important to recognize this connection whenever criticizing currently established social institutions. Calling to reform a currently established institution is like treating a symptom of an illness without treating the illness itself. If reform is what one believes is necessary, then total reform must be considered.

Smith notes that social institutions ought to be run by the government to reinforce and cultivate what he believed to be innate qualities in all persons. These qualities included being sociable, trustworthy and cooperative (Klein 1971, p. 393). These qualities ought to be reinforced by government institutions to produce a society of self-interested business people who, by pursuing capitalist interests, will inevitably serve the interests of the public more generally.

Social institutions in a left anarchy would look slightly different, as the institutions would serve the general interests of all and would reinforce autonomy, freedom and community primarily amongst other social values. Therefore, one would expect to see a society whose citizens would exhibit these values both in terms of

view of one's self as well as in the interpersonal relationships the citizens would have.

Conclusion

The socialization of the persons who construct a society occur distinctly through the institutions that a society establishes. These institutions are constructed to reinforce the values that a society holds to. Whether or not these values are consensually agreed on does not always matter.[1] Nonetheless, they are of utmost importance.

If it is the goal of a society to create an environment that aids in the flourishing of all and does all that it can to relieve inequalities, then there will be certain values that would need to be believed and acted upon to reach this end. One belief that would seemingly not fit within this society is one that holds that pursuing one's own interests will somehow by causation eventually positively affect the whole of society.

This seems to be a naïve understanding of social causation and, when looking at capitalist's societies today, it is obvious that the fruition of this belief is actually a greatly divided society where the majority are struggling to achieve *more* while the affluent minority use these masses to reach their own ends without ever sharing the profits equitably. There is no invisible hand or wisdom of nature's course that correct for the self-interest of the wealthy. There is only gross inequality.

In contrast to capitalism, the social institutions in a left anarchy would serve the well-being of the many first. This would necessarily restrict some of the interests of others, at least temporarily. Sacrifice of one's own interests may be a necessary cost to live in a successful anarchy. But, the outcomes may also be much greater. Living a truly free life, free from any coercive government or other authority may warrant such sacrifice.

At the same time, the interests of those who have been social-

ized in an anarchy will likely not be interests of capital gain, as the economy will not play as much of a role as it does in a capitalist society. In fact, it can be imagined that if all were to volunteer to perform the necessary tasks of having a properly maintained infrastructure and in return education, housing, food, and good care of health were available to all, there may be no need for any sort of currency altogether.

If one were socialized in a society of this sort, then there may actually never be a reason to restrain one's interests. Unless, of course, these interests were to bring harm or violence to any persons in the society or to the society as a whole. In which case, action would need to be taken to restrain these influences.

The point here is, though, that whatever the best outcome of a society can be imagined to be, the social institutions that are established must be created to reinforce the values that will help bring that society to the imagined end. If we look at the United States today, we can see that in many ways, Adam Smith was wrong about human nature and what the outcomes of capitalism would actually be. And, in contrast, living in complete anarchy independent of states, governments and economies, might actually provide the best environment for the flourishing of persons everywhere. After all, if the flourishment of *all* persons is not the goal of a society, then the social theory ought to be questioned from the outset; for, societies are constructed of people, and therefore ought to be constructed *for* people.

Notes

1. An example of this would be the notion of the "American Dream" in the United States. This is a notion that no matter how humble one's beginnings are, if one works hard and puts their mind to do what they want, through hard work and much determination they can reach "the top" of society and will achieve a happy and fulfilled life—the life of their dreams. This is regarded as nonsense by many and at the same time still completely believed by others. But, when looking at education, justice and health-care systems currently established in the United States, it is apparent that this sort of value is still being reinforced in the United States.

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Master of Arts in Philosophy
California State University, Los Angeles

The Department of Philosophy at California State University, Los Angeles offers a program of study leading to the Master of Arts degree in Philosophy. The program aims at the acquisition of a broad background in philosophy. It is designed for those preparing for further graduate study or community college teaching, and for self-enrichment. Although the department is analytically oriented, it encourages work in other areas, for example Asian philosophy, feminist philosophy, and the interaction between European and Anglo-American thought. The Department includes faculty members with diverse backgrounds and interests actively working in a wide range of philosophical specialties. Classes and seminars are small with a friendly, informal atmosphere that facilitates student-faculty interaction.

The academic programs in philosophy at California State University, Los Angeles are intended to engage students in philosophical inquiry. They aim to acquaint students with noteworthy contributions by philosophers to the tradition; to explore various philosophical issues, problems, and questions; to provide students with principles of inquiry and evaluation relevant to the many areas of human activity, such as science, law, religion, education, government, art, and the humanities; to develop in them skills of analysis, criticism, and synthesis needed for advanced work in various scholarly fields; to encourage the development of skills and attitudes leading to self-reflection and life-long learning.

Philosophy in Practice
Submission Information

Each of the student contributors was specially selected to submit a paper for this issue of *Philosophy in Practice* by one or more faculty members in the Department of Philosophy at California State University, Los Angeles. All writers are currently either students in the master's program of philosophy or undergraduate majors in philosophy. All philosophy students at California State University, Los Angeles are eligible for nomination, and those who were chosen to contribute have demonstrated a superior ability to develop and compose works of advanced philosophical writing.

For more information on *Philosophy in Practice*, please contact:
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