

Two Types of Civic Friendship

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Abstract Among the tasks of modern political philosophy is to develop a favored conception of the relations among modern citizens, among people who can know little or nothing of one another individually and yet are deeply reciprocally dependent. One might think of this as developing a favored conception of civic friendship. In this essay I sketch two candidate conceptions. The first derives from the Kantian tradition, the second from the 1844 Marx. I present the two conceptions and then describe similarities and differences. My approach is both taxonomic and programmatic. My taxonomic goal is to provide an initial sketch of the conceptual territory. My programmatic goal is to provide reasons to think that the conception derived from Marx is both appealing and feasible.

Keywords Civic friendship · Fraternity · Political attitude · Concern · Respect · 1844 Marx

“[P]eople say that we ought to wish good things to a friend for his own sake . . . many have good will towards people they have not seen, but suppose to be good or useful; and the same feeling may exist in the other direction. They appear, then, to have good will to each other, but how could anyone call them friends when they are unaware of their attitude to one another?”

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*¹

§1. Let's begin with Adam Smith in *The Wealth of Nations*

Observe the accommodation of the most common artificer or day-labourer in a civilized and thriving country, and you will perceive that the number of people of whose industry a part, though but a small part, has been employed in procuring him this accommodation, exceeds all computation . . . without the assistance and cooperation of many thousands, the very meanest person in a civilized country could not be

¹Aristotle 2000, p. 145, 1155b–1156a.

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provided, even according to, what we very falsely imagine, the easy and simple manner in which he is commonly accommodated (Smith 1976, pp. 15–16).²

Smith's discussion points to the range of people upon whom each of us depends and to the distance of those individuals from us in space and often in time. A distinctive feature of modern dependence is the impossibility of knowing upon whom one is dependent or who is dependent on oneself. Our mutual dependence is pervasive and yet impossible to specify.

Among the tasks of modern political philosophy is to develop a favored conception of the relations among modern citizens, among people who can know little or nothing of one another individually and yet are reciprocally dependent for the provision of what Mill calls "the very groundwork of our existence" as well as for those things that facilitate a good human life (Mill 1969a, p. 251). One might think of this as sketching a favored conception of civic friendship; in older terminology, of fraternity.

At issue is the category of *political attitude*. In a modern democracy I take our political attitudes to have two connected objects. There are, first, our fellow citizens. These are the objects of our attitudes directly when one engages in public activities but more importantly indirectly via one's knowledge that their lives are profoundly affected by our shared political institutions, indeed, by our general collective life.

Second, political attitudes also take as object our basic political institutions. Political philosophers have often focused on the conditions under which citizens might rationally affirm or at least be reconciled to society's basic institutional arrangements. Our lives are in significant part shaped by institutions. We occupy, and understand ourselves in terms of, roles specified by institutions, and we encounter one another within these roles (including that of "citizen"). Moreover, our understanding of our relationships with our fellow citizens is affected by how we read the normative status of our shared institutions, e.g., if I think our shared institutions instantiate a normatively defensible content, I will relate to you, qua fellow citizen, differently than if I think our institutions are indefensible.

My focus in this essay will be on citizens, even if unknown and distant, as the object of one another's political attitudes, but this is not to denigrate institutions as the objects of such attitudes. In fact, I will urge that a central expression of our attitude toward our fellow citizens can be through (i) our conception of the content of our shared institutions and (ii) our compliance (or lack of compliance) with those institutions, so understood.

The two attitudes I discuss are respect and concern. These are not the only political attitudes in a modern democracy. Danielle Allen writes of trust, and Axel Honneth and others talk of recognitive attitudes such as esteem (Allen 2004 and Honneth 1995). These attitudes will surface in my discussion, but they are not reducible to respect or concern (or to concern's companion, appreciation). They deserve separate examination.

I examine two pictures of positive citizen-citizen relationships, two conceptions of civic friendship. The first derives from the Kantian tradition, the second from the 1844 Marx. My approach is both taxonomic and programmatic. I present the two attitudes and describe some similarities and differences. The taxonomic goal is to provide an initial sketch of the conceptual territory. My own preference is for the Marxian conception and so I focus more on it, but there is not space here to mount proper arguments for either its value or, more crucially, its feasibility. I say a bit about the latter (see §§10 and 11) but surely not enough.

The enterprise of describing positive citizen-citizen relationships seems to presume at least modest optimism about instantiating such relationships. No doubt, we should not

² For John Locke's "Catalogue of things" that go into the production of "every Loaf of Bread," see Locke 1988, §43, p. 298.

indulge ourselves too far. We should keep somewhere in view the corrosive realism of a writer like Thucydides. Still, determining how it would be good for citizens to relate to one another – and so how far the present fails to meet such a standard – seems worth the doing.

§2. What makes a modern political attitude distinctive is, I think, that its primary object is unknown distant strangers. In a modern society we can have direct citizen-citizen interactions of various kinds and these can be important, but so far as I have fellow citizens and an attitude toward them, for the most part these citizens are unknown. Moreover, my political attitudes have little direct impact on the objects of those attitudes. My attitudes might translate into a vote, but such an effect is modest. Nevertheless, political attitudes have considerable importance. The political attitudes I hold will pervade my way of seeing and treating my fellow citizens, my orientation toward our shared social life. And my beliefs about my fellow citizens' political attitudes will determine how I see myself as being treated both by those citizens and by our society's political institutions. Political attitudes are a basic element of a modern society, a basic feature of citizen-citizen relationships.

§3. Turning now to dependence, political philosophers have often found dependence suspect, but especially suspect has been dependence on another person's will. Part of the worry is vulnerability. If I am dependent on X for an important good, then it is not my own but X's decision that determines whether I can obtain or must do without that good. Still, this doesn't completely capture the worry. Dependence on something without a will can also make me vulnerable. I might be dependent on the weather or on the free market and thus vulnerable to their vicissitudes. In these areas, however, I am not personally dependent – I am not *subordinate*. Of course, impersonal dependence can lead to personal – after the rain washes out my crop I might be dependent on a bank's loan officer. Nevertheless, dependence on the impersonal is often thought not to be problematic. (One could challenge this premise: Marxists are not keen about dependence on the free market).

At stake is whether our vulnerability to others' wills can be neutralized or even made beneficial. One strategy, often associated with philosophers of a Kantian bent, is to attribute the desired alchemical power to the law, at least to the law of a well-functioning democracy. The idea is to think of dependence on the law here either as dependence on something without a will or, if one sees democratic law as, ideally, the output of the collective will, as dependence on a will with which one identifies – one's dependence is not on an *alien* will. As Frederick Neuhouser puts it in attributing a variant of this view to Rousseau, we get not the "eradication" of dependence but its "restructuring" (Neuhouser 1993, pp. 388 and 391). This involves both neutralizing vulnerability (in part) and turning it to our advantage (in part). And, as we will see, the relationship that is generated could be conceived as a form of civic friendship.

The following are often said to be characteristic of dependence on the law of a well-functioning democracy:

- (i) It is impersonal. Particular officials are merely representatives of and themselves subject to the law, and they are responsible to the citizenry. In principle, one is not subject to *them*.
- (ii) All citizens are *equally* dependent on the law. The law applies equally, in Locke's words, to "the rich and poor . . . the favorite at court and the country man at plough" (Locke 1988, §142, p. 363).

- (iii) Jointly and equally, we *make* the law through democratic political processes. Our individual wills are equally embodied in the collective will.
- (iv) Our equal subjection to law certifies our possession of dignity-entitling properties. This means:
 - (a) We are beings with the (valuable) capacities needed to participate in political decision-making, as well as with the (valuable) capacities needed to be able to recognize what the (democratically made) law requires of us and to comply with it, and to comply with it at least in part because it is (democratically made) law.
 - (b) More generally, although equality before the law does not entail, it does usually go with a social understanding that each citizen is entitled to full political participation and equal treatment because each has fundamental value *qua* citizen or, more generally, *qua* human being.

The reference to a “social understanding” points to the expressive role of institutional arrangements. The law is often said to be expressive, e.g., Joel Feinberg stresses that the criminal law expresses the community’s moral condemnation of the criminal, our collective opprobrium (Feinberg 1970). In a more positive vein, the public understanding that all citizens are equal before the law has been thought to express an affirmation of citizens’ equal (and fundamental) value. In the society we are imagining – call it an *equal reciprocal respect society* – citizens see equality before the law as expressing certain widespread beliefs. Overall, the following obtain:

- (1) Citizens believe in their own and other citizens’ fundamental value; moreover, they respect other citizens’ *qua* beings with fundamental value.
- (2) Citizens believe that other citizens believe this about them and respect them *qua* beings with fundamental value.
- (3) Citizens (a) believe that other citizens can make certain claims on them, e.g., claims to certain background economic conditions or to the exercise of certain liberties; moreover, citizens (b) are (sufficiently) motivated to meet those claims.
- (4) Citizens believe that other citizens believe (3-a) about *them*, and that other citizens are (sufficiently) motivated to meet *their* claims.

The combination of (1)–(4) is likely to support citizens’ sense of their own value. Each believes that others believe she has fundamental value. For most of us this is an important prop to our sense of our own worth (Rawls 1971/1999a, p. 179/156). In addition, each citizen is motivated to satisfy certain basic claims from others, and each believes others are similarly motivated. Here, citizens depend on others not only in the sense of being vulnerable to others but also in the sense of being able to rely on others. Such relationships among citizens can be seen as a particular form of civic friendship.

§4. On this picture, vulnerability is (partly) neutralized through the existence of laws that protect individuals against power (the power of particular individuals and of groups and institutions), and through the public affirmation of each citizen’s value (this partly neutralizes psychological vulnerability). Yet the alchemy wrought by good institutions is supposed to go farther. It is supposed to make possible the exercise of certain valuable human capacities, e.g., the capacity to act justly. The exercise of such capacities is supposed to be both good in itself and possible only against a background of vulnerability.

In effect, we have a variant of the idea of the *felix culpa*, the fortunate fall: only by leaving Eden could crucial human capacities be developed (Lovejoy 1937). On this view, finitude fits us. Reciprocal dependence, at least of the right kind, enables us to exercise capacities and to have relationships that are good in themselves. If manna fell from heaven and we had no need of one another, we would be worse off.

As an example, on the Kantian interpretation of John Rawls's justice as fairness, citizens in the well-ordered society of *A Theory of Justice* realize their nature by acting not merely in accordance with but from the two principles of justice, but these principles are needed only if we are in the circumstances of justice, both objective and subjective.³ On the Kantian interpretation, being a just person is, in significant part, constitutive of one's good.⁴ On this picture, reciprocal dependence is a condition of, not a threat to, human self-realization.

§5. There is more to say about a reciprocal respect society. For instance, it rests on the value of respect for X, and so there will be variants depending on the content of X (rationality? humanity?). Particular variants will have to defend the significant value of the particular X. Given space constraints, however, I turn to a different way to think of reciprocal dependence and so to a different way to think of civic friendship. This is found in the 1844 Marx, in his "Comments on James Mill, *Éléments d'économie politique*" and *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*. For Marx, in a true communist society citizens' reciprocal dependence counts as "completing" one another (Marx 1975a/1981a, pp. 217, 226, 228/451, 460, 462). By this, Marx means:

- (a) Agents would provide one another with the objects each needs to attain her individual ends.
- (b) Such provision for others would be an important part of each agent's goal in producing.

A consequence of (a) and (b) would be:

- (c) The consumer's use of the product would contribute to the producer's attaining his end. And as the consumer would also be a producer, would also make something that some producer, now qua consumer, would use, such complementarity would be reciprocal.

In a communist society there would thus be a link between my production according to my abilities and your use according to your needs. My production would be *for* your needs, and your need satisfaction would be the final stage in my production process. To help meet your (anyway, someone's) needs would be among my ends, a component of my good.

For Marx, one realizes one's nature by transforming the material world in order both to express one's individuality and to sustain one's own and other human beings' existence at an increasingly high material level (Marx 1975b/1981b, pp. 302/542). Thus I can realize my nature only if there are others for whom I can provide things (for their individual projects) and who will provide things for me (for my individual projects). As such, our reciprocal dependence is a condition of our good.

³ For a discussion of the circumstances of justice, see Rawls 1971/1999a, pp. 126–128/109–110.

⁴ For "congruence," the link between being a just person and one's own good, see Rawls 1971/1999a, pp. 398–399 and 567–577/349–350 and 496–505; also, see below, §10. For a discussion of how, on the Kantian interpretation, being a just person in Rawls's well-ordered society constitutes realizing one's nature, see Brudney 1997.

Note the following about these relationships.

- (1) They are impersonal. There is no specific individual for whom I produce.
- (2) As with a respect society, there is an important expressive role for social arrangements. Citizens must see themselves as producing *for* others and see others as producing *for* them: citizens must see a certain intention embodied in material objects.
- (3) Such relationships presume widespread belief in a specific conception of human nature, of what counts as its good.

For us, (3) represents a problem. Any political philosophy will rest to some degree on a conception of the good but that of the 1844 Marx is excessively narrow. Meaningful work is an important component of the good, but it is far from the only component, nor is it obviously the dominant component, nor need it involve the transformation of nature. On the other hand, the Marxian picture of reciprocal dependence is appealing and worth further development.

I will drop the commitment to the specific content of the 1844 Marx's conception of human nature while adapting and exploring the relationships he describes. The agents in his true communist society have a specific pair of attitudes toward one another. First, there is *concern for* one another's well-being: agents *matter to* one another. Second, each can *appreciate* what others have done for her.⁵ In what I call an *equal reciprocal concern/appreciation society* the following would obtain:

- (i) Agents would be concerned for others' well-being. Agents would matter to one another.
- (ii) Among agents' aims in their activities (in a wide variety of activities) would be to provide for others' needs.
- (iii) Agents would take satisfaction in others' satisfactions.
- (iv) Agents would appreciate that other agents' aims would be, in part, to provide for *their* needs.
- (v) Agents would believe that (i) – (iv) are reciprocal. They would thus have the following beliefs:
 - (A) That others are concerned for their well-being (that they matter to others).
 - (B) That others recognize that they are concerned for others' well-being (that others matter to them), and appreciate them for being concerned.
 - (C) That others have contributed and are continuing to contribute to their well-being.
 - (D) That they have contributed and are continuing to contribute to others' well-being, and that others appreciate them for doing so.
 - (E) That others take satisfaction in *their* satisfactions.

These beliefs have to do with citizens' aims, beliefs and attitudes toward one another within the framework of economic and political interdependence.

§6. It is time to explore the categories of concern and appreciation.⁶ To begin with concern, one might think that concern is simply a weak form of love. But then concern for unknown distant others is likely to be deemed impossible because, so the thought goes, love involves frequent and intense feelings, and these cannot obtain in relation to unknown distant others. Something like this objection was made to the nineteenth

⁵ The terminology here is mine, not Marx's. A textual argument would be needed to show what I think can in fact be shown, namely, that the concepts, even if not the terminology, are found in the 1844 Marx.

⁶ One finds the theme of concern in work by, among others, Ronald Dworkin, Michael Slote, Martha Nussbaum and Joan Tronto. See Dworkin 2011; Slote 2001; Nussbaum 2001, 2006, and Tronto 1993.

century religion of humanity.⁷ In fact, I take concern to be different from love, to be a distinct attitude. For instance, concern, as I understand it, need not involve much in the way of occurrent feelings for its object. Now, perhaps this mostly marks a difference from the views of nineteenth century writers. Recent discussions of love downplay occurrent feelings, and concern does involve some feelings, say, reactive emotions with regard to the object of one's concern. Still, feelings are likely to be less frequent and intense with concern than with love.

However, the key difference between love and concern has less to do with feelings than with the degree of specification of the objects of these different attitudes.⁸ At issue in political philosophy are our omnipresent relations to people of whom we will never hear. I don't think the object of love can be someone unspecified in the sense of being seen only under a very general identity (Frankfurt 1999, p. 166). Yet it does seem possible to have concern for someone like that – say, for those people who are, and take this as the full available description, the victims of an earthquake in New Zealand.

If the concept of concern, where the object is other individuals and their well-being, is to do work for political philosophy, we must be able to have a motivationally efficacious attitude – concern, not love – toward individuals about whom we know very little. *How far* we are likely to have this attitude is of first importance but cannot be dealt with here. Here, I want merely to press for the possibility of such an attitude toward unknown others. An example of Cora Diamond's is useful. Diamond imagines a news report announcing that a Boeing 747 has crashed and everyone aboard has been killed. Diamond then imagines two different news flashes that correct the earlier report. On one corrective flash, it turns out that a Boeing 747 crashed but not everyone was killed – there were survivors. The alternative news flash says that the crashed plane turned out to be a Boeing 727, a smaller plane – everyone died but there were fewer deaths (Diamond 1990, p. 162). In both corrected scenarios the number of fewer dead is the same. If we respond differently to the two corrections – feel a kind of relief with the first but less so with the second – the difference cannot be due to aggregative considerations.

In neither corrected scenario is a face put on those who do not die. In the first it is easier to imagine real people with real lives, but this is an exercise in imagination. All one knows is that some people “escaped death,” as Diamond puts it (Diamond 1990, p. 162). In the second case no one escaped death. Here, nothing can be said about those who did not die. It is the rest of humanity. Even in the first case although one's concern is for individuals, one knows nothing about them. The point is that concern can be focused on the well-being of individual human beings rather than on numbers even when one knows nothing about those individual human beings.

Still, the key question – the question about the feasibility of the concern view – has not yet been addressed. Diamond's example shows that one can desire that things go well for unknown individuals. It does not show that one can care about unknown individuals, where such caring is a non-trivial part of who one is.⁹ It seems likely that one can care about things other than known individuals, e.g., about God or country. Perhaps one can also care about the common good. Yet for the 1844 Marx one's intent is to benefit individuals, not the common good. My claim will be that a concern for others' well-being – a concern for

⁷ For a discussion of this criticism, see Brudney 2012.

⁸ I would like to thank an anonymous referee for pressing me to clarify the issues here.

⁹ A more complete discussion of the concept of concern would link it to the idea that one can identify with one's concern for others or perhaps, to use Harry Frankfurt's way of talking, be “willingly committed” to one's concern for others. See Frankfurt 2004, p. 16.

individuals – can be expressed in large part through bringing about and maintaining basic social institutions that have a proper content (say, institutions that instantiate proper distributive principles, whatever these are). This appeal to the role of institutions is something the 1844 Marx would surely reject, but in fact institutions must play a central role in any remotely feasible account of reciprocal concern. I discuss this and other aspects of the feasibility of the concern/appreciation view in §§10 and 11.

§7. Let's look now at the concept of appreciation. I take it to involve three elements. There is, first, a positive assessment of what the agent has done, for instance, that she has made something that is good of its kind. There is, second, an affirmation of the value of the kind of thing in question. I see the ways in which a particular painting is a good work of art and I also see it as a thing of value because I value art. Finally, and crucially, there is an attitude of thankfulness, of gratitude, to the agent for having done something with the goal of benefiting me (or, perhaps merely of benefiting someone).¹⁰

The phrase, "I appreciate what you have done," could involve all these elements. I could be acknowledging that you have done something of value, but I could also be thanking you for doing something *for* me (or others) – I could be acknowledging your intention in acting. In the concern/appreciation ideal, agents reciprocally appreciate what others have done *for* them.

With the 1844 Marx, what I appreciate are the material objects produced for me to use. However, in a modern society each of us does many things for unknown others: provides products and services, complies with the laws, debates the issues of the day, votes. These activities, and many more, are part of good citizenship. In engaging in these activities we are usually self-interested. Yet we might also understand and affirm these activities' roles in sustaining our joint social life, that is, in sustaining the conditions of one another's good. If it is widely understood that sustaining these conditions tends to be among citizens' aims – if that is a non-trivial part of what citizens' intend in their actions – there could be broad reciprocal appreciation of what we do for one another.

In a concern/appreciation society, then, the following obtain:

- (a) I believe that others do (valuable) things (in part) for me. They are concerned for my well-being, my well-being matters to them.
- (b) I understand myself as someone who does (valuable) things (in part) for others.
- (c) I believe that others appreciate, in the sense sketched above, my intentions in doing (valuable) things (in part) for them.

(a) and (c) are about others' attitudes toward me. (b) is about my self-assessment. All are positive. I assume that seeing myself in this web of positive relationships will help to sustain my self-worth.

Appreciation, incidentally, goes beyond "esteem."¹¹ The latter need not include the element of gratitude. I can have a high opinion of Joe's qualities and conduct without being in the least bit grateful to him. It is only if I read Joe's conduct as (in part) motivated by

¹⁰ There might also be an impersonal form of gratitude, e.g., gratitude to an artist for having brought something of value into the world.

¹¹ The reference to esteem is a reference to the work of Axel Honneth. My own account is an attempt to develop an alternative to Rawls's justice as fairness, but it trespasses on turf long staked out by Honneth. An adequate development of the concern/appreciation view would have to detail the ways in which it overlaps and contrasts with Honneth's work.

concern for me (or others) and by the intent to benefit me (or others) that gratitude becomes an appropriate element in my response.¹²

§8. The attitudes of respect and concern for others are always for others under a description. Respect is, e.g., respect for others as rational beings. Concern for others is always concern for others as beings of this or that kind, and so concern always has a determinate content, one that is dependent on the nature of its object. Concern that others' lives go well presupposes a description of what it is for lives of the relevant kind to go well.¹³

What distinguishes concern for fellow citizens from, say, concern for the Amazon rain-forest is, then, the nature of the object of concern. The content of concern for fellow citizens – political concern – is a function of the kind of beings at issue. Now, I am eschewing Marx's anthropology and its conception of what it is for a human life to go well. In its place we need a description specific to human beings and yet general enough to accommodate a wide range of possible valuable lives. Concern must be for the kind of beings that human beings are and for the kind of well-being (at a suitably general and accommodating level) that human beings can have. I propose the following content: political concern is concern for each citizen (1) as a being who has the capacity to affirm, to pursue and to revise (if she so chooses) a conception of the good (where part of this good can involve having concern for others' well-being), and (2) as a being whose well-being requires adequate opportunity to exercise these capacities. This formulation stems largely from Rawls.¹⁴ I think it is broad enough to cover the needed range of possible valuable lives.

Note that one could reject the content I propose for concern while accepting the idea of a reciprocal concern society. One could simply provide a different content, e.g., concern that others' souls are saved. In keeping with my taxonomic aspiration, the particular picture I have sketched can be seen as merely one species of a genus.

§9. In several ways an equal respect society and an equal concern/appreciation society (as I have sketched it) are alike.

- (i) Each is consistent with, indeed, each is likely to require, the standard array of individual liberties.
- (ii) Neither involves a shared goal that goes beyond sustaining institutional arrangements that maintain certain citizen-citizen relationships. Nor must either rest on ties of a common history, religion, ethnicity, and so forth. Concern and respect can each be rooted in certain citizen-citizen relationships and in the associated beliefs about one another's value and about the attitudes with which citizens do things for one another. Ties of historical experience and so forth could be overlaid on such relationships but the relationships can be independently described.
- (iii) Each of respect and concern/appreciation could be seen as central to the social ethos of a given well-ordered society.¹⁵ Each could inform citizens' basic stance toward one another and their society.
- (iv) I have said that a respect society can see dependence as something good. This is equally true with a concern society. For the 1844 Marx, human beings realize their nature through transforming the material world and providing one another with the products of this

¹² For the element of gratitude, see Ikäheimo and Laitinen 2010.

¹³ For the discussion here I am indebted to correspondence with Heikki Ikäheimo.

¹⁴ Rawls would add the capacity for a sense of justice. See Rawls 1996, p. 19.

¹⁵ For the concept of a social ethos, see Cohen 2000, p. 128.

transformation. For him, a good society requires that human beings have found a way to overcome material scarcity – and yet, for him, a good society has not transcended the conditions of human life. Its members must constantly overcome material scarcity. Otherwise, their reciprocal dependence would end. They would no longer need to provide one another with products. As with the picture from *A Theory of Justice*, for the 1844 Marx, finitude and reciprocal dependence are conditions of human self-realization.

Thinking now of an equal concern/appreciation society, such a society would protect its citizens from physical vulnerability in the same way a respect society would, namely, via laws that treat citizens as equals. Psychological vulnerability would be cushioned by the belief that one is part of a network of agents who value one another and are concerned for one another's well-being.

The basic premises here are that agents can come to think of themselves as, among other things, beings who have the capacity to be concerned for others and to act from such concern, and that they can come to see the exercise of this capacity as part of their own good. This would enable citizens to see their reciprocal dependence as a condition for part of their good.

It is worth noting that respect and concern/appreciation seem mutually compatible. There seems no reason why citizens could not take both attitudes toward one another.

One contrast should be mentioned. In principle, mere respect is consistent with indifference. That Jane respects Joe does not mean he matters to her. It means she recognizes duties, including positive duties, toward Joe but not that his life-condition makes a difference to her, that she is affected by his well- or ill-being. One might think that the widespread understanding that citizens not only comply with rules requiring contributions to one another's well-being (e.g., redistributive taxes) but matter to one another would bolster self-worth more than would mere mutual respect. Moreover, it seems a more satisfying form of social life – more like a civic form of friendship – if it is publicly understood that citizens have concern for one another's well-being.

§10. Further comparisons and contrasts are surely possible. However, I want to close with two sections about the feasibility of a concern/appreciation society. It seems often to be assumed that citizens can be readily motivated by the attitude of respect. In fact, a full compliance respect society, e.g., Rawls's well-ordered society, is a *highly* idealized picture. Still, put that aside. Where there tends to be skepticism is about the feasibility of a modern concern/appreciation society.¹⁶

The issue of feasibility has several components and only some can be addressed in this essay. One question I will not address is the from-here-to-there question: does a particular ideal provide useful guidance to its own attainment? Some ideals might do so, others might not (Simmons 2010). Any such guidance will rest on speculations about how our moral psychology might develop in different institutional contexts, and this is not the place to sort out plausible from not so plausible speculations. Moreover, although I believe the attitude in question – concern – is an element of the human good and there seems no reason to think it at odds with individual liberty, its feasibility conditions must neither undermine liberty nor forestall pursuit of other important elements of the good. Put differently, psychological feasibility must fit with the moral acceptability of the relevant political arrangements.

¹⁶ Interestingly, Rawls himself urges that, over time, what he calls “mutual caring” among societies could come to obtain. See Rawls 1999b, pp. 112–113.

A different feasibility question has to do with the proper standard for our social ideal. Just as there are limits to our physical capacities (no human being will ever run a one minute mile), there are limits to our motivational capacities. Nevertheless, we all act well episodically, and what we do episodically we could do more often. We are capable of instantiating the better angels of our nature more often – perhaps much more often – than at present. Call the condition of acting fully up to one’s motivational possibilities *being the best one can be*. Some writers think that the proper standard is being the best one can be (e.g., Cohen 2008). Others think the proper standard is less exalted: being what it is reasonable to demand of one, given the normal strains, needs and foibles of human life. Each standard is feasible – neither requires that we actually be angelic – but the second is more “realistic,” in the sense of being more likely to be attained.¹⁷

With the concern/appreciation view, I suspect that the first is the proper standard. We might as well specify the best form of human polity. Moreover, suppose, as seems plausible, that the approach to the fully realized concern standard is scalar. Suppose, too, that, as noted above, we are considering only morally acceptable arrangements (e.g., those that protect individual liberty). A scalar approach is thus unlikely to veer into vicious political practice (e.g., oppressing some to benefit the whole). In that case, asking us to strive toward the more demanding standard seems sensible. Still, more argument to this conclusion is needed.

In thinking about feasibility we should distinguish a number of ways in which, as a social phenomenon, concern might manifest itself.

- (i) As the basis for the choice of principles for distribution (of rights, liberties, opportunities, material goods, etc.).
- (ii) As the basis for compliance with institutional rules that instantiate the chosen principles of distribution.
- (iii) As a component in the satisfaction an agent finds in the perceived well-being of her fellow citizens.
- (iv) As a component in the satisfaction an agent finds in the belief that her work is of value to her fellow citizens.
- (v) As a component in an agent’s motivation to engage in activities that she believes are of value to her fellow citizens.

Let’s go through the list. First, an appeal to equal concern could provide the basis for the choice of distributive principles. One would ask: What principles would be chosen by an agent motivated by equal concern for all citizens’ well-being (understood as sketched in §8)? I suspect that the output would be something like Rawls’s two principles of justice but here that must remain mere conjecture. The main point is that an appeal to equal concern could be a way to derive distributive principles.

As for (ii), to say that concern is the basis for compliance with a certain set of institutional rules does not mean that one is conscious of concern at each moment of compliance – anymore than one is conscious of respect at each moment of compliance with respect-based rules. Moral education that develops concern (or respect) for others generates habits of obedience to the relevant principles and their institutional embodiments. If queried, one might invoke concern (or respect) to explain compliance but, in general, compliance is simply what one does. When one obeys the law one rarely thinks of the probability of punishment for violation but avoiding punishment might still be among one’s motivations. It can be the same with concern (or respect).

¹⁷ This is perhaps what Rawls means by “a realistic utopia.” See Rawls 1999b, p. 7.

(i) and (ii) are about institutions. In a modern society, concern will largely be manifested by creating and maintaining institutions that ensure such things as that each citizen has adequate opportunity to affirm, revise and pursue her conception of the good.¹⁸ Of course, our concern could, perhaps should, also show itself outside institutional contexts.¹⁹ The point is merely that, in a society with proper institutions, institutional contexts would be central to the manifestation of concern. (i) and (ii) seem feasible in the sense of not overdoing the demands on our nature. (i) requires concern for others only at the episodic moments of significant political choice, and (ii) can be buttressed by habit and other motivational supports.

With (iii) we move away from institutions. Here, we must deal with *Elster's circle*. Suppose each of us tries to find happiness only in others' happiness. This will be self-defeating because my happiness in your happiness presupposes that you find happiness in something other than mine. Some people must pursue their own happiness if others are to throb to it (Elster 1985, pp. 87–88). To avoid Elster's circle, concern for others must be merely one element in an agent's set of ends, and, for many people, not the most important element. It must not continually dominate other ends. A sensible psychology would see concern as an element that, at key moments (e.g., moments of required compliance with the rules of basic social institutions), would trump other ends yet much of the time would be merely in the background or even subordinate to other ends.

(iii) also brings us to controversy about human psychological possibilities. There is a divide between philosophers who think that we can respond only to others' ills versus more optimistic writers who think that we can respond as well to their pleasures.²⁰ (iii) presumes the latter. It also presumes that we can respond to the pleasures of unknown distant others, or at least to the belief that these others are doing well. One should certainly not overestimate this capacity; still, it is not a wild demand on our psychological possibilities. Hume is hardly the most starry-eyed of thinkers yet he believes that we do desire others' well-being.²¹ I suspect that we at least sometimes resonate to strangers' well-being and could come to do so more often.

(iv) tracks a theme found in a number of philosophers. Hume remarks on the desire to see one's work as socially useful. "Can anything stronger be said in praise of a profession, such as merchandize or manufacture, than to observe the advantages which it procures to society; and is not a monk and inquisitor enraged when we treat his order as useless or pernicious to mankind?" (Hume 1998, p. 80) And Hegel urges that agents in civil society be seen as engaged in activities that have more than a "selfish aspect," that have objective social value (Hegel 1991, §253, p. 272).²² I suspect that few people want to admit that their life's work makes little or no social contribution. The concern/appreciation view assumes that, consistent with individual liberty, people can be brought up to take satisfaction in the thought that their work is socially valuable. And if one finds satisfaction in the usefulness of one's activity, it is presumably because one has concern for those whom the activity benefits.

¹⁸ Perhaps this is why Ronald Dworkin often writes, anthropomorphically, that *government* owes all citizens equal concern (and respect).

¹⁹ A claim along these lines about the difference principle has long been made by G.A. Cohen. See Cohen 2008.

²⁰ To mention a few names, on the pessimistic side of the divide are Butler and Schopenhauer while on the optimistic side are Hume, Mill and Oscar Wilde.

²¹ Of course, Hume was pessimistic about how far our desire for others' well-being could motivate us to individual action. That is why it is crucial that concern can be expressed via endorsing and acting in accordance with institutional arrangements whose content embodies concern.

²² I thank Hans-Christoph Schmidt am Busch for pressing me to see the role of Hegel in this area.

When we reach (v), the view may seem to become less plausible. The following should be kept in mind.

- (a) As noted, concern for others, even when motivationally efficacious, need not involve frequent occurrent feelings (see §6 above). Here, there is an analogue to trust. If one trusts one's fellow citizens and/or one's basic political institutions, one's life will be different from a life in which there is no such trust, and yet there need be no occurrent feelings. Similarly, concern for others and a belief that they have concern for oneself can make a difference in one's life and be motivationally efficacious even absent frequent occurrent feelings.
- (b) In the philosophical tradition there is support for (v) not only from the 1844 Marx but also from, among others, Mill, who holds that, with a proper education of the sentiments, we can come to see others' well-being as partly constitutive of our own good and so be motivated to produce it (Mill 1969a, chapter 3, and Mill 1969b).
- (c) Compliance with the rules of properly justified social institutions may involve sacrifice of one's individual interests but such compliance should not be seen as altruistic. I take altruism to involve sacrifice beyond what a justified distributive norm requires. By hypothesis, a concern society is regulated by a justified distributive norm. Compliance with that norm is thus not an exercise of altruism. Indeed, if we were to call the distributive norm "distributive justice," compliance would simply be doing as justice requires.
- (d) The issue of motivation is tied to what Rawls calls "congruence" (Rawls 1971/1999a, pp. 398–399 and 567–577/349–350 and 496–505). If congruence obtains in a society, then being the sort of person who complies with social rules for the right (non-instrumental) reasons will be at least partly constitutive of one's own good. It will be part of one's good to comply with these rules because they rest on values that fit the kind of person one takes oneself to be. One will find a form of self-expression in such compliance. In a concern society part of one's conception of oneself would be as someone who has concern for others. Part of one's good would then be to act, at least at times, from such concern.

The 1844 Marx's claim that to exercise one's capacity (collectively) to transform nature is fundamental to one's good and Rawls's claim, in *A Theory of Justice*, that to exercise one's sense of justice is fundamental both fit within a broadly Aristotelian line. A compelling argument for a concern/appreciation society must show, in a further extension of that line, that it can be part of one's good to exercise one's capacities for concern for unknown distant others and for appreciation of what those others do. The exercise of concern and appreciation among family and friends clearly seems to be a good. Perhaps concern and appreciation among co-religionists or members of other groups also provides a good for those involved. The challenge is to make compelling *the concern/appreciation thesis*: that concern and appreciation can be a good for those whose central link is that they are fellow citizens, jointly maintaining their collective life. Something like that thesis has not lacked supporters. Here, for instance, is John Dewey in 1927:

Wherever there is conjoint activity whose consequences are appreciated as good by all singular persons who take part in it, and where the realization of the good is such as to effect an energetic desire and effort to sustain it in being just because it is a good shared by all, there is in so far a community . . . A community thus presents an order of energies transmuted into one of meanings which are appreciated and mutually referred

by each to every other on the part of those engaged in combined action. . . . fraternity is another name for the consciously appreciated goods which accrue from an association in which all share, and which give direction to the conduct of each (Dewey 1984, pp. 328, 331, 329).

§11. The element of the concern/appreciation view that might seem least feasible is the stress on appreciation. From one perspective this element ought to be unproblematic: my fellow citizens (not to mention non-citizens at home and abroad) do in fact do many things to provide the conditions for me to pursue my vision of the good. However, in our current world they surely do not do these things *for* me in the sense of doing them, even in part, in order to promote my (anyway, someone's) good. It makes little sense to appreciate, in the third and key sense of appreciation, what others do for me unless it is rational to believe that, to some extent, they have done these things *for* me (or for someone).

What, then, are the conditions under which it would be rational for me to appreciate what others do as done (in part) *for* me? One condition is a social ethos that involves the widespread attitude of concern. One must have sufficient reason to believe that others have and are motivated by concern: one's appreciation must be in step with the reality of one's world. A related condition is an institutional structure that supports this social ethos. Here is where the concern/appreciation view has critical bite. To begin with, income and wealth must be distributed in such a way that concern and appreciation can be reciprocal. A society of very rich and very poor is unlikely to satisfy this requirement. How egalitarian such a society must be is open to debate. Still, large economic differentials probably preclude reciprocal appreciation (why would the very poor appreciate the very rich?). Moreover, a concern/appreciation ethos seems likely to be in tension with a pure market society in which goods and services are seen solely as objects for which one pays and work is engaged in solely to gain money, and in which relative wealth and income are the bases of status and a sense of self-worth. Among the central issues for further development of the concern/appreciation view is how far its ethos can fit with the market, how far a concern/appreciation society requires significant regulation and/or alteration of market institutions.

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