Human Beings and Freedom:
An Interdisciplinary Perspective

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Introduction

J. L. Shaw & Michael Hemmingsen

Freedom and the nature of human beings, as well as related issues, such as resistance, identity, and equality, are topics on which scholars from different fields and differing cultural traditions have a lot in common, even if their approaches and focuses vary.

The concept of freedom is related to liberty, self-determination, self-government, and the ability to choose or decide without alien interference. This book explores freedom and related themes from a wide range of perspectives, including philosophical, psychological, sociological, religious, cultural and historical. However, freedom, resistance, identity and equality do not end at the level of theory, but fundamentally influence and affect our day-to-day lives. Questions about what freedom is, what forms it can take, and what means are best to actualise it in society are taken up by the authors of this volume, in discussions of the notion of free critique, an examination of socialist and post-socialist political theory, an exposition on the concept of resistance in Deleuze & Guattari's war machine, and analyses of the relationships between freedom and topics like humour, equality, human nature, and feminist ideas regarding the cultural production of identity.

The book *Human Beings & Freedom* contains twenty-one articles. These articles consist of seven main papers and two articles in response to each of the seven papers. These responses are written by scholars from outside the discipline of the author of the main paper. Hence, each paper is expanded upon by issues raised by the respondents. Each set of three articles (the main paper and its two responses) should be considered a dialogue, rather than merely a collection of essays.

This book discusses freedom, resistance, identity and equality from Marxian, critical, feminist, ancient, modern, post-modern, Western, and non-Western points of view. In doing so the articles in this volume contain authoritative expositions of the views of leading Western thinkers – Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Jacques Lacan, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, Cornelius Castoriadis, Judith Butler,

Mikhail Bakhtin, Martin Heidegger and Jean-Paul Sartre, to name a few – and the views of both classical and modern Indian scholars. We hope this book will broaden the horizons of the contemporary perspective of scholars in different countries.

Based on a series of seminars at Victoria University of Wellington, organised by the Society for Global Philosophy, this importance of this volume lies not just with the end result, but the process of its creation. This is because the seminars provided forums for interaction between different disciplines and scholars with diverse backgrounds and cultures.

This collaboration – bringing together individuals from across the range of academia – has built relationships and understanding between members of different disciplines. This spirit of collaboration and exchange is both visible in and promoted by this volume. *Human Beings & Freedom*, represents the ideals of our Society for Global Philosophy: promoting interdisciplinary dialogue and exchange, understanding between diverse traditions of thought and culture, and goodwill between scholars.

In short, this book sees what different disciplines and branches of our academic society offer and combines them. In addition to containing contributions from political science, international relations, psychology, media studies, English, philosophy, religious studies, cultural studies, history, sociology and classical studies, it draws inspiration from the exchange between Anglo-American and Continental philosophy, as well as between the East, West, North and South.

Our first three main papers approach freedom, resistance, identity and equality from the direction of critical/cultural theory. The initial paper, by media studies theorist Anita Brady, discusses certain contemporary issues regarding freedom, including the impact of the sex/gender distinction on the freedom of individuals. She looks at the response to Caster Semenya's victory in the women's 800m final at the 2009 Athletics World Championship as a way of arguing that our freedom is heavily influenced by how we fit into certain socially prescribed categories, and that even those categories as seemingly natural as biological sex (as opposed to gender) are not as straightforward and unproblematic as we might like to think.

In response Robbie Shilliam, an international relations theorist, argues that sexual and racial attributes have been combined in a single discourse. The limits we find as human beings are deeply tied up with concepts of "normality", and it is important to recognise 'the conjoining of sex, gender and racial attributes in the very framing of the inquiry [into normality].' James Meffan, a scholar of English literature, is also sympathetic to Brady's view, and through an anecdote about his young daughter's experience with short hair, agrees that the concept of biological sex is a troubled one. Meffan says an individual's sex is naturalised in such subtle but pervasive ways that even seemingly free choices, such as whether to prefer girls' or boys' toys, are influenced by this kind of sex/gender naturalisation.

We follow Brady's paper with a discussion by another media studies theorist. Tony Schirato discusses the topic of Foucault, freedom, and the notion of critique. Schirato says that the discourse of Enlightenment, including such things as reason and human rights regimes, claims to make us freer. However, he argues that Enlightenment discourse has been "colonised" by disciplinary techniques with 'no discursive place of their own.' Rather than making us freer, the discourse of Enlightenment constrains our freedom. He concludes that humour and incongruity create a space that allows us to critique these disciplinary techniques. In the 'comical, incongruous or paradoxical half-openings of discourse' we are given the opportunity to think otherwise.

Political scientist Pat Moloney talks more about disciplinary techniques in his response. However, he argues that the disciplinary techniques we should be interested in are Christian ones, those he considers the most relevant to our understanding of the modern Western self. Moloney explores this idea through a discussion of the (internal, disciplinary) restrictions placed on our sexual behaviour. Classicist David Rosenbloom focuses on the idea of free and frank speech (*parrhēsia* in ancient Greek). Rosenbloom argues that *parrhēsia* is related to the origins of critical thinking in the Enlightenment, however he also comments on Foucault's analysis of *parrhēsia*, questioning Foucault's claims about the relationship between *parrhēsia* and truth.

Our third paper, written by cultural studies scholar Nicholas Holm discusses freedom of speech by examining the relationship between humour and freedom.

Holm argues that humour in liberal democratic societies is often understood as a form of freedom akin to Mikhail Bahktin's notion of the "carnivalesque", a view that sees humour everywhere and always as resistance to authority; in other words as freedom. However, Holm suggests that there are other ways of seeing humour, specifically as a means of establishing and asserting social dominance. As such, debates surrounding offensive material should move beyond our liberal democratic assumptions about the nature of humour, and the view that those who oppose offensive material are simply ignorant, unable to perceive the joke, or opposed to freedom.

Sociologist Mike Lloyd agrees with Holm that understanding humour is not as straightforward as deciding whether humour is or is not resistance, or is or is not insult; it is unwise to treat all instances of humour as if they are derivable from a single source. However, he also argues humour is rarely actually political, and he believes that even when attempting to utilise humour as resistance the political content is very quickly pushed aside as attention is focused on the mechanisms and manipulations of humour itself. Historian Dolores Janiewski acknowledges Holm's two kinds of humour, but adds a third. In addition to being aggressive or liberatory, she argues that humour can also sometimes be unifying, and she points to various examples, such as the 'carthartic, integrative ritual of laughter' in some African American communities.

Our second set of three main papers, by Marc Stewart Wilson and Christopher G. Sibley, Chamsy el-Ojeili and Robert Deuchars, along with the responses to them, focus on freedom as a political value. Psychologists Wilson and Sibley begin this section by investigating the relationship between freedom and equality and political opinion in New Zealand. Through three case studies they demonstrate that the relative importance placed by citizens on the values of freedom and equality is a strong indicator of their voting preferences, as well as their views on a number of political issues, including resource allocation, land claims, and affirmative action.

Philosopher Simon Keller questions Wilson and Sibley's conclusion by emphasising that there are a number of different uses of the word "freedom" and "equality", and that different individuals using these words may be referring to quite different values. He also cautions that we should be careful in jumping to

conclusions about the relationship between freedom and equality, the use of these terms in Wilson and Sibley's case studies, and the voting patterns of citizens. Arthur Buehler, a religious studies scholar, adds that there is a need to emphasise the interrelationship between these two values. He suggests that different political perspectives may represent different worldviews that relate to each other in an evolutionary framework. He recommends that we pay more attention to the development stages of world-views.

Sociologist Chamsy el-Ojeili focuses on the debate between socialists and post-socialists in the work of Cornelius Castoriadis. El-Ojeili argues that if we re-focus socialism on those issues with which it was and should be centrally concerned, the criticisms levelled at socialism and Marxism by the "post-" movement are no longer appropriate. Specifically, el-Ojeili argues that Marxist and socialist ideas such as 'class, exploitation, the imperative of the endless accumulation of capital, the tiered world-economy, totality, commodification [and] ideology' remain essential concepts if we are to make sense of the modern world, and that we cannot simply abandon them as Castoriadis would have us do.

Kate Schick, an international relations theorist, agrees with el-Ojeili that post-Marxists and post-socialists have "overcorrected" for the weaknesses of Marxism and socialism, and that their emphasis on the particular has hampered our ability to think about universality. Drawing on the thought of Gillian Rose, she argues that "engaged politics" should focus on negotiating the "broken middle" between the particular and the universal, identity and difference, individual and community. On the other hand, psychologist James Liu rejects the usefulness of Marxist inquiry in all forms, arguing that the changes to global society during the last twenty years have rendered such debates parochial. Liu believes that post-Marxism and post-socialism, along with the capitalism it opposes, all have their origins in the Enlightenment, and refer to only a single cultural tradition. The tools that they provide are not sufficient to understand or analyse our increasingly diverse global society, in which many increasingly powerful non-Western countries are developing modern social, economic and political systems with reference to indigenous cultural traditions.

Approaching the issue of freedom from a Continental perspective, political theorist Robert Deuchars discusses resistance and the war machine of Deleuze and Guattari.

Deuchars claims that the concept of the war machine, when understood correctly, 'provides a radically different ontology for both the globalising tendencies of capitalist power and the various forms of resistance to that mechanism of power.' However, he emphasises that, due to its very nature, the war machine does not give us a ready-made formula or cookbook for us to solve our problems.

International relations theorist Ben Thirkell-White is not certain that the war machine is as widely applicable as Deuchars might claim. However, he acknowledges that Deleuze and Guattari's concept is useful, particularly in the way that the war machine and the related concept of "nomad thought" helps us highlight the 'pervasive dominance of state thinking through counter-posing alternative and equally valid but incompatible forms of thought.' Ronald Fischer adds a psychologist's perspective, pointing to empirical data suggesting that the tendencies of human beings towards favouritism, in-group bias and the construction of social hierarchy are deeply ingrained, and that this is, on the face of it, problematic for the idea of the war machine and nomad thought. However, as an optimist he believes that we *can* conceive of the war machine in a way that takes these realities into account.

Our final paper and its responses look at freedom from a moral as well as metaphysical perspective. Philosopher J. L. Shaw argues that we cannot understand the nature of human beings without understanding freedom, understood variously as free will and the freedom to 'do otherwise', creativity, and metaphysical freedom. The author examines and rejects various common ideas of what it is to be a human being, including those proposed by Plato, Aristotle and Immanuel Kant, existentialists such as Søren Kierkegaard, Heidegger, José Ortega y Gasset and Sartre, and various religious positions. Shaw argues it is better to think of the nature of human beings as consisting of six features or dimensions: a) the concept of ought and ought not; b) free will, presupposed by the concept of ought; c) the concept of infinity, or participation in both finite and infinite concepts; d) creativity, as well as suggestive meaning; e) the realisation of *rasas*, supermundane experience, and f) liberation (*mokṣa*, *nirvāṇa*), or freedom from bondage.
Political theorist Xavier Marquez picks up on the ancient Greeks views on the nature of human beings. Marquez argues that we should be careful not to attribute to the ancient Greeks too much interest in the question of human nature as Shaw

has phrased it; in trying to establish the nature of human beings in a way that differentiates them from non-human animals. In his view, the ancients were not 'overly concerned with fully distinguishing human beings from other animals.' Instead they were more concerned with other questions, like whether 'we can actually *become* properly rational, and what follows from our being rational or our lack of rationality for our ability to rule ourselves wisely.' Religious studies scholar Michael Radich focuses on the perspective of Buddhists, claiming that they lack an emphatic distinction between human beings and non-human animals. Buddhists, concerned as they are with metaphysical freedom, are more likely to frame the question not as "human vs. non-human", but as "sentient vs. non-sentient". He adds that we should be careful of speaking as if human/sentient beings are self-sufficient for attaining metaphysical freedom. Buddhists claim that we require the teaching and assistance of a Buddha – a being qualitatively different from us and all other sentient beings – in order to achieve this state.

This book will bring to the reader's mind a range of important questions, such as how to achieve freedom in this world, whether equality feeds or restricts freedom, how our identity is constructed and constrained, and how we can resist oppression and deprivation. This book will provoke these and other questions, and will lead to further dialogue regarding human beings and freedom.

It should also be noted that without those individuals involved with the running of the Society this book would never have come into existence, and the editors have immense gratitude towards all who helped to make this book a reality. Particular thanks are due to Maryke Barnard, Mariko Hemmingsen, Shri Sharma, Piripi Whaanga, Jenny Ombler, Frances Denton, and all other office bearers and members of our Society. We are also grateful for the advice and input of Kate Schick and Reuben Schrader. We would like to acknowledge the help we received from our community and funds from the Victoria University of Wellington Student's Association. We are also grateful to the Indian High Commissioner, Sureesh Mehta, for his support and encouragement. Our heartfelt thanks to the publisher of this volume, Mr. P. K. Bhattacharya, proprietor of *Punthi Pustak*, for his eagerness to publish this volume.

Could This Women's World Champ Be a Man?": Caster Semenya and the Limits of Being Human

Anita Brady

Among the most persistent questions my students ask, when faced with the work of philosopher and feminist theorist Judith Butler, are the ones that concern her critique of the sex/gender distinction. The sex/gender distinction, which dominated feminist theory at the time that Butler's *Gender Trouble* was written, is often framed as a nature/culture dichotomy where sex refers to the biological givens of male and female, and gender refers to the myriad ways in which those bodies are required to adhere to pre-existing social scripts. As Gayle Rubin characterises it: the sex/gender system transforms the 'biological raw material of human sex and procreation'[1] into the limited range of subject positions available to women. To put that in the terms through which it is most often reproduced: sex refers to male and female, while gender refers to masculinity and femininity.

In general, my students have little difficulty understanding or articulating this distinction between gender and sex. They tend to arrive at *Gender Trouble* with at least some sense that dominant cultural notions that all men like watching sport, or that all women are genetically predisposed to enjoy shopping, are at least questionable, even if their willingness to question them might vary. Having got that far, however, Butler's claim that the "truth" of sex is produced via the same regulatory practices that produce the norms of gender[2] seems often to be a theoretical bridge too far. Butler asserts that the nature/culture dichotomy that underpins the distinction between sex and gender fails to recognise that the sexed body is as much a discursive construction as the system of gender that feminism critiques. She argues that feminist analyses that pull apart the naturalisation of gender tend to leave an unexamined notion of the body in place. Whereas the sex/gender distinction draws attention to the "material fact" of sex, Butler asks 'to what extent does the body *come into being* in and through the mark(s) of gender?'[3]

Given the very material bodies that they themselves inhabit, and given the naturalised and seemingly obvious "biological" distinctions that they recognise as

the properties of male and female, my students tend to respond with incredulity: 'How can she argue that 'sex' is as much a discursive construction as 'gender' is?' they ask, 'Our bodies are real, and men and women are different – anyone can see that.' The exasperation that inevitably accompanies such enquiries always produces a sense of urgency: for them, it's usually connected to a fast looming assignment due date; for me it always signals that I've got a tiny window, probably measurable in minutes, to convince them to try and rethink the way those terms "men" and "women" are deployed so axiomatically, as if they never require any further elaboration. To that end, I tend, in those moments, to move away from differences between bodies, and toward questions of the human. Echoing Butler's enquiries, I ask my students: 'What transforms the screaming crying thing that emerges at the moment of birth, to a body that we can recognise, that we can refer to, that we can address as human? What's the first thing we ask when we hear of a baby being born to someone close to us?' The answer that I'm hoping for, and the answer I almost inevitably get, is: 'what is it?'

Butler argues that it is only once the "it" that is the uncategorised child is made to make sense within the discursive matrix of gender that that child can be placed within the kinship relations that will constitute its first regime of belonging. 'The girl is girled' as she puts it, 'it is brought into the domain of language and kinship through the interpellation of gender.'[4] "It" becomes a girl, and it is only once that interpellation has taken place that "it" can also become someone's daughter, someone's sister, someone's niece. By following Butler and framing it in these terms, my aim is to encourage my students to stop and think about the ways in which what is taken for granted from the beginning of our existence as humans, are also the terms by which we are actually granted that very existence *as humans.* In order to demonstrate both how this subjectivating mechanism works, and what its significance might be, I encourage my students to consider those bodies that are never fully granted the status of being recognisably gendered, or those bodies that have been granted it, only to have it subsequently taken away.

Via the body of South African athlete Caster Semenya, the global media audience has recently been privy (at times, uncomfortably so) to precisely this kind of body – a body around which the "biological fact" of sex has unravelled. As a consequence, I want to suggest, we have been simultaneously privy to both an

example of precisely why Butler's critique of the sex/gender distinction makes sense, and an example of why that critique remains so important, even as it simultaneously seems to have gained only minimal purchase in everyday media discourse.

Caster Semenya won gold in the women's 800m final at the 2009 Athletics World Championships, and won it by a considerable margin. Shortly afterward, the governing body of world athletics, the International Association of Athletics Federation (IAAF), announced that she would be required to undergo an unspecified regime of "gender testing" before her victory would be confirmed. The following discussion argues that the institutional and media response to Semenya exemplifies Butler's claim that it is the discursive framework of gender that produces and naturalises sex. Butler argues that:

> gender is not to culture as sex is to nature; gender is also the discursive/cultural means by which "sexed nature" or "a natural sex" is produced and established as "prediscursive", prior to culture, a politically neutral surface on which culture acts.[5]

What we see at the mediated site of the body of Caster Semenya is the unravelling of this discursive effect: when the cultural signifiers of her gender are called into question, the anatomical facts of her sex are simultaneously revealed as contingent. As a consequence, I argue, the "case" of Caster Semenya also demonstrates how "the natural" in relation to sex and gender functions as a discursive regime that sets, and polices, the limits of the recognisably human. Furthermore, this relationship between power, knowledge and the production of the natural is enabled even greater purchase by the ways in which race always already marks Semenya's black African female body on a hierarchised register of embodiment. This chapter thus concludes with a consideration of how media discussions of Semenya animate a quasi-scientific colonial gaze that links the boundaries of sexual difference to the boundaries of human belonging.

The Limits of the Sex/Gender Distinction

According to an article in *The Times,* the emphatic nature of Semenya's victory (she finished two seconds ahead of the defending world champion) constituted a vast improvement in her form, and capped a rapid rise through the ranks of international athletics.[6] Given such an unexpected emergence, questions were inevitably raised about the possible use of performance-enhancing drugs, yet test results provided no evidence that anything untoward had taken place. Instead, attention turned to the apparently excessive masculinity of Semenya's appearance. Journalist David Smith[7] contends that subject to particular scrutiny was the hair on her upper lip, the muscularity of her body, the deepness of her voice, and her apparent lack of breasts. The IAAF announcement following the Berlin final, that Semenya had been examined in a Berlin hospital and would be required to undergo further 'gender verification testing' before her world-champion title would be confirmed, seemed to add institutional weight to the question marks surrounding her gender. The media reports that announced the IAAF decision were almost universally a variation on the question asked by a headline in *TIME* magazine: 'Could this women's world champ be a man?'[8]

Despite the sensational gender duplicity suggested by *TIME*, the IAAF's position was slightly more complex. As Slot explains it 'her strength and appearance have raised fears that she may have been born with a rare abnormality, where she has grown up with the genitalia of a woman but the chromosomes of a male.'[9] The assumption was that this "abnormality" might give her an unfair advantage over other female competitors. That Semenya was actually a man pretending to be a woman was not what was being suggested, although it apparently had been at other periods in her career. In an article in the *Daily Mail*, one of her former teachers, Moloko Rapetsoa, discusses how at interschool athletics meets, 'some schools, suspecting that she was not a girl, even demanded that her status be checked. But each time they returned from the toilet, she would be cleared and the competition would resume.'[10] In Berlin, however, despite the repeated suggestion on blogs and message boards that the crude verification system of simply having a look be deployed again to settle the matter, the question seemed not to be whether Semenya could really be a man but only whether or not she could really be a woman.

Motivated, at least in part, by a desire to protect the athlete's privacy, the exact nature of what constitutes gender testing, and what its borders and limits might be, was not disclosed by the IAAF. Spokesman Nick Davies did explain, however, that it involves 'an endocrinologist, a gynaecologist, an internal medicine expert, an expert on gender and a psychologist.'[11] Early media speculation pointed to an "excess" of testosterone as the likely explanation for Semenya's deviation from the norms of gender.[12] However, as was reported online at *CNN*, a number of reports later claimed that the testing had revealed Semenya to be intersex.[13] In November 2009, the IAAF stated that as a consequence of the tests, Semenya would retain her world title, but that the results of the testing would not be publicly released. In announcing the decision, the South African sports ministry was quoted in *The Guardian* as stating that Semenya had been found 'innocent of any wrong.'[14] Commentators such as *Sports Illustrated's* David Epstein[15] interpreted this to mean that there was no evidence of deliberate gender cheating but that Semenya may not necessarily qualify as female for the purposes of competition. In July 2010, the IAAF announced that Semenya was indeed now free to return to competitive racing as a woman. What is unclear is what took place in the seven-month period between the announcement that Semenya had been cleared of any wrongdoing, and the announcement that she was once again allowed to compete. According to the *Telegraph's* Simon Hart,[16] it is widely believed that during this period Semenya was required to undergo 'medical treatment for an inter-sex condition' in order to qualify as female to the satisfaction of the IAAF.

For her part, Semenya has always maintained her status as an authentic, and authenticated female. Upon learning of the proposed gender tests, she reportedly considered boycotting the medal ceremony. She has since questioned the 'correctness and moral integrity' of the process she was required to undergo, and criticised the time it took for the IAAF to issue a definitive ruling.[17] According to the *Daily Mail*, her family, similarly angry and upset at the IAAF and the questions raised in the media, released a copy of her birth certificate, which states, indeed unequivocally, that her gender at birth had been recorded as female.[18]

Judith Butler argues that the notion of gender as 'radically independent of sex' that the sex/gender distinction seems to advance tends to posit gender as a 'free-floating artifice,'[19] and presumes that any gender may accrue to any body. The logical

conclusion of this, she asserts, is that there is no necessity that 'the construction of "men" will accrue exclusively to the bodies of males or that "women" will only interpret female bodies.'[20] Any body could exhibit any gender, and maintain the integrity of its sexed embodiment. Yet what culture repeatedly makes clear, and what Butler seeks to draw attention to, is that a failure to conform to gender norms does not leave an unproblematically sexed body in place. Rather, such a failure is precisely what calls the legitimacy of the body into question. As Butler argues, those bodies that do not cohere between sex and gender function as unintelligible *at the level of the body*, the very materiality of which is repeatedly articulated as a site of material truth.

The example of Semenya demonstrates this in precisely the terms that Butler describes. Despite being identified as a girl at birth and raised as such, and having competed as a woman throughout her career, it is the masculinity of Semenya's appearance (face, voice, physique, speed) that seemingly casts doubt on the legitimacy of her legally registered identity. The integrity of Semenya's sex is called into question and subject to a range of unspecified tests, not because an anomaly was discovered in the usual, and usually indisputable, markers of sex – the genitalia – but because her gender performance was at odds with a sex already noted, verified and registered at birth.

The birth certificate produced by Semenya's family as evidence of her gender identity thus reveals precisely the gap between what the certification of sex is usually understood as, and what, following Butler, it actually is. The deployment of the birth certificate as evidence relies on the cultural assumption that it functions as a legal record of a self-evident truth. The body is seen, noted and officially verified by the power invested in whomever records that description, and by the power invested in the markers of that distinction – the genitalia of the infant. This, as my students argue, is an unambiguous verification of biology.

Yet, what Butler argues is that the sighting of the infant in these terms, and the citation of a category of sex on the official record, is the performative materialisation of the body within particular subjectivating structures. Butler's use of the framework of performativity draws attention to how the process of "girling" enacts what it appears to merely describe. The announcement "it's a girl"

seemingly recognises the body as female, but, Butler suggests, simultaneously orders that this body adhere to the terms of that recognition in order to maintain the status of human subject. The "girling of the girl" as Butler describes it,

> does not end there; on the contrary, that founding interpellation is reiterated by various authorities and throughout various intervals of time to reinforce or contest this naturalized effect. The naming is at once the setting of a boundary, and also the repeated inculcation of a norm.[21]

What Butler draws attention to here are the ways in which the verification of a body's ostensibly natural sex is contingent upon an ongoing regime of scrutiny. The announcement "it's a girl" is thus not a description, but rather a requirement that cites and reasserts a cultural understanding of what "girl" means, and insists that this body continue to make sense in those terms. The process of girling begins with what seems like a moment of recognition ("it's a girl") but is in fact an act of constitution ("this body must remain recognisable in these terms in order to continue to be accorded this status"). Subjectivity, and thus its limits, are bestowed at the moment that they are seemingly announced.

This is evident in the article in the *Daily Mail* that accompanies the publication of Semenya's birth certificate. The article[22] reproduces the verification of sex but simultaneously undermines its discursive authority by adding to the already recorded complications of Semenya's gender identity, other misperformances of gender from her childhood. So, while we are presented with documented evidence that Semenya is officially a girl, we also learn that she never liked wearing dresses, was not allowed to play football with other girls because she was too rough, only sees boys as potential friends and not as potential boyfriends, and doesn't really like romantic movies. Reading backward, as the *Daily Mail* does, the verification of Semenya supposedly present in the birth certificate is revealed as the contingent interpellation that it always was. Someone, somewhere, it suggests, got this body wrong, and it is thus not the gender requirements that come under scrutiny, but rather the body that fails to adhere, and that thus can no longer be made sense of in either social or medical terms. 'It seems unlikely that so many people could lie about Caster Semenya's sex' the *Mail* piece concludes, and because the writers

cannot conceive that this might call into question the veracity of sex in the first place, Semenya becomes, in their words, a 'quirk of nature,' and the 'sex-riddle daughter' of a father who finds it difficult to recognise her on the phone. The *Daily Mail's* list of Semenya's gender failings joins the range of medical experts utilised by the IAAF, and the hundreds of contributors to message boards and blogs in the wake of the 2009 World Championships all repeating the question that Butler argues belies that naturalness of sex. While the question is posed as 'is this person female?' the terms by which it is asked are 'is this person *feminine* enough? (emphasis added)' to continue to be accorded that status.[23]

The Limits of Being Human

Semenya's media re-emergence after the Berlin final suggests a desire, at some level, to answer that question in the affirmative, not least in the court of public opinion. A few months after the world championships, Semenya appeared on the cover of South African magazine *You*,[24] made-over with a great deal more femininity than in the images we saw in the wake of the Berlin final. In the accompanying article she describes how she wants to wear dresses more often, and learn how to do her own make-up. In November 2009, the *Guardian* online published a series of exclusive photographs inside her training camp. What the photo essay seems determined to reveal is not an athlete's hard body engaged in sporting endeavour, but an affable *person* laughing and joking with her friends, and dressed, tellingly, in pink.[25] Given the media and medical attention Semenya has been subjected to, her subsequent assertions of her femaleness do not seem particularly surprising. Media discussions of Semenya have almost universally drawn attention to the possible impact of the controversy on this 18-year old girl. Yet those discussions have almost equally as universally located the fault of that impact with the IAAF's handling of the issue, rather than with the requirements of gender that produce it as an issue in the first place.

What I would like to draw attention to is how the seeming desire to make sense in the normative terms of being female by Semenya, and the failure of the press to question why that is even necessary (and indeed to be complicit in the continued requirement that it is) demonstrate the extent to which gender determinacy is

deemed necessary for what Butler describes as a 'liveable life.'[26] Repeated over and again in the coverage of Caster Semenya was the question of whether she was a "real" woman, the question that the IAAF seemed to have so much difficulty trying to settle. For Butler, this calling into question of one's reality connects gender normativity to the limits of being human and the subsequent possibility of the liveable life. As Butler puts it, 'to be called unreal, and to have that call, as it were, institutionalized as a form of differential treatment, is to become the other against which the human is made.'[27]

The limits of the liveable life are rendered in stark relief when we are reminded that in 2006, Indian 800m runner Santhi Soundarajan had the silver medal she won at that year's Asian Games stripped after failing a gender verification test similar to that which Semenya was required to undergo. One year later Soundarajan attempted suicide, something she attributes to the 'mental torture' she underwent as a consequence.[28] In an article in *The Observer,* David Smith[29] suggests that the calling into question of Caster Semenya's gender identity lays bare her 'profoundest sense of self…with potentially damaging psychological consequences.' As I noted above, the extent to which Semenya's life can remain liveable is repeatedly considered in media discussions of her "gender controversy". But while Smith's article posits gender identity as the very essence of self, Butler suggests that it only becomes so because it is the founding interpellative mechanism by which that self is recognised as belonging, or failing to belong, to the field of legitimated subjectivity. Butler locates the initial verification of sex at birth within the 'field of discourse and power that orchestrates, delimits, and sustains that which qualifies as "the human".'[30] She suggests that 'we see this most clearly in the examples of those abjected beings who do not appear properly gendered; it is their very humanness that comes into question.'[31]

As the Soundarajan example demonstrates, gender testing in sport by no means begins with Caster Semenya. There have been cases in history of deliberate gender fraud, just as there have been cases of previously undetected "medical conditions" that put the gender authenticity of athletes into question, and of deliberate drug regimes designed to produce seemingly gender-specific advantages, such as excess testosterone. Furthermore, sporting bodies such as the IAAF have had to develop protocols to account for, and codify, post-operative transsexual competitors. The

IAAF, therefore, is certainly aware of the range of variations that are possible under the nominally straightforward signifiers of male and female. One might even suggest that the IAAF is therefore also aware of the fiction of the gender system to which it nonetheless continues to adhere. According to journalist Owen Slot, there are 'between 20 and 30 different types of 'intersex' conditions, each of them affecting the body in different ways'[32] that the IAAF recognises. The rendering of such information in mainstream news sources as a result of the Semenya "controversy" could certainly be argued to have increased awareness among the general public of the extensive array of anatomical/hormonal/chromosomal variations within apparently self-evident gender categories, variations that sporting bodies have been aware of for years.

In her own commentary on the treatment of Caster Semenya, Butler suggests that the very management of the determination of Semenya's qualification to compete clearly recognises the complex array of bodily possibilities. In a blog post on the *London Review of Books* site written following the announcement that Semenya had been cleared of any wrongdoing, but before the announcement that she was allowed to return to competition, Butler questions whether the deployment of a *panel* of experts functions as some, possibly unforseen, recognition that sex is not a biological property, but rather a site of cultural negotiation:

> And yet, if we consider that this act of "sex determination" was supposed to be collaboratively arrived at by a panel that included "a gynecologist, an endocrinologist, a psychologist and an expert on gender" (why wasn't I called!?), then the assumption is that cultural and psychological factors are part of sex-determination, and that no one of these "experts" could come up with a definitive finding on his or her own (presuming that binary gender holds). This co-operative venture suggests as well that sex-determination is decided by consensus and, conversely, where there is no consensus, there is no determination of sex. Is this not a presumption that sex is a social negotiation of some kind? And are we, in fact, witnessing in this case a

> massive effort to socially negotiate the sex of Semenya, with the media included as a party to the deliberations?[33]

Butler's (presumably tongue-in-cheek) questioning of why she, as an expert on gender, wasn't invited onto the panel simultaneously demonstrates that the determination of gender does not take place on a discursively neutral terrain. While the IAAF must clearly contend with the knowledge that the categories male and female are far from straightforward, there is no suggestion that, as a consequence, "male" and "female" as organising categories have been genuinely called into question either at an institutional level, or in media coverage of the events.

A key question therefore is whether the assignation of anomalous bodies to 'a field of deformation'[34] works to pluralise the field of gender, or whether, as Butler suggests, it tends instead to shore up the very boundaries that those bodies might call into question. Discussions of gender variance among athletes tend to frame such anomalies with an expectation that variations, once discovered, should be corrected. David Epstein, writing online for *Sports Illustrated*, suggests that if Semenya were found to have three times the level of testosterone considered normal for a woman (as was reported elsewhere to be the case), such a finding would 'indicate a medical problem that requires treatment.'[35] Indeed, in discussing the possibility that Semenya has been required to undergo gender treatment, none of the media commentators appeared to see any paradox in a body being required to undergo "artificial" intervention to attain recognition within a supposedly "natural" field of categorisation. Like the *TIME* headline that asks, 'Could This Women's World Champ Be a Man?,'[36] what this demonstrates is an inability to conceive of a discussion that goes beyond deciding which of the two existing gender categories this body will be *made* to be intelligible within. As Butler notes, the organisational ramifications of bodies recognised as intersex forms no significant part of the debate:

> We might say as well that the institution of world sports rests upon a certain denial of intersex as a persistent dimension of human morphology, genetics and endocrinology. What would happen if the IAAF or any other world sports organisation decided that it needed to

> come up with a policy on how those with an intersex condition might participate in competitive sports?[37]

It is only once they do so, she argues, that sport will be open to the 'complexly constituted species of human animals to which we belong.' In the meantime, both the IAAF, and media discussions more generally, can neither tolerate nor countenance a body that cannot be made to fit under the regimes of male and female, however expansive those categories can be made to be.

What matters most in the case of Caster Semenya is less the possibility that she is a man, than the possibility that she is *neither* authentically man, nor authentically woman. The ongoing refusal of the IAAF to disclose what constitutes gender testing, what the results of Semenya's gender tests are, and what treatment, if any, she has been required to undergo, suggests that situating a body within male and female is not the simple act of recognition it is so routinely naturalised to be. What is particularly ironic, as Christina Eckert suggests, is that 'professional sports are *the* evidence most often offered for *sex* being a natural fact: men run faster, throw further and are generally stronger than women.'[38] Sport has a particular role then in performatively repeating that distinctions between the sexes are among the most fundamental of corporeal axioms. Yet the discourse of secrecy that surrounds the nature of verifying that distinction, along with the requirement that a panel of experts agree on how such a verification might be reached, demonstrates instead that there is no self-evident means of recognising the correct categorisation of a sexed body. If there were, "we" would all know precisely the kind of "gender testing" Semenya has been subject to. As Tavia Nyong'o argues, what we see in the case of Caster Semenya is the playing out of Butler's assertion that '"natural" gender is actually a mimetic attempt to forestall the uncanny prospect of their being no stable gender referent at all.'[39]

In drawing attention to how those bodies that fail on the register of cultural intelligibility are excluded from the domain of the human, Butler seeks to underline precisely how high the stakes of sex and gender coherence are. As the pun in the title of her third book, *Bodies That Matter*, suggests, it is only those bodies that materialise in the recognisable terms that are required, that are the bodies that get to count as matter, and that are thus the bodies that come to matter in the discourse of

rights that is repeatedly articulated as the property of the human. As Butler argues, the 'human is understood differentially depending on its race, the legibility of that race, its morphology, the recognisability of that morphology, its sex, the perceptual verification of that sex.'[40] Thus, in as much as belonging to a race other than white, or a sex other than male, positions a body as the lesser of two parts of any binary, a failure to be recognisable as either term in such a dualism positions a body on an entirely different register of (non)viability.

Animating Racial History

At the same time, it is critical to draw attention to the ways in which the unambiguous markers of belonging to one identity category complicate the possibility of belonging to another, precisely because *both* are deployed to mark the limits of being human. More specifically, it is impossible to discuss the processes of "perceptually verifying" Semenya's sex without also acknowledging the significance of a racialised lens to that process of verification. As Sue Tait argues, 'representations of black bodies remain inscribed with the fantasies and anxieties of our racist histories.'[41] In particular, they are inscribed with a historical hierarchy of exhibition that positions black bodies at the very margins of the human.

Stuart Hall[42] draws attention to the ways in which "black sexuality" has been produced throughout colonial history as a marker of the primitivism of the black body. To that end, he discusses how gender, sexuality and race combine to constitute the black sporting body as a spectacle of otherness. What is evident from the examples that Hall uses is that this otherness is made manifest via the ways those bodies function as a site of transgression, both of the boundaries between male and female, and (often as a consequence) of the boundaries between human and ape. For example, Hall describes a 1988 *Sunday Times* Olympic Special that featured photos of black American athletes Florence Griffith-Joyner and Jackie Joyner-Kersee. Both were accompanied by quotes from Al Joyner (Griffith-Joyner's husband and Joyner-Kersee's brother) that said, respectively, "Someone Says My Wife Looked Like A Man" and "Somebody Says My Sister Looked Like A Gorilla".[43] Hall's suggestion is that "looking like a man" and "looking like a gorilla" are linked in the ways these texts are read, and that connection is

underscored in the intertextuality of these pictures with other images of black athletes, and of black bodies in general. So while the excessive muscularity of any female sporting body may be interpreted as a transgression of the line between male and female, what is clear is that it is only the black female sporting body that can be imagined to simultaneously blur the boundaries between human and animal.

Ramona Coleman-Bell[44] draws a similar conclusion in her discussion of the ways in which the body of tennis player Serena Williams is mediated. Coleman-Bell argues that Williams' 'black, athletic body stands in stark contrast to the white, often blonde, "soft" tennis players who historically have dominated the game.'[45] She acknowledges that there are white tennis players, such as Martina Navratilova whose physique (and, for Navratilova, whose sexuality) positions them outside gender norms, but suggests that the 'racial specificity' of Williams' body codes her 'corporeal presence' to entirely different effect.[46] Like Hall, Coleman-Bell draws a link between the ways in which the non-normative gender performance of the black sporting body is made to signify, and the historical terms of the colonising gaze. In particular, she connects the reproduction of Williams' physique in the media to the representation of Saartje Baartman, who was exhibited in nineteenth-century colonial Europe as a bodily display of primitive sexuality.

Baartman was taken from her home in South Africa in 1819 and exhibited as the "Hottentot Venus" first in England, and later in France, to a public fascinated and titillated, in particular, by her protruding buttocks. According to Stuart Hall, that fascination was also the displacement of an attendant fascination with Baartman's relatively enlarged labia, the result of deliberate manipulation of the genitals and, as Sander Gilman describes, considered beautiful by Hottentot men.[47] Gilman argues that in the scientific discourse under which she was examined and exhibited, Baartman was repeatedly reduced to the otherness of her genitalia.[48] That otherness became representative of the black female in general, and 'Baartman's sexual parts, her genitalia and her buttocks' came to 'serve as the central image for the black female throughout the nineteenth century.'[49]

Coleman-Bell contends that as a consequence, 'the black female body became a signifier of deviant sexuality'[50] and she finds the 'discursive traces' of this conflation of race and sexual excess in media representations of Serena Williams.

In particular, Coleman-Bell highlights the attention paid to the size of Williams' buttocks, and suggests that Williams' 'Hottentot body' becomes loaded with 'carnal connotations' that are packaged for the white imagination.[51] She argues that the focus on the size of Williams' physique in general, and on her buttocks in particular, is a displacement that seeks to mask the sexual nature of a highly racialised gaze. In connecting this to the treatment of Baartman, she quotes Hall:

> Fetishism, then, is a strategy for having-it-both-ways: for both representing and not-representing the tabooed, dangerous or forbidden object of pleasure and desire. It provides us with what Mercer calls an "alibi". We have seen how, in the case of "The Hottentot Venus", not only is the gaze displaced from the genitalia to the buttocks; but also, this allows the observers to go on looking while disavowing the sexual nature of the gaze.[52]

According to Gilman, this disavowed fascination with the black body's sexuality is central to the ways in which the image of Baartman was deployed as the antithesis of the white female body, and served to underscore their positions as the furtherest poles 'on the scale of humanity.'[53] He argues that the significance of the genitalia in exemplifying that scale, was informed by quasi-scientific travel literature that described how the 'animalike sexual appetite' of the African woman 'went so far as to lead black women to copulate with apes.'[54] What is clearly evident in that, and subsequent, literature, is that the position of the Hottentot female as the 'lowest rung on the great chain of being'[55] has an integral relationship to her imagined transgression of the reproductive and sexual boundaries between animal and human. These transgressions are constituted, and fetishised, in the "otherness" of her bodily display.

For a number of commentators, particularly those in South Africa, the link between Baartman and Caster Semenya was immediate and obvious. As Carina Ray puts it, two hundred years on from the exhibition of Baartman, 'the genitals of another young South African woman, runner Caster Semenya, have once again become the target of western scientists' prodding and poking.[56] Moreover, as blogger Jessica

Davenport suggests, the medical-scientific gaze authorises a far more public examination:

> Like Baartman, who was not only studied by scientists, but also put on display in exhibitions for the entertainment of the general public, pictures of Semenya are being scrutinized by the general public all over the internet. Despite the fact that she has not undergone testing yet, the news media and the public have already started its examination by posting pictures of her grimacing and grotesquely flexing her muscles. These images are all in stark contrast to the baby-faced, seemingly shy and sheepish Semenya that appeared at a news conference just after her victory. But despite this, the public has made its conclusion: She isn't a woman or a man. She's a deranged beast.[57]

Tavia Nyong'o in contrast, suggests that in the 'rush to compare' Semenya and Baartman something crucial is missed.[58] She argues that 'Baartman was exhibited and violated for what the imperialist eye took to be her abherrant *femininity'* and that a better comparison to Semenya would be 'the many trans bodies who have been disciplined and punished for their female *masculinity*.'[59] While I agree with Nyong'o that such a comparison is necessary, I would argue that the link between Baartman and Semenya remains an important one, precisely for the reasons that Davenport's blog post suggests. The authenticating gaze that Semenya and Baartman are both subject to produces both women as an exhibition of gender non-normativity, and thus as a site of compromised human subjectivity. Baartman's buttocks and genitalia were on display as a difference that underscored the primitive corporeality of the non-white body. She functions not as a scientific confirmation of the plurality of female embodiment, but as a less-than human link to an entirely different species. Thus they demonstrate how the gendered ground by which viable bodies are determined does not produce those bodies in isolation from other subjectivating mechanisms.

Semenya and Baartman are connected by the pathologising of their imagined "difference" from the register of norms imagined in the discourse of Western science. Leonard Chuene, the head of South African athletics, described the treatment of Semenya as 'racism, pure and simple' and asked, 'who are white people to question the makeup of an African girl?'[60] What the link to Baartman demonstrates is that white people questioning the makeup of African women has a long and unfortunate history. It is left, in both cases, to a panel of Western experts to determine what their gender nonconformity might mean, and that nonconformity simultaneously generates a public spectacle of otherness. The media reports that drew attention to the link between Semenya and Baartman seemed concerned, in particular, with the discursive management of her "exhibition", and repeatedly critiqued the way in which the IAAF handled disclosure of the gender testing. Not discussed in those reports was the extent to which gender in relation to a black female athlete is the materialisation of a body whose humanness is always, already, in question.

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[47] Hall, "The Spectacle of the Other," 265
[48] Sander L. Gilman, "Black Bodies, White Bodies: Toward an Iconography of Female Sexuality in Late Nineteenth-Century Art, Medicine and Literature," *Critical Inquiry* 12, No. 1 (1995), 217
[49] Ibid., 216
[50] Coleman-Bell, "'Droppin' It Like It's Hot'," 199
[51] Ibid.
[52] Hall, "The Spectacle of the Other," 268, quoted in Coleman-Bell, "'Droppin' It Like It's Hot'," 198
[53] Gilman, , "Black Bodies, White Bodies," 212
[54] Ibid.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Carina Ray, "Caster Semenya: 21st Century 'Hottentot Venus'?" *The African Executive,* December 16-23 2009, 18
[57] Jessica Davenport, "Saartjie Baartman, Caster Semenya and the 'Curious Case' of Black Female Athletes," *Prathia's Daughters* (blog). 29 August 2009
[58] Nyong', "The Unforgivable Transgression of Being Caster Semenya," 98
[59] Ibid.
[60] Smith, "Caster Semenya row"

Response to Anita Brady: This Woman is Also an African

Robbie Shilliam

That Caster Semenya, a Black South African athlete, was tested for being a normal human in a Berlin hospital holds a special significance. It is not just that the testing for "normativity" in this location invokes memories of the German eugenics projects of the 1930s. It is also that Berlin was host to a conference of imperial powers in 1884-1885 out of which the continent and diverse peoples of Africa were carved up into colonial squares. The Berlin Act justified the exercising of European "sovereign rights" by reference to a civilising mission that would especially suppress slavery and the slave trade amongst Africans. I invoke this conference because it brings to the fore the limit of being human that is broached by Anita Brady at the end of her wonderful chapter but is not present at the start: the racialised limit of humanity. What follows is not so much of a critique of Brady's argument, but a sympathetic footnote that provides some thoughts on how to inquire further into the limiting of the "normality" of human being. Key, in my opinion, is to agitate for the importance of recognising the conjoining of sex, gender and racial attributes in the very framing of the inquiry.

Partly inspired by the work of Frantz Fanon, Sylvia Wynter, Jamaican author and academic, has proposed a provocative narrative of the creation of the "human" subject.[1] First sketched out in the Spanish debates over the extent to which Amerindians could be incorporated within natural law if not within the Bible narrative, the human emerged as a secularised version of those entities that could be said to embody goodness versus those that embodied evil. Come the era of Atlantic slavery and ultimately arriving at late 19th century social Darwinian notions, this human became articulated further as a racialised being. During the long era of slavery, notions of goodliness, cleanliness and racial hygiene can be gleaned in the attempts to make sure that poor European women in the American colonies did not inter-mix with enslaved populations – in both the social and reproductive sense – as they sometimes, in fact, tended to do.[2]

In effect, we see the attempt to segregate a racialised human being – white and invested with goodliness – from sub- or proto-human beings – native, negro and invested with evil. Women were deemed dangerous to the extent that in their wombs lay the future success of segregating good from evil beings. Hence their putative feminine values and affects, along with their bodies, had to be exorcised from the public realm of political deliberation to be made dependent upon men's sanction in the private realm. The "true" human who manifested in the visible realm of the public sphere had a sexed, gendered and racialised limit protected by the discourse of white supremacy.

Come abolition, the European imperial powers suddenly and conveniently forgot their culpability in forging an almost entirely racialised-sexualised-gendered figure of the human. And now for the sake of (their) humanity, these powers used the existence of slavery in Africa and amongst Africans as the justification for another round of colonisation. The new colonial epoch ordered and segregated populations into humans (the small colonial administrator population) and sub-/proto- humans (natives/negroes) to be tutored in the ways of becoming human. Part of this tutoring, as Ifi Amadiume has shown,[3] was to purify the public realm of all the vices of heretofore savage rule, first amongst these being the presence of women in authoritative roles, especially in the market and in the shrines.

European administrators and ideologues had already long recognized the danger of giving women such space in their American adventures. So again, the civilised public realm had to be cauterised from weak and seductive feminine values that had heretofore in part structured the social lives of both men and women, especially in many West African cultures. So again, but this time on the African continent, the particular human who could command and inhabit this public realm embodied a conjoined sex-gender-race limit.

The challenge, somehow, is to find a way of framing the problem of the "human" in a way that articulates the history of its conjoined sex-gender-race limit. This is a slightly different problematique to the mainstream understanding of inter-sectionality whereby one takes a number of variables, e.g. gender, race, sex and adds them together to form a sum of oppression.[4] It is also different to the liberal demand to treat all narratives or analyses of gender, sex and race equally. Rather,

the framework of analysis can articulate the limits of the human in a way adequate to the history of its becoming – i.e. as a conjoined sex-gender-race limit. It must somehow be possible to investigate the gendered nature of the human in a way that nevertheless unavoidably incorporates its racialised nature even if the focus remains on gender. And vice versa.

As an analogue, I am reminded of the critique of colonialism by Aimé Césaire that makes colonial rule forever implicated in the rise of fascist rule: both categories – colonialism/fascism – are infected with one another.[5] Yet few nowadays return to Césaire; most, instead, start with Foucault's lectures on race and bio-politics in European history and follow by adding in, or applying Foucault to, the extra-European colonial world.[6] By this method, colonial and fascist rule cannot be articulated as conjoined but rather as comparative projects; and in this way the global and relational history of the modern limitation of the human is dis-articulated in the analysis. With this in mind, would it be possible to enter with wide open eyes into a discussion of the relationality of Butler and Fanon? Could we thus develop an analytic that exposes the conjoined sex-gender-race limit of the modern figure of the human – the gendered athletics, the anatomical tests on a South African person, and the significance of the location of the tests in Berlin.

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[1] Sylvia Wynter, "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, After Man, Its Overrepresentation - An Argument," *CR: The New Centennial Review* 3, No. 3 (2003), 257-337

[2] See for example, Cecily Forde-Jones, "Mapping Racial Boundaries: Gender, Race, and Poor Relief in Barbadian Plantation Society," *Journal of Women's History* 10, No. 3 (1998), 9-31

[3] Ifi Amadiume, *Re-inventing Africa: Matriarchy, Religion, and Culture* (New York: Zed Books, 1997)

[4] For an overview, see L. McCall, "The Complexity of Intersectionality," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 30, No. 3 (2005), 1771-1800

[5] A. Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000)

[6] Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Colege de France, 1975-76*. Trans. David Macey (New York: Picador, 2003)

Response to Anita Brady: Naturalising Gender

James Meffan

Reading Anita Brady's paper, I am drawn to reflect on the difficulty that awaits a teacher who wants students to think about such fundamental questions, especially when the underlying concepts are so thoroughly *naturalised*. Interrogation of the construction of gender has been part of mainstream academia for many years now, yet this mode of thinking remains challenging to sustain. In my own time in academia – as both student and professional – critiques of the "naturalness" of apparently self-evident and common-sensical classificatory structures became widespread to the point of themselves becoming *de rigueur* for a time. Now their star seems to have waned somewhat.

Even if the essentialism of various pre-theoretical positions is still considered dubious, there has been, on a number of fronts, an embracing of what Spivak called with respect to race and gender "strategic essentialisms". In effect, turning the headlamps of sceptical theories onto essentialist categories has not resulted in the destruction of those categories. And if the categories still operate with real force in "the real world", then the very class of person constructed still has a reason to mobilise under that very nomination. For example, I may not "buy" that my classification as, say, "woman" has any more basis than a set of historico-discursive forces, but as long as society continues to circumscribe my world according to these categorical limits, I will be likely to have shared political interests with others likewise categorised, and it will be meaningful to attempt to mobilise under the banner "woman" and advance these as "women's" interests.

While I acknowledge that personal anecdote is justly rejected as a reliable basis for advancing an academic argument, please indulge me as I recapitulate what I take to be some salutary experiences that have influenced my view on these matters.

The sex/gender distinction that Brady so succinctly summarised for us became, for a time, a widely held article of faith among my group of friends, particularly among

those who went to university. As many of these friends went on to have children – produced from various relationship configurations – I noted a trend. For many the raising of children came to function as a counter-argument to their earlier anti-essentialist certainty. The process was not immediate: many approached parenting determined not simply to capitulate to genderist assumptions; they were adamant that they were not going to "girl the girls" or, for that matter, "boy the boys" as a matter of course.

I didn't always take as much interest as I might in my breeding friends, but I couldn't help but notice a number of them adopting a radically changed view after a few years' parenting experience. The account of the transformation typically went something like this: 'I made a point of not dressing my girl/boy in the normative styles and colours treated as proper to their gender. I supplied non-gender-specific toys (or made all types available to them), and generally did everything I could not to "gender" them, but,' (went the conversion narrative), 'it turns out that even with all the anti-gendering effort in the world, the boys inevitably began to choose boy-gendered modes of being, the girls "girled" themselves regardless of my efforts.'

In many cases the conclusion drawn was a return to essentialism, the "recognition" that sex will out, that boys will be boys and girls girls. Once committed anti-essentialists now asserted that boys and girls are, at some level different "by nature".

As I say, I don't see any particular value in playing out a contest of anecdotal evidence. But what I was (and remain) struck by was the certainty of these parents that the measures that had personally taken to control the gendering variables influencing their children's development amounted to the most important and potentially influential impacts on each child's sense of self. If their anti-gendering efforts were unable to prevent the gendering process, they argued, then this was surely proof that the sex/gender distinction was less sustainable than they had previously thought. My own experience suggests that this might underplay the influence of social forces beyond the parent's control.

When I became a parent I also watched my children becoming gendered (though with no special effort on my own part to modify the process). One event in

particular, though, influenced my thinking on the gendering process, and in particular on the agential role of "significant individuals" such as parents. When at the age of four my first (and at the time only) child Pearl watched me shearing my hair off with a set of electric clippers and a short comb she became excited by the transformative possibilities of this radical topiary. She immediately (and persistently) set to petitioning both her parents to allow her to do the same. It took about a week of daily requests before we accepted that we really had no good reason to thwart this desire. I shaved off her shoulder-length blond hair, leaving her with close-cropped stubble.

For Pearl, everything changed. She did not feel any different, yet the people who addressed her in public places (supermarkets especially) now addressed her as a male, for fairly obvious reasons. But the register of address shifted too. Often the pitch of the addressor was significantly lowered, and the content changed too. I was made particularly aware of this because the change was literally overnight. In particular people seemed to want to reinforce her helpfulness as a marker of nascent "manhood". 'Aren't you being a helpful little man?' was a fairly typical of these comments that sought to hail her into a role that was treated as normatively masculine.

Pearl found the experience immediately frustrating. 'Why does everyone say I'm a boy?'; or at one stage: 'why do people have to always say what I am?' Really, though there is nothing remarkable, nothing surprising in noting that a change to one basic signifier – hair – was enough to lead passersby to make (erroneous) assumptions about her sex. After all, at that age, hair and clothing are pretty much the only signifiers available to viewers and Pearl always preferred "boyish" clothes. Nothing remarkable either in noting the way their responses "hailed" her as masculine and subtly sought to interpellate her into a particular normative role.

No, what struck me was rather the reflection that this change forced on my own awareness. I now had to acknowledge that the interpellative way she had been addressed hitherto (the myriad subtle ways she had been "girled") had not appeared (to her or, to be honest, to me) as a particularly gendered hail. Only under the disconcerting conditions of being addressed in a way that she knew to be normatively "wrong" (she knew she was a girl; they called her a boy) could she

register the gendering language. Only once I noticed that people had different ways of addressing boys did I acknowledge that people (myself included, no doubt) had always been using an insidiously gendering register. It does not take long for a normalised mode of discourse to seem natural and uninflected if we have no reason to question or find no value in questioning it.

Her hair grew out and normal service was resumed. Asked if she planned to go for a similarly severe cut in future she decided that it was ‘not worth the hassle’ of having constantly to correct people’s misperceptions. Exceptionality can be, apart from anything else, a tiresome, even exhausting space to inhabit. To return to the normalised category no doubt represents considerable relief to the accidental exception.

For some, of course, exceptionality is not a choice. There is no easy way out once an individual has been claimed as a legitimate focus of public interest. For those like Caster Semenya, who are driven into the space of exceptionality, one can readily imagine the exhaustion that comes from having one’s identity argued between two poles of an inclusive binary. But, as Brady suggests, this treatment of exceptionality goes further; it seems to radically destabilise all categorisation, reaching a climax in the long established category debate that interrogates the individual subject in terms of human or non-human status.

For those with a choice, an inadvertent foray outside the delineations of the normative is readily resolved. And why would you not choose to restore yourself to the normalised position which society, sometimes subtly, sometimes overtly, but always persistently, rewards. Unless you see something important at stake in the challenging of these normative conventions, what would induce you to challenge them?

Brady referred to the difficulty of teaching these radical philosophical ideas and I sympathise. More challenging still than getting students to pause, question and allow these ideas to enter their thoughts, is the problem of getting them to see them as a commentary on the observable world that might have some bearing on the way they live or on they way they might live.

The Disorder of Things: Foucault, Disciplinary Procedures and Enlightenment Discourse

Tony Schirato

In a section of *The Practice of Everyday Life* titled 'Theories of the Art of Practice', Michel de Certeau opens his discussion of Foucault's work by way of reference to what he describes as 'the problem of the relation of ... procedures to discourse.'[1] He writes about how in a text such as *Discipline and Punish* Foucault produces a Freudian story of the "vampirization" of Enlightenment discourses by the apparatuses, techniques and mechanisms that characterise, and provide the impetus for, the development of 'penetential, educational and medical control at the beginning of the nineteenth century.'[2] For Certeau, the relation between Enlightenment discourse and politics is not to be expressed as a dichotomy, but as a form of colonisation – disciplinary procedures take over the Enlightenment project, riding on the back of the ideology of revolution: 'All the while,' Certeau reminds us, 'ideology babbles on.'[3]

There are a number of aspects to Foucault's work on disciplinary procedures – 'this detective story about a substituted body'[4] – that are of particular interest. Firstly, although these procedures inhabit and feed off Enlightenment ideologies, they appear to have no discursive place of their own. Techniques that are neither derived from the Ancient Regime, nor explicable in terms of Enlightenment discourse, suddenly appear in a place, spread themselves throughout social space to the extent that they, and not the contending ideologies of sovereignty or the revolution, triumph. The first question that needs to be asked, then, is how does a set of techniques and procedures establish themselves and proliferate without recourse to ideologies? Certeau looks for the answer in the Freudian narrative of the unconscious and the return of the repressed. Why do disciplinary techniques "win out" in the end? He, Certeau, suggests that:

> Through a cellular space of the same type for everyone (schoolboys, soldiers, workers, criminals or the ill), the techniques perfected the visibility and the gridwork of this

> space in order to make of it a tool capable of disciplining under control and "treating" any human group whatsoever. The development is a matter of technological details, minuscule and decisive procedures.[5]

What we have here is a testimony to the efficacy of a set of techniques of observation, regulation and control that will culminate in what, for Foucault, is our contemporary system of power, which operates without regard to sovereignty or specific form. But those techniques are not in themselves the answer here. If they are efficacious, if they have successfully vampirised the Enlightenment project, it is only because there is something in the conditions of the time and place which encourages their proliferation. If the Enlightenment evacuates power from the place of the sovereign, and sets up, in its place, what Claude Lefort characterises[6] as the "empty space" of democracy (in which power is not tied to any specific content), then the question remains as to how the state is to function (for instance, how is a population to be organised, educated, controlled?) without recourse to sovereignty? In a sense the evacuation of the place of power (power understood as a "without regard to") can also be understood as an invitation to the concealment of power. This other side of the Enlightenment 'inverts revolutionary institutions from within and establishes everywhere the "penitentiary" in place of penal justice.'[7] And in works such as *The Order of Things* and *The Archeology of Knowledge* Foucault demonstrates how these procedures feed back into, and are eventually articulated within and legitimated by, a variety of official discourses ("the human sciences").

What is of particular interest here is the economy (the gains and losses) of the theoretical moves which make our understanding of this development possible. Most of the gains are, of course, quite obvious. 'This surgical operation,' Certeau writes:

> consists in starting out from a proliferating contemporary system - a judical and scientific technology – and tracing it back through history, isolating from the whole body the cancerous growth that has invaded it, and explaining its current functioning by its genesis over the two preceding centuries. From an immense body of historical material ...

> the operation extracts the optical and panoptical procedures which increasingly multiply within it and discerns in them the at first scattered indexes of an apparatus whose elements become better defined, combined with each other, and reproduce themselves little by little throughout all the strata of society.[8]

There is, apart from this uncovering of the genealogy of micro-power and its disciplinary techniques, a further, more general gain – the development of a theory of a non-discursive style of practice. At the same time, however, the identification of this style of operating begs as many questions as it answers. Leaving aside the question of why Enlightenment discourses and ideologies proved such hospitable hosts to disciplinary mechanisms, Certeau points to the theoretical chiasmus opened up by just this theory of non-discursive activities, and in particular two possibilities which militate against Foucaldian explanations and narratives of the contemporary workings of power. The first of these is that although the disciplinary techniques identified by Foucault can be detected (in their relations with Enlightenment ideology), this evidence in no way delivers up to us the set of non-discursive procedures. 'What,' Certeau asks, 'is the status of so many other series which, pursuing their silent itineraries, have not given rise to a discursive configuration or to a technological systematization? They could be considered as an immense reserve constituting either the beginning or traces of different developments.'[9]

What Foucault's work delivers up, then, is not a comprehensive map of the relations between discourse and disciplinary techniques, but at best an account of the triumph of one of any possible number of sets of non-discursive practices. And the narrative of coherence and homogeneity that Foucault attributes to the period in question must be understood, ironically enough, as the self-articulation (an ideology) of panoptic procedures. Even here, however, there is a second possibility, again largely derived from the logic of Foucault's theory of non-discursive procedures, which calls into question the narrative of the over-determination of society and culture by panoptic techniques and mechanisms. Put simply, how do we know that this "final formation" identified by Foucault still exercises the influence he attributes to it. 'What is the status,' asks Certeau:

> of a particular apparatus when it is transformed into the organizing principle of a technology of power? What effect does foregrounding have on it? What new relationships with the dispersed ensemble of procedures are established when one of them is institutionalized as a penitentiary-scientific system?[10]

Certeau pushes the question - and the logic opened up by Foucault's work – even further. Once these non-discursive procedures, through their triumph, have inscribed themselves, and been inscribed, within Enlightenment discourses, do they not forfeit, to a large extent, their status as the (necessarily) silent organising principles of power. In other words, the success of these non-discursive procedures is perhaps also the moment when they become known, and therefore less efficacious; and we can only speculate as to the kinds of procedures that today "vampirize" the penitentiary-scientific system.

Foucault's attempts at analysing and explicating the relation between Enlightenment discourses and procedures get caught up in an economy of theory characterised by gains and losses – which are not easily distinguishable: the production of a genealogy of micro-power, for instance, is to some extent simultaneously a reproduction and legitimation of its ideologies. On a different level, however, Foucault's work contributes to de Certeau's interest in theories of practice in three significant ways. Firstly, it posits the question of the extent to which practices and procedures can articulate discourse without discourse making them its object. Secondly, it brings to our attention the notion of a truly silent ensemble of procedures which have no place of their own, and which, thirdly, may play an important role in understanding the workings of power.

In another piece of work on Foucault – 'The Black Sun of Michel Foucault', a chapter in *Heterologies*, Certeau writes, apropos of *The Order of Things*, that:

> Over time, and in the density of its own time, each episteme is made up of the heterogeneous: what it does not know about itself (its own grounding); what it can no longer know about other epistemes (after the disappearance of the

> fundamentals they imply); what will be lost forever of its own objects of knowledge (which are constituted by a structure of perception). Things are defined by a network of words, and they give way when it does. Order emerges from disorder only in the form of the equivocal. Reason, rediscovered in its underlying coherence, is always being lost – because it is forever inseparable from an illusion. In Foucault's books, reason dies and is simultaneously reborn.[11]

Certeau suggests that, for Foucault, regimes of truth are not only open to contestation – rather they are predicated on a certain inescapable failure and ignorance. If the conditions and means and practices through which discourses, narratives, knowledge and regimes of truth establish and authorise themselves, are at the same time the conditions and moments of their mechanically repetitious disestablishment, then we can say, following Bergson, that such processes of authorisation have a generic affiliation with the comic.[12] Certeau argues that this potential consanguinity between truth-as-authority and the comic, and the ramifications of that consanguinity, are taken up and specifically utilised by Foucault as a form of and basis for the work of critique.

Certeau continually refers to, and insists upon, the centrality to Foucault's work of dichotomies such as ideology/procedures, words/things and signifier/signified. For Certeau the grounds of truth are prepared through claims that are made by the field of power regarding the overcoming of such dichotomies (in Lacanian terms, power claims that the circle of signification is closed). This occurs through the identification, evaluation and categorisation of relevant socio-cultural practices, activities, signs and meanings; in other words, a pacification-as-organisation of "everything that is the case". Every regime of truth is predicated on this relationship between – actually the imbrication of – identification, evaluation and categorisation: a thing can be identified only when it has meaning; that is to say, when it can be classified and ordered. Someone is only identifiable as human, for instance, because (at a certain time, in a certain place, for certain people) they provide markers and produce performances commensurate with, and that have been assimilated into and institutionalised as, authorised cultural categories (involving

say, notions of gender, race, class, age, literacy). We can follow Judith Butler[13] on this point and say, paradoxically, that materiality itself only comes into being through the agency of cultural categories of perception that are themselves dependent on, and recognisable through, the process of cultural iteration.

Paradoxically, regimes of truth always call up that which they produce as evidence of their own authority and legitimacy; so, as Slavoj Zizek[14] has argued, the law always makes use of the effects of the law and the power of the law to legitimate the law. Men and women, adults and children, come before the law as the (legally) evaluated categories of men and women, adults and children, categories produced by the law, which then claims to treat, disinterestedly, what it finds before it. Incongruously, truth and knowledge can only mechanically deny their own validity, can only proclaim, violating our expectations, the lie of truth and the ignorance of knowledge. Paradox, incongruity, mechanical repetition and violation of expectation are, of course, strongly associated with the comic: Freud,[15] Bergson,[16] Bakhtin[17] and René Girard[18] have built their various theories of the comic on these shifting and unstable grounds. Consider, from this perspective and context, Foucault's preface to *The Order of Things*:

> This book first arose out of a passage in Borges, out of the laughter that shattered, as I read the passage, all those familiar landmarks of my thought – our thought, the thoughts that bear the stamp of our age and our geography – breaking up all the ordered surfaces and all the planes with which we are accustomed to tame the wild profusion of existing things ...
>
> This passage quotes a 'certain Chinese encyclopaedia' in which it is written that 'animals are divided into: (a) belonging to the Emperor, (b) embalmed, (c) tame, (d) sucking pigs, (e) sirens, (1) fabulous, (g) stray dogs, (h) included in the present classification, (i) frenzied,) innumerable, (k) drawn with a very fine camel- hair brush, (1) etcetera, (m) having just broken the water pitcher, (n) that from a long way off look like flies.'

> In the wonderment of this taxonomy, the thing we apprehend in one great leap, the thing that, by the means of a fable, is demonstrated as the exotic charm of another system of thought, is the limitation of our own, the stark impossibility of thinking "that".[19]

There is no need to labour the consanguinity between violence and the comic, nor any need to point out that sudden encounters with the exotic 'Other' can be read in a number of negative ways (for instance, to confirm the Other as inhuman). Nevertheless the comic has a great deal to offer, as Foucault's work demonstrates. The comic move is always reciprocated, as René Girard[20] has pointed out.

In the opening section of *Discipline and Punish*, we are presented with a problem to solve, a puzzle. What do we make of these accounts of the torture and execution of Damiens that Foucault has brought together? Why these details? What do they mean? As Damiens is called up by and processed through the discourses, actions and technologies of government, bureaucracy and religion, we notice that power is anything but certain in its treatment of the subject Damiens. Can he be taken apart, carefully, rigorously, and almost scientifically, and then metaphorically put back together again? Can power perform itself? These questions are largely answered in the negative, for as Foucault demonstrates the law is an ass that can't even work out how many horses it takes to tear a body apart; technology finds slaughter a messy and unsatisfactory business, even when pincers are specially designed for the occasion; and confessors turn up after the confessing soul has become a lost soul. And yet at the same time power is set on making an example of Damiens: executioners and torturers and technicians cut off his thighs and sever his sinews and hack at his joints, while the spectators, we are told, are edified by the solicitude of the Parish Priest of St Paul's, who 'despite his great age,' does 'not spare himself in offering consolation to the patient.'[21] What we have here is farce, with absurdities and blunders – and blunderers – in profusion, bringing to light the absurdity and impossibility of any affinity, even any easy coexistence, between the man of God and the technician; and, paradoxically, at the same, the absolute necessity of that alliance between regimes of truth that hardly recognise one another.

What we have in the Damiens section, above all else, is a combination of underkill (nothing can make this body behave and comply) and overkill (why does it take so much power to achieve so little?). Foucault does not create this incongruity; but he does read it, and pass on that reading position, what we might term that literacy. As Foucault suggests, this is the kind of spectacle that had to go because it gave too many opportunities for too many to observe how the law does not work; this explains, to a certain extent, the move from punishment to discipline, from spectacle to science. What we are dealing with here, in this epistemic move, is a change from one (comic) genre to another; a move that Foucault plots, not as an evolution, but as a new sleight of hand. In this regime of reason, everything that is the case is shown to be different from itself, to be ignorant of itself, to exceed itself; and in these comical, incongruous or paradoxical half-openings of discourse the 'possibility of thinking otherwise bursts in.'[22]

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[1] Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. S. Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 45
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid., 48
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Claude Lefort, *The Political Forms of Modern Society: Bureaucracy, Democracy, Totalitarianism* (Cambridge: Polity, 1986)
[7] Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 46
[8] Ibid., 47
[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid., 48-9
[11] Michel de Certeau, *Heterologies*, trans. B. Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 173
[12] Henri Bergson, *Laughter*, trans. C. Brereton & F. Rothwell (London: Macmillan, 1921)
[13] Judith Butler, Bodies that Matter (London: Routledge, 1993)
[14] Slavoj Zizek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London: Verso. 1991)
[15] Sigmund Freud, *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious*, trans. J. Strachey (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1981)
[16] Bergson, *Laughter*
[17] M. Bakhtin, Rabelais and His World, trans. H. Iswolsky (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1968)
[18] Rene Girard, *To Double Business Bound* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978)
[19] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (New York: Vintage, 1973), xv
[20] Girard, *To Double Business Bound*
[21] Michel Foucault, Discipline and Punish, trans. A. Sheridan (New York: Vintage, 1987), 3
[22] Foucault, *The Order of Things*, xv

Response to Tony Schirato: Foucault and the Politics of Self

Pat Moloney

Michel Foucault described modernity as an attitude rather than an era – a particular way of thinking and feeling about the present and oneself.[1] In his discussion of Kant's essay on the Enlightenment, Foucault defined the Enlightenment as an *ethos* of permanent critique of our present circumstances, and in particular, of ourselves. Reflexivity – self-critique and self-invention – he identified as a crucial aspect of the critical use of reason in the modern period.

If we pause and consider the historical setting of our own academic critique today, we surely look enviously upon Foucault's position. He was at the heart of France's intellectual elite, trained in, and teaching in, its leading institutions. His speech enjoyed a wide audience. By contrast, our lament here in New Zealand concerns not restrictions on academic freedom, but on the indifference of our public. Our academic conversations take place amongst a small and physically remote group, even as information technologies mitigate that distance. While we may have our differences with the managers of our tertiary institutions, we must acknowledge that truth-telling in our society is not a risky business. Compared with our colleagues in many countries, and compared with other historical periods – theologians in Salamanca during the counter-reformation; Kant in Konigsberg during the reign of Frederick II of Prussia; scholars in Eastern Europe behind the Iron Curtain – our own situation is highly privileged (and too much taken for granted).

Although the second part of Schirato's paper (not published here) concentrates on Foucault's reflections on the Greek notion of *parrhēsia*, in Foucault's later work it is surely Christian technologies of self rather than pagan ones that Foucault identified as most pertinent to an understanding of the modern self. At the end of his life he became interested in the way in which Christian authors focused on sexual desire, establishing a set of uniquely Western practices aimed at the production of truth about the self.

Foucault saw the contribution of Christian apologists like Augustine and Cassian to Western notions of sexuality, not in their condemnation of pagan vices or their advocacy of Christian asceticism, but in their articulation of the 'new type of relationship which Christianity established between sex and subjectivity.' Pagan philosophers, no less than Christian theologians, had required austerity in the regulation of the appetites and had admonished those addicted to excessive or "unnatural" sexual behaviours. Yet for the ancients, the key issue when considering the ethics of a sexual act had been that of penetration: who penetrated whom? In the Roman empire of late antiquity however, the questions around sex no longer turned on honouring the social status of the parties to a sexual encounter, but, amongst Christian authors like Augustine, on 'the relationship of oneself to oneself, or more precisely, the relationship between one's will and involuntary assertions.'[2] The confession of one's sinfulness through rituals of self-reflection and the verbalisation of one's introspections to a religious superior was a Christian "hermeneutics of self" that modern Europeans have inherited.[3] Foucault characterized Augustine's contribution to the history of sexuality as the 'libidinization of sex'— our preoccupation with 'constantly scrutinizing ourselves as libidinal beings.'[4]

One sexual behaviour that becomes problematised within this Christian hermeneutics of self is masturbation. In Cassian and the monastic tradition Foucault found a new concentration on the 'spiritual struggle against impurity.' Between paganism and Christianity the 'main question has moved from relations to people, and from the penetration model to the relation to oneself and to the erection problem.' Solitary pollution is conceded a new significance. The 'masturbation problem – which was nearly ignored or at least neglected by the Greeks, who considered masturbation a thing for slaves and for satyrs, but not for free citizens – appeared as one of the main issues of sexual life.'[5]

In the Christian context of Western Europe, *parrhēsia*, the truth-telling of the ancient pagan world, becomes transformed into a novel confessional practice. 'The verbalization of the confession of sins is institutionalized as a discursive truth-game, which is a sacrifice of the subject.'[6] Curiously then, our modern relation to ourselves is established at a relatively early stage in Europe's history.

Foucault summed up the Enlightenment mode of being as: 'the principle of critique and the permanent creation of ourselves in our autonomy.'[7] Thomas Laqueur has explored the way in which masturbation acquired a renewed significance in the eighteenth century.[8] In his view, anxieties about the social dangers posed by the "free" individual, the commercial expansion of appetites and commodities to satisfy them, the entitlement to a sphere of privacy and solitary enjoyments (like silent reading), and the cultivation of the imagination reached a new height at that time. The masturbator came to epitomise the excesses of pleasure-seeking. Solitary pleasures aroused by the imagination were deemed to be anti-social, addictive, limitless and uncontainable.

Kant is a preeminent Enlightenment philosopher. Although his moral philosophy replaced theological with philosophical justifications, he defended a moral code remarkably similar to those that preceded his. In some instances the restrictions upon sexual behaviour or the sacrifice of self that reason demanded were more exacting than earlier religious ones. When Kant lectured to his undergraduate male students he told them:

> Lust is called unnatural if one is roused to it not by a real object but by his imagining it, so that he himself creates one, contrary to natural purpose; for in this way imagination brings forth a desire contrary to nature's end, and indeed to an end even more important than that of love itself, since it aims at the preservation of the whole species and not only of the individual … unnatural lust, which is the complete abandonment of oneself to animal inclination, makes man not only an object of enjoyment but, still further, a thing that is contrary to nature, that is, a *loathsome* object, and so deprives him of all respect for himself.[9]

Kant's fearless critical speech sought to instill fear into his youthful, non-clerical audience by telling them that suicide was ethically superior to masturbation. His great edifice of reason was constructed not merely at the expense of pleasure, but in order to provide a regime for individuals whereby their freedom might be exercised

towards the proper subordination of pleasure and its cultivation in particular directions. It was the imagination, our ability to conjure up objects of desire other than those that he deemed natural, that was of particular concern to Kant. It was this faculty – with both its dangers and its creative potential – that, for Foucault, lay at the heart of modernity. 'For the attitude of modernity, the high value of the present is indissociable from a desperate eagerness to imagine it, to imagine it otherwise than it is, and to transform it not by destroying it but by grasping it in what it is.'[10]

If Kant sought to determine the limits of our knowledge, Foucault described his goal as transforming the critique conducted in the form of a necessary limitation into a practical critique that takes the form of a possible transgression. The problem, as Foucault identified it, was that in the Western tradition the 'hermeneutics of self implies the sacrifice of self.'[11] What is the *Ausgang*, the exit, the escape from this technology of the self transmitted through the Christian confession?

> I think that one of the great problems of Western culture has been to find the possibility of founding the hermeneutics of self not, as it was in the case of early Christianity, on the sacrifice of the self but, on the contrary, on a positive, on a theoretical and practical emergence of the self … But the moment, maybe, is coming for us to ask, do we need, really, this hermeneutics of the self. Maybe the problem of the self is not to discover what it is in its positivity, maybe the problem is not to discover a positive self or the positive foundation of the self. Maybe our problem is now to discover that the self is nothing else than the historical correlation of the technology built into our history. Maybe the problem is to change those technologies or maybe to get rid of these technologies, and then, to get rid of the sacrifice which is linked to those technologies. And in this case, one of the main political problems would be nowadays, in the strict sense of the word, the politics of ourselves.[12]

The modernity of the West has been about the acquisition of capabilities and the struggle for freedom. 'What is at stake then, is this: How can the growth of capabilities be disconnected from the intensification of power relations?'[13] Foucault's post-modernist stance has been characterised as strategic, one that extends the Enlightenment project: 'The critique of what we are is at one and the same time the historical analysis of the limits that are imposed on us and an experiment with the possibility of going beyond them.'[14]

If the hermeneutics of self is an endless quest for the truth of who we are, then according to Augustine, Eden in its pristine form, and the City of God at the end of time, are the only places where this project of self-discovery and self-sacrifice can be accomplished. Augustine's theology of original sin, which posited a profound and universal corruption of human nature, logically required a pristine condition *before* that Fall. Prelapsarian Eden is the original moment of human integrity and social harmony in which the body is not bothered by its sensations, nor the mind troubled by desires. There, subordination to God and communion with others is complete, transparent and authentic. It is an ideal realm of order, innocence and integrity. Augustine theorised and imagined a place before sexuality and another moment at the end of time beyond sexuality. By posing an origin and final end for human beings where sexuality is absent, Augustine constructed the theological scaffold upon which the Christian technology of the self was placed.

Perhaps then, one task within the larger politics of self is to continue the enquiries that Foucault left incomplete. A richer understanding of the theological framework that supported the Christian technology of self may well be required if we wish to find the exit from out modern version of that technology of self.

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[1] Michel Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?" in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon, 1984), 39

[2] Michel Foucault, "Sexuality and Solitude," in *Ethics, Subjectivity and Truth*, from *Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984, Volume 1,* ed. Paul Rabinow, trans. Robert Hurley et al. (New York: The New Press, 1997), 182

[3] Michel Foucault, "About the Beginning of a Hermeneutics of Self: Two Lectures at Dartmouth", *Political Theory* 21 (1993), 221

[4] Foucault, "Sexuality and Solitude," 187

[5] Ibid., 183

[6] Foucault, "About the Beginning of a Hermeneutics of Self," 227
[7] Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?" 44
[8] Thomas Laqueur, *Solitary Sex: A Cultural History of Masturbation* (New York: Zone Books, 2003), 267-281
[9] Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. Mary Gregor (Cambridge University Press, 1996), 178-9
[10] Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?" 41
[11] Foucault, "About the Beginning of a Hermeneutics of Self," 222
[12] Ibid., 223
[13] Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?" 45
[14] Ibid., 50

Response to Tony Schirato: *Parrhēsia* and the Problem of Moral Authority

David Rosenbloom

Tony Shirato's papers are a diptych – a two-part treatment, first, of critique as ethical behavior, and second, of *parrhēsia* (not published here), a word often translated as 'free and frank speech,' presumably as an exemplum of critique as 'akin to virtue.' While I think that *parrhēsia* and the origins of the modern critical mentality in the Enlightenment are related – they are both specific expressions of freedom, they address power and authority (and are means of gaining power and authority, a point I think Schirato underemphasises), they involve boundary testing, they can be reduced to games – I missed an explicit analytical connection between the two in the course of the paper. If, as Shirato claims Foucault maintains, the modern critical mentality derives from historical conditions of government at the micro-level, contested organisations of knowledge based upon particulars and contingencies merely posited as universal, and demonstrations of how such bodies of knowledge that explain and prescribe the truth of the world authorise themselves 'by effectively concealing or disappearing the conditions of their own emergence' (I enjoyed the rule-breaking there – who is to say that disappear can't be a transitive verb!), how is this related to *parrhēsia*, particularly as practiced in the ancient world, except in the obvious sense that critique requires free and frank speech? But we might even question that proposition: there is plenty of work showing how critique operates in a coded way, concealing the conditions of its own emergence, from the Roman empire to Soviet Russia and points in between. We can even find examples of covert critique in democratic Athens, the birthplace of *parrhēsia*.

In the ancient world, the game of *parrhēsia* differed according to context; and a significant part of the game was in fact minimising the stakes of the game. For example, written expressions of *parrhēsia* ran a minimal risk in ancient Athens. Pseudo Xenophon (aka "The Old-Oligarch") can write that Athenian democracy is immoral and add that free Athenian citizens are "slaves of slaves" because their economic interests makes them treat them with equality (*isēgoria*). Plato spent his

life unmasking what he considered the unwholesome effect of traditional forms of knowledge on individual souls and the societies they form. We can go back even further to the itinerant Xenophanes of Kolophon, who criticised the immorality of the gods as portrayed in Homer and Hesiod (they lie, steal, and commit adultery) and unmasked anthropomorphic polytheism as a fiction. He lived to be nearly a hundred. In Homer, when the ugly, deformed, and lower class Thersites emerges to speak in the Achaian assembly – a *parrhēsiastēs* if ever there was one – Odysseus wallops him on the back with a scepter to silence him, to the delight of the army. Even before the word *parrhēsia* emerges (the first extant appearance of the word is 428 BC), there is a crisis of free and frank speech: who can speak, who has the truth, whose advice can be aired in public as serve as the basis for collective action? What differentiates Homer from the cultural products of democratic Athens after 430 BC is essentially that hegemony was being contested at Athens in ways that had not yet emerged in Homer's world.

Thus it is particularly disappointing to see Foucault writing that 'proof of authenticity and reliability of *parrhēsia* is given in, and guaranteed by, the "moral qualities of the speaker".'[1] In reality, "moral qualities" constitute a thin veil for membership in a particular class and status group – Greek ethical terminology conflates socio-economic status, and moral attributes; and there was a strong tendency, as exemplified by Homer's treatment of Thersites and by the comic poet's treatment of the so-called "demagogues" (a very rare word in the fifth century BC; the more common term was *prostatēs tou dēmou*, "leader," "champion," "protector," "representative" of the people) coined to describe the non-aristocratic politicians who rose to power after the death of the aristocrat Perikles in 429 because of their speaking ability, knowledge of laws and administration, and commitment to majority rule. They hailed from industrial slave-holding rather than landed backgrounds and won their followings as prosecutors of public crimes and orators in the assembly rather than as military leaders; their rise to power should have been the success story of fifth-century democracy and empire; but it was not. They were the reason why *parrhēsia* became deeply questionable as a value in fifth century Athens: they did not have the "moral qualities" to legitimate their exercise of *parrhēsia*.

But it certainly does not follow that *parrhēsia* gradually became problematic 'as Athenian democracy at the end of the fifth century is corrupted by demagoguery, and consequently suffers military reversals and disasters in the Peloponnesian War.'[2] There is no historical validity to this claim; the leader behind the invasion of Sicily, whose catastrophic defeat began Athens' slide into desperation and defeat, was an aristocrat; the demagogues sabotaged him in political competition and cast deep suspicion upon his entire class and status group, weakening the city and making it difficult to support the invading forces. There is no sense in which the proposition that Athens' democracy was corrupted by demagoguery at the end of the fifth century is valid.

All of this points to the naïveté of Foucault's analysis of *parrhēsia*. First is the proposition that there were two types of *parrhēsia*. There was only a single type: the freedom to speak one's mind to an individual or to a group, to say anything and everything (*pan-rhēsia*, "speaking everything"), to be sincere and not to tailor one's speech to the requirements of a socially and politically superior interlocutor. At Athens, the legal prerequisite for this was nothing more than birth from two Athenian parents. In Euripides' *Ion*, Ion does not want to return to Athens because, as the son of a foreign father or perhaps servile mother, he will have a "slave's mouth" – he will never be able to say what he really thinks. Moreover, continued exercise of the privilege of *parrhēsia* was contingent on one's conduct and circumstances: citizens who owed money to the state or who had prostituted themselves lost the privilege of addressing other citizens in public venues.

In fact, there were two ways of responding to *parrhēsia*; and most of the discourse we have about *parrhēsia* from fifth and fourth-century BC Athens is critical. Most common is the claim that the privilege of speaking one's mind in public was an exercise in "ignorant insolence"; it afforded the opportunity to greedy individuals to sell their privilege to speak on behalf of interests inimical to those of the community or to pander to the basest elements of the collective. Another criticism was that *parrhēsia* was largely fictional: mass audiences did not allow speakers to continue speaking if they did not like what they were saying, but drowned them out with shouting and hissing, effectively driving them from the speaker's platform. In this view, *parrhēsia* was something accorded only to comedians. There never was a

connection between *parrhēsia* and truth independent of that posited by a speaker or imposed by class-based ideologies.

Finally, I would like to question the distinction between history of ideas and history of thought as Foucault formulates it. The history of thought, it seems, is enabled by the analysis of how something unproblematic and accepted without question becomes a problem and induces a crisis. But I would suggest that *parrhēsia* is problematic even before it reaches crisis; and the crisis, when it does arrive, has less to do with *parrhēsia* than with the structures that legitimate speech – these were traditional yet no longer operative in public venues (the assembly and the law courts); but they remained deeply ingrained in the culture. The "crisis" is the noise of an outmoded form of hegemony crumbling and collapsing.

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[1] Tony Schirato, "Foucault, Fearless Speech, and the Notion of Critique," (paper presented as part of the Society for Global Philosophy "Human Beings & Freedom" series, 8th September 2010)
[2] Ibid.

Reassessing the Right to Laughter: Humour, Dissent and the Liberal Imagination

Nicholas Holm

Though it might seem utterly innocuous, almost not worth considering, at the heart of my concern is whether humour can be considered to be something *good*. This probably doesn't seem like a particularly controversial thesis, especially in New Zealand in the twenty-first century. For example, I would hazard an estimate that almost anyone reading this essay would like to be thought capable of humour in some form: whether this is understood as the ability to tell a joke, to make a comic observation, or, at the very least, to be seen to possess what is commonly referred to as a sense of humour. In our mediated culture, a sullen, unsmiling face is reserved for totalitarian authority figures, the po-faced, the earnest and the boring who feature as the recurring villains of television, film and advertising. In fact, I would even go so far as to suggest – in terms so broad and definitive that one would usually, and rightly, shy away from them – that as a society, we value humour. To push this claim even further, when I refer to "we" I am not restricting this definition to New Zealand, but rather I am expanding this pronoun to encompass other nations within the rich, English-speaking, liberal democratic world such as Canada, Australia, the UK and the USA (and I would probably open this already large tent even wider if encouraged or pushed to do so). Within these nation-states, united by a common media culture borne by a common language, humour is desired, respected and valued.

It is this social value ascribed to humour that makes it so important and that I seek to address here. This value is more than simply a love of jokes or an affinity for laughter; it is the ubiquitous and almost unflappable perception of humour as a benign, desirable characteristic. Moreover, this ascription of value is not the sole province of any one form or mode of humour, but rather is most often assigned to humour in a very general and abstract sense, including, but by no means limited to, the overlapping realms of satire, jokes, comedy, slapstick, puns, wit and sarcasm. All of these various designations can be understood as specific forms or subsets of humour, and thus all of these are thought to be good in some way, shape, form, in

terms of the worldview addressed herein. In particular, I am concerned with the ways that this valuation of humour takes on a political valence, whereby it becomes conceived of as a dynamic and enlightening, aesthetic and social force: a conception which I will argue is tied to the manner in which humour plays a role in the construction of our sense of what it means to be a critical, yet reasonable, subject in a liberal democratic society. However, rather than simply reaffirming this notion – rather than repeating what might be a familiar, if not often explicitly expressed, formula, that humour is democratic, progressive and critical – I want to trouble this comfortable equation, and suggest instead that humour is more complicated and more fraught than often thought. Instead, I want to suggest that humour not only can, but does function in culturally restrictive and even repressive ways that run contrary to a common conception of humour as a site of freedom and liberation. Furthermore, I want to suggest that this dual nature of humour becomes most readily apparent at moments of crisis or controversy, and, in order to illustrate this point, I will consider in some depth the 2005 *Jyllands-Posten* Muhammad cartoons controversy as a means to illustrate my wider points about the cultural, political and social importance of humour at our current moment.

This importance of humour can be perceived on multiple fronts. Firstly, humour can be understood as a major concern of the media industries, which earn a significant portion of their profits from the production and distribution of situation comedies and comedic films, not to mention the role of humour in advertising, video games, popular publishing and internet content. To phrase it succinctly, the production and consumption of humour is a major economic concern. Secondly, humour also operates as an almost unassailable aesthetic category – by this I mean that humour is often taken up as a marker of unquestioned cultural value, such that for a text to be thought "funny" is to entirely justify its existence and circulation. In this instance, "funny" operates in a manner once reserved for categories such as "beauty" or "truth".[1] Thirdly and finally, humour has come to serve a central social need, wherein it operates as a site of subjective identity and affect that manifests, as noted by the sociologist Michael Billig, in the almost unquestionable desirability of a "sense of humour"[2] most evident in personal ads and obituaries. So strong is this belief in the social utility of humour that it increasingly comes to be seen as a physical and mental cure-all, one which can, in the words of humour scholar and entrepreneur John Morreall, 'reduce stress, boost morale, defuse conflict, and make

communication more effective.'[3] Morreal even goes so far as to suggest that humour can aid physical recovery and healing,[4] an idea that recurs fairly frequently in self-help and popular medical science reporting. It is, thus, on the basis of these reasons – economic, aesthetic and social – that I want to suggest that humour also performs an important political function.

Laughing All the Way to the Revolution: Humour as Radical Politics

I wish to make clear that at this stage that when I refer to the *political* function of humour, I do not mean 'political' strictly in the sense of parties and policies, though that is certainly as aspect of the way in which I will be discussing it. Instead, drawing on a wider cultural studies tradition evident in the work of theorists such as Raymond Williams and Stuart Hall,[5] as well as the work of Michel Foucault,[6] I here define politics very broadly as the distribution, contestation and negotiation of power within society. Above all, I am concerned with the way in which culture acts to challenge or shore up different interpretations of the world. According to this understanding, then, humour can be thought to be political insofar as it influences and inflects the ways in which we perceive and interact with the world, and the opportunities and obstacles that humour creates for addressing the world in a political manner. While there is some debate among theorists and philosophers as to the political role of humour, here I will focus upon the dominant understanding of its political role, wherein humour is taken up as a form of irreverent critique**;** as a means to subvert hierarchy, authority and dogma, that Alenka Zupancic characterises as 'the humanist-romantic presentation of comedy as intellectual resistance.'[7] Simon Critchley's highly influential book, *On Humour*, offers a paradigmatic example of this perspective, whereby humour is characterised as a subversive force that reveals the incongruities in the everyday structures of power, rendering the familiar unfamiliar and thereby producing opportunities for critique.[8] Similarly, in *Art and Laughter*, Shelia Klein makes the broad claim that 'all humour is subversive, that is, aims to disrupt our assumptions, emotions, patterns of thinking, ways of knowing and the world as we know it.'[9] Such examples are only the tip of an iceberg of academic and popular work that imagines humour to be a revolution by another name and, in doing so, perpetuates

an understanding of humour as an inherently progressive and productive political endeavour.

This constellation of related approaches to humour can, perhaps, be best be understood as informed – whether directly or indirectly, tacitly or explicit – by the work of Russian philosopher and literary critic, Mikhail Bakhtin, specifically, his notion of the "carnival". To summarise briefly, drawing on the historical carnivals of Europe, Bakhtin takes up the carnival, or the carnivalesque, as a symbol of the political force of anarchic, chaotic, grotesque, absurd culture: in the words of Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, Bakhtin's carnival is 'a potent, populist, critical inversion of all official worlds and hierarchies.'[10] Thus understanding the carnival is liberation from the prevailing truth and established order and an entry into 'truly human relations'[11] – under the conditions of the carnival, then, order breaks down, social status is repealed and reversed, fear gives way to reverie, and suppressed passions erupt. Widely taken up in cultural studies in the 1990s, most notably in the influential work of John Fiske,[12] the carnivalesque has been understood as a powerful theoretical tool for making sense of popular culture as a radical political force. It is in this vein that we should interpret Louis Kaplan's enthusiastic appraisal of the political potential of Holocaust humour, when he declares that:

> Unlike the official demand of Holocaust monumentality for a strictly delimited reading, ... transgressive modes of pop cultural expression (i.e., jokes, cartoons, and film comedies) are based on the refusal to be circumscribed within the confines of officialdom. They offer more decentralized, heterogeneous, polysemic, and anarchic transmissions of the Holocaust memory.[13]

Kaplan here demonstrates how the notion of the carnival can inform an interpretation of humour as a profoundly political act. Extending this position further would seem to imply that to treat any ostensibly serious subject in a comic manner would constitute, to return to Kaplan's words, a 'decentralized, heterogenous, polysemic and anarchic' moment. Here, then, the notion of the carnival is used to suggest that the destabilising influence of laughter can lead to the defeat of power and the levelling of hierarchy: a utopic vision of humour as

revolution that crystallises many of the political assumptions made regarding modern satire and humour.

This perception of humour status as a form of politically critical speech is not unrelated to the resonance and importance of humour in our current moment. Rather, the sense of importance afforded humour can be understood within the dominant political culture of liberalism, a milieu in which the expression of subversive, critical or anti-authoritarian perspectives comes to be seen as an essential political duty. Following Wendy Brown, liberalism is here understood very broadly as a belief in the inherently positive and desirable nature of equality and individual freedom as guiding political tenets.[14] Understood in this manner, we can think of liberalism as more than simply the concerns of a few political parties, but rather as a set of foundational values or ideals shared by all mainstream political interests in liberal democratic states. Under a liberal political order, dissent or the speaking of truth to power is seen as inherently desirable. Therefore, in this context, humour comes to be valued insofar as it is thought to promote freedom and challenge oppression, in other words, when it is believed to serve a liberal political function. Thus, what I want to suggest is that humour thrives in a liberal society when it is understood to be an expression of liberal values, such as is the case with the conception of humour-as-carnival.

In terms of such a model, a liberal relation to the world is both produced and promoted by humour and a pre-condition for its existence. Symptomatic of this viewpoint is Shelia Klein's suggestion that 'the satire and irony in much of contemporary art has thrived in both US and UK societies because [they] have societies that are open to free expression and the critique of social and political structures. [The citizens of those countries] are able to laugh freely, and engage in public laughter, and the exhibition of these works may even spur changes in public and private consciousness, with citizens and public officials, which may lead to changes in social structures and policies.'[15] As enticing an image of humour as this might be, I am somewhat sceptical of Klein's account, in large part because she takes its liberal credentials for granted. Klein's declaration is noteworthy, however, because it speaks to the extent to which a liberal politics and humour are thought to be mutually reinforcing as well as demonstrating the manner in which such a sentiment might be expressed. Klein's position thereby illustrates how the

centrality of humour to contemporary culture can be understood in part as a consequence of its purported affinity with liberal values.

It is during the liberal moment of politics, then, that humour comes to be theorised as a form of carnivalesque dissent, and importantly this is the case even in the absence of any directly political content. In order for humour to be considered political it is not, therefore, a matter of evoking subject material broadly classified as politics, but rather it is the form of humour itself which is here thought to do political work. Thus, humour, even ostensibly apolitical humour, comes to be regarded as a site of a necessary and inescapable politics: humour's irreverence becomes read as inherently antiauthoritarian in the context of a social order that proponents of a political reading of humour insist is serious about dominance, and dominant in its seriousness. For example, Joseph Boskin conceptualises comedians and humourists as modern-day shamans who confront social issues and taboos.[16] Stephen Kercher argues that humour was one of the leading vectors for left-liberal politics during the McCarthy era and beyond, a space for the critical, marginal perspectives of minority groups: he recounts how the comedians themselves, figures such as Jules Feiffer, Harvey Kurtzman and the members of the Second City, considered themselves satiric forces of social change.[17] And perhaps most explicitly, Israel Knox declared in 1951 that 'humour is a species of liberation, and it is the liberation that comes to us as we experience the singular delight beholding chaos that is playful and make-believe in a world that is serious and coercive.'[18]

Nor is this liberation restricted to a particular form of humour, such as satire, but rather is taken by writers such as Critchley, Klein and Boskin to encompass all possible forms: thus, punning is liberation from the rules of language, slapstick from the rules of bodily comportment, absurdity from the rules of sense. Hence, though most forms of humour are not understood to be politicised in any direct sense, the understanding of humour as a force of anarchy rather than order, nonetheless, reflects the more directly political theoretical consensus. Through this interpretive lens, all humour is an inherent force for freedom and resistance to authority, even if this political understanding of humour is not often clearly

articulated in these terms.[i] The politics commonly attributed to humour can thus be understood as a liberal politics: and what I want to suggest, then, is that under the political and cultural conditions of dominant liberalism, humour becomes seen as an expression of dissent, in a moment when dissent is widely viewed as the speaking of truth to power, and therefore as something inherently desirable. Satirical humour comes to be seen as an important form of democratic speech. Thus understood, humour becomes regarded as a social good in the context of liberal democracy: an interpretation evident in humour's previously considered status as an unquestionably desirable personality trait and aesthetic quality.

The perception of humour as an inherent good in the context of liberal political ideology is not, however, the ultimate conclusion that can be drawn from the current analysis. Instead, I would like to push this argument one more step and suggest that when humour is interpreted as a positive political force in liberal terms, this then creates the conditions whereby humour becomes tied to the expectations of liberal democratic society: a situation which goes someway to explaining why controversies regarding humour can become so heated and politically charged. The integration of humour into the expectations of liberalism arises as a consequence of humour's configuration as a form of liberal political speech, which then creates an impetus to partake and enjoy humour in order to demonstrate one's liberal credentials. The consequence of this is that to disapprove of humour, now understood as a form of free critical speech, is to side against the carnival, and thus to reveal oneself as aligned against not only fun, which is a problem in and of itself in our current society, but also against the politicised freedom of the carnival. The curmudgeon thus becomes tied to the figure of the carnival: to remain sour in the face of jocularity is to betray one's opposition to progress and free-thinking. The inadvisability of taking such a stance can be seen in the manner in which politicians endeavour to present themselves as at least capable

[i] One major consequence of this interpretive framework is that forms of humour which are seen to not fit within this paradigm, such as racist jokes, are either ignored or deemed to not be humour, or at least not proper forms of humour. Critchley, for example, defines as "true humour," that which laughs at itself, while bad or false humour is that, such as racist jokes, which is taken to laugh at others. In this manner, Critchley manners to preserve humour as an entirely positive and liberatory force.

of appreciating a joke, often at their own expense, even if not capable of delivering one.

For example, consider the concern surrounding Barack Obama's angry response to the satirical June 21 *New Yorker* cover, "The Politics of Fear," which prompted commentators to question aloud whether the future president lacked a sense of humour. The charges of a lack of humour on Obama's part were subsequently redressed by Obama's repeated forays into humour, such as his appearance on the Tonight Show with Jay Leno – the first appearance by a sitting president on a chat show – in order to demonstrate his ability to have a laugh. In a similar manner, Obama's predecessor cultivated the image of a relaxed, folksy sense of humour that often worked to offset criticism of his more militant policies. In a New Zealand context, the recently elected Prime Minister, John Key, has delivered several quips and jokes in his addresses to the press, some of which have backfired, but which nonetheless still work to entrench the perspective of Key as a politician with a sense of humour. Nor is it only politicians who need to be capable of humour, the demand also extends to private citizens who also must appreciate a laugh, especially those who might seek to actively define themselves as liberal. Laughter becomes regarded as a mark of the reasonable subject, who is able to temper his or her own politics and passions with a well-grounded perception of their own limitations.[19] Thus, humour becomes an essential quality of the sophisticated and tolerant contemporary (liberal) subject: an important means to distinguish oneself from other subjects who are considered to lack the sense of humour necessary to engage on the global scale in a knowing, informed, and appropriately cynical manner. The net effect of this process is that humour becomes taken up as a gauge of social tolerance and self-critique, and the liberal subject becomes a humorous subject.

That's Not Funny: Debates over Controversial Humour

What happens, though, when such humour goes wrong? What happens when humour is thought to cross the cultural line from critical to offensive? Examples of such controversies abound, from Sacha Baron Cohen's *Borat* and *Bruno* to numerous controversies arising out of *South Park* and *Family Guy*, the

provocations of Chris Morris's *Brass Eye* in the late 90s, the aforementioned New Yorker cover, South African cartoonist Jonathan Shapiro's (popularly known as Zapiro) provocative depiction of Muhammad in May 2010,[20] *bro'Town* creator David Fane's comments regarding AIDs patients and Jews in June 2010,[21] Joel Stein's *Time* magazine Article "My Own Private India,"[22] which was widely criticised in the Indian-American community in July 2010, in addition to numerous local infractions across the global. In all these instances, remarks made in the context of humour, are thought by some to go too far; to go beyond the bounds of acceptable comedy and to thereby contravene the conditions by which satire is considered a form of desirable political speech. In such circumstances, offence is taken, positions are staked, and humour is converted into a site at which politics is explicitly, actively and aggressively played out. In his analysis of such conflicts, Paul Lewis suggests that 'the edgy-jokes-lead-to-angry-criticism-and-countering-defensive-moves dance has become a ritual of public discourse.'[23] Lewis characterises this rote response in terms of "anti-jokes", his term to describe the response to controversial humour, whereby an offending incident is declared to be not funny, but rather a cruel and hurtful attack. The familiar form and frequency of these incidents whereby humour becomes a site of public conflict can be considered to speak to the social investment in humour as a site important enough to require frequent policing and debate.

How, though, are we make sense of these conflicts? As Lewis suggests, at a basic level, it seems that all the co-ordinates, indeed, all the rhetorical moves and feints, accusations and defences are already laid out for the aggrieved and defensive parties: the responses seem so automatic they may as well have been scripted. On the one hand, for those who seek to defend the validity of a given instance of possibly offensive humour, there is the notion of humour as dissent, as critique, as challenge, which argues that no limits should be placed. From this perspective, humour is always on the side of freedom and its opposition always constitutes oppressive censorship. However, on the other hand, there is the notion of humour as mockery, as disrepute, as insult: a perspective which has not yet been implicated in the current discussion. This is because such an interpretation is all but impossible to countenance when working under the discursive limitations and assumptions of the carnivalesque, liberal model of humour. From this position, humour is at best a provocation, at worse a cruel and intolerant insult. In the case of controversial

humour, then, the assumptions that are often made regarding humour and its political function are made visible, and thus must account for themselves. Therefore, though the largest majority of humour obviously does not result in international conflicts and debate – and thus is not politicised in any immediate or obvious manner – this does not mean that those unremarked upon examples are of a different kind than their more contentious kin. Rather, controversial humour can be thought to bring to the fore that which most often goes overlooked in other accounts of humour, as the liberal model is made apparent, and even brought into question. It is not that contentious examples, such as the *Jylland-Posten* cartoons, are fundamentally different from the majority of humour, but rather that their interaction with other cultural, social, political, religious or ethical contingencies leads to intensified debate and concern with those instances. Thus, the liberal mode is still operative in those uncontentious examples, but under conditions and in relation to subjects and events which do not result in the need for humour to openly account for itself and its social function. In contrast, humour controversies arise when the understanding of humour as freedom is disrupted by claims that humour is working as illiberal insult and ridicule.

Both these positions can be seen at work in what is arguably the most important and controversial of the humour clashes in recent years – what is most often referred to as the *Jyllands-Posten* Muhammad cartoons controversy, which arose following the publication of 12 cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad by the Danish newspaper, *Jyllands-Posten*, on 30 September 2005. The 12 cartoons were the result of an "experiment" whereby the editors of the paper approached the Danish union of newspaper illustrators soliciting cartoons of Muhammad purportedly in order to demonstrate a stand against intimidation and self-censorship.[24] The cartoons sparked fierce denunciations of the newspaper and the Danish state, death threats, boycotts of Danish goods by twelve countries, and international protests in which buildings were torched and over eight hundred people died, most in Nigeria. As Jytte Klausen, whose book, *The Cartoons that Shook the World*, I am drawing on in my account of the crisis, declares, 'it is hard not to marvel at how twelve little cartoons could cause so much trouble.'[25] Klausen argues that the cartoons functioned in such a manner because they become a flash-point for existing tensions regarding Muslim immigration into Europe, and an on-going battle for

global influence over diasporic populations between European and Muslim nations, Egypt in particular.[26]

The basic co-ordinates of the debates that accompanied the cartoons can be understood in terms of two positions, which, it's important to note, do not map tidily onto any West versus Muslim division. On one side, were those who saw the cartoons as an exercise in free speech, a manifestation of the critical satiric impulse, which as discussed above, is so highly valued in liberal democracies, at least in principle. From such a position, any opposition to the cartoons constituted censorship or even authoritarian tendencies. Flemming Rose, the editor of *Jyllands-Posten*, compared the cartoons to the use of humour by dissidents in the Soviet Union as a means of resistance – he declared demands to censor the cartoons as anathema to secular democracy and free speech.[27] An aligned, and perhaps more troubling, refrain from those in support of the cartoons was that the offended parties had failed to "get the joke". Muslim opposition was thus framed as the consequence of a lack of a sense of humour. This willingness to present Islam as a religion without a sense of humour is strongly reminiscent of the colonial tendency, traced by Michael Ross, to imagine non-white subjects to be incapable of humour. Ross argues that, in colonial texts, the civilised settler subject is known by their sense of humour, which separates them from the colonised Other who is presented as lacking the requisite sophistication.[28] A similar mechanism is arguably also at work in the current example, whereby the liberal humorous subject, who understands the cartoons as an exercise in critical free speech, is defined against the zealous seriousness of Muslim opposition. In such a manner, those in support of the cartoons framed opposition as a failure of interpretation – an inability to perceive a joke – rather than as the consequence of a different, but equally legitimate perspective.

It should be clear then that when someone is taking humour as offensive in this manner, they are no longer conceiving of it in terms of liberal critical speech. However, this does not mean that the aggrieved party has simply failed to correctly interpret the humour. Rather, what we see here is a response informed by an alternate view of humour as a demeaning, insulting operation that seeks to humiliate or disrespect its target: an interpretation which stands in stark contrast to the currently dominant interpretation of humour as a radical, critical force. As the

Jyllands-Posten controversy took on a global resonance and the cartoons spread beyond around the world courtesy of new media outlets, these positions solidified further as newspapers' decisions to republish the cartoons were alternately conceived as either solidarity in free speech or evidence of widespread disrespect for Muslim opinion and values. At the heart of such a debate, then, there seems to arise a fundamental clash, not of cultures, but rather of different interpretations of humour: which raises the question of how should we best understand the *Jyllands-Posten* cartoons, as satire or mockery?

To ask such a question, however, is to approach this situation from the wrong perspective; one premised upon a false opposition. Rather than adhere to either of these circumscribed options, I instead want to argue here that humour is always both critique and insult. Attempts to distinguish between the two interpretations amount to attempts to separate out indivisible elements at the centre of the operation of humour: most examples of humour contain comingled and complimentary aspects of both critique and ridicule. Moreover, I am not arguing that these alternate conceptions of humour are simply the result of subjective disagreement; rather I want to suggest that they are inseparable political consequences of a single cultural process. Consequently, there need not be, and indeed cannot be, any final decision as to whether a given instance of humour is better understood as critical satire or abuse, and no final arbitration as to which side is correct. However, an adjudication of the correct meaning of humour is, by and large, the dominant perspective from which controversial instances of humour have been approached, in both the academic and popular press. As mentioned before, in instances of controversial humour, it has become common practice to assemble along well-worn paths of conflict: to defend humour as a special form of address, either politically critical or just joking, or to interpret it as straightforward attack on the butt of the joke.

Mapping the Controversy: Incongruity and Superiority in the Jyllands-Posten Cartoons

The polarisation of responses in instances of controversial humour, such as the *Jyllands-Posten* controversy, is particularly curious because of the manner in which

this division reflects what might otherwise appear to a somewhat esoteric debate in the study of humour, between adherents of what are customarily referred to as the incongruity and superiority models of humour. Indeed, I want to suggest that the debates surrounding the *Jyllands-Posten* cartoons can be approached as the contemporary iteration of a long-standing question for theorists and philosophers of humour: that is, what makes humour humourous? As such, I will now turn to a consideration of the ways in which the *Jyllands-Posten* controversy can be mapped onto the competing theories of humour as more than simply an esoteric or academic concern, but rather as a means to better make sense of this conflict and the ways in which it speaks to the wider linkages of humour to critical thought and a liberal politics.

Historically, humour has been of concern to a great deal of prominent thinkers – Aristotle, Henri Bergson, Immanuel Kant, Søren Kierkegaard, Sigmund Freud, Thomas Hobbes, Arnold Schopenhauer – though usually only in passing. As a consequence, we're left with a broad range of theoretical models, often quickly sketched, frequently conflicting. A favoured contemporary method for making sense of this proliferation is to organise the multiple competing theories into a tripartite structure of Relief, Incongruity, and Superiority theories. I will not be addressing Relief theory here, because of its lack of both contemporary critical currency and immediate political relevance – for while its name may conjure up notions of a social-pressure release-valve, relief theories are, in practice, more concerned with the physiological and psychological mechanisms of laughter as a physical process,[29] and, as such, will not concern us here.

Briefly summarised, superiority theory suggests that humour is generated when the subject has a sudden realisation of supremacy with respect to another person or situation. In the words of Thomas Hobbes, it is the belief that 'the passion of laughter is nothing else but a sudden glory arising from the sudden conception of some eminency in ourselves, by comparison with the infirmities of others, or with our own formerly.'[30] Superiority theory thus understands the experience of humour as arising from a sudden perception of supremacy in the audience with respect to another person, which causes the audience enjoyment. This feeling of superiority can arise for a number of reasons: for example, if the object of the humour, or the "butt" were, in classic slapstick style, to trip and fall, or if a butt were revealed to

be stupid or culturally ignorant. Through its recourse to such notions of normality and inferiority, superiority theory thus runs counter to understandings of humour as inherently subversive, offering instead an interpretation of the comic as a site of ridicule, rather than rejoicing, that serves to reaffirm structures of power and ways of being. Superiority theory thus offers an interpretation of humour as a form of social corrective. In such accounts, laughter is not an escape from social rules, but our punishment for stepping out of line or a way to demonstrate the inferiority of certain social groups. The understanding of humour that arises out of superiority theory thereby challenges any attempt to attribute carnivalesque properties to humour or, more radically, inverts them such that the carnival becomes a site of control, its free play revealed as mockery and ridicule, its unsettling power focussed downward to repress rather than enlighten. The superiority theory of humour would seem to inform the perspectives of those who interpret the *Jyllands-Posten* cartoons as a malicious exercise in disrespect. If one believes that the purpose of the humour here is to make the audience feel superior to the subject, or the butt, of the cartoon, then it is a short step to condemning the cartoons as an attempt to deride the Islamic faith. In terms of such a theory of humour, those opposed to the cartoon did not fail to get the joke – they got it all too well, as well as the declaration of supremacy or malice it embodied.

Incongruity theory, on the other hand, surmises that humour follows the substitution of an unexpected event or remark in the place of what is expected. Customarily traced back to the work of Kant,[31] incongruity theory proposes that humour arises when a particular interpretation or understanding of a statement or situation is suddenly disproved and another substituted in its place. Given that incongruity theory focuses attention on the formal mechanism of substitution, rather than the butt of the joke, this model allows for a much more euphemistic reading of the comic in contrast to the negative social implications of the superiority model. The contemporary ascendency of this model can thus be thought to reflect the wider social tendency, discussed earlier, to imagine humour as a desirable and benign force, which, in line with dominant liberal ideology, is primarily conceived in terms of boundary-breaking, order-challenging, and carnivalesque freedom. Moreover, while there is nothing inherently political about the incongruous construction of humour – it simply relies upon the bringing together of two disparate elements, so that they uneasily coexist – subsequent

commentators have reconfigured this interpretation in a number of politicised ways, many of which regard incongruity to be, or at least invoke, a profoundly subversive gesture, one which Karl Hill describes as "Groucho Marxism". In this manner, humourists are thought to act as the comic doubles of critical philosophers, challenging the established norms of culture through "wit" rather than argumentation. Incongruity theory can thus be seen to underpin the position of those who understand humour to be a critical, liberal means of dissent. From this perspective there is no concern with cruelty or disrespect, but rather humour is a means to fulfil one's liberal duty and speak truth to power.

Neither of these models – incongruity or superiority – should be regarded as correct in any final or total way. Both have been subjected to extensive debunking through the provision of numerous counter-examples. For example, Michael Billig goes to some length to try and locate the hidden malice in apparently incongruous jokes,[32] while the history of opposing superiority theory can be traced at least as far back as Francis Hutcheson's eighteenth century observation that a true believer does not find the inferiority of a heretic cause for amusement.[33] In light of the necessary gaps within any universalising theory, we should not therefore treat these models as final or full accounts of how humour operates, but rather as what they are: models. Both are simplified abstractions that allow one to conduct analysis and draw conclusions out of the chaotic complexity of actual occurrences.

This does not mean they are useless; far from it, for these models not only provide us with a means to begin to account for the complicated function of humour, but they also provide a way to make sense of the underlying and unspoken models of humour that inform the divergent positions as regard the *Jyllands-Posten* controversy, and indeed other humour conflicts. Furthermore, the frame of reference for understanding humour is more than just an academic matter; it informs the he clash of perspectives over humour, the manner in which humour is created, mobilised, understood, and taken up in popular culture and everyday discourse. Perhaps the most important thing we should draw from this, then, is the inability of the dominant social narratives of humour, premised as they are within the broad contours, if not the theoretical niceties, of these models, to actually make sense of these conflicts. When humour is understood as an exercise in incongruity and satire it becomes a freedom of speech issue. When humour is understood as

superiority and mockery it becomes a tolerance issue. These positions do not overlap. However, while neither position can fully account for the totality of the operation of humour in any given case, such as the *Jyllands-Posten* controversy, nor can either position be considered a failure to understand how humour "actually" works.

Moving Beyond the Liberal Model of Humour as Dissent

At a basic level, then, this is a simple point – humorous texts tend to be polysemic, that is, have multiple meanings depending upon who is interpreting. What is more interesting here, though, is the way in which those alternate meanings can become rapidly and rabidly politicised. Thus, in moments of controversial humour, these different perspectives in relation to humour are taken up not simply as alternate interpretations, but as opposing positions in openly political and aggressive conflicts with very real material outcomes for many of those involved. Moreover, the way in which humour is interpreted in these moments is far from an autonomous decision but rather reflects the power structures in which that humour is situated, and the underlying understandings of humour that inform particular responses. The importance of humour within our contemporary media society as a means to communicate and critique can lead us to perceive it as an inherently positive aesthetic that speaks to the tolerance, critical distance and sophistication that we believe characterises our way of life. However, dominant accounts of humour as dissent and critique overlook the way in which it can serve a disciplinary and repressive function. Dividing this into an either/or debate, by characterising those who disagree as failing to "get it", allows both parties to retain their denial, it allows the retention of pure models of humour, wherein the comic is thought to serve singular and relatively straightforward functions as a tool of resistance or oppression.

This is not a helpful way to make sense of humour. From a liberal perspective, it blinds commentators and critics to the ways in which humour can hurt and marginalise. In emphasising this fact, I am not asserting that humour cannot be critical: if anything, I am arguing that it should be thought of as almost always critical on some level, but that this interpretation needs to be tempered through an

acknowledgement that humour also operates simultaneously in other, less positive, registers. Humour is much more complicated than simply the form of carnivalesque dissent or free speech that it has become in the liberal imagination, and this should bring us to reassess the unspoken right to laughter than operates in our political moment.

A significant part of this process involves working out how humour can be understood beyond liberalism and satire: away from a direct equation of humour with liberal political speech. This could involve increasing recognition of the parallels between the anger of opponents to the *Jyllands-Posten* cartoons and the refusal of the left to acknowledge the "humour" of remarks by the likes of Rush Limbaugh or Anne Coulter in the USA. An equation of humour with critical thinking prevents us from considering how humour can be used in ways that clash with our own values and leads to a dismissal of any humour we disagree with as either a false or inferior form leading to an unproductive confusion of aesthetic and ethical registers. Faced with such a situation, too often we simply reject the possibility that the other is capable of humour at all. This means both a representation of aggrieved parties as unsophisticated, unhumorous reactionaries and of those who mock the values we believe in as unfunny, manipulative demagogues. A consideration of the mockery of liberal values and practices is perhaps one way to begin the complication of an understanding of humour as an inherently positive carnival and to break the link between humour and an always liberal politics. Humour certainly functions as a form of liberal speech, but it is not simply freedom and it is not simply dissent. Given the importance of humour to the constitution of the reasonable and sophisticated subject of the contemporary Western metropolis, a better understanding of the cultural mechanics of humour is a vital part of any rigorous critical theory of the political potential of contemporary culture. To do so, we must jettison the sweeping generalisations that too often define the terrain on which debates about humour taken place, and instead carefully attend to the actual texture of humour and humorous texts. In the instance of a text such as the *Jyllands-Posten* cartoons, it becomes vital to consider the texts themselves – the way the joke-work of the text is constructed, the way it frames its butt and the attitude it takes towards them. This is a careful and particular job, and one for another time. What I have tried to do here is demonstrate the necessity of such a task, through arguing for the importance of humour for the political

frameworks of our current cultural moment, and troubling the liberal frame through which we are accustomed to making sense of the political work of humour. As I stated at the beginning, I believe we are a society that values humour, and therefore I think that it is time we started thinking about it in ways that reflect its centrality, importance and possibilities.

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[3] John Morreall, "Keynotes and Seminars on Humor in the Workplace," *HumorWorks*

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[24] Jytte Klausen, *The Cartoons That Shook the World* (London: Yale University Press, 2009), 14–17
[25] Ibid., 2
[26] Ibid., 167–184
[27] Ibid., 18–19
[28] Michael Ross, *Race Riots Ross: Comedy and Ethnicity in Modern British Fiction* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's, 2006), 11 -14
[29] John Morreall, *Comic Relief* (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 21–22
[30] Thomas Hobbes, *The Elements of Law, Natural and Politic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 54–55
[31] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgement*, ed. Paul Huyer, trans. Paul Huyer & Eric Matthews (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 208–210
[32] Billig, *Laughter and Ridicule*, 153–156
[33] Francis Hutcheson, *Reflections upon Laughter and Remarks upon the Fable of the Bees* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1971), 11–14

Response to Nicholas Holm: Tracking Footprints?

Mike Lloyd

It is encouraging to read Nicholas Holm's work on humour and politics and to see someone taking the topic seriously. Although my own work on humour is quite different, I share the view that humour is far too pervasive to be neglected within academia just because it appears less directly "serious". To date, the international literature on humour and the main scholarly organisation devoted to it – the International Society for Humor Studies – has been dominated by linguistics and psychology. So, it is good for some diversification to occur, and particularly for this to have some association with New Zealand (there is precious little research here on humour). However, slightly altering Holm's title, I am going to exercise the right to be critical, hopefully in a constructive manner. The critical points made here share in common a desire for more attention to specifics. Of course, this is where Holm finishes his argument, and I do hope that he takes up his own suggestion to study particulars 'at another time,' however, in getting to that partly evasive conclusion he has raised some points that deserve critical discussion.

Shortly after defining politics as 'the distribution, contestation and negotiation of power within society,' and then framing the concern with humour 'as a form of irreverent critique, as a means to subvert hierarchy, authority and dogma,'[1] the discussion moves to Bakhtin. This is because his work on the carnival is consistent with the notion that humour is critique. Holm notes that many scholars have favoured Bakhtin's concepts as they are 'a powerful theoretical tool for making sense of the popular culture as a radical political force.'[2] However, as some scholars who have ethnographically studied carnivals suggest, we may need some caution before jumping on the Bakhtin bandwagon. Crowley[3] and Abrahams[4] both make this point with the former being more direct. As Crowley says, 'the most astonishing characteristic of Carnival is its conservatism of form in a situation designed to maximise innovation and creativity.'[5] He goes on to make the obvious if neglected point that Bakhtin's source material was primarily textual:

> for Bakhtin, 'Carnival is not a spectacle seen by the people; they live in it, and everyone participates because its very idea embraces all people' … Carnival becomes 'life itself,' … [But there is] One small problem: no such Carnival has ever existed, and indeed Bakhtin had no field experience with Carnivals or markets except through Rabelais. … Indeed, the idea that all people participate in Carnival is dead wrong. … So, if you look at it a little closer, you wonder if this isn't something Bakhtin cooked up in some cold Russian room. Like the lady said about Bach, 'I don't like Bakhtin, but I approve of him!'[6]

I am sure many people would say they have good reasons for approving of Bakhtin's model of carnival, but we could extend the last point that Crowley makes. That is, most people are in favour of critique, particularly if directed at those who unjustly benefit from power and perpetuate inequality. Consequently, it is very easy to want humour to be positively involved in progressive politics, or at least some kind of counter-movement against power. But we need to remind ourselves of one of the complicated "meta" features of humour. As Basso nicely puts it:

> Acts of joking convey messages that are not conveyed when the acts they are patterned after are performed unjokingly, and for this reason jokes are not intended to be taken literally, "seriously", or at face value. … In the event that they are, they instantly cease being jokes and, having thus gone awry, stand open to interpretation as instances of the unjoking acts they are modelled upon.[7]

This takes some thinking through. One thing it emphasises is that successful humour is very finely crafted and based around structures of economy. But the key thing to take from it is that very rarely is humour directly political; given its own dynamic, it tends to operate some steps removed from such a level, or as Raskin has nicely put it, 'politics is a serious business; humor has a serious footprint: its "message".'[8]

Christie Davies, one of the few sociologists who has worked extensively on humour, has some useful things to say here. Let us take one of his specific analyses; the discussion of "Jokes on the Death of Princess Diana".[9] To cut a long story short, after the media announced to the world that Diana had died in hospital after a car crash in Paris, there arose, it seems within hours, an internationally distributed joke cycle. Despite these jokes being unflattering to Diana and the Royal Family, Davies does not analyse them as some kind of serious critique of the monarchy, out-dated political systems, and so on. Instead, he focuses on incongruity, particularly regarding the role of contemporary media in portraying disasters or accidents. The incongruity has two key elements. First, media reports urge us to feel strong emotions, but this is incongruent both with our physical absence from the scene of the tragedy, and with the sanitised portrayal of disasters, accidents, or tragedies. Second, televised reporting of such events is a "rubbish sandwich": solemn announcements and calls to grieve are sandwiched by the typical fare of trivial quiz shows, soap operas, sport and overblown endorsements of advertised products. Hence, the gist of Davies argument:

> The level of incongruity provided by the media and particularly television was perhaps especially high following the death of Diana because of the extraordinarily strong media coverage of her death and funeral. Hence the enormous volume of jokes that followed.[10]

In what he calls a "dialectical" explanation, he sums up his explanation of the Diana jokes:

> Humour is the only area of social life where dialectical relationships prevail, so that the strong assertion of a thesis calls into play a humorous antithesis. The more insistent and emotional the thesis, the more numerous the antithetical jokes. The Diana jokes are a series of reversals of the hegemonic sentimentality, for they are the only way in which independence and opposition can be asserted.[11]

Now, Davies' use of the terms dialectical and antithesis does suggest some connection with resistance to power, but carefully note the central role of emotionality and sentimentality in his argument. The humour anti-thesis is towards the incongruous suggestion that it is natural for everyone to be grieving at Diana's death. Also note the orientation to unpacking the socio-logical conditions of possibility for humour's emergence ("socio-logical" is a way of emphasising that the logic has social bases). So, for Davies and many other humour scholars, humour has a massive formal consistency and the particular content focused on is relatively insignificant. Again, Raskin has succinctly expressed this: 'A rare good joke will be appreciated for its quality as would a joke about anything – and that anything will be quickly forgotten.'[12]

If this is accepted, it might mean that when humour is actually mobilised around obvious matters of inequality, the formal humour mechanism itself can diminish any directly political return, that is, content matters are 'quickly forgotten' because people focus on appreciation of the new manipulation of old humour mechanisms. This is the import of Basso's point noted above: because of the nature of humour, it is one-step removed from serious political discourse; it has to be to be humour. In "getting" a political joke people may well reflect upon serious matters, but first they must be operated upon by the antithetical mechanism of humour, and there is a case to be made that whatever humour produces – laughter, critical reflection, etc – in some part it is based upon appreciation of the socio-logical mechanisms themselves.

If this all seems a bit abstract, we can make an interesting analogy to the case of the Muhammad cartoon controversy. In 2008 the journal *Humor* featured a special forum on the controversy, including the following insightful comment from Elliott Oring: 'people can be mightily offended by a host of things – cartoons among them. As in the case of those published by *Jyllands-Posten* on September 30, 2005, cartoons can even offend people who *have not actually seen them* (emphasis added).' [13] This is an interesting adjunct to the case of humour where 'anything is quickly forgotten.' When we are dealing with strong socio-logical machineries of form, whether the antithetical impulse of humour, or a type of religious fundamentalism, matters of content will often be relatively unimportant. This is not to say that humour cannot be brought into analyses of power, but it certainly

suggests that to do so is very difficult. To continue Raskin's metaphor, it may be akin to having plenty of footprints to follow, and being able accurately to guess the type of beast one is following, but never being able to track it down.

Personally, in regard to humour, I am more in favour of a kind of Wittgensteinian position. That is, one that avoids saying that complex, heterogeneous social practices are all really derived from a single overarching structural force. A particularly egregious example is provided by Michael Billig who, in a book length treatment, basically argues that all humour is a form of ridicule (see Lloyd for a critical review).[14] Of course, here I have endorsed the work of Christie Davies, which is actually an exemplar of generalising comparative sociology, but a quick look at his work will show that it begins with a great deal of collection of humorous data. There is detail in it, even if at times it does get glossed over in his comparative project. So, the positive project here might be to collect material on political humour whilst simultaneously working out how to theorise or analyse it in a way that avoids the tendency to over-generalise. It is not an easy thing to do and I wish Holm good luck with this project, if this is in fact what he is trying to do.

To finish, a slice of humour. There is a wonderful Peter Cook and Dudley Moore sketch called "The End of the World" where four men are gathered on a mountain because Brother Enim (Peter Cook) has precisely prophesied the date and time of the end of the world. They count down from ten seconds to the allotted time:

> *Peter:* Five – four – three – two – one – Zero!
> *Omnes: (Chanting)* Now is the end – Perish the World!
> *A pause*
> *Peter:* It was GMT, wasn't it?
> *Jon:* Yes.
> *Peter:* Well, it's not quite the conflagration I'd been banking on. Never mind, lads, same time tomorrow … we must get a winner one day.[15]

Undoubtedly, it is stretching the example too far, but this seems a good thing with which to think about humour and critique. Religious "false" prophets, and maybe even "religion" as a whole, are the obvious butts of the joke; however, in the

returning back tomorrow, same time, same place, we have a sobering reminder of the power of what Alfred Schutz liked to call "paramount reality". [16] That is, the mundane, everyday world that, sooner or later, after our diversions, fantasies, periods of excitement, and so on, we always return to. Interestingly, it could be argued that if critique is to have any purchase it too must have implications for "paramount reality". But, it seems to me that humour is not actually designed to alter the everyday world in any serious sense of the word "critical". What it can do is add a certain wry and pleasurable sensibility to our realisation that there is no escape from reality. Thus, it is not because every joke may have a hidden "critical" edge that humour is so pervasive, but simply because it makes life bearable.

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[1] 50, above

[2] 51, above

[3] Daniel Crowley, "Carnivals, Carnival, and Carnivalization, or How to Make a Living without Actually Working," *Western Folkore* 58 (1999)

[4] Roger Abrahams, "Bakhtin, the Critics, and Folklore," *Journal of American Folklore* 102 (1989)

[5] Crowley, "Carnivals, Carnival, and Carnivalization, or How to Make a Living without Actually Working," 218

[6] Ibid., 219-220

[7] Keith Basso, *Portraits of "The Whiteman"* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 37

[8] Victor Raskin, "On the Political Impotence of Humor," *Humor* 21:1 (2008), 27

[9] Christie Davies, "Jokes on the Death of Diana," in *The Mourning for Diana*, ed. Tony Walter (Oxford/New York: Berg, 1999)

[10] Ibid., 257.

[11] Ibid.,. 259-260.

[12] Raskin, "On the Political Impotence of Humor," 29

[13] Elliott Oring, "The Muhammad Cartoon Affair," *Humor* 21:1 (2008), 22

[14] Michael Lloyd, "Book Review: Michael Billig *Laughter and Ridicule*," *Thesis Eleven* 89 (2007), 136-138

[15] Peter Cook & Dudley Moore, "The End of the World," Available Online

[16] Alfred Schutz, *Collected Papers I: The Problem of Social Reality* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1962)

Response to Nicholas Holm: Laughter from a Historical Perspective

Dolores E. Janiewski

In a historical context in which humour has caused riots and deaths while also serving, in the case of Jon Stewart's *The Daily Show*, as a vehicle for news and public commentary, Nicholas Holm's reassessment is timely. The publication of cartoons about the prophetic founder of Islam in the Danish newspaper, *Jyllands-Posten,* offers a useful case study in which to explore the question of whether humour should be understood as an indicator of liberal values. To pursue this question, Holm has chosen to interrogate two competing explanations of what constitutes a humorous topic: the claim that humour stems from an appeal to a sense of superiority vis à vis its object as opposed to the alternative explanation that it derives from a sense of incongruity. To provide a gloss on these competing paradigms, the question might be posed as to whether humour primarily involves mocking, insults, and putdowns or whether it reflects a sense of irony, playfulness, and what Mikhail Bakhtin has discussed as the carnivalesque. There is much in Holm's paper which requires interrogation and analysis since it raises provocative questions about such complicated areas as the history of emotions, the reasons for the existence of the constitutional protection of free speech, issues of tolerance and human rights, and the power relations in which humour takes place.

As a historian whose discipline relies upon the deductive work of assembling interpretations based upon a multiplicity of specific instances, it would be the examples cited ever so tantalisingly and briefly by Holm that would be the ultimate test of the validity of these models. Lawrence Levine's examination of "black laughter" in *Black Culture, Black Consciousness* treated humour as a survival mechanism, a weapon of the weak to mock the pretensions of their oppressors, the cultural ability to transcend suffering through humour which he also ascribed to Jews confronting pogroms, prejudice and poverty. Patrick Merziger identified two models in the historiography on humour: humour understood as a form of resistance and as an instrument of power in which a ruling regime used satire to ridicule or even obliterate its opponents. Merziger's own work on humour in Nazi

Germany added a third form, a "benign humour", which emphasised German unity rather than covertly or overtly expressing aggression, agitation or protest. Taken out of its German context, this third form might also be found among African Americans as described by Levine who identified the 'carthartic, integrative ritual of laughter.' The contributions to a special issue of the *International Review of Social History*, later republished as *Humour and Social Protest*, stressed this third form in a series of case studies of humour's contribution to solidarity ranging from leftist cartoonists in the early twentieth century United States to garment workers in contemporary Hanoi.[1] These case studies thus amplify the dual model of humour as aggression or liberation to identify a third – unity.

My own just completed work, *Seeing Reds: U.S. Conservatism and Red Scares, 1871-1964*, challenges the limitations of the two models of humour presented and the subsequent claim that humour is either a freedom of speech issue or a question of tolerance.[2] Perhaps it is my own experience as a historian seeking to understand the complicated functions humour performs but it seldom happens that such neat separations exist in historical situations. Holm then went on to say that 'what is more interesting here' is the 'way in which those alternative meanings become rapidly and rabidly politicised.'[3] My own reading of the historical evidence suggests that three forms of humour are always political in that they reinforce, resist or construct new forms of power. As a case in point, the cartoons analysed in *Seeing Reds* condensed ideology into memorable images which offer insights into beliefs and values both for what they highlight and what they omit. Their fusion of emotion and ideology enhanced their ability to convince because of their familiarity and their ability to trigger fear, hostility, and contempt in receptive viewers within the disarming camouflage of humour.

The cartoons which I analysed by Thomas Nast, the premier cartoonist of his era, which appeared in *Harper's Weekly* from the 1860s to the mid-1880s, reveals the same complicated questions about the meaning of humour as do the cartoons which *Jyllands-Posten* published in 2005. Nast, usually celebrated by liberal historians for his progressive attitudes in support of African American emancipation and enfranchisement or in defence of the Chinese victims of mob violence, was capable of vicious attacks on Catholicism and Irish Catholics. Portraying bishops as crocodiles or reptilian figures crawling over the Capitol dome or the Irish as

simian-faced thugs, Nast helped to stir up mob violence in the streets of New York where he also served in the militia to suppress the riots his attitudes helped to create. He combined the liberatory and the repressive aspects of humour, sometimes in the same cartoon, even as he built Protestant and nativist solidarity against Catholics and other immigrants whom he defined as un-American. Like the *Jyllands-Posten*, *Harper's Weekly* spoke in the name of liberty while also tacitly encouraging intolerance and bigotry.

Such situations do not make for neat divisions between questions of free speech and tolerance. Indeed, as both Nast and the Danish incident demonstrate, the situation also involves the competing freedom to practice one's faith. Writing as the defender of "secular society", Flemming Rose, culture editor of the *Jyllands-Posten*, accused Moslems of demanding 'a special position, insisting on special consideration of their own religious feelings' which he described as 'incompatible with contemporary democracy and freedom of speech, where one must be ready to put up with insults, mockery and ridicule.'[4] Clearly conflating the liberatory with the sense of superiority in his rationale for publishing the cartoons, Rose argued that airing opinions, however cruel, racist or derogatory, is preferable to repression, and allows the free exchange of ideas necessary to democratic politics. Coming from such a position, he demanded the toleration of satire which is intolerant, cruel and insulting to groups, religions, or gods which other people hold sacred. There is, therefore, no clean separation between freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and tolerance. In Rose's view unacceptable ideas must be able to be endured. He did not add the caveat that those who objected have the same right to express their objections nor offer them space in his newspaper. The conundrum that free speech requires the tolerance of intolerance has no easy solution except to ensure equal access to the means of communication. This, of course, in an unequal national or global society calls into question the notion of "free" speech when the ability to communicate carries a hefty price. Neither the *Jyllands-Posten* nor other publishers of the cartoons addressed this issue or provided remedies.

It is necessary therefore to examine the questions of ethics, purposes, intentions, and likely consequences which the *Jyllands-Posten* and its defenders evaded. Rose enjoyed the privileged position of occupying a powerful and well-fortified position in his own society, as did Nast and *Harper's Weekly* in New York, which protected

him from the consequences meted out to those who paid with their lives in Afghanistan, Libya, Pakistan, Lebanon, Turkey, Iraq and Nigeria due to the violent reaction displayed. Stepping back to ask who has the power in the conflict over the cartoons would point out that satires do not need to be politicised. They are already political acts and the question is rather what kind of politics do they endorse? The makers needed to confront these question for themselves rather than being censored or threatened, but they should have admitted their own power as Westerners involved in quasi-imperial relationship with the groups that have been the objects of Western colonialism. What is free and what is humour in an unfree context?

To speak as a historian, I would dispute, therefore, that people trained in my discipline could accept the proposition that liberals necessarily see humour as carnivalesque, 'decentralized, heterogeneous, polysemic and anarchic,'[5] subversive, critical, or anti-authoritarian. Certainly, the cartoons drawn by Nast and his disciples exemplified the urge to demonstrate one's superiority over those whom they mocked, whether Catholics, immigrants, or radicals. They mocked or ridiculed the relatively powerless and endorsed the claims of superiority of the already powerful. These types of humour invite contempt, hostility, or derision towards their targets. In that, they fit the definition of ridicule in Webster's dictionary, which defines it as 'language calculated to make a person or thing the object of contemptuous humorous disparagement; also, looks or acts expressing amused contempt; derision; mockery; or an object of mocking merriment.' It then helpfully adds that ridicule may be 'merely sportive or thoughtless; derision is always hostile or malicious.'[6] The definition itself thus contains the element of cruelty or hostility as latent if not fully developed in the kind of humour that we call satire. Certainly, it was quite obviously present in the cartoons in *Harper's Weekly* and the *Jyllands-Posten.*

Interspersed among the thousands of instances of such cartoons which reinforced the existing power relations in American society, there also existed some from considerably less powerful media outlets which mocked the powerful. By their very departure from the dominant view, these might be considered expressions of incongruity, but they also exemplified what Michael Cohen has called 'angry if playful outrage' infused with 'a sense of collective idealism,' a combination of solidarity and protest in 'a class politics of laughter' to 'illustrate the common

values that held them together as a movement.' Like the African American humour described by Levine, these cartoons sought to pull the powerful down to the common level and expose their lack of superiority. In that they were expressing the carnivalesque mode described by Natalie Zemon Davis as the upending of the normal rules of a society.[7] Theirs was a humour from the bottom up instead of the lofty heights of superiority from which Nast and the cartoonists of the *Jyllands-Posten* invited their readers to peer down on objects of their ridicule.

Derived from this analysis, I would put forward a tripartite interpretation of what historians of humour have discovered that identifies three positions which humour might take, rather than two: reinforcing existing power relations; challenging those power relations, and developing a solidarity based on goodwill and good humour towards other members of the community. As the historical examples have demonstrated, these could interpenetrate creating the "German humour" of the Third Reich or the "black laughter" described by Levine as the 'carthartic, integrative ritual of laughter.'[8] Placing humour within this schema requires an analysis of the emotions contained within the humorous camouflage. I doubt, for example, that anyone actually laughed at the cartoons in *Jyllands-Posten* or in *Harper's Weekly* because their humour intended to elicit scorn or belittle the objects. These cartoons expressed aggression and contempt rather than joy.

Behind this interchange, to which Holm has drawn to our attention, lie the issues of globalisation and the media in a world system in which the rules about freedom and expression are impossible to disaggregate from the power relations which treat knowledge as a form of property, even as its purveyors speak of free speech or freedom of the press. Access to such freedoms is unequally distributed, and depends on unequal ownership, unequal access to resources, and lives within a long history of dominance and subordination, which any satire that aspires to promoting freedom needs to recognize and take into account. Like George W. Bush, Nast and the Danish cartoonists exhibited the hubris of seeing themselves only as defenders of freedom while failing to see that they were also its enemies by inflaming already volatile political situations. In both the historical and the contemporary context, the test would be to ask about the power relations humour upholds or undermines or creates. It is essential to consider the situatedness of satire, the satirist's standpoint, the elicited response of the intended consumers, and the position of the target. In

the case of *Jyllands-Posten*, whose freedom to express its views was never in doubt, the question would be asked: what freedom was advanced by their actions – and whose freedoms were eroded? Holm has raised important questions which should perplex and confound the liberal imagination.

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[1] Lawrence W. Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness:Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 300, 366; Patrick Merziger, "Humor in Nazi Germany: Resistance and Propaganda? The Popular Desire for All-Embracing Laughter," *International Review of Social History* 52: S15 (December 2007), 275-290, 289; Michael Cohen, "Cartooning Capitalism: Radical Cartooning and the Making of American Popular Radicalism in the Early Twentieth Century," *International Review of Social History* 52: S15 (December 2007), 35-58; Nghiem Lien Huong, "Jokes in a Garment Workshop in Hanoi: How Does Humour Foster the Perception of Community in Social Movements," *International Review of Social History* 52: S15 (December 2007), 209-233; Dennis Bos and Marjolein t'Hart, eds. *Humour and Social Protest: International Review of Social History Supplements* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008)

[2] Dolores E. Janiewski, *Seeing Reds: U.S. Conservatism and Red Scares, 1871-1964*, has just been submitted to Johns Hopkins University Press

[3] 63, above

[4] Flemming Rose, "Muhammeds ansigt," *Jyllands-Posten*, 30 September 2005

[5] Louis Kaplan, "'It Will Get a Terrific Laugh': On the Problematic Pleasures and Politics of Holocaust Humor," in *Hop on Pop: The Politics and Pleasures of Popular Culture*, eds. Henry Jenkins, Tara McPherson & Jane Shattuc (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 345

[6] 'Ridicule,' *The New International Webster's Comprehensive Dictionary of the English Language Encyclopedic Edition* (Chicago: J. G. Ferguson Publishing Company, 1999), 1083

[7] Cohen, "Cartooning Capitalism: Radical Cartooning and the Making of American Popular Radicalism in the Early Twentieth Century," 36; Natalie Zemon Davis, "The Reason of Misrule," in *Society and Culture in Early Modern France*, ed. Natalie Zemon Davis (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975), 77-123

[8] Levinem *Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom*, 366; Merziger, "Humor in Nazi Germany," 289

The Political Role of Freedom and Equality as Human Values

Marc Stewart Wilson & Christopher G. Sibley[i]

This paper summarises three empirical studies investigating the importance of Freedom and Equality in political opinion in New Zealand. The first two studies provide support for Rokeach's contention that followers of different political viewpoints may be differentiated by their relative endorsements of the values of freedom and equality.[1] These studies were conducted in New Zealand which, thanks to a change of electoral system, displays a degree of political heterogeneity absent from earlier tests of the hypothesis. Study one describes the result of content analysis of parliamentary speeches by representatives of five ideologically distinct political parties. Contrary to previous local findings (but consistent with overseas research) the parties were classifiable in their differential endorsement of the target values. The classification related systematically to the parties' positions in New Zealand political climate, with left-wing parties endorsing equality over freedom while the reverse was increasingly true of parties of the right. The second study shows that political preference may be predicted from respondents' responses to the Schwartz values inventory,[2] with particular importance attributed to the values of "universalism" and "self-direction". In both studies, "equality" is the more important in predicting political affiliation, while limited, the studies suggest that the two-factor model does successfully differentiate parties and their supporters in a multi-party context. Finally, we present a scale summarising the central and core elements of a social representation of individual versus group-based entitlement to resource-allocations in New Zealand (NZ), drawn from qualitative analyses of the discourses of NZ's citizens, its political elites, and the media. People who positioned equality as group-based tended to support the Labour and Green parties and those who positioned equality as meritocracy tended to support the National and NZ First parties. Taken together, these findings indicate that the *Equality*

[i] The authors wish to acknowledge the invaluable funding for this study provided by the Victoria University of Wellington Internal Grants Committee. Study one has been previously published in a different form as Wilson (2004) while study three has previously been published as Sibley and Wilson (2007, study two).

Positioning Scale provides a valid and reliable measure that contributes to models of the psychological and ideological bases of voting behaviour in NZ. Moreover, our findings suggest that the positioning of equality provided an axis of meaning that aided in the creation and mobilisation of public opinion regarding resource-allocations, land claims, affirmative action programs, and a host of other material issues in the months leading up to the 2005 NZ election

Values & Value-Systems

Perhaps the most frequently cited definition of what constitutes a human value is offered by Rokeach as an 'enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence.'[3] Rokeach argued that, considered together, values form values systems where a value system is 'an enduring organisation of beliefs concerning preferable modes of conduct or end-states of existence along a continuum of importance.'[4] Thus the importance of different values should co-vary with the importance of others in the value system. Human values are strongly prescriptive in nature and form the core around which other less enduring beliefs are organised. As such they are important in a range of other processes. For example, the formation of specific attitudes is presumed to be predicated upon more general values.

If attitudes are predicated upon value systems then by extension political attitudes are also predicated upon values. Indeed, Rokeach contended that the traditional left-right (liberal-conservative) continuum was not sufficient to differentiate (or make comparisons) between all the varieties of political ideologies active at the time.[5] In its place, Rokeach proposed that the minimum dimensions necessary to describe different ideologies was two, and outlined a programme of research intended to show that proponents of different political philosophies differ in their relative support for the two values of freedom and equality. For example, adherents of liberal democratic or socialist doctrine should endorse both values equally highly while the reverse is true of Nazist or fascist sympathisers, who should endorse neither. Differential endorsement of the two values is illustrated by Republican or right-wing supporters valuing freedom over equality and

communists favouring equality over freedom.

Rokeach found support for the two-value hypothesis in content analyses of the written works of idealogues commonly accepted as typifying different political persuasions.[6] Rokeach and his colleagues selected as representative of communist, capitalist, fascist, and socialist orientations the writings of Lenin, Goldwater, Hitler, and a number of socialist writers (the argument being that no one individual was sufficiently prototypal). A number of raters content analysed the four 25,000 word excerpts, making frequency counts of the occurrence of sentences containing synonyms for all of Rokeach's terminal and instrumental values. The final analysis compared the relative frequency rankings of all the values for each of the exemplars. The overall importance of freedom and equality was illustrated by the finding that they accounted for 45% of all terminal value occurrences. The relative frequencies seemed to support Rokeach's two-value model, with "freedom" and "equality" being ranked first and second (out of seventeen terminal values) most frequent respectively in the socialist excerpts, sixteenth and seventeenth for the Hitler (fascist) excerpts, first and sixteenth for Goldwater (capitalist), and seventeenth and first for Lenin (communist). Later studies by Rous and Lee,[7] using samples of American ideologues, and Mahoney, Coogle, and Banks,[8] using American presidential inaugural addresses, were consistent with the contention that freedom and equality defined two basic dimensions underlying the themes of the presenters.

Levine applied the two-value model in a content analysis of a selection of New Zealand political party programmes.[9] Simple frequency counts of the eighteen terminal values, including freedom and equality, specified by Rokeach[10] were calculated. Given the variations in the amount of campaign material for the different parties Levine rank ordered the frequency counts of the eighteen values for each party. National ranked freedom first, and equality second, while Labour ranked equality first and freedom third. The smaller parties sampled were differentiated to a greater extent, with Social Credit citing freedom and equality first and third, Socialist Unity fourth and first, and the Values Party endorsing the two values second and eighth respectively. Given the lack of parliamentary representation of the smaller parties it would appear that the middle ground of NZ politics at the time was characterised by Labour and National as system-supporting

centre parties.

Based on this literature there is general support for the differentiation of ideologies by these two primary values. Unfortunately, beyond the content analyses described previously there has been little consistent support for the proposition that supporters of the different political parties these ideologues represent may be differentiated in the same manner. Several studies, including a number by Rokeach himself, have found that equality was the only useful discriminator of the two values.[11] For example, Bishop, Barclay, and Rokeach administered the Rokeach Value Survey to a national probability sample and reported that endorsement of equality differentiated the sample according to their presidential preference but freedom did not.[12] The only application of this research in New Zealand was conducted by Ng and utilised discriminant analysis of value ratings of fee-paying members of the three major parties of the early eighties (National, Labour, and the now defunct Social Credit).[13] Ng found that discriminating values formed two dimensions. Labour and National were only distinguishable on one dimension, with Labour members valuing "equality", "justice", "broadmindedness", "a world of peace", and "friendship", while National members endorsed "obedience", "loving", "national security", "an exciting life", and "responsibility". Importantly the value of "freedom" was not a value significantly associated with either discriminant dimension, consistent with the body of critical literature already described.

Rokeach has countered the lack of supportive findings by suggesting that contemporary Western societies (of which America was considered the prototype) are characterised by a strong societal emphasis on freedom, and as a result are sufficiently politically homogeneous that only the smallest minority of the population might be expected to endorse freedom significantly less than equality.[14] While this may indeed be the case it is perhaps surprising that other values, for example "a world at peace", do consistently differ across political groups even though that value might be expected to be a dominant Western value as well. Indeed "a world at peace" is consistently endorsed more than "freedom".

If this is the case, why does freedom appear to be a value commonly alluded to in content analyses of conservative political discourse? It may be the case that the current socio-political context has given rise to a different emphasis on freedom.

Freedom may mean different things to different people and it may be that while freedom remains important, the content associated with it may have changed. At the height of the cold war it might be easier to explain the importance attributed to freedom by right-wing oration, but in contemporary New Zealand after a decade under increasing user-pays systems it may be the case that self-reliance is the dominant feature of individual freedom. For this reason, this research is intended to address the two-value hypothesis in a distinctly different context to that in which it was originally conceived. Additionally, the single-item measures used to test the two-value hypothesis have been criticised for their lack of reliability, as well as their validity in tapping into the complicated constructs that freedom and equality represent.[15] Using a multiple-item measure of the two values Mueller was able to successfully differentiate supporters, which indicates that the use of single-item measures may account for some of the non-findings in the two-value literature.

This paper, then, is devoted to investigation of the role values may play in political perception and preference. This investigation examines the speeches of political elites and prediction of survey respondent preference based on the values they hold to be important.

Study One: Values as Symbols in Political Rhetoric

The difference in relative endorsement of the two values by National and Labour found by Levine, which we would expect to be greater than he found, would lead us to categorise both National and Labour as approximately equally socialist in ideological orientation (high freedom, high equality).[16] While in retrospect this might be consistent with the political styles of the parties at the time it suggests that the New Zealand political environment is too homogeneous to make a thorough test of the two-value hypothesis. This is no longer the case – as the result of a change of electoral system in 1993 New Zealand now elects parliamentary representatives using a proportional representation system under which the allocation of parliamentary seats reflects the percentage (exceeding 5%) of the nationwide vote attained by each party. The immediate consequence of this change was that twenty-six political parties contested the 1996 election and six were successful in gaining parliamentary representation. In the decade preceding the change of system the

traditional party of the left (the New Zealand Labour party) fractured to produce the parties that would become the more left-wing Alliance, the centrist party United New Zealand and (ironically) the ACT party, which is perceived as even more right-wing than the traditional party of the right, National. National has suffered slightly less with a few solitary defections to United, the ill-fated Conservative party, and most importantly the loss (or ejection) of former National cabinet minister Winston Peters, whose New Zealand First party rocketed to a 1996 pre-election high as the second most popular party. Of particular relevance to this research is the ideological classification of the parties, which shows the parties to be spread across a left-right continuum, from the Alliance (far-left), Labour (centre-left), New Zealand First and United (both slightly left-of-centre), National (centre-right), and ACT (far-right).[17] The heterogeneity of the political climate allows for a more complete test of the two-value hypothesis.

Previous content analyses have been analytically limited in that, typically, examples of discourse are selected from only a few sources (however typical those sources may be of particular political viewpoints). This has meant that sophisticated statistical techniques have not been employed in analysis as samples fail to meet important assumptions. For example, Rokeach's analysis of political writings involved examination of the relative rankings of terminal and instrumental values, precluding analytic flexibility.[18] For the purposes of this study a more flexible approach was desirable, and the selection of samples from a number of sources (representing the different political parties) was intended to allow for a more rigorous investigation of the freedom-equality hypothesis.

Based on Rokeach's argument it was expected that in a politically heterogeneous environment representatives of different parties should be differentiable in terms of their use of "freedom" and "equality". Parties of the right (National, ACT) should value freedom over equality, while the reverse should be true of parties of the left (Labour and Alliance).

The data for this exercise was comprised of the ninety-three (thirteen Alliance, twenty-eight Labour, seventeen NZ First, twenty-seven National, e ACT) Address-in-Reply speeches given at the opening of the parliamentary session following the 1996 election. As only one United New Zealand candidate, Peter Dunne, had

survived the election, that one speech was omitted from further analysis. The Address-in-Reply debate contests the motion that the proposed government has the confidence of a majority of the elected party representatives in the House. Each speaker is allowed fifteen minutes (with the possibility of extension if there is no objection) to present a contribution, the content of which is relatively open (and indeed need not strictly follow party ideology). The Address-in-Reply speeches are commonly used to outline the members' vision for the term of their office, as well as to vilify the opposition.

Transcripts of the speeches are reproduced in the New Zealand weekly Hansard, the official record of New Zealand parliamentary debates. Parliamentary debates are transcribed from audio recordings of the parliamentary session, and are authorised as accurate by each speaker before printing. These transcripts were first photocopied, and then converted into a computer readable format using optical scanner and optical character recognition software. The final product comprised a word processor file of 218,349 words, with speeches averaging just over 2300 words.

Synonyms for "freedom" and "equality" were located from a number of sources. Appropriate synonyms were taken from Billig's value content analysis of fascist propaganda[19] and Rokeach's original content-analytic tests of the two-value model.[20] Additional synonyms were obtained from prominent authors on the topics of freedom and equality: Berlin[21] and Dixon.[22]

Values and their related synonyms were located and a tally kept of their occurrence for each speaker. Each synonym was considered in the context in which it occurred, and was only counted if its use in that context was consonant with either value. Reliability of coding was evaluated by a second rater, who coded a sample of ten speeches blind (references to the speaker were removed) using the same list of value synonyms. The second rater identified and agreed on 93% of value classifications. Discussion resulted in agreement on the remainder.

Analysis/Discussion

Though the inferential statistics in this study focus on the frequency of two values, "freedom" and "equality", it is appropriate to devote some time to the actual context and usage of these values. In both cases these values were referred to in two ways – the endorsement of the value, and criticism of the negation of the value. For example, those Members of Parliament (MPs) who endorsed equality and fairness (positive equality) were also likely to criticise favouritism, exploitation, and discrimination (negative equality). Similarly, those who endorsed freedom, autonomy, voluntary participation, and choice (positive freedom) were likely to criticise the use of compulsion, force, and legislative restriction (negative freedom). There were very few examples of MPs being critical of freedom or equality; in fact the only examples of criticism of positive values came from ACT and the Alliance. For example, ACT speakers denounced the teacher pay regime in which, it was argued, bad teachers were able to earn as much as good teachers, while Alliance speakers decried the freedom availed to overseas investors by the government to purchase shareholding in state resources, thereby depriving the people of New Zealand of the future value of these resources. Many references were couched in evocative terms. As the examples given above show, freedom became liberty, equality became fairness. Deprivation of freedom became slavery and compulsion. Deprivation of equality became discrimination and exploitation.

Throughout, speakers represent themselves as champions of positive values, and as opponents of the negative. To different degrees (as illustrated in the inferential results below) MPs tend to stand for positive usage of a value and oppose the negation of these values. For example, if National represents freedom then National MPs denounce Labour, the Alliance, and New Zealand First as wishing to deprive New Zealanders of their freedom to decide and to earn. Where the Alliance represents fairness and equality, National, New Zealand First (and even Labour) are criticised as seeking to deprive New Zealanders of a fair go. In some cases the lines become blurred – where does equality of opportunity stop being the freedom to achieve? Though few examples arose in the discourse used, it is apparent that these two values are not as distinct in their usage as they are in psychological theory. Attention needs to be paid not only to the frequency of usage, but also the manner of usage of potent values such as freedom and equality.

Figure 1 shows the mean number of value references ("freedom" and "equality" combined) made by the representatives of each party. On average, the Alliance and ACT speakers make more value references ("freedom" and "equality" combined) than do Labour, NZ First and National Speakers. A one-way ANOVA shows that the parties differ significantly in their value references,[ii] with Tukey range tests indicating that Alliance speakers make more value references than do Labour speakers.

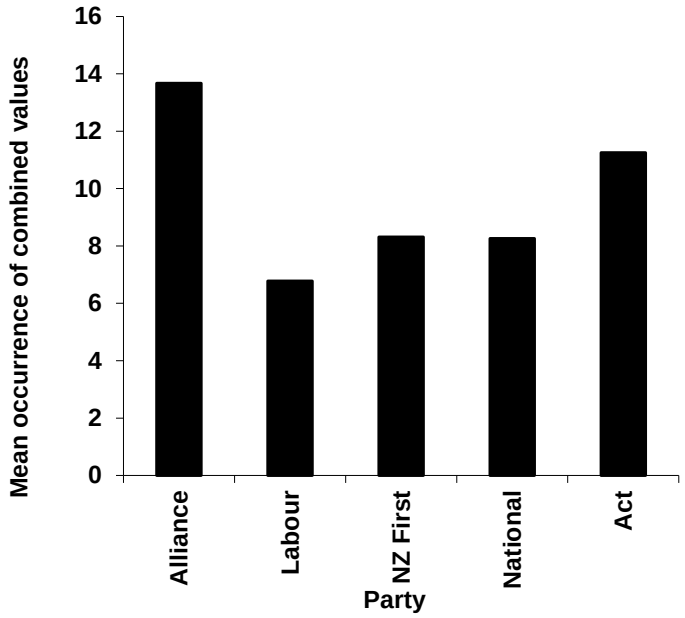

Figure 1: Mean occurrence of combined values per speech by party

It was found that frequencies of occurrence of each value were uncorrelated.[iii] The frequencies of each value for speakers from each party were analysed using MANOVA, showing main effects for party[iv] and value type,[v] as well as a significant party by value interaction.[vi] Overall, freedom value references occurred more frequently than equality values[vii] and Tukey post-hoc tests indicated that ACT

[ii] ($F(4,86)=2.39$, $p<.05$)
[iii] $r=.02$, $p=.44$ns
[iv] $F(4,86)=2.64$, $p<.05$
[v] $F(1,88)=10.13$, $p<.01$
[vi] $F(4,86)=6.27$, $p<.01$
[vii] $mean_{freedom}=5.96$, $mean_{equality}=3.70$

speakers used freedom values more frequently than their Labour counterparts,[viii] with Alliance, NZ First and National falling in between. Similarly, Alliance speakers used equality values more frequently than all other parties.

Figure 2 plots the mean frequency of mention for the two values by each party, where the parties are presented in the order of their ideological classification from left to right.[23]

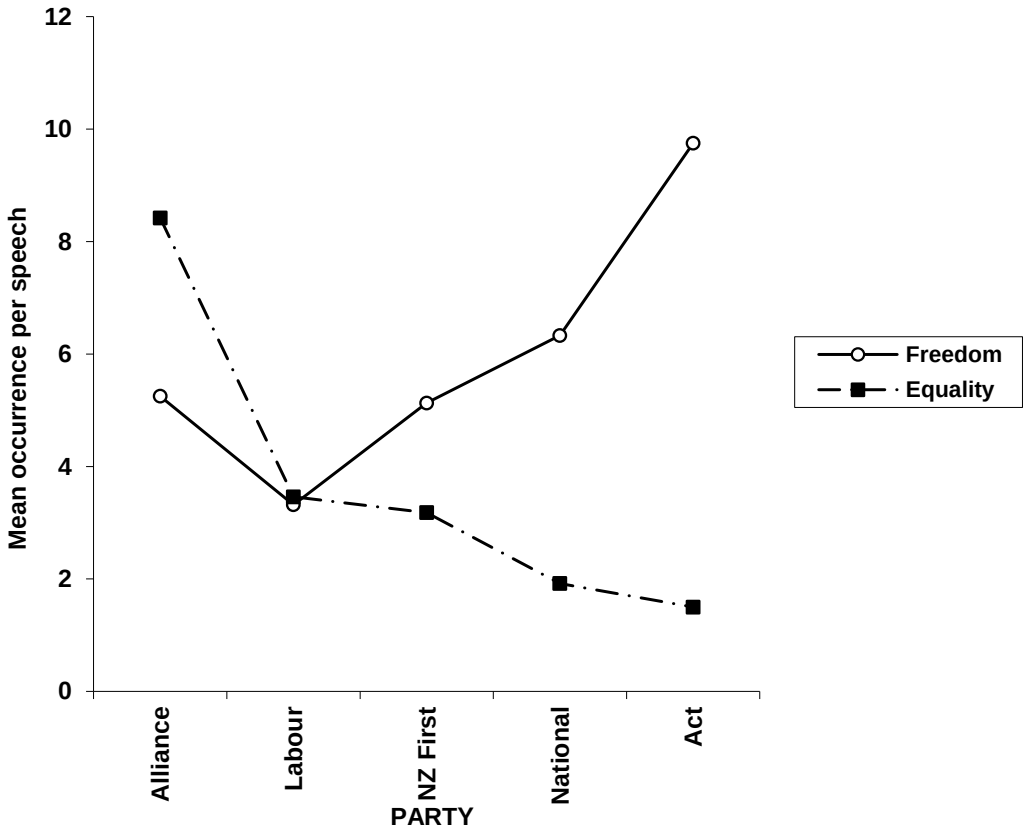

Figure 2: Average occurrence of Freedom and Equality value references for each party

There is a general trend for increasing reference of each value to follow the common perception of the party's places on the left-right dimension. For example, as mean frequency of "equality" references increases the parties are increasingly left wing, while (with the exception of the Alliance) the pattern is reversed for "freedom" references.

In order to test the relative discriminatory power of the two values, the "freedom"

[viii] $mean_{ACT}$=9.75, $mean_{Labour}$=3.32

and "equality" frequencies were used as predictors of political party representation using discriminant analysis.[24] The two discriminant functions obtained both achieved statistical significance with the first accounting for 79.3% of the between-groups variance[ix] and the second accounting for 20.7%.[x] The correlations between the predictor variables and the two canonical discriminant functions (referred to as discriminant loadings) were -.388 and .926 for "freedom", and .957 and .303 for "equality".

Based on this analysis, "equality" defines the first function while "freedom" defines the second. Therefore the relative endorsement of equality and, to a lesser extent, freedom can successfully differentiate between the party representatives. Figure 3 shows the group centroids (the group average on each function), indicating that the first (equality) function discriminates most strongly between the parties, with the parties falling in right-left ideological order. The Alliance is most clearly delineated by this function. There is less spread on function two (freedom) which is consistent with the lesser amount of classification variance accounted for.

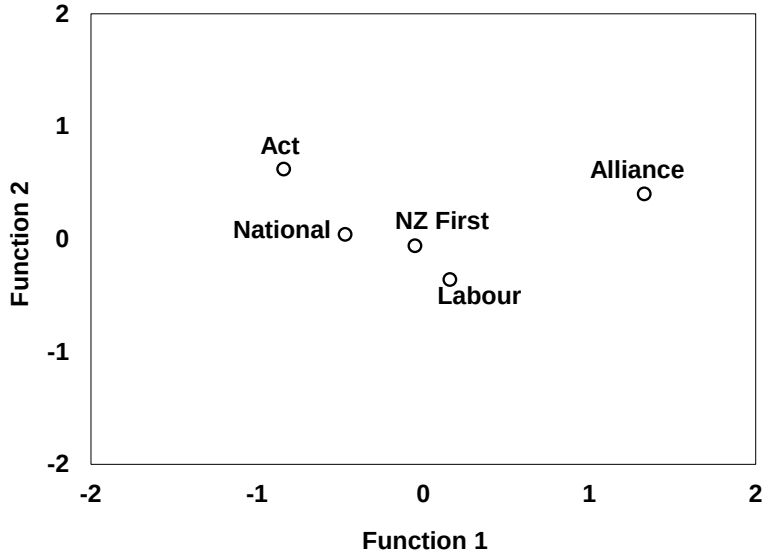

Figure 3: Discriminant map derived from MDA analysis of Freedom/Equality references

Additionally, the two significant functions derived accurately predicted 53% of the cases. This may be compared with the classification rate we might expect to occur at a chance level. If all five parties were equally represented that would be 20%,

[ix] $\chi^2(8)=36.95$, $p<.001$

[x] $\chi^2(3)=8.41$, $p<.001$

however as this is not the case it is appropriate to use the proportional chance rate which weights the chance according to the unequal group sizes.[25] In this case the proportional chance criterion is 23.9 or approximately 24%. Thus the obtained classification rate is significantly better than that expected at the chance level.[xi]

The classification table is reproduced in table 1 and shows the number of representatives that are correctly classified to the right party (note that the bold diagonal indicates the speakers correctly classified). The discriminant functions obtained provide equal or better than 50% classification of Alliance, Labour and ACT speakers while there is considerable confusion in the classification of National and NZ First speakers. National speakers are spread across the parties with more than half of the NZ First speakers being misclassified with the parties of the left (and 50% to Labour).

		Predicted Party				
		Alliance	Labour	NZ First	National	ACT
Actual Party	Alliance	**6 (50%)**	5 (41.7%)	1 (8.3%)	0(0%)	0 (0%)
	Labour	3 (10.7%)	**17 (60.7%)**	2 (7.1%)	5 (17.9%)	1 (3.6%)
	NZ First	2 (12.5%)	8 (50%)	**1 (6.3%)**	1 (6.3%)	4 (25%)
	National	1 (3.7%)	10 (37%)	1 (3.7%)	**9 (33.3%)**	6 (22.2%)
	Act	0 (0%)	1 (12.5%)	0 (0%)	1 (12.5%)	**6 (75%)**

Table 1: Classification table indicating speakers correctly classified on freedom/equality references

At the very least, the results of this content analysis provide some support for the contention that elite members of New Zealand's political parties differ in their endorsement of the key values of freedom and equality. Comparisons of the mean frequency of occurrence indicate that there are differences in endorsement of these two values, and that endorsement varies as a function of the value type as well as speaker affiliation. The results of the discriminant analysis indicate that while both values are related to political affiliation, a difference in the relative value accorded to equality is the primary dimension of difference in this analysis.

[xi] Press's Q=29.71, p<.001

Table 1 is useful in interpreting the value orientations of the political parties. Just as Billig and Cochrane found in their analysis of extremists and potential extremists, there is little overlap in the value profiles of those at opposite ends of the political spectrum, in this case ACT and the Alliance.[26] This is illustrated by the relative infrequency of mis-classification of speakers from these two parties as members of other parties, and particularly in that no Alliance speakers are misclassified as ACT speakers, and vice versa. The findings indicate that certainly the Alliance (and probably ACT – the sample of eight ACT speeches being too small to draw a concrete conclusion) speakers make more references ("freedom" and "equality" combined) than do their colleagues from the other parties. Again, this is consistent with the expectation of Billig and Cochrane that extremist parties rely more on the symbolic aspect of values to mobilise their constituency.[27] In doing so one assumes that their greater reliance on values (or the use of values in political rhetoric) is aimed at constituencies for whom values, or the symbolic and rhetorical content of values, are more extreme.

Both NZ First and National speakers are mis-classified at a high rate. One is inclined to interpret this not as a limitation of the theory or analysis but rather (with knowledge of the context) as an indication that these parties (and particularly NZ First) are experiencing a period in which their identities as distinct parties may be unstable. As the units of analysis are speeches given by individual speakers one can conclude that National is a party comprised of a number of factions – those who wish to occupy more of the political centre (vying with Labour), a similar number who wish to retain a unique National position, and a smaller number favouring a move further move to the right (closer to the position of ACT). On the other hand NZ First would appear to have more in common with Labour (with whom they were popularly considered most compatible), with half of the NZ First speakers being misclassified as Labour. The words of the late British Labour politician Aneurin Bevan would seem to sum up the position of NZ First; "we know what happens to people who stay in the middle of the road. They get run down."[28]

These results also illustrate the problems faced by the Labour party. Following an abortive coup lead by now deputy leader Michael Cullen, Labour poll support fell to the lowest point ever in the months leading up to the election. As the traditional party of the left they had suffered from the popularity of the Alliance, which had

been able to carve off the more radical left of the Labour support. The Alliance had also attracted the favour of welfare recipients who had been gutted by the welfare reforms of the fourth Labour government, then filleted by the refinement of those policies by National. Labour was unable to satisfactorily position itself in the eyes of voters- unable to claim the left wing without suffering identity conflict with the Alliance and unable to move too far to the centre while still retaining their traditional identity.

Of the parties analysed, all but Labour showed some preference for equality over freedom or vice versa. Sidanius has argued that it may be impossible to hold freedom and equality as equally important without suffering important contradictions.[29] The belief in equality must presuppose some negation of individual freedom; for example, absolute wage equality will see the individual denied the opportunity to earn more than their neighbour by working more hours than their neighbour. The equal endorsement of freedom and equality values by Labour may place them in a position leading to internal inconsistency in publicising their party platform. The most obvious example of this inconsistency is the Labour endorsement of free market reform while at the same time arguing for a more inclusive welfare policy.

The misclassification of NZ First speakers (primarily into Labour) hints at one of the problems faced by a National-NZ First administration. New Zealand First was generally expected to coalesce with Labour after the 1996 election, but ultimately co-aligned with National. Certainly, parts of the coalition agreement reflected a desire for a more equitable division of the spoils of an improving economy. In the end this proved futile, as National terminated the coalition more than a year out from the 1999 election.

An essential point to remember is that while this study presents a relatively descriptive analysis of the frequency of value references in parliamentary speeches, the implications go considerably further. It is not by chance that these parties endorse different values – it is by tradition and design that this comes to be. Rokeach has argued that equality and freedom are the foundation of modern political ideology because of the role they play in western democracies.[30] That is to say that freedom and equality are not only important in political discourse. Indeed

it is *because of* their social value that they are manipulated in political discourse.

As Rokeach has argued, freedom has characterised western democracy for centuries, and the quest for freedom has been manifest in any number of conflicts (e.g. the American war of independence, opposition to slavery world-wide, free-trade interventions). Similarly, equality has played a significant role in defining the Australian and New Zealand national identity – those that appear to stand out from the crowd elicit a swift negative response.[31]

The social relevance of these values spills over into the political world as well – the social and political worlds are not separate. For the past seventy years the National party has spent more time as government than any other. At the time of the election, the National party was completing its second consecutive term in office, marked by a dramatic growth in the number of welfare recipients, growing disparity between the rich and poor in New Zealand, increasing privatisation and sale of state assets to overseas buyers, and many other concerns.[32] It is no surprise that the call for a return to a time of greater equality defines the political platforms of the opposition parties. Similarly, the National party is appealing to the nation by emphasising the value that has aided their ascension in the past: one should be free to achieve what one desires. "Freedom" and "equality" are not simply values, but symbols themselves – they stand for something other than their strict denotation, they stand for the things that different constituencies desire.

This reflects the finding that people favouring collective responsibility tend to score lower on measures of anti-egalitarianism.[33] This means that National party supporters favour the retention of the systems and conventions that perpetuate social division in favour of the dominant group. On the other hand Labour, Alliance, and New Zealand First supporters favour reducing the gap between dominant and non-dominant groups (e.g. racial and social minorities, the underprivileged). Sidanius contends that one mechanism through which perpetuation of a hierarchical social system is justified by the dominant group is the use and propagation of legitimising myths that make social hierarchy seem necessary.[34] One example of such a myth is the meritocratic principle (that greater reward be a reflection of greater effort). Taking such a position allows one to argue that affirmative action policies are unfair not only to those who do not qualify for

affirmative action but those who do as well (they may suffer from unfair expectations of which they may not be worthy). Such a position allows one to argue that the CEO of a large company deserves a salary higher than the average wage because they work harder than the average wage earner. Similarly, anyone who works deserves to be paid more than someone who is unemployed. This type of argument is clearly apparent in the discourse analysed here.

Historically, such myths have proven highly persuasive – and notoriously difficult to counter. Opposition to such positions by necessity requires the mobilisation of other values; in the above example a potential opposition between the freedom to earn as much as one is able, and rejection in favour of fair distribution of resources and wealth. Clearly, these values are mobilised through discourse and the simple frequency counts presented in the results of this study illustrate, albeit superficially, such a mobilisation.

This raises the obvious point that political elites do not endorse different values simply because they are valued to some degree by different societal groups. This passive construction leaves elites at the whim of the electorate, and an unpredictable electorate at that. If, as Edelman points out, 'politics is concerned with … the authoritative allocation of values,'[35] then the discourse used in this study is not only reflecting the values perceived to be important; it is an active attempt to advocate for societal endorsement of particular values. In this case ACT endorses freedom because they wish the listener to give priority to that value, while the same holds for the Alliance endorsement of equality.

Study Two: Values as Predictors of Political Preference

The previous study provided support for the contention that political parties in New Zealand may be distinguished in terms of their party value system. The major parties were found to differ in their use of freedom and equality in parliamentary speeches. While this study provides an up to date, and more sensitive, test of the two-value hypothesis as applied to political rhetoric, an equally important question is whether it is possible to differentiate political party supporters by their endorsement of values, in particular freedom and equality. Therefore the aim of the

next study is to evaluate the importance of values, and freedom and equality values in particular, in political preference.

The sample for this study came from a series of surveys conducted over a one-year period (1995-1996). Of 247 electors (whose addresses were obtained from the public electoral roll) originally contacted concerning participation in the research, twenty-five were no longer contactable, and two were reported deceased. Reminders were sent out two weeks later to those who had not replied, and a second copy of the survey sent to those outstanding after a further two weeks. 157 surveys (61% of the original 247) were returned satisfactorily. Comparison of the sample's demographic characteristics with the 1996 national census indicated that, other than a slightly higher level of education and intentional over-sampling of non-European ethnic groups, the sample closely matches the profile of the sampled region.

Respondents completed a subset of the Schwartz values inventory.[36] The full inventory requires respondents to rate each one of fifty-six values in terms of their importance to the respondent as "guiding principles" in their lives. Thirty-seven items were selected for administration. Items were selected according to theoretical relevance to the study at hand (political perception). Each item includes a brief qualifying phrase or word. For example the value of self-discipline was qualified with 'self-restraint, resistance to temptation.' These values can be aggregated into a number of motivational domains reflecting the primary motivation those values serve.

The motivational domains sampled in this study were: **power** (represented by "social power", "authority", "wealth", "preserving my public image", and "social recognition"), **achievement** (represented by "successful", "ambitious", "influential", and "intelligent"), **self-direction** (represented by "curious", "freedom", "choosing own goals", and "independent"), **universalism** (represented by "protecting the environment", "a world of beauty", "broad-minded", "social justice", "wisdom", "equality", and "a world at peace"), **benevolence** (represented by "honest", "forgiving", and "responsible"), **tradition** (represented by "accepting my portion in life", "devout", "respect for tradition", and "moderate"), **conformity** (represented by "obedient", "honouring of parents and elders", "politeness", and

"self-discipline"), and **security** (represented by "clean", "national security", "reciprocation of favours", "social order", "family security", and "healthy").[xii]

The respondents were asked to rate each of the values on a nine-point scale indicating the relative importance of each value as a guiding principle in their lives. The scale runs from 'opposed to my values' through to 'of supreme importance.' Respondents were advised to read through the values once to determine which they considered most and least important, and to give those values the highest and lowest ratings respectively to encourage them to use the whole range of ratings.

Analysis/Discussion

The five most highly endorsed values were "family security",[xiii] "honesty",[xiv] "a world at peace",[xv] "responsible",[xvi] and "honouring of parents and elders"[xvii] which would suggest an emphasis on inter-relationships. The five least important values were "social power",[xviii] "preservation of public image",[xix] "devotion",[xx] "authority",[xxi] and "wealth"[xxii] which, while a little more difficult to describe, seem to encompass more individual level desires.

The relationship between values and political preference was investigated using discriminant analysis, with political preference the dependent variable and the values as predictors. Composite motivational domain scores were used as predictor variables. This has the statistical advantage of introducing fewer independent variables into the analysis and therefore preserving degrees of freedom. The

[xii] See Schwartz for the qualifiers of each value.
[xiii] Mean=7.46, SD=1.02
[xiv] Mean=7.24, SD=1.05
[xv] Mean=7.07, SD=1.35
[xvi] Mean=7.04, SD=1.02
[xvii] Mean=6.94, SD=1.21
[xviii] Mean=3.20, SD=1.58
[xix] Mean=4.82, SD=1.75
[xx] Mean=4.88, SD=2.12
[xxi] Mean=4.91, SD=1.59
[xxii] Mean=4.95, SD=1.38

reliability of composite scales may be subject to more rigorous testing than single-item measures, a criticism that has been levelled at the Rokeach Value Survey.[37] To this end Cronbach's alphas were calculated for each of the eight domains. Table 2 provides the alphas as well as the mean and standard deviation of the eight scale scores.

Value Domain	**α**	**Mean**	**SD**	**N**
Benevolence	.63	6.83	.87	154
Universalism	.82	6.58	.94	157
Self-direction	.72	6.53	.96	153
Conformity	.73	6.48	.99	153
Security	.63	6.45	.85	157
Achievement	.68	5.85	1.00	154
Tradition	.58	5.31	1.22	152
Power	.76	4.74	1.13	153

Table 2: Cronbach's Alpha, mean, standard deviation and N for each Schwartz value domain

The alphas reported above compare favourably with the reliabilities reported by Schwartz across his samples, particularly given the reduced pool of items from some domains. Additionally, the mean reliability of .69 is comparable the majority of the samples reported by Schwartz.

A direct discriminant function analysis was performed using the eight value domain variables as predictors of the parties perceived as best representing the respondent. 120 respondents completed the question 'which party do you intend to vote for with your party vote in the October 12th election?' 107 respondents named one of the four major parties, with the remaining thirteen respondents splitting between six minor parties. For this reason only the 107 major-party identifiers were retained for the analysis, and of those fourteen respondents were eliminated with missing data. Ninety-three respondents were used in the analysis. Evaluation of assumptions for multivariate analysis revealed no obvious violations and a Box's M test for equality of variance of group covariance matrices indicated no

significant differences.

Of the three discriminant functions calculated, two were found to be significant. The first discriminant function accounted for 58%[xxiii] and 28%[xxiv] of the between group-variability. The two significant discriminant functions correctly predict the responses of 58% of the respondents (significantly better than chance[xxv]).

Value Domain	Function 1	Function 2
Security	.45	.08
Power	.38	.02
Conformity	.27	-.14
Tradition	.26	-.25
Universalism	-.37	.30
Self-direction	-.05	-.38
Achievement	.07	-.22
Benevolence	.10	.10

Table 3: Pooled within-groups correlations between variables and canonical discriminant functions

Table 3 displays the correlations between the discriminating variables and the two significant canonical discriminant functions. The first discriminant function is primarily defined by three value domains;[38] **security**, **power**, and **universalism**. While the second discriminant function is defined primarily by **self-direction** and **achievement**.

Figure 4 plots the centroids of the four groups against each discriminant function. The first function differentiates between Labour and the Alliance on the one hand, and NZ First and National on the other. Thus National and NZ First respondents tend to endorse **security**, **power**, and to a lesser degree **conformity** and **tradition**, while attributing less importance to **universalism**.

[xxiii] $\chi^2(24)=53.5$, $p<.001$

[xxiv] $\chi^2(14)=23.7$, $p<.05$

[xxv] Press's Q=27.13, $p<.01$

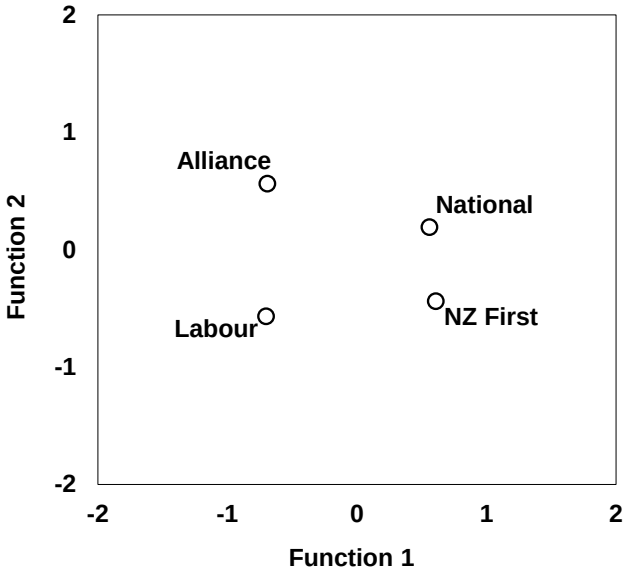

Figure 4: Discriminant map derived from MDA of value domain scores and political preference

The second function discriminates between the Alliance and National on the positive side, and Labour and NZ First on the negative. This function is defined most strongly by the **self-direction** domain, and more weakly by **achievement**. Respondents indicating Alliance and National tended to endorse these two values more than Labour and NZ First respondents.

There was a significant difference on the first discriminant function[xxvi] with Tukey range tests indicating that proponents of Labour and Alliance scored significantly more negatively than National and NZ First supporters at the 5% level. Range tests for the second discriminant function[xxvii] indicated that Labour supporters' function scores were lower than National and Alliance, while NZ First supporters scores were lower than Alliance at the 5% level.

The analyses above support the contention that values are related to political preference as expected. There was only weak support for the specific expectation that freedom and equality-related values would be the best predictors of support for different political parties in New Zealand. Table 3 shows that support for the four major parties of the time can be predicted using two value dimensions. The first

[xxvi] $F(3, 89)=12.32$, $p<.001$
[xxvii] $F(3,89)=5.89$, $p<.01$

dimension is strongly defined at the positive pole by support for **security** and **power** values, and at the negative pole by support for **universalism** values. In the context of Schwartz' theory of value structure the opposition of these value domains is quite consistent – Schwartz' international study of values resulted in a two-dimensional value space in which the **universalism** motivational domain is directly opposed to **security** and **power**.[39]

Given that the content of the **universalism** domain stresses equality, justice and tolerance, this would seem to mirror Rokeach's original suggestion that equality values define one dimension of political positioning.[40] The second dimension is defined most strongly at the negative pole by endorsement of **self-direction** and **achievement** values, opposed (weakly) by **benevolence** values. Given that the content of the **self-direction** domain (including "freedom", "independence", and "curiosity") seems closest in spirit to Rokeach's concept of freedom this would give cautious support for the two-value model of politics.

Once more though, it is the dimension defined at one pole by the domain of **universalism** (equality values) that is the best discriminator between parties. This is in line with the findings of the political rhetoric analysis in the first study of this paper, that equality was the primary discriminator between political speakers, with freedom playing very much a secondary role, and we go on below to consider the use of equality in the debate over allocation of resources in New Zealand in more recent times.

It is worthwhile at this point to note that the two poles of the primary domain are consistent with the contention made by Braithwaite that political parties may be differentiated using the constructs of "international security and harmony" and "national strength and order", or in this study **universalism** and **security**.[41] According to Braithwaite these two dimensions function independently (in the same way that Rokeach argued freedom and equality function)[42] such that different levels of endorsement relate to different political positions. The fact that these are the two poles of a single dimension in this study suggests that, if representative, Braithwaite's contention may not be applicable to complex political systems such as New Zealand's.

If there is one concern over the tentative support these studies provide it is this: while the target values do differentiate supporters and representatives in the predicted direction, there is little evidence of the Low/Low or High/High combinations utilised by Rokeach.[43] This is not entirely surprising – fascist or communist ideologies still do not enjoy any real popularity, which is not entirely undesirable given the historical baggage associated with these positions. This does not mean that such parties are not covertly or overtly represented on the ballot sheet; rather, they are not perceived as attractive voting options. This leads to the question of whether Low/Low or High/High combinations are unpopular – they are certainly extreme in the political values these studies tap.

Study Three: Equality Positioning and Political Behaviour in the 2005 General Election

As the previous studies suggest, values such as equality possess meanings that are by no means fixed, and this symbolic "slippage" both lends itself to rhetorical use by political elites, as well as muddying the waters of everyday discourse around political matters. In this final section we focus on equality, given its established importance not only in the New Zealand political context but internationally. There has been considerable political debate regarding issues of who gets what in contemporary New Zealand society. Such debate is often characterised by an underlying tension between contrasting ideologies of equality. On the one hand, some definitions prescribe that equality should be based on principles of meritocracy that emphasise the individual's freedom to pursue economic self-interest and the right to have their worth determined based solely upon their individual merit. On the other hand, some definitions emphasise that equality should consider group differences, whereby it may be necessary to allocate resources on the basis of group membership in order to reduce categorical disadvantages experienced by some groups within society.

As various commentators have suggested, the positioning of equality provided a central axis that organised much of the political debate regarding tax cuts, the role and function of the Treaty of Waitangi, and affirmative action policy in the months leading up to the 2005 NZ general election.[44] Consistent with these observations,

we argue that ideologies of equality and issues of who gets what were central to the NZ 2005 election campaign in much the same what that ideologies of national security and the war on terrorism were central to election campaigns in the United States (US) that occurred at around the same time. However, as Jost recently concluded, although trends in the ideologies that govern voting behaviour and political attitudes are often commented upon anecdotally, systematic quantitative research validating such observations remains limited.[45]

We therefore sought to explore the impact of the ideological positioning of equality on the political party preferences of the majority ethnic group in NZ (Pakeha, or NZ Europeans[xxviii]) in the months leading up to the 2005 NZ general election. To do this, we developed a measure of individual differences in value framing, which we term "e*quality positioning*". The Equality Positioning Scale summarises the core elements of an ideology of equality and entitlement specifically for use in the NZ socio-political environment. Items contained in the scale are adapted from a variety of NZ-specific sources, including both our own earlier qualitative work,[46] the insightful and content rich qualitative work on race talk of Nairn and McCreanor,[47] Wetherell and Potter[48] and others, as well as political speeches made in the years preceding the 2005 NZ general election (e.g., Brash, 2004[49]).

Political Ideology in the New Zealand Context

In the 2005 NZ general election, National and Labour achieved a remarkably similar endorsement from the nation, with Labour receiving 41.1% of the nationwide vote, and National coming in a close second with 39.1%. The next two highest ranking parties were the NZ First party (self-styled as centrist but primarily conservative) with 5.7%, and the Green Party (a liberal party that focuses on environmental issues) with 5.3%.[50] With the support of a number of smaller parties (primarily the Greens), Labour formed their third consecutive government – an

[xxviii] There is currently considerable debate in New Zealand regarding the most appropriate name for New Zealanders of European descent. Although New Zealand European is the most popular term (Liu et al., 1999), Pakeha is the term that most strongly implies a relationship with Maori and hence seems most appropriate for this paper.

unprecedented achievement for a Labour party.

Research indicates that support for the National versus the Labour party differs amongst middle income voters (the majority of the NZ population) because of perceived ideological differences. Support for smaller and more extreme parties, in contrast, has been described as governed more directly by economic self-interest – analyses of a random sample of voters conducted in 1997 indicated, for example, that the belief that people (both oneself and others) have the ability to determine their economic situation (and the related implication that equality is most appropriately defined as meritocracy) predicted increased support for National versus Labour.[51]

The Labour agenda over the preceding few years had been marked by an egalitarian disposition toward government spending and legislation. For example, one of Labour's high profile policies during their term in government in 2000 was the "Closing the Gaps" policy, focused on identifying and addressing areas in which Maori (the indigenous peoples of NZ) were underperforming relative to Pakeha. Maori are disadvantaged relative to Pakeha on most indicators of social and economic well-being; Maori form 16% of the total population and 50% of the prison population; they earn 16% less income, and their life expectancy is 8 years lower.[52] However, following concerted expressions of opposition from other political parties, and a significant number of mainstream (primarily Pakeha) New Zealanders, the policy was dropped.

A common argument presented when arguing against "Closing the Gaps" was that resources should be allocated on the basis of need rather than ethnic group membership, and that the policy implemented by the Labour government was effectively advantaging Maori over other New Zealanders. Dr. Don Brash, the leader of the National Party at the time of the 2005 election, mobilised similar discourses framing equality as meritocracy in his Nationhood speech delivered to the Orewa rotary club in early 2004. Brash argued, for example, that 'we are one country with many peoples, not simply a society of Pakeha and Maori where the minority has a birthright to the upper hand, as the Labour Government seems to believe.'[53] Here we see the emphasis placed on treating all people equally as individuals, and the related implication that not to do so would be unjust and unfair

to other individuals (presumably because they do not have 'a birthright to the upper hand'). This indicates, among other things, how common sense symbols like "equality" can be used to support *and* oppose the same initiative.

The Ideology of Equality

"Equality" can be used to refer to distributive justice rules that emphasise individual merit (the merit principle) or rules that consider target group membership. As numerous researchers have noted, the value of equality has the potential to cut both ways depending upon how notions of fairness are positioned to legitimise or oppose the allocation of resources, outcomes, or other treatments that consider or are seen to be otherwise contingent upon group membership.[54] At one extreme, equality may be constructed as meritocracy, whereby outcomes or treatments that consider group membership as a criterion are framed as biased and potentially discriminatory toward individuals who belong to other (typically majority) groups.[55] Instead, the notion of equality-as-meritocracy emphasises individual merit (performance and ability) as the governing factor that should determine issues of who gets what. Conversely, in situations where there is a gap between minority and majority group members in terms of social and/or economic wellbeing, distributive justice rules that consider minority group membership may be a viable means of increasing social equality. Presumably, it was observations of this latter type that led the Labour government to propose their "Closing the Gaps" policy initiative in the first place.

Research in both NZ and Australia has shown that people tend to emphasise notions of equality-as-meritocracy when expressing opposition toward affirmative action and reparation in natural discourse. Such discourses typically argue that the consideration of group membership as a criterion for determining resource allocations may constitute preferential treatment or even reverse discrimination.[56] Discourses of this type are often unmarked and position affirmative action as a form of "preferential treatment" that subverts the principle of meritocracy, dividing people along ethnic (or other stratification) lines. People also often raise concerns that affirmative action may risk an increase in social unrest and thus exacerbate rather than reduce prejudice.[57] Such observations emphasise the polemic way in

which value descriptions can be positioned in order to manage ideological dilemmas resulting from discrepancies between the allocation of material resources and existing social inequality.[58]

We therefore developed a self-report measure assessing the degree to which individuals adopt a prescriptive norm in which equality is positioned as being based on individual- versus group-merit, and examined the predictive validity of this measure for understanding differences in political party preference. Consistent with the societally elaborated standard discourses of equality identified by Sibley, Liu, and Kirkwood in work assessing opposition to affirmative action programs, we define this measure of equality positioning as assessing the degree to which people construe equality as meritocracy (as being based solely on individual merit), versus the degree to which people construe equality as a process whereby it may sometimes be necessary to allocate resources on the basis of group membership rather than individual merit per se in order to redress categorical disadvantages currently experienced by ethnic minorities.[59] We argue that equality positioning in the NZ context constitutes an *ideology*, as defined by Rokeach,[60] who argued that 'an *ideology* is an organisation of beliefs and attitudes – religious, political, or philosophical in nature – that is more or less institutionalised or shared with others, deriving from external authority.'

Political debate in the months leading up to the 2005 NZ elections centred on a number of issues, much of which was ideological in nature, at least to the extent that different political parties and politicians sought to promote their own polices and denigrate those of their opponents through reference to ideological differences. To the extent that the positioning of equality as individual- versus group-based provided an axis of meaning that aided in the creation and mobilisation of public opinion in the months leading up to the 2005 NZ election, individual differences in equality positioning should differentiate between support for political parties understood to be more liberal (Labour and the Greens) and those understood to be more conservative (National and NZ First). Specifically, we hypothesise that people low in equality positioning will express increased levels of support for the Labour and Green parties, whereas people high in equality positioning will display the opposite trend and express increase support for the National and NZ First parties.

Development of the Equality Positioning Scale

Participants in the initial test of the Equality Positioning Scale were 259 NZ-born undergraduate students who participated for partial course credit and who self-identified as NZ European/Pakeha (the majority ethnic group in NZ). Participants (sixty-two males and 197 females) ranged from eighteen to fifty-five years of age.[xxix] This research was conducted approximately two months before the NZ general election which occurred in September 2005. All participants were NZ citizens who were eighteen years of age or older, and were thus eligible to vote in the upcoming election.

The Equality Positioning Scale	Factor Loadings	
	Study 1	Study 2
1. We are all one nation and we should all be treated the same. No one should be entitled to anything more than the rest of us simply because they belong to one particular ethnic group.	.84	.78
2. It is wrong for any one minority to be provided with additional resources because of their ethnicity. Equality means treating all people equally regardless of whether they identify as Maori, NZ European, Asian, or any other ethnic group currently living in New Zealand.	.83	.83
3. We should provide additional resources and opportunities to ethnic minorities with a history of disadvantage in order to promote genuine equality in the future. (r)	.81	.86
4. True equality can only be achieved once we recognise that some ethnic groups are currently more disadvantaged than others and require additional assistance from the government. (r)	.81	.84
5. Given that the economic playing field in New Zealand is not truly level, it is only fair to provide disadvantaged ethnic minorities with additional resources in the here and now so as to make things more equal in the long term. (r)	.78	.81
6. Everyone should be judged solely on their individual merits. People should not be given additional rights simply because of their ethnicity, even if they do belong to a 'disadvantaged' group.	.77	.79
7. We are all New Zealanders and the law should *not* make provision for minority groups because of their ethnicity.	.77	.78
8. The government should devote extra resources to disadvantaged ethnic groups in order to help them overcome the effects of past discrimination and inequality. (r)	.74	.79

Table 4. Item content and factor loadings for the Equality Positioning Scale.[xxx]

[xxix] $M = 20.08$, $SD = 4.77$

[xxx] *Note.* Study 1: $n = 259$ self-identified Pakeha, Study 2: $n = 150$ self-identified Pakeha, *(r)* = item is reverse coded so that a low score on this item (e.g., a rating of 0) was coded as a high score (e.g., a rating of 6), and vice-versa.

Equality positioning was measured using the eight items shown in Table 4. These eight items were adapted from a variety of sources, primarily recent NZ political speeches[xxxi] and qualitative responses and summaries of responses described in earlier work on "race talk" in NZ.[61] Items were also revised to give a balanced number of pro and con trait statements, as the discourses from which items were adapted tended to be pro-trait in nature. Items were rated on a scale ranging from 0 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). Higher scores indicated increased endorsement of ideologies positioning equality and fairness as being based on individual (rather than group) merit. As shown in Table 4, exploratory factor analysis indicated that the items assessing equality positioning all loaded on a single dimension.[xxxii] Interpretation of the scree plot also supported a unidimensional solution, as the eigenvalues displayed a steeply decreasing trend that levelled out after the first value.[xxxiii] This unidimensional solution accounted for 62.79% of the total variance in item ratings, was normally distributed,[xxxiv] and internally reliable.[xxxv]

Equality Positioning and Political Preference Leading up to the 2005 General Election

Having developed the scale, we set out to examine the unique effects of equality positioning on political party preference, controlling for a set of predictors that have been shown to relate to attitudes toward ethnic groups and bicultural policy in NZ specifically (in addition to also controlling for SDO and RWA). Namely, we controlled for pro-majority (i.e., pro-Pakeha) ethnic group attitudes and attitudes toward the symbolic principles of biculturalism.

Pro-majority ethnic group attitudes have been shown to predict increased levels of anti-minority ethnic group attitudes in both NZ[62] and elsewhere.[63] Given that equality positioning is distinct from more generalised pro-ingroup ethnic attitudes,

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[xxxi] e.g. Brash's Orewa speech

[xxxii] factor loadings > .74

[xxxiii] eigenvalues: 5.02, 1.02, .43, .39, .33

[xxxiv] *kurtosis* = -.17, *skewness* = -.19

[xxxv] α = .91

it should predict unique variance in political party preference once such attitudes have been controlled. Attitudes toward the symbolic principles of biculturalism, in contrast, assess the degree to which people are supportive of the incorporation of Maori values and culture into mainstream (primarily Pakeha) NZ culture and national identity. Sibley and Liu have argued that attitudes toward the symbolic aspects of biculturalism are distinct from attitudes toward material interests relating to bicultural policy, at least in contexts like New Zealand where biculturalism is part of the national ideology for governance.[64] If attitudes toward the symbolic and resource-specific aspects of biculturalism are indeed distinct from one another, then equality positioning (which assesses attitudes toward the allocation of material resources) should predict additional variance in political party preference once attitudes toward the symbolic principles of biculturalism have been controlled.

Participants were 146 NZ born undergraduate students who participated for partial course credit and who self-identified as NZ European/Pakeha. Participants (fifty-three males and ninety-three females) ranged from eighteen to fifty-five years of age.[xxxvi] This research was conducted in July 2005. All participants were NZ citizens who were eighteen years of age or older, and were thus eligible to vote in the upcoming election.

Participants were asked to indicate their level of support for each of the political parties contesting the election. SDO was measured using the full 16-item SDO_6 scale.[65] RWA was measured using a shortened set of sixteen balanced items from Altemeyer's scale.[66] Positive intergroup attitudes toward Pakeha were assessed using eight items from Duckitt and Parra's NZ ethnic attitude scale.[67] Attitudes toward the symbolic principles of biculturalism were assessed using the five-item scale developed by Sibley et al.,[68] measuring the degree to which people were supportive of the incorporation of Maori values and culture into mainstream (primarily Pakeha) NZ culture and identity. Equality positioning was measured using the scales described previously. Consistent with Table 4, exploratory factor analysis indicated that the items assessing equality positioning all loaded on a single dimension.[xxxvii] Interpretation of the Scree plot supported a unidimensional

[xxxvi] $M = 21.38$, $SD = 4.55$

[xxxvii] factor loadings > .78

solution, as the eigenvalues displayed a steeply decreasing trend that levelled out after the first value.[xxxviii] This unidimensional solution accounted for 65.74% of the total variance in item ratings, was normally distributed[xxxix] and internally reliable.[xl] All items were rated on a scale ranging from 0 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree).

Analysis/Discussion

The Equality Positioning Scale provided an internally reliable and normally distributed measure assessing the degree to which New Zealanders believe that equality should be determined on the basis of group versus individual merit. The scale was balanced, and analyses indicated that con- and pro-trait item aggregates were strongly negatively correlated prior to the con-trait items being reverse scored.[xli] Furthermore, all items loaded strongly on a single underlying dimension. These findings suggest that the positioning of group- versus individual-based merit reflect opposing aspects of a single underlying ideological continuum, rather than distinct, albeit correlated, belief dimensions, at least in the NZ context. Thus, it is unlikely that New Zealanders will tend to endorse allocations on the basis of both individual and group merit; rather our results indicate that these two positions are mutually exclusive, and individuals will be more likely to adopt one of these ideological positions at the expense of the other.

Associations between Equality Positioning and Political Party Preference

Correlations between self-identified Pakeha respondents' levels of equality positioning, SDO, RWA, support for biculturalism in principle, pro-majority ethnic group attitudes and support for NZ political parties are shown in Table 5. Equality positioning was negatively correlated with support for the Labour and Green

[xxxviii] eigenvalues: 5.36, .95, .41, .37, .31

[xxxix] *kurtosis* = -.31, *skewness* = -.24

[xl] α = .92

[xli] *r's* of around -.70

parties,[xlii] and positively correlated with support for National and NZ First parties.[xliii] These results indicate that the equality positioning scale differentiated between Pakeha who supported political parties understood to be more liberal (Labour and the Greens) or more conservative political parties (National and NZ First).

Scale		1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
1.	Equality positioning									
2.	Social Dominance Orientation (SDO)	.26*								
3.	Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA)	.14	.44*							
4.	Support for biculturalism in principle	-.38*	-.40*	-.18*						
5.	Pro-majority ethnic group attitudes	.55*	.46*	.33*	-.51*					
6.	Support for the Labour Party	**-.50***	-.21*	-.26*	.31*	-.34*				
7.	Support for the Green Party	**-.33***	-.29*	-.36*	.30*	-.37*	.52*			
8.	Support for the National Party	**.38***	.30*	.25*	-.29*	.43*	-.50*	-.39*		
9.	Support for the NZ First Party	**.31***	.32*	.25*	-.31*	.43*	-.19*	-.19*	.47*	
	M	3.65	1.60	1.83	4.03	3.12	3.37	3.11	2.84	2.26
	SD	1.22	.86	.82	1.24	.71	1.32	1.56	1.56	1.50
	Cronbach's Alpha	.92	.90	.89	.87	.72	-	-	-	-

Table 5. Descriptive statistics and correlations between equality positioning, SDO, RWA, pro-majority ethnic group attitudes, biculturalism in principle, and support for NZ political parties two months prior to the 2005 general election.[xliv]

Equality positioning was moderately positively correlated with SDO,[xlv] but not significantly correlated with RWA.[xlvi] Equality positioning was also moderately negatively correlated with support for the symbolic principles of biculturalism,[xlvii] and strongly positively correlated with Pakeha pro-ingroup ethnic attitudes.[xlviii] As expected, SDO, RWA, and pro-majority ethnic attitudes were also moderately negatively correlated with support for the Labour and Green parties, and positively correlated with support the National and NZ First parties, whereas support for the

[xlii] $r(144) = -.50$, $p < .01$; $r(144) = -.33$, $p < .01$, respectively

[xliii] $r(144) = .38$, $p < .01$; $r(144) = .31$, $p < .01$

[xliv] *Note.* * = $p < .05$; $n = 146$ self-identified Pakeha university students for all correlations. Scores for all variables ranged from 0 to 6.

[xlv] $r(144) = .26$, $p < .01$

[xlvi] $r(144) = .14$, $p = .10$

[xlvii] $r(144) = -.38$, $p < .01$

[xlviii] $r(144) = .55$, $p < .01$

symbolic principles of biculturalism displayed the opposite pattern of correlations (see Table 5).

Unique Effects of Equality Positioning on Political Party Preference

Hierarchical multiple regression was used to examine the shared and unique variance in political party preferences predicted by SDO and RWA (Step 1), pro-majority ethnic group attitudes (Step 2), support for biculturalism in principle (Step 3), and equality positioning (Step 4). As shown on the top left side of Table 6, the linear combination of SDO and RWA entered at Step 1 predicted 7% of the variance in support for the Labour party.[xlix] The entry of pro-majority ethnic group attitudes at Step 2 predicted an additional 6% of the variance in support for the Labour party,[l] bringing the *adjusted* R^2 for the model up to .12. The entry of support for the symbolic principles of biculturalism at Step 3 predicted an additional 3% of the variance,[li] bringing the *adjusted* R^2 for the model up to .14. Finally, as predicted, the entry of equality positioning at Step 4 predicted an additional 14% of the variance in support for the Labour party above and beyond all other predictors,[lii] yielding an *adjusted* $R^2$of .28 for the final model. As with Study 1, the direction of this effect indicated that people who scored higher on equality positioning (and thus tended to construe equality as meritocracy) were more likely to oppose the Labour party in the upcoming election.

	Support for Labour Party		**Support for National Party**	
	β (*SE*)	R^2 *adj.*	*β* (*SE*)	R^2 *adj.*
Step 1: SDO	.03 (.13)		.08 (.17)	
RWA	-.19 (.13)*	.07*	.10 (.16)*	.09*
Step 2: Pro-majority ethnic group attitudes	.03 (.18)	.12*	.22 (.22)*	.19*
Step 3: Biculturalism in principle	.13 (.09)	.14*	-.05 (.11)	.19
Step 4: Equality positioning	-.45 (.09)*	.28*	.21 (.11)*	.21*

[xlix] *adjusted* R^2 = .07, $F(2,143) = 6.03$, $p < .01$

[l] ΔR^2 = .06, $F_{change} = (1,142) = 9.55$, $p < .01$

[li] ΔR^2 = .03, $F_{change} = (1,141) = 4.33$, $p < .05$

[lii] ΔR^2 = .14, $F_{change} = (1,140) = 27.60$, $p < .01$

	Support for Green Party		Support for NZ First Party	
	β (*SE*)	R^2 *adj.*	β (*SE*)	R^2 *adj.*
Step 1: SDO	.04 (.16)		.11 (.16)	
RWA	-.26 (.16)*	.14*	.08 (.16)*	.11*
Step 2: Pro-majority ethnic group attitudes	-.11 (.22)*	.19*	.26 (.22)*	.19*
Step 3: Biculturalism in principle	-.11 (.11)	.19	-.08 (.11)	.20
Step 4: Equality positioning	-.18 (.11)*	.21*	.10 (.11)	.20

Table 6. Hierarchical regression analyses predicting support for NZ political parties two months prior to the 2005 general election.[liii]

Equality positioning also predicted unique variance in support for the National party, however, the effects of equality positioning were in the opposite direction to those observed when predicting support for the Labour and Green parties. Those who scored higher on equality positioning (and thus tended to construe equality as meritocracy) were more likely to express support for the National party in the upcoming election. The linear combination of SDO and RWA entered at Step 1 predicted 9% of the variance in support for the National party.[liv] The entry of pro-majority ethnic group attitudes at Step 2 predicted an additional 10% of the variance in support for the National party,[lv] bringing the *adjusted* R^2 for the model up to .19. The entry of support for the symbolic principles of biculturalism at Step 3 failed to significantly predict additional variance.[lvi] Finally, as predicted, the entry of equality positioning at Step 4 predicted additional variance (3%) in support for the National party above and beyond all other predictors,[lvii] yielding an *adjusted* $R^2$of .21 for the final model.

[liii] *Note.* Analyses were based on data from 146 self-identified Pakeha university students; standardised regression coefficients (β), standard errors (*SE*), and *t*-values displayed for the Step 4 model. The adjusted R^2 (R^2 *adj.)* is displayed for each step, the significance of the *adjusted* R^2 indicates whether the linear combination of variables entered at that step predicted significant additional variance in the dependent measure of interest (rather than whether the overall model was significant at each step). * $p < .05$.

[liv] *adjusted* $R^2 = .09$, $F(2,143) = 8.49$, $p < .01$

[lv] $\Delta R^2 = .10$, $F_{change} = (1,142) = 17.22$, $p < .01$

[lvi] $\Delta R^2 < .01$, $F_{change} = (1,141) = .76$, $p = .39$

[lvii] $\Delta R^2 = .03$, $F_{change} = (1,140) = 5.50$, $p = .02$

As shown on the lower left side of Table 6, equality positioning also predicted unique variance in levels of support for the Green party. These results were similar to those predicting support for Labour. Inspection of the regression model predicting support for the NZ First party (presented in the lower right side of Table 6) suggested that the origins of support for this party differed from those of the other three political parties. In short, the Pakeha included in this sample were motivated primarily by RWA and SDO combined with high levels of pro-ingroup ethnic attitudes. Equality positioning failed to predict additional variance in support for NZ First beyond that already predicted by the SDO, RWA, and pro-majority ethnic group attitudes.

Pakeha low in equality positioning were more likely to support the Labour and Green parties whereas those high in equality positioning tending to support the National party. These differential associations were also unique. That is, equality positioning predicted variance in levels of support (or the lack thereof) for the Labour, Green, and National parties that could *not* be attributed to measures of SDO, RWA, pro-majority ethnic group attitudes, or attitudes toward the symbolic principles of biculturalism. Equality positioning did not, however, predict unique variance in support for the NZ First party. Support for NZ First was instead predicted solely by SDO, RWA, and pro-majority ethnic group attitudes.

Just as Verkuyten has reported that in-group-identified majority group members are more supportive of assimilationist policies,[69] Pakeha who positioned equality as meritocracy under one nation where all people are treated as individuals also tended to demonstrate more positive pro-in-group evaluations, as indexed by agreement with Likert items from Duckitt and Parra's scale,[70] such as 'NZ Europeans/Pakeha through hard work and perseverance developed this country and are entitled to their greater material prosperity.' Furthermore, equality positioning exerted unique effects on political preference that could not be explained by such pro-ingroup evaluations.

Equality positioning differentiated between people who supported liberal versus conservative political parties in NZ. The differential associations between equality positioning and political party support were also unique, and could *not* be attributed to more universal (SDO, RWA) or culture-specific (pro-Pakeha ingroup attitudes,

support for the symbolic principles of biculturalism) constructs. It is important to note that these analyses examined the effects of personality and ideology within the individual.

These results provide good evidence for the convergent and discriminant validity of our measure of equality positioning and indicate that the scale provides important information that increases the accuracy of models predicting voting behaviour in NZ. The strong and unique predictive utility of equality positioning in this context most likely occurred because the ideological positioning of equality as individual- versus group-based provided an axis of meaning that aided in the creation and mobilisation of public opinion in the months leading up to the election. It seems that one of the main (perceived) ideological distinctions between Labour and National in this election was the emphasis placed on distributive justice rules that emphasise individual merit (the merit principle) or rules that considered target group membership, or to use Rokeach's parlance: "freedom" versus "equality". Our measure tapped specific elements of a wider social representation of these contrasting ideological positions, both of which are framed as promoting "equality", but may lead to quite different outcomes.

It is interesting, however, that discourses positioning equality as group-based (such as those reflected in the con-trait items contained in the scale) seem to occur relatively *infrequently* in public discourse and media (and should presumably, be less heavily anchored and more malleable to change[71]). Indeed, qualitative research in NZ has commented upon the scarcity of socially elaborated discourses that may be used to promote biculturalism and resource-allocations on the basis of ethnic group membership in everyday talk.[72] Nevertheless, when asked to respond to items assessing such discourses people can readily do so, and the manner in which they respond is strongly consistent with their level of agreement with items assessing more readily apparent discourses of equality positioning to which they have presumably had greater exposure: those positioning equality as meritocracy.

The Equality Positioning Scale was developed based upon qualitative analyses of NZ discourse, with the aim of providing a measure of ideological positioning that was relevant and directly applicable to the NZ context. The positioning of equality appears to be a relatively universal ideology, however, and many studies have

identified similar discourses in measures of racism, sexism and political ideology in other countries.[73] For example, the symbolic and modern racism scales developed in the US contain a blend of items assessing the belief in meritocracy and individualism (akin to those contained in our scale) and items that assess generalised negative affect toward minority groups (namely African Americans). Consider, for example, the similarity between items contained in the Equality Positioning Scale and the following item from the Symbolic Racism Scale developed for use in the US: 'it's really a matter of some people not trying hard enough; if Blacks would only try harder they could be just as well off as Whites.' Such observations emphasise the cross-cultural generality of ideologies of equality and their implications for intergroup and, in particular, race relations. They suggest that the positioning of equality as meritocracy in the NZ context may be similar in its form and function to discourses of symbolic and modern racism identified in the US. The positioning of equality may function as a mechanism that justifies and maintains social inequality between ethnic groups in NZ in much the same way that symbolic and modern racism are theorised to legitimise social inequality between African Americans and Whites in the US.

Causes and Consequences of Equality Positioning

To whom does the positioning of equality as meritocracy most appeal? Our findings indicate people high in SDO and RWA were more likely to position equality as meritocracy, as were Pakeha who expressed more positive pro-ingroup attitudes (and presumably identified more strongly with their ethnic group), perceived themselves to be more conservative (versus liberal), and opposed the incorporation of Maori values and culture into mainstream (primarily Pakeha) NZ culture and national identity at the symbolic level. However, equality positioning was not significantly associated with measures of personality, indicating that the degree to which people were extroverted versus introverted, agreeable versus disagreeable, emotionally labile versus emotionally stable, conscientious versus disorganised, or open versus closed to new experiences, was unrelated to the degree to which they adopted a proscriptive belief positioning equality as being based on individual (rather than group) merit.

Why are some people more likely to position equality as meritocracy, and what implications does the adoption of such proscriptive beliefs have for intergroup relations in NZ? The aforementioned pattern of associations suggests that individual differences in equality positioning are the product of ideologically-based goals and motives, rather than being directly influenced by personality. Ostensibly, agreement with items from the Equality Positioning Scale that started with statements such as: 'we are all one nation and we should all be treated the same…' and 'we are all New Zealanders…' reflect a discourse of equality for all under one nation and one common law regardless of ethnicity, class or creed. However, meta-analytic averages combining the effect sizes from both studies indicated that equality positioning was moderately positively correlated with both SDO and RWA.[lviii] As noted earlier, SDO and RWA provide reliable indicators of two distinct dual processes that form the motivational basis for many different forms of prejudice, negative intergroup attitudes, and system justifying ideologies.[74] Ironically, people who tended to *agree* with statements from the SDO scale reflecting the belief that social inequality is not really such a bad state of affairs, such as: 'it's OK if some groups have more of a chance in life than others' and 'some groups of people are simply inferior to other groups,' *also* tended to be more likely to position equality as meritocracy.

Although correlational in nature, these results are consistent with previous research examining the ideologies surrounding affirmative action in the US.[75] Our results indicate that both the competition-driven motivation for group dominance and superiority indexed by SDO and the threat-driven motivation for collective security and social cohesion indexed by RWA may predict the endorsement of ideologies that support the status quo and that facilitate the maintenance of existing social

[lviii] It is worth noting that analyses of the combined data from studies one and two indicated that SDO was significantly *positively* correlated with the protrait item aggregates assessing equality positioning (i.e., the aggregate of those items where agreement indicated the positioning of equality as meritocracy) and significantly *negatively* correlated with contrait item aggregates (i.e., the aggregate of those equality items where agreement indicated the positioning of equality as group-based), $r(403) = .12$, $p = .02$; $r(403) = -.19$, $p < .01$, respectively. Thus, the association between SDO and equality positioning was not driven solely by the association between SDO and the endorsement of only those items positioning equality-as-meritocracy. People high in SDO were also just a likely to disagree with items positioning equality as group based.

inequality. Hence, we theorise that the emphasis placed on the need for one nation under one common law where all people are treated "equally" by people who are high in SDO occurs because such discourses facilitate the maintenance of hierarchical social structures and social inequality.[76] This is not to say that all people who position equality as meritocracy are motivated by racism or group-dominance related motives.[77] It does, however, suggest that (a) majority group individuals who *are* motivated by such goals will be among those who are most ardent in positioning equality in this manner, and (b) that shared endorsement of such ideologies by a wide segment of society may engender systemic levels of social inequality.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we have shown that equality (and to a lesser extent, freedom) are consistently related to political positions of both elites and electors, and how individuals position themselves in terms of equality is related also to votership. We presented a new measure of equality positioning and demonstrated that our measure differentiated between support for liberal and conservative political parties in NZ, even after a host of other universal and culture-specific predictors had been considered. We contend that equality positioning reflects a socially elaborated discourse that is anchored within broader notions of liberal democracy and freedom for all.[78] The culture-specific positioning of equality-as-meritocracy may have allowed political elites and their constituents to express opposition to resource allocations favouring minority groups in the NZ context while still maintaining discourses of plausible deniability in much the same way as symbolic racism is thought to operate within the United States.[79] In this way, the NZ-specific (re-) formulation of equality positioning assessed here may have provided an axis of meaning that aided in the creation and mobilisation of public opinion regarding resource-allocations, land claims, affirmative action programs, and a host of other material issues leading up to the 2005 NZ general election[80] – and, as our results indicate, the mobilisation of public opinion in this way exerted unique effects on political party preference that were not reducible to universal and broad-bandwidth measures of personality, ideological attitudes, or attitudes toward biculturalism and ethnic group relations in the NZ context.

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Response to Marc Wilson & Christopher Sibley: Flexible Freedom, Promiscuous Equality

Simon Keller

Marc Wilson & Christopher Sibley look at the Address-in-Reply speeches given by politicians from New Zealand's various political parties. They tally the number of occurrences of "freedom" and some related words, and the number of occurrences of "equality" and some related words. They find that the more right-wing a politician, the more likely she will speak frequently of "freedom", and the more left-wing, the more likely she will speak frequently of "equality". This result is consistent with the findings of similar studies in other countries.

Wilson & Sibley's method is ingenious and their results are striking. But what do they show? One ambitious suggestion, hinted at in many of Wilson & Sibley's remarks, is that the study reveals something about the deep nature of disagreements between different political ideologies. Freedom and equality are basic political values, runs the ambitious suggestion, and political ideologies are distinguished by the extent to which they prioritise one of these values over the other. Those on the right value freedom over equality, those on the left value equality over freedom, and those in the centre value freedom and equality about equally.

I shall argue that this ambitious suggestion cannot be correct, and will offer some sketchy thoughts about what a better explanation might be. The basic point is this: freedom and equality, absent qualification and disambiguation, are not values. Imagine that someone asks you, 'How much do you value freedom, and how much do you value equality?' Your first response should be, 'It depends what you mean by "freedom" and it depends what you mean by "equality".' We all endorse some kinds of freedom and some kinds of equality, and we all reject others.

In trying to explain what I mean, I shall say something about the nature of freedom, then something about the nature of equality, then something about the relationship between freedom and equality, then something about what politicians are doing when they use certain words rather than others in their speeches. Then I will make

my own suggestion about what Wilson & Sibley's result might mean.

On Freedom

In a political debate about freedom, the first thing you notice is that everybody agrees that freedom is very important and valuable. No one will identify herself as the opponent of freedom. The second thing you notice is that everybody disagrees about what freedom is. On one conception, a person is free so long as nobody is actively preventing him from doing what he wants to do – so that a person could be impoverished and unhappy, yet perfectly free. On another conception, a person is free only if he is able to choose for himself what kind of life to live – so that he can only be free if he has the basic levels of health, nutrition, security, and independence required to make good options available. On another conception, freedom requires authenticity and self-knowledge – so that a person can be free only if he is wise, or only if he achieves oneness with God, or only if he throws off the bonds of class-, race-, and gender-based oppression. And there are many other conceptions of freedom apart from these.

Some people say that they believe in freedom above all other values. Even these people, however, turn out to be very selective about whose freedoms, and which freedoms, they are prepared to champion. The archetypal American conservative Republican is likely to say that he is a fan of freedom, but unlikely to be interested in the freedom of same-sex couples to marry, the freedom of Mexicans to live where they want to, or of anyone's freedom to produce and enjoy recreational drugs.

Isaiah Berlin famously distinguished between "positive" and "negative" concepts of freedom.[1] More recent work on freedom suggests that there is one concept of freedom, but that it can be filled out in infinitely many ways. We can use the language of freedom whenever we are able to speak of something being free from something to do or be something.[2] Depending on which particular "somethings" interest us, we can use the language of freedom to speak of any virtually any value we want. The fact that somebody expresses his political views using the word "freedom" tells us nothing, in itself, about his values.

On Equality

It is often said that all modern political theory takes place on the "egalitarian plateau"; we all agree that everyone is equal, and the task of a theory of justice is to say who exactly counts among "everyone", and what kind of equality between everyone is important.[3]

As with the apparent agreement on the importance of freedom, however, the insight that we are all on the egalitarian plateau does not imply that we share much substantive agreement about political ideology. For some, we are equal if we all have basic property rights. For others, we are only equal if we have about the same level of wealth. For some, equality need prevail only between co-citizens. For others – most famously, Peter Singer – all animals are equal.[4]

Again, the language of "equality" is sufficiently promiscuous that it can be used to cover an enormous range of otherwise antagonistic political positions. So, again, the fact that someone uses the word "equality" to describe her own values does not tell us anything much about the nature of those values.

On the Relationship between Freedom and Equality

Equality is an essentially comparative notion. You cannot be equal all by yourself; you must be equal with somebody else (and if you are equal with her, in a given respect, then she is equal with you too). Freedom is not an essentially comparative notion. Even without comparing you to anybody else, we can ask how free you are, in certain respects at least. You could be the only inhabitant of a desert island, yet still be more or less free – more free if you have made yourself a boat, less free if you are stuck up a palm tree.

To that extent, equality and freedom and different kinds of concepts, and are not properly seen as opposites, or as values that are in tension with each other. Much work on the value of equality, indeed, argues that the best way to understand equality is as equality with respect to certain capabilities, opportunities, or freedoms; one of the most trenchant recent defenses of egalitarian politics is

entitled *Real Freedom for All*.[5] Similarly, there is a strong tradition of argument to the effect that people in a society can only truly be free if they are truly equal.[6]

There are certain kinds of equality that are opposed to certain kinds of freedom. As a general matter, however, freedom and equality are not values that need, necessarily, to be weighed against each other.

On the Significance of Wilson & Sibley's Findings

So far in these comments, I have really just tried to confuse things; I have tried to make it less clear that we really know what we are talking about when we talk about freedom and equality as values. As much as we complicate things, however, Wilson & Sibley's striking result remains: politicians to the right of the political spectrum are more likely to speak of "freedom", politicians to the left of "equality". If that is not because their political differences reflect differences over the relative importance of freedom and equality, then what explains it?

It is obvious enough, I supposed, that the goal of the average politician in the course of an average speech is not to give an honest and searching explanation of her own deep political values. It is often said of the Australian prime minister, Kevin Rudd, that if he starts talking about the things you value, then you had better watch out. If he speaks of his deep commitment to education, then he is about to withdraw funding from schools. If he speaks of his devotion to the environment, then he is about to abandon the Emissions Trading Scheme. In general, politicians target their words at a particular audience, to evoke particular reactions, and it is only rarely that speaking honestly of their deepest values is the strategy that serves their purposes.

Also, politicians, like most people, are not very good at knowing what they really value. Even if they were motivated to speak honestly of their deepest values, they couldn't, because they – like most people – do not know what those values are. This is not to accuse politicians of any special failing. It is very difficult for anyone to say what values they truly stand for.

All of this in mind, an explanation of Wilson & Sibley's results must take account of the slipperiness of the notions of "freedom" and "equality", of the fact that they need not be construed as opposing values, and of the motives that may plausibly lie behind a politician's choice of words. I do not know what the right explanation is, but here is a suggestion.

In the modern liberal age, almost all of us will accept two platitudes. First: the principal role of government is to prevent people from harming each other – not to protect people from themselves, nor to try to make individuals or a society more virtuous. Second: no person is more deserving than anyone else just because of where or to whom she is born. These platitudes explain why we are resistant to idea of an overbearing or moralistic government, and why we are resistant to anything that discriminates between people based explicitly on race, sex, or social class.

Each of these platitudes is rather vague – What counts as a harm? Does your talent or work ethic count as an accident of birth? – and it is doubtful that any of us is fully committed to all of their implications. Nevertheless, the platitudes each gesture at something important, and are each, in the modern political environment, rhetorically powerful.

Right-wing politicians are on their firmest rhetorical ground when they are arguing that government should keep out of people's lives, and leave people to make their own decisions. As a result, right-wing politicians have an incentive to make all of their causes look as though they are about keeping individuals free from government interference – that is why they find it effective to use the language of freedom at every opportunity.

Left-wing politicians are on their firmest rhetorical ground when they are arguing that ancient institutions of arbitrary privilege need to be overthrown. They have an incentive, as a result, to make their causes look as though they are all about making sure that people are not held back by accidents of birth – that we all start with the same opportunities, and are all, in that sense, equal. I think that that is why left-wing politicians find it useful to use the language of equality.

But that, as I say, is just a suggestion. The important point is that the right

explanation of Wilson & Sibley's data has to discriminate between different kinds of equality and different kinds of freedom, and has to be sensitive to the reasons why people – and politicians in particular – tend to use some words rather than others.

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Response to Marc Wilson & Christopher Sibley: Enlarging the Context – A Transdisciplinary Perspective

Arthur Buehler

On the surface, the content of Marc Wilson & Christopher Sibley's paper appears to have little relevance outside of a small group of political analysts in New Zealand. But this is quite deceiving. I hope Wilson & Sibley continue to research the importance and inter-relationships of values and their implications in societies. Perhaps they is on to more than they realise. Using the Spiral Dynamics model below he can expand his analysis from a 2 x 2 matrix to an 8 x 8 matrix.

Values and values systems, that is worldviews, are one of the best ways of understanding individuals, cultures, and societies. This is best exemplified in the pioneering work of Clare Graves, which has been further developed by Don Beck and Christopher Cowan in a multi-perspectival approach called Spiral Dynamics. Far from being mere armchair analysts, Beck and Cowan were vital participants in the discussions that lead to the end of apartheid in South Africa, where their first book was published.[1] The principles of Spiral Dynamics have been fruitfully used to reorganise business enterprises, revitalise towns, revamp schools, and defuse ethnic tensions. This evolving methodology has been tested in over 100 countries. Spiral Dynamics (following Graves's work) conceives of human development proceeding through eight "value memes" or structures. These are not rigid levels, but fluid and flowing waves with much overlap and interweaving that results in a dynamic unfolding spiral of increasing human consciousness.

Spiral Dynamics is a developmental model that transcends "liberal" or "conservative" ways of dealing with socio-political problems. The typical, well-meaning liberal approach to solving social tensions is to weight every value equally and then try to force a redistribution of resources (money, rights, goods, land) without changing any values. The typical conservative approach is to take its own particular values and try to force them on everyone else. The developmental approach of Spiral Dynamics recognises that there are many different values and worldviews, some more complex than others. Many problems at one stage of

development can only be resolved by evolving to a higher level. Through recognising and then facilitating an evolution of values and worldviews, one can achieve greater social justice. What seems to be a political or religious problem is often the cover story for expressing a worldview (a complex of value memes). Recently Don Beck was working in Gaza. He described, in an interview, how a Palestinian in a tribal meme had to get his grandfather's house back after it was taken in 1947 in order to die an honourable man. Beck then asks the man whether there would be greater honour if he were to put his efforts into building a university where his sons and daughters could learn information technology and medicine to contribute toward the greater welfare of a future Palestine. Whether or not the person's behaviour changed as a result (it is not stated), this skilful shifting of perspective demonstrates the potential of how understanding and using values can facilitate social change.

In addition, by seeing that *each and every individual has all memes potentially available to her/him*, the fracture lines of social tension shift. All of a sudden reality is no longer based upon skin colour, economic privilege, or political power. Instead the focus is placed on the *type* of worldview from which a person, group of persons, tribe, business, government, educational system, or nation is operating. As Beck says, 'the focus is not on types *of* people, but types *in* people.'[2] As the implementation of Spiral Dynamics has already demonstrated in South Africa, a Spiral Dynamics perspective transcends skin colour while focusing on underlying factors creating cultural tensions (for example, developmental values and worldviews). In a trans-disciplinary move, the situation shifts from "black versus white", to a rainbow of colours (representing worldviews). The good news is that consciousness and values can change with education and awareness. Skin colour cannot be changed (easily).

Herein lies the value of Wilson & Sibley's work on values (pun intended). The values that Wilson & Sibley have studied in the New Zealand context, freedom and equality, revolve around two memes identified by Beck and Cowan as Orange and Green.

Orange = Scientific Achievement. In this region of the spiral, the self seeks truth and meaning in individualistic terms. It is "scientific" in the sense that there is a

mechanistic world with natural laws that can be discovered and manipulated for one's own purposes. Such a worldview is highly oriented toward materialistic gains (think capitalism). The laws of science rule politics (hence political science), the economy, and human events. This is the realm of freedom. As John Key's government has it, there should be freedom from too much taxation for the rich and the freedom to exploit the mineral wealth of New Zealand.

Green = Equality and Ecology. This worldview has a communitarian ethos involving ecological sensitivity, and networking. The self must be freed from greed and divisiveness. There is a place for feelings and caring instead of a cold rationality. The Planet is Mother Earth, not an inanimate object to be exploited for profit. Instead of a hierarchy of wealth or scientific knowledge, green prefers lateral bonding and decision making through reconciliation. It is strongly egalitarian and it seriously embraces multiculturalism. Taxes are good for everyone except the poor because they redistribute the wealth, making society more equitable. Exploiting natural wilderness for short-term profit is not an option for green.

In the details, these aforementioned perspectives are not new in light of Wilson & Sibley's paper on the topic. It is the context that has enlarged to a matrix of eight developmental value systems. Marc cites Sidanius in a 1990 paper that argued the impossibility of holding freedom and equality equally important without suffering important contradictions. But there was no intimation of *why* this may have been the case. Spiral Dynamics is able to answer this question credibly because it puts specific values into the context of worldviews, which are "attractors" for certain kinds and sets of values.

My small contribution in this discussion is to alert the audience to the massive amount of data accumulated by Beck and Cowan that explains how the two values of freedom and equality intersect with a constellation of values, a worldview. These worldviews have developmental stages that have been documented in significant detail. I hope that in the future my students will be taught and allowed to use the principles of Spiral Dynamics in a range of undergraduate courses (rather than just mine). Spiral Dynamics has its limitations (as do all perspectives), but its trans-disciplinarity makes some of the methodology (developed for the simpler 20th-century problems that are still with us) appear to be very antiquated and parochial

in comparison. Although Spiral Dynamics is designed (and works) for the type of 21st-century problems our students will face, the map is not the territory, even if it is a Spiral-Dynamics map.

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[1] Don Beck & Christopher Cowan, *Spiral Dynamics: Mastering Values, Leadership and Change* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005)

[2] Ken Wilber, *A Theory of Everything: An Integral Vision for Business, Politics, Science and Spirituality*, (San Francisco: Shambhala, 2000), 8

After Post-Socialism: Social Theory, Utopia, and the Work of Castoriadis in a Global Age

Chamsy el-Ojeili

A widespread feature of contemporary social theoretical commentary has been to note the post-1970s troubles faced by social theory, utopia, Marxism, and socialism, often linked to the proliferating "posts" and "ends of" that have marked discussion in the human sciences over the past three-four decades. Thus, Peter Wagner notes the doubts that have 'arisen during the closing decades of the twentieth century as to whether the social science's way of observing, interpreting and explaining the world really brought superior insights into the social life of human beings;'[1] thus, Perry Anderson argues that 'the utopian itself has been in general suspension since the mid-seventies,' bringing a 'remorseless closure of space;'[2] thus, we find a variety of lamentations and celebrations of the death of Marxism and socialism – as either evidence of a dispiriting conformism, end to contestation, disorientation, and political-intellectual stasis, or a welcome move beyond the totalitarian imaginary, beyond the abstract, unrealistic schemes pushed by disreputable intellectuals. I want to explore some of these notions, here – first and foremost, by examining post-Marxism as an intellectual formation, and, in particular, the concentrating on the work of Cornelius Castoriadis.

Castoriadis remains a somewhat neglected figure, even though a number of his books have now appeared in English translation,[3] and his work has not yet found a place in the canon of political and social theory. This is unfortunate, because Castoriadis is, I believe, an important thinker whose work has central links to more prominent contributors to theoretical debates. Born in Constantinople in 1922, Castoriadis was philosophically literate and politically active by his teenage years. Hunted down in Greece in the early 1940s by both Stalinists and fascists, he left to take up a never-completed doctoral thesis in France, where he worked as an economist for the OECD, then as a psychoanalyst, and finally as an academic in the school for advanced studies in the social sciences. He died in France in 1997.[4]

Perhaps Castoriadis is best known for his tutelage of the now-legendary group Socialism or Barbarism, which split from the Trotskyist Fourth International in 1949, and whose ranks included psychoanalyst Jean Laplanche, philosopher Claude Lefort, Jean-Francois Lyotard, and Guy Debord, author of *The Society of the Spectacle*. Socialism or Barbarism belongs within that rather neglected political current of what might be labelled "left communism", a strand of socialism that contested the socialist orthodoxies of both social democracy and Leninism, that interpreted the regimes of "really existing socialism" as forms of capitalism, and that posited the possibility of a different type of socialism, often a directly democratic socialism of workers' councils.

This left communist strand is of interest today, I shall argue towards the close of this essay, but, for the most part, I am interested in Castoriadis as arguably the earliest representative of that contemporary intellectual formation of "post-Marxism".[5] In the following pages, I want, first, to explore the "co-ordinates of unity"[6] of this intellectual formation, illustrating them primarily with reference to Castoriadis's work. I then want to turn back to suggest that, today, the post-Marxist, post-socialist contentions found in this work are more problematic than they once might have appeared, troubled by the troubles of global capitalism. I am suggesting, here, that what we have witnessed in the past decade or so is the fading of both post-Marxist and post-socialist moments, and that, in related fashion, shifts are visible in the realms of debate around social theory and utopia.

Post-Marxism

In order to examine the main features of post-Marxism as an intellectual formation, I'm going to use Tormey & Townshend's[7] argument that post-Marxism is unified by six central problems posed to Marx and Marxism – the problems of history, of revolutionary subjectivity, of ethics, of positivism, of vanguardism, and of democracy. I'll treat these in turn.

As I have noted, Castoriadis broke fairly quickly from the Marxist orthodoxy of the communist parties and sided with the Trotskyists, but from around the mid-1940s he was already expressing dissatisfaction with some of their analyses, particularly

around the understanding of the character of the regime in the USSR.[i] Over time, Castoriadis became more and more critical of more and more of the Marxian tradition, and in 1959 he made a decisive break with Marxism in a lengthy text he circulated within Socialism or Barbarism,[ii] "Modern Capitalism and Revolution".[8] In this text, a major issue is that first post-Marxist problem: the problem of history. This problem entails a critique of the teleological Marxist philosophy of history and of Marxist economic determinism, the notion that all of social life can be understood by reference to the economic base.[9] Castoriadis's version of this problem is that the late Marx, the Marx of *Capital*, in seeking to discover iron laws of history and develop a strictly scientific analysis of capitalism, treats the value of the commodity labour power as a fixed and objectively determined quantity, as if it were, say, a lump of coal.[10] In doing this, Castoriadis charges, Marx ends up perversely eliminating the factor of struggle from the story of history.

In this same text, wearing his economist's hat, Castoriadis takes issue with a number of the major emphases in Marxist economic theory. Against Marx, Castoriadis argues that we are not seeing the immiseration of the working class, growing reserve armies of labour, and uncontrollable, escalating crisis tendencies. In fact, post-war in the core countries, we have full employment, rises in average working class earnings, and the control of crisis tendencies through state intervention and planning. Here Castoriadis turns to Weber, arguing that bureaucratisation in four spheres – production, the state, consumption, and working class organisations – has transformed capitalism, making Marx's portrait of mid-nineteenth century British capitalism of little contemporary relevance.[11]

Castoriadis's criticisms of Marxist economics are linked to that second post-Marxist problem – the problem of revolutionary subjectivity. This problem

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[i] Castoriadis contended that the Trotskyist idea that this regime could be understood as a "deformed" or "degenerated workers' state" made little sense. We might as well, Castoriadis quipped, label the social orders in advanced capitalist nations "workers' states in gestation".

[ii] It is interesting to note that Jean-Francois Lyotard, the author of *The Post-Modern Condition* – which argued the case that we had entered the age of incredulity towards meta-narratives, with the Marxist metanarrative as the major object of criticism – strenuously objected to the text and became part of what was rather cruelly labelled the "Paleo-Marxist tendency" within the group, a tendency which sought to defend Marxism against Castoriadis's heresy.

encompasses issues of agency in progressive social change (who makes revolution?), the character of social struggles (what are the crucial divisions within society?), and political identity (how do people become political animals?). The major key played by post-Marxists here has been to question the Marxist prioritisation of the working class.[12] Thus, one of Castoriadis's points about the changes entailed by the coming of bureaucratic capitalism is that manual workers in the West are increasingly a minority. In addition, with rising wages, full employment, and the transformation of the old labour organisations into cogs in the machine of capitalism, what remains of the working class no longer strives for the radical transformation of society.[13]

Instead of pinning socialist hopes on this shrinking and increasingly moderate industrial working class, Castoriadis turned his attentions and enthusiasms to the new sorts of struggles that were emerging, struggles taking place beyond the factory floor, contestations that were later to be characterised as the "new social movements". Furthermore, Castoriadis attempts to think again about what, in place of capital versus labour, is the crucial scission within advanced social orders. A first answer here is that the fundamental divide is that between order-givers and order-takers, an argument connected to Castoriadis's Weberian emphasis on bureaucratisation. Subsequently, Castoriadis suggests that even this division was losing relevance, and he strikes a more existentialist note in arguing that the central basis for contestation in the contemporary period is to be found in the attitude of individuals to the present social system – do they accept it or not?[14]

This existentialist note provides something of a segue into the next of those post-Marxist problems, the problem of ethics. This is broadly the notion that Marxism suffers from an "ethical deficit" or from "moral constipation".[15] That is, Marxism's tendency to think in terms of objective laws and goals of history, and its often fervent opposition to liberalism and "bourgeois democracy" – for instance, rights talk as merely an expression of atomization and the desire to protect private property, liberal democracy as no more than one modality of the "dictatorship of capital" – means a worrying reluctance to reflect in any independent and serious fashion on questions of the good – these questions being merely ideological or idealist.[16] This problem isn't raised as loudly by Castoriadis as it is by other post-Marxists, who tend to take a more strongly post-modern line that foregrounds

difference and otherness and that warns of the dangers of totalising approaches in theory and politics. Nevertheless, something of this concern is displayed in Castoriadis's psychoanalytic writings, where he insists on the need for an "ethic of mortality", an ability to live with the Abyss, in the absence of guarantees, a break with the assumed omnipotence and immortality of the alienated person, from the eternity promised by the ideologies of heteronomous society.[17]

This emphasis on the Abyss, the absence of guarantees, that we are more clearly now without sure foundations for knowledge and political action, is connected to the fourth post-Marxist problem – the problem of positivism. The major post-Marxist line of argument here is a post-modern-inflected opposition to the alignment between Marxism and the naive understanding of the operation of the natural sciences (laws, prediction, experimentation, control). This is once again to come back to Castoriadis's criticisms of Marx's objectivist view of capitalism, of "theological" laws of history, and it is also linked to his argument that Marxism is deeply implicated in the troubling modern fantasy of "unlimited rational mastery" – the modern will to fully know, order, and control the natural world, the individual, the social order.[18]

Faced with this problem, a common post-Marxist response has been to reject Marxist determinism, to emphasise the limitations on what human beings can know and do,[19] and to underscore, to greater or lesser degrees, the *contingency* of social life. And a common theoretical alternative to the conceptual apparatus of historical materialism has been the post-Marxist turn to culture, meaning, discourse, and language. Castoriadis's version of this is his focus on "social imaginary significations".[20] Here, Castoriadis underscores the importance of the "magma of social imaginary significations", the "web of meanings", which give the society in question its particular shape – things, language, reality, norms, ways of life and death, anthropological types. A major hope among post-Marxists is that these alternative theoretical languages offer a way to escape the reduction in Marxism of the concrete to the abstract,[21] to move from the simple conclusion that capitalism is capitalism, and to allow access to the fine-grained differences across various social formations. In Castoriadis, a crucial factor in leaning towards contingency against Marxist determinism is the hitherto neglected role of the imagination. That is, for him, the history of theory has been dominated by a view that being is being

determined, and this view neglects that radically new "forms and figures" are constantly appearing, at the social level and at the level of the individual psyche.[22] History, he says, is creation.

The fifth post-Marxist problem is the problem of vanguardism, entailing questions about the function of political organizations, the role of intellectuals, and the interpretation of "really existing socialism". Here, we see a number of common emphases among post-Marxists: a distancing from Lenin's organisational strictures in *What is to be Done?*; a post-modern deflation of notions of the privileged and separate place of the intellectual[iii]; and various critiques of "really existing socialism". Castoriadis's responses to these problems are as follows: he rejects Leninist organisational ideas, emphasising the leading role of popular self-organisation; he lends intellectuals an only modest role in progressive social change; and he views the "communist" regimes – marked as they are by planning, socialisation equated with nationalisation, and commodity production – as "total bureaucratic capitalism".[23]

In terms of more explicitly utopian questions, the designation of a better, not-yet-existing way of being,[24] we have the last of our post-Marxist problems, the problem of democracy. Here, I think we could say that, across post-Marxism, a reconsideration of democracy comes to replace explicit socialist commitments: "radical democracy" in Laclau and Mouffe, and something similar in Heller and Feher; Lefort insisting on the modern democratic mutation, where the place of power becomes empty, as an unsurpassable horizon; "democracy to come" in late Derrida. Castoriadis's version of this is "autonomy", those two breaks in human history – in Greek Antiquity, then again in modern times – where we see the unleashing of unlimited, endless questioning of ourselves and our institutions. Castoriadis's continued self-identification as a "revolutionary" is, I think, the exception that proves the rule of an overall post-Marxist retreat or moderation of emphasis, away from the old Marxian language of the dictatorship of the proletariat and revolution, away from the maximalist critique of rights, liberalism, and representative democracy.

[iii] See, for instance, Foucault's discussion of the shift from universal to specific intellectuals, or Bauman's argument about legislator versus interpreter intellectuals.

Back to Marxism and Socialism?

Having set out these central post-Marxist contentions, I want now to turn to wrestle with them a little, suggesting a number of crucial problems with post-Marxist and post-socialist emphases today. As a way into this, I think it is worth thinking a little about the context of Castoriadis's work. I read this as divided into two periods, these periods separated by a short sequence of intensive social contestation. The first period, 1945-1967, in which Castoriadis makes his break from Marxism, is the period of the post-War boom, of what has been called "organized capitalism",[25] of clear American dominance in the world-system.[26] It is also the period of great success for what world-systems thinkers call the "antisystemic movements" – communism, social democracy, and national liberation: a period in which the "social democratic consensus" rules in the West; in which nearly a half of the world's people are embraced by the regimes of "really existing socialism"; in which movements for decolonisation in the "third world" are extraordinarily successful.[27]

In this period, Castoriadis is clearly struck by the successful expansion of capitalism, by the containment of opposition, and he is very critical of the alternatives offered by these anti-systemic movements. On this last point, a major feature of the sequence of contestation I mentioned – the '60s, 1967-1973[28] – is widespread disillusionment with these movements: criticisms that they had left certain categories of people out; that they had failed on their promises to transform life for the better; that they had become oppressive and corrupt.[29] With the unrest of the '60s, Castoriadis's mood brightens: he is clearly hopeful about the arrival of a new, better kind of socialism. But, of course, the '60s terminate in a global economic downturn, the progressive loss of power of these antisystemic movements (which are not replaced by strong alternatives), neo-liberalism, and a new "disorganized capitalism". In this period, while carrying out his most important reconstructive theoretical work, Castoriadis becomes relentlessly gloomy. For him, we are heading in the direction of a "closing into heteronomy": massive de-politicisation and privatisation; the end of the avant-garde and the youth revolt; the demise of radical questioning – importantly, of capital and liberal democracy; the philosophical/theoretical correlate of this in post-modern thought,

which, for him, represented a flight from the question of truth, impotent agnosticism, and sterile eclecticism.[30]

It's in this second period, especially through the 1980s to the mid-'90s, that you see post-Marxist and post-socialist notions really getting traction in intellectual life, and these notions get bound into the "globalization talk" that expands particularly after the collapse of "really existing socialism". My suggestion is, though, that from about the time of Castoriadis's death in 1997, post-Marxist, post-socialist, and "happy globalization"[31] assumptions began to look more and more questionable. Here, I want to again follow Tormey & Townshend by posing problems to those post-Marxist problems and re-orientations.

With that first problem of history, Castoriadis's assumptions about the permanence of full employment, rising wages, and growth were already called into question by the downturn from the mid-1970s, and, after the Asian crisis and contagion from 1997, in the face of the recent global financial crisis, the notion of the end of the contradictions of capitalism seems quite unsustainable. Meanwhile, in terms of those criticisms of Marx's philosophy of history, Marx, of course, had plenty more to say than he does in *Capital* and in the 1857 "Preface to the Critique of Political Economy",[32] and, in any case, it has been regularly pointed out that the post-Marxists and post-modernists themselves erect a competing meta-narrative of progress and emancipation, with ours as a break into widening recognition of difference, generalised incredulity towards totalising thought, scepticism about abstract utopian schemes, and so on.[33]

In terms of the second problem of revolutionary subjectivity, it seems to me a very short-sighted view of things to imagine that we have said goodbye to the working class. Clearly, in the core countries there has been a shift in the direction of service work, but a number of Marxian cautions are in order. First, much of this service work is rather low-end and routine and does not accord at all with the image often painted by enthusiasts of the "knowledge society" or the "information age" of highly mobile, flexible, networked, empowered knowledge workers.[34] Second, it is plausible to suggest that the period of globalisation is marked precisely by the expansion of the proletariat – the steep growth of the world labour force, the "death of the peasantry", the relocation and growth of productive wage labour in semi-

peripheral regions.[35] Third, and related, capitalism and the working class have been in a process of dynamic transformation from the start – from the "agricultural capitalism" of the seventeenth century, to the "cotton capitalism" of the British Industrial Revolution, to the "automobile capitalism" of the middle of the twentieth century, and beyond.[36]

Furthermore, against the thesis of a post-'60s transformation towards more "culturalist" forms of contestation, Tormey & Townshend note the return of more "materialist" struggles from the end of the 1990s – from major alternative-globalisation mobilisations against the IMF, World Bank, and WTO, to movements focussed on Southern debt relief, to efforts to impose tighter control on global financial movements, to the wave of left-wing populist movements in Latin America. Such "materialist" class concerns are, I think, clearly in play (sometimes in veiled or unpleasant ways) in the newer combinations that gained ground in that decade – political Islam, Right-wing populism, anti-globalisation.[37]

One expression of the problem of ethics, meanwhile, was a social theoretical "ethical turn" through the '80s and '90s – its major themes being recognition of difference, pluralism, concern with totalitarianism – but, more recently, there are lots of signals of deep dissatisfaction with some of what is bound up with this turn.[38] For instance, some will say that this turn has entailed the triumph of moralising over properly political thinking.[39] A related objection has been the criticism of the rising prominence of human rights discourse. Here, a number of commentators have detected an unfortunate shift from the "Third Worldism" of the '60s and '70s, where those in the poorer nations are no longer today viewed as potentially assertive agents battling domination and capable of self-emancipation, but are instead portrayed as suffering, pitiable victims who are in desperate need of human rights charity from the West.[40]

On the problem of positivism, Gregor McLennan contends that, from the second part of the 1990s, we have seen a movement away from the predominance of the post-modern mode in social theory.[41] This mode has been important in many ways – for instance, scepticism about "laws" of the social, criticism of the naive positivism that models the human sciences on a fantasy of the operations of the "hard sciences", and so on. However, for McLennan, the "excessive self scrutiny"

and "negativity" that have resulted from post-modern emphases – excessive pluralism, anti-totalisation, desperate avoidance of the various "sins" (essentialism, universalism, determinism, say) of modernist theorising[42] – has proved corrosive to the essential tasks of social theory. More recently, McLennan contends that a 'new positivity' can be detected in social theoretical work, expressed in a more deflationary attitude to theory and in a 'more substantive and affirmative' direction in theoretical work, where people are more likely to want to say something about the 'structure and direction of the world we inhabit and about the values which will guide a better human future.'[43] One signal of this positivity, for McLennan – despite some of the major recurring problems found in this enormous literature[iv] – is the replacement of "post-modernism" by "globalization" as the central theme in theoretical work in the social sciences.

With the problem of vanguardism, one signal of the resonance of this problem was a steep growth in the literature on intellectuals from the 1980s, much of which takes up post-modern concerns about the equation power/knowledge.[44] To be provocative, here, I think we could say that, despite some really good case studies, the level of evaluation of the difficult issues in play within this literature seldom reaches beyond concerns found early within the socialist tradition[v] about the dangers of intellectuals speaking for, representing, or hoping to lead the subaltern classes. What we find in much of this discussion is an oscillation between two equally inadequate poles: on the one hand, an easy, deceptive anti-intellectualism,[45] on the other hand, romantic portraits of intellectuals as exilic characters with a vocation for 'speaking the truth to power,'[46] both poles often characterised by an extraordinary obscurity of expression that performatively contradicts the rhetoric about breaking from Marxian elitism. On the related question of "really existing socialism", I think we should at the very least consider Zizek's argument about the way in which the spectre of totalitarianism has come to function as a "prohibition on thinking" – the notion that any venture to re-shape the world for the better will inevitably end up with the Gulag.[47] The quick but important reply to this Cold War

[iv] Among these problems, we have, for instance, persistent tendencies to overstate the uniqueness of contemporary globalization, to present globalization as unstoppable, inevitable, and "agentless", to fail to elaborate on the explanations implied by the myriad pairings between globalization and a host of substantive issues.

[v] Since at least the time of Bakunin's opposition to the designs of the Marxists.

prohibition is that socialism is a much richer set of traditions than the equation "socialism = Stalinism" allows.

Last, with respect to that problem of democracy, as I have said, the post-Marxist move has been to elevate the question of democracy above the commitment to socialism, with this democracy often attached to references to, say, "new social movements" or "civil society" and viewed as a different, less dangerous beast in utopian terms (differentiated, plural, self-limiting, and so on).[48] Once more, I would suggest that, by the close of the 1990s, there were clear signs of dissatisfaction with the often vague, thin, residual quality of these "utopian references".[49] Here, I will simply note three possible signals of this shift. First, there has been a fair bit of recent attention to the major problems confronting "really existing liberal democracy", with a growing critical literature on ours as an age of "post-politics", "post-democracy", "media politics", and so on.[50] Second, and related, more recently, a number of rather grand and more institutionally-detailed accounts (often of a broadly "cosmopolitical" character) have appeared that seek to address the supposed weakening of state sovereignty, citizenship, and democracy in the face of the challenges of globalisation.[51] Third, within the broad alternative globalisation movement, there have been a host of experiments in a more "participatory" or "high-intensity" democracy, which often appear to recall some of those neglected left communist currents and their alternatives to social democracy and Leninism.[52] All of this is to suggest that utopia has made something of a comeback since the late '90s.[53]

Concluding Comments

My suggestion, then, is that since the end of the 1990s a shift has occurred away from post-Marxist emphases in social theory and from the idea that ours is a post-socialist condition. I want to conclude by briefly treating these matters in turn. First, on the question of Marxism, Goran Therborn has recently argued that the "Marxist triangle" has been decisively broken.[54] This triangle, composed of a historical social science, a philosophy of contradictions, and a working class, socialist politics, has irreparably come apart, says Therborn, in the face of extensive social changes. In contrast to this, I think that we are better to follow

Jameson in viewing Marxism as entailing 'the allegiance to a specific complex of problems, whose formulations are always in movement and in historic rearrangement and restructuration, along with their object of study, capitalism.'[55] This view of things has it that many of Marxism's concepts and emphases – class, exploitation, the imperative of the endless accumulation of capital, the tiered world-economy, totality, commodification, ideology – remain indispensable for thinking about the world we are in, and, on this score, Marxism has continued to be a productive research programme across sociology, philosophy, literature studies, economics, and history. Conversely, the various post-Marxist efforts to build something like a replacement triangle just demonstrate how hard it is to match the 'scope and moral force'[56] of Marxism. This is demonstrated, I think, by the rather modest intellectual gains to be had from post-Marxist attempts at alternative theoretical languages to historical materialism: for instance, Castoriadis's work in *The Imaginary Institution of Society*, which has not been significantly taken up to found a distinctive research programme; or Laclauian critical discourse analysis, which – while often an illuminating "analytical strategy"[57] on issues of political identity and what were once called ideological matters – tends, in the end, to converge with the substantive analyses of sophisticated Marxian thinkers. In addition, in many of these post-Marxist efforts to escape from economic determinism, class and economy very often simply disappear from the analysis, or Marxist categories simply get smuggled in through the backdoor.[58]

With respect to the issue of post-socialism, after the end of "happy globalization", what was once thought by a certain "talented author" to be a "remarkable consensus" around liberal democracy and free markets now looks in real doubt.[59] But, more positively, the rejuvenation of social scientific interest in utopia, the surprising recent attention given to a number of socialist thinkers and works,[vi] and the vitality of the alternative globalisation movement could all be read as signals that 'the word "communism" … is now back in circulation.'[60]

To finally close with closer reference to my own discipline, sociology; as Castoriadis once said, 'the encounter with Marxism remains immediate and inevitable' for anyone interested in the 'question of society,'[61] and, as Fuller has

[vi] For example, the work of Zizek, Badiou, and Hardt and Negri.

noted, socialism and sociology were 'born joined at the hip' and their fates have been, and will probably continue to be, intertwined.[62]

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[1] Peter Wagner, *A History and Theory of the Social Sciences* (London: Sage, 2001), 1

[2] Perry Anderson, "The River of Time," *New Left Review* 26 (March-April 2004), 67-77

[3] For an introduction to Castoriadis's work, see Simon Tormey & Jules Townshend, *Key Thinkers From Critical Theory to Post-Marxism* (London: Sage, 2006); see also some of the collections of Castoriadis's writings: Cornelius Castoriadis, *The Castoriadis Reader* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1997a); Cornelius Castoriadis, *The World in Fragments: Writings on Politics, Society, Psychoanalysis, and the Imagination* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997b); and Cornelius Castoriadis, *A Society Adrift, Interviews and Debates, 1974-1997* (New York, Fordham University Press, 2010), for instance.

[4] See David Ames Curtis, "Introduction," in *The Castoriadis Reader*, ed. Cornelius Castoriadis (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1997); David Ames Curtis, "Foreword," in *Political and Social Writings, Volume 1, 1946-1955*, ed. Cornelius Castoriadis (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988a)

[5] Other thinkers frequently embraced by this "post-Marxist" label include Claude Lefort, Ernesto Laclau and Chantelle Mouffe, Agnes Heller, Zygmunt Bauman, Jacques Derrida, Jurgen Habermas, Gilles Deleuze, and Jean-Francois Lyotard. See, for instance, Stuart Sim, ed., *Post-Marxism: A Reader* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998); Stuart Sim, *Post-Marxism: An Intellectual History* (London: Routledge, 2000)

[6] Perry Anderson, *Considerations on Western Marxism* (London: New Left Books, 1976)

[7] Tormey & Townshend, *Key Thinkers From Critical Theory to Post-Marxism*

[8] Cornelius Castoriadis, *Political and Social Writings, Volume 2, 1955-1960* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988b)

[9] Tormey & Townshend, *Key Thinkers From Critical Theory to Post-Marxism*

[10] Castoriadis, *A Society Adrift*

[11] Ibid.

[12] Tormey & Townshend, *Key Thinkers From Critical Theory to Post-Marxism*

[13] Castoriadis, *A Society Adrift*

[14] Ibid.; Castoriadis, *Political and Social Writings, Volume 2*; Cornelius Castoriadis, *Political and Social Writings, Volume 3, 1961-1979* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1993)

[15] Lawrence Wilde, ed., *Marxism's Ethical Thinkers* (New York: Palgrave, 2001)

[16] Tormey & Townshend, *Key Thinkers From Critical Theory to Post-Marxism*

[17] Castoriadis, *The World in Fragments*. See Zygmunt Bauman's rather similar notion of the post-modern condition as learning to live with ambivalence, as 'modernity without its illusions.'Zygmunt Bauman, *Postmodern Ethics* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993)

[18] Castoriadis, *The Castoriadis Reader*. Similar emphases are to be found in Heller, Bauman, and Lyotard.

[19] Peter Beilharz, *Postmodern Socialism: Romanticism, City and State* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1994)

[20] See Corneilus Castoriadis, *The Imaginary Institution of Society* (Cambridge: Polity, 1987)
[21] Ernesto Laclau & Chantelle Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (London: Verso, 1985)
[22] Castoriadis, *The Castoriadis Reader*; Castoriadis, *The World in Fragments*; Castoriadis, *The Imaginary Institution of Society*
[23] See Castoriadis, *The Castoriadis Reader*
[24] On utopia, see, for instance, Ruth Levitas, *The Concept of Utopia* (New York: Syracuse, 1990); Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope* [Three Volumes] (Cambridge: MIT, 1986)
[25] See, for instance, Scott Lash & John Urry, *The End of Organized Capitalism* (Cambridge: Polity, 1987)
[26] Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Decline of American Power: The U.S. in a Chaotic World* (New York: The New Press, 2003)
[27] See Immanuel Wallerstein, "New Revolts Against the System," *New Left Review* 18 (July-August 2002), 29-39; Giovani Arrighi, Terrence Hopkins & Immanuel Wallerstein, *Antisystemic Movements* (London: Verso, 1989)
[28] See Fredric Jameson, "Periodizing the '60s," *Social Text* 9/10 (Spring-Summer, 1984), 178-209
[29] Arrighi, Hopkins & Wallerstein, *Antisystemic Movements*
[30] See Castoriadis, *The World in Fragments*; Cornelius Castoriadis, *The Rising Tide of Insignificancy*, available at: http://www.notbored.org/RTI.pdf, 2003; Cornelius Castoriadis, *Figures of the Thinkable*, available at: http://wwwnotbored.org/FTPK.pdf, 2005
[31] William Outhwaite & Larry Ray, *Social Theory and Postcommunism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005)
[32] On this issue, see, for instance, Etienne Balibar, *The Philosophy of Marx* (London: Verso, 2007)
[33] Tormey & Townshend, *Key Thinkers From Critical Theory to Post-Marxism*
[34] See, for instance, Ronaldo Munck, *Globalization and Labour: The New "Great Transformation"* (London: Zed Books, 2002); Manuel Castells, *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture: The Rise of the Network Society* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000)
[35] For a good discussion of this question, see (Munck, *Globalization and Labour*); see also A. K. Ghose, N. Majid, & C. Ernst, *The Global Employment Challenge* (Geneva: ILO, 2008)
[36] See, for instance, Beverley Silver, *Forces of Labour: Workers' Movements and Globalization Since 1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005)
[37] See, on this score, Fredric Jameson, *Valences of the Dialectic* (London: Verso, 2009); Slavoj Zizek, "Why we all Love to Hate Haider," *New Left Review* 2 (March-April, 2000); D. Albertazzi & D. McDonnell, eds., *Twenty-First Century Populism: The Spectre of Western European Democracy* (London: Palgrave, 2008)
[38] See Marjorie Garber, Beatrice Hanssen & Rebecca L. Walkowitz, eds., *The Turn to Ethics* (New York: Routledge, 2000)
[39] See, for instance, Chantelle Mouffe, *On the Political* (London: Routledge, 2005)
[40] See, for instance, Kirsten Ross, *May '68 and its Afterlives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); or Alain Badiou, *Ethics* (London: Verso, 2002)
[41] See Gregor McLennan, "The New Positivity," in *For Sociology: Legacies and Prospects*, eds. J. Eldridge et al. (Durham: Sociology Press, 2000); Gregor McLennan, "Sustaining Sociology: An Interview With Gregor McLennan," *New Zealand Sociology*, Volume 17:2 (2002), 322-337; Gregor

McLennan, *Sociological Cultural Studies: Reflexivity and Positivity in the Human Sciences* (London: Palgrave, 2006)

[42] See Gregor McLennan, "Post-Marxism and the 'Four Sins' of Modernist Theorizing," *New Left Review* 218 (July-August 1996), 53-74.

[43] McLennan, "The New Positivity," 18; Gregor McLennan, "Recanonizing Marx," *Cultural Studies*, Volume 13:4 (1999), 556

[44] For examples of this literature, see Alvin Gouldner, *The Future of Intellectuals and the Rise of the New Class* (London: Macmillan, 1979); Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977* (Sussex: Harvester, 1980); Russel Jacoby, *The Last Intellectual: American Culture in the Age of the Academy* (New York: Basic Books, 1987); Zygmunt Bauman, *Legislators and Interpreters: On Modernity, Post-Modernity and Intellectuals (*Oxford: Polity, 1987); Andrew Ross, *No Respect: Intellectuals and Popular Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1989); Cornelius Castoriadis, *Philosophy, Politics, Autonomy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); Charles Lemert, ed., *Intellectuals and Politics: Social Theory in a Changing World* (London: Sage, 1991); Carl Boggs, *Intellectuals and the Crisis of Modernity* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993); Bruce Robbins, *Secular Vocations: Intellectuals, Professionalism, Culture* (London: Verso, 1993); Jean-Francois Lyotard, *Political Writings* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1993); Edward Said, *Representations of the Intellectual* (London: Vintage, 1994); J. Jennings & A. Kemp-Welch, eds., *Intellectuals in Politics: From the Dreyfus Affair to Salman Rushdie* (London: Routledge, 1997); S. Gupta, *Marxism, History, and Intellectuals: Towards a Reconceptualized Transformative Socialism* (Associated University Presses, 2000); J. Michael, *Anxious Intellects: Academic Professionals, Public Intellectuals and Enlightenment Values* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000)

[45] See, on this point, Spivak's critique of Foucault and Deleuze. Gayatri Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, eds. Cary Nelson & Lawrence Grossberg (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988)

[46] See Said, *Representations of the Intellectual*

[47] Slavoj Zizek, *Did Somebody Say Totalitarianism? Five Interventions in the (Mis)Use of a Notion* (London: Verso, 2001)

[48] See, for instance, Jeffrey C. Alexander, "Robust Utopias and Civil Repairs," *International Sociology*, Volume 16:4 (December 2001), 579-591

[49] *Ibid*.

[50] See, for instance: Zygmunt Bauman, *In Search of Politics* (Cambridge: Polity, 1999); (Castells, *The Information Age*); Colin Crouch, *Post-Democracy* (Cambridge: Polity, 2004); Peter Mair, "Ruling the Void: The Hollowing of Western Democracy," *New Left Review* 42 (November-December 2006), 25-51; Danilo Zolo, "The 'Singapore Model': Democracy, Communication, and Globalization," in *The Blackwell Companion to Political Sociology*, eds. Kate Nash & Alan Scott (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001)

[51] See, for example, Jurgen Habermas, *Time of Transitions* (Cambridge: Polity, 2001); David Held, *Global Covenant: The Social Democratic Alternative to the Washington Consensus* (Cambridge: Polity, 2004); Roberto Unger, *What Should the Left Propose?* (London: Verso, 2005)

[52] See Bonaventura de Sousa Santos, *Democratizing Democracy: Beyond the Liberal Democratic Canon* (London: Verso, 2005)
[53] For a discussion of this, see Patrick Hayden & Chamsy el-Ojeili, eds., *Globalization and Utopia: Critical Essays* (London: Palgrave, 2009)
[54] Goran Therborn, *From Marxism to Post-Marxism?* (London: Verso, 2009)
[55] Jameson, *Valences of the Dialectic*, 372
[56] Perry Anderson, *In the Tracks of Historical Materialism* (London: Verso, 1983)
[57] Niels Akerstrom Andersen, *Discursive Analytical Strategies: Understanding Foucault, Koselleck, Laclau, Luhmann* (Bristol: The Policy Press, 2003)
[58] See, on this score, Nicos Mouzelis, *Post-Marxist Alternatives: The Construction of Social Orders* (London: Macmillan, 1990); Judith Butler, Ernesto Laclau & Slavoj Zizek, *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality: Contemporary Dialogues on the Left* (London: Verso, 2000)
[59] Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (London: Penguin, 1992)
[60] Alain Badiou, *The Communist Hypothesis* (London: Verso, 2010), 36
[61] Castoriadis, *The Imaginary Institution of Society*, 9
[62] Steve Fuller, *The New Sociological Imagination* (London: Sage, 2006), 25

Response to Chamsy el-Ojeili: Against Overcorrection – Risking the Universal

Kate Schick

Chamsy el-Ojeili's paper provides a useful and insightful overview of some of the most important trends in post-Marxist thought since the middle of the 20th century. Post-Marxists have sought to move away from the materialism and determinism that pervades Marx's thought in order to provide a place for individual agency and to address forms of oppression not rooted purely in the relations of production. Whilst these developments have been valuable in many ways, el-Ojeili argues that much post-Marxist thought has overcorrected for the weaknesses of Marxism. In particular, it can facilitate a certain kind of political paralysis as fears of promulgating "totalising thought" make it difficult to mobilise effective political projects on the left.

The tendency towards overcorrection is a weakness of leftist political thought that is attracting increasing attention, particularly in the realm of thinking about ethics, where difference and otherness have corrected for abstract universalism and homogenisation. Benjamin Arditi illustrates this problem with reference to the metaphor of a walking stick that Lenin is said to have used. In order to straighten the walking stick, one needs to bend the handle in the opposite direction; however, there is always a risk that one will apply too much or too little pressure. Arditi argues that corrections applied to Marxism in the name of identity politics have gone too far; an emphasis on particularity has undermined attempts to think about universality:

> The radicalization of the critique of grand narratives and the relentless vindication of particularism served to part ways with, say, the class reduction of Marxism, but it also turned the question of difference into something akin to the essentialism of the totality it criticized.[1]

El-Ojeili makes the same criticism of post-Marxist and post-modern thought when he says that they end up creating an alternative meta-narrative of progress, one characterised by recognition of difference, scepticism of traditional utopias, and rejection of totalising thought.

The emphasis on the particular that is characteristic of much post-Marxist thought has served as a vitally important corrective to the abstract universalism of Marxism and, for that matter, mainstream liberal thought. However, in the remainder of this short response, I argue that engaged politics requires us to take the risk of the universal alongside attention to the particular. To do this, I draw on the thought of Gillian Rose, who is extremely critical of the one-sidedness of both Enlightenment and postmodern thought, with their emphases on the universal and the particular respectively.

El-Ojeili refers to Gregor McLennan's writing on the paralysis of social theorising that has emerged from attempts to avoid the 'sins of modernist thinking.' In an attempt to overcome essentialism, universalism, functionalism, and determinism, post-Marxist theorists have over-corrected in a way that has undermined the core tasks of social theory, particularly explanation. Rose would heartily agree with this statement. She believes that post-Marxist thinkers have bent the walking stick much too far in their attempt to straighten it, that their thought has become unduly "one-sided" in its emphasis on particularity over universality.

Against the one-sidedness of post-Marxist thought, Rose argues that we have a responsibility to attend to and negotiate what she calls "the broken middle" between dualisms: the universal and particular, identity and difference, individual and community.[2] The negotiation of the broken middle stems from Rose's speculative Hegelianism, which maintains that it is impossible to comprehend concepts in isolation; they must always be thought in relation to their other: 'each "thing" is defined by not being another, lives in and only in the absence of another, and so "passes over" from being a discrete object to being a moment in a complex movement.'[3] Speculative thought is attuned to the ways in which individuals are situated, not only in relation to one another but also in relation to socio-political structures and historical processes, resisting exclusive particularity and insisting on attention to the universal.

Rose's response to the "middle" might be seen as an anxious negotiation of the relatedness of opposite terms. This anxiety is inherently political: it involves an embrace of equivocation, ambiguity, and ambivalence *as well as* an insistence on the need to take the risk of political action. Instead of proposing paths that would lead us away from anxiety (be they blueprints for reform or messianic utopianism), Rose calls for a dogged acceptance of uncertainty and equivocation. This uncertainty is not a radical uncertainty that would lead to political paralysis, however; Rose insists always upon the need to "stake oneself", to take the risk of political action, knowing that there is no foolproof path to justice, but that we must struggle always towards what she terms a "good enough justice".[4] She speaks of the need to 'act, *without guarantees*, for the good of all—this is to take *the risk* of the *universal* interest.'[5]

What might it mean in practice to take the risk of the universal? Here, it is helpful to turn to the thought of Bonnie Honig, who proffers a radical account of democratic agency with speculative political risk at its core. Drawing on Freud's depiction of Moses as the foreign founder of Israel in *Moses and Monotheism*, she sketches a model of agency where democratic subjects are always sceptical of their leaders and institutions. For Honig, radically democratic subjects who engage in political risk are:

> subjects who do not expect power to be granted to them by nice authorities with their best interests at heart; subjects who know that if they want power they must take it and that such taking is always illegitimate from the perspective of the order in place at the time; subjects who know that their efforts to carve out a just and legitimate polity will always be haunted by the violences of their founding; subjects who experience the law as a horizon of promise but also as an alien and impositional thing.[6]

These subjects live in an agonistic relationship with their law, institutions, and leaders. They see glimpses of promise in the law but do not expect it to be perfect or complete or to be wielded wisely by those who adjudicate it. These subjects are also ready to *act*, knowing that any action will have imperfect results and that no

system will ever be complete. They do not expect to 'mend diremption in heaven and on earth,'[7] nor do they indulge in an endless melancholy. Instead, they 'nurture some ambivalence regarding their principles, their leaders, and their neighbors and… put that ambivalence to good political use.'[8]

El-Ojeili's paper charts post-Marxists' disillusionment with more structural conceptions of Marxism in which a utopian revolution was virtually assured and in which social problems would largely disappear once the central issue of the means of production was resolved. Radical social theory moved from there to a much more subject-centred vision in which the goal was to facilitate and celebrate difference and particularity. Many on the left are increasingly uneasy about the potential for this kind of project to deliver real social and political change, but are equally anxious that attempts to think in more universal terms will sacrifice the space for particularity and difference that has been won through the identity politics of the second part of the twentieth century. Rose's thought provides one way to think one's way out of this dilemma. She urges a refusal of both easy utopian answers and cynical resignation. What she offers instead is a challengingly austere vision, emphasising work and risk in pursuit of the universal good, whilst also acknowledging the need for perpetual anxiety and disquiet in the face of inevitable failure (or at least only partial success) as projects are challenged by the needs of the particular. This is not an exciting vision but it is a mature one and is perhaps all we have.

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[1] Benjamin Arditi, *Politics on the Edges of Liberalism: Difference, Populism, Revolution, Agitation* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), 13

[2] Gillian Rose, *The Broken Middle: Out of Our Ancient Society* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992)

[3] Rowan Williams, "Logic and Spirit in Hegel," in *Post-Secular Philosophy: Between Philosophy and Theology*, ed. Phillip Blond (London: Routledge, 1998), 118

[4] Gillian Rose, *Love's Work* (London: Vintage, 1995), 115-116

[5] Gillian Rose, *Mourning Becomes the Law: Philosophy and Representation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 62

[6] Bonnie Honig, *Democracy and the Foreigner* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 39

[7] Rose, *The Broken Middle*, xv

[8] Honig, *Democracy and the Foreigner*, 118

Response to Chamsy el-Ojeili: Globalisation and the (Temporary) Death of Grand Social Theories

James H. Liu

I have a confession to make. As a psychologist I didn't understand a lot of Chamsy el-Ojeili's essay on "After Post-Socialism: Social Theory and Utopia in a Global Age". It wasn't for a lack of trying, as I did read through it three times. Probably the empiricist in me resists thinking about what "After post" really means. Psychology has its own "post" hangover; for us it's "post-positivism". For much of its history, psychology has been ruled by an epistemology of logical positivism and its descendants that refuse to acknowledge the validity of concepts that cannot be measured. So you can see I am working at a disadvantage in commenting on this paper. This paper has a lot of complex concepts that social theorists are accustomed to use discursively, but for a psychologist trained in empiricism I struggled with their significance and meaning. And so I will try to relate to this as best as I can, through the big picture of what has happened in global society in the last twenty years, and its significance for social theory.

Francis Fukuyama once famously declared the "End of History"[1] in 1992, at the beginning of the era of peak American hubris after the fall of the Soviet Union. His thesis was not that there would be no more new historical events or figures, but that the grand questions in history about what should be the best and most moral social order for human society were settled. According to Fukuyama, liberal democracy is not only the system that provides the greatest prosperity for the most people, but is also best suited to perennial human psychological needs (for recognition in particular). Free market capitalism plus political democracy not only provides the most practical solution to all our troubles, but it is the most psychologically satisfying. It should be noted that his 1992 book produced not the slightest shred of evidence that he had any awareness at all there was a field called psychology. Rather, he derived his universal prescriptions for human society and psychology from Greek analytical and moral philosophers. Unfortunately, as with any

"universal" prescriptions taken from such a limited perspective, Fukuyama now seems not just quaintly, but almost presciently naïve after less than two decades. We have now been through two decade long cycles of boom and bust for the global economy driven by Western economic interests, where its financial elites created stock market, building and currency/bubbles that ultimately resulted in the destruction of immense wealth, both at home and abroad. The lack of accountability of Western financial elites to the damage they are responsible for and the inability of its governing elites to enact anything but the most superficial of financial reforms have resulted in a much weakened United States that is now the world's leading debtor nation, dependent on Asia for its fix of capital to remain solvent.

The end of history does not seem so eminent as the end of two centuries of absolute Western dominance. The series of "posts" alluded to in el-Ojeili's essays are just that; stakes in the ground laid during an era when there seemed no alternatives to Western theories about the good society. While non-Western peoples may still need to go through the histories and canons of Western civilisation, they are by no means reaching the same conclusions. Islamic peoples and cultures, for example, now have both the power and the ideology to make Western people and powers very uncomfortable. I am currently editing a special issue of the *Asian Journal of Social Psychology* on Islamic terrorism in Asia, and the Muslim scholars I am working with have an intimate understanding of the psychology of the Islamic fundamentalists that are struggling to undermine the secular basis of society in their home countries (including such diverse societies as Indonesia and Turkey).

The basis of *jihad*, which has become the key ideological component of Islamic terrorist movements, is scriptural, even though contemporary Islamic scholars want to reinterpret the Koran's pronouncements on *jihad* to mean inner rather than outward struggle. For Muslim fundamentalists, *jihad* is a call to arms based on a desire for purity and unity in the struggle against worldly corruption and temporal opponents to God's Will. When this is fused with situational perceptions of injustice, whether they be the failings of the locally corrupt secular regime, or international injustices perpetrated in the Middle East by liberal democratic nations such as the United States or Israel, the call to *jihad* becomes a potent ideological instrument against liberal democracy in Islamic societies. While only a small

portion of the populations in Turkey or Indonesia support the violent actions called for by terrorist groups, large numbers of people in both countries yearn for the justice of *syariah* law and believe that many of the failings in their lives and societies are because of a failure to make manifest God's kingdom on earth, as called for by the Koran.

For all its bluster, terrorism is at the end of the day a power of the powerless, and an independent and secular government like Indonesia's is more than capable of winning the battle against their brand of Islamic terrorists in a way that the Western-dominated governments of Iraq and Afghanistan cannot. However, Westerners still agonise over the results, and Europeans in particular appear to have plenty of fear in their stomachs about the apparent indigestibility of Muslims within their liberal democratic or democratic socialist projects. Barriers to immigration are emerging all over Europe, from North to South and East to West, giving lie to Fukuyama's assertion that liberal democracy is the best of all forms of governance for all peoples, and that it should act as a psychological magnet drawing all peoples to it as the End of History. But again, barriers to immigration are nothing new, and will not fundamentally alter the world order until climate change brings refugees pouring into wealthier countries by the millions by the middle of the 21st century, with projected sea level rises and the loss of arable farmlands in Africa.

The immediate challenge posed to Western dominance by China is far more serious because it is based in economic fundamentals that cannot be countermanded. Islamic terrorism, after all, was inspired, and to a certain extent funded, by the fundamentalism of Wahhabi Saudi Arabia, and Middle Eastern power is in large part fuelled by petroleum rather than the enduring strengths of its indigenous social order. China's rise, by contrast, is based on fundamental inequalities in the capitalist structure of Western economies, where the interests of propertied ruling elites do not coincide with the interests of salaried workers. Stockholders and corporate managers want the most product for the lowest price to capture the largest market share, and they do not care who provides the labour nor where the goods are sold. This is in accord with the liberal theory that Adam Smith outlined in the *Wealth of Nations.* Smith also posits that larger markets offer more room for specialisation, and China is the largest of integrated markets by far. With endless resources in terms of peasant labour (China has moved from being 80% rural

peasantry to 50% in less than three decades, fuelled by its manufacturing prowess), China can out-compete almost anyone in terms of cheap and efficient labour. It has also developed a substantial internal market and huge amounts of sovereign wealth that allow it to cushion and absorbs shocks from the ups and downs of the global economy.

Most disturbing for liberal theorists, China's top-down system of command has been robustly producing economic growth of 9% per annum over the course of three decades, thereby increasing its GNP by orders of magnitude, *without its political elites loosening their grip on the controls of society*. China remains a nation with little in the way of civil society (as indexed by formally constituted non-governmental organisations) and rule by law (in terms of an independent judiciary). According to liberal theorists like Fukuyama, this should not be possible. For Marxists, "socialism with Chinese characteristics" is an even more bitter pill to swallow when they realise that their hero Mao was the author of agony and death for millions of his co-nationals in his later years, while state-run capitalism is making China now one of the most powerful nations on earth and has brought upwards of 300 million people out of poverty in recent decades.

According to both Marxist and Liberal theory China should have collapsed as the Soviet Union or liberalised like Eastern Europe long ago. More empirically minded social scientists have a different interpretation. After two decades of the most comprehensive cross-cultural study in social science history, Inglehart and Baker concluded that 'a history of Protestant or Islamic or Confucian traditions gives rise to cultural zones with distinctive value systems that persist after controlling for the effects of economic development… We doubt that the forces of modernisation will produce a homogenised world culture in the foreseeable future."[2]

China appears to be following in the footsteps of Japan and the four dragons of Taiwan, South Korea, Singapore, and Hong Kong, all of whom are rooted in Confucian traditions and all of whom have embarked on decades long rises to prosperity based on a powerful work ethic and top-down, hierarchical leadership from "moral and benevolent" authoritarian ruling parties. China is much bigger than any of its predecessors along this path, and it is an open question whether China will eventually open up and become more liberal as it gains in prosperity.

The diversity encompassed by China is much greater than Japan or the four dragons, and as we have seen in Western societies, too much diversity, especially in the form of fundamental inequalities (in economic systems, culture, or religion) is difficult for liberalism to handle due to its basic premise that all people are fundamentally equal.

Confucian theory is not based in equality, but in role-based complementarity between two people who are unequal, but bind themselves into a mutually beneficial system of relational obligations.[3] As Western forms of capitalism fundamentally produce inequality in favour of the capital holder, Confucian forms of relationalism that have built-in mechanisms for managing inequality become more and more attractive, especially to the lower-powered person, who begs protection from free market capitalism by pledging personal loyalty to a superior. This counter-balances Fukuyama's psychological need for recognition with an even more basic need for safety (in Maslow's hierarchy[4]). China's rise to prominence in Africa, for instance, may be as related to its methods of doing business as its insatiable need for raw material resources. China doesn't lecture about human rights in Africa – it builds infrastructure – and it remains to be seen which is more beneficial to poor people in Africa.

All this is a very roundabout way of arriving at my main criticisms of post-Marxist theory. I have a problem with all the posts in the literary canon of social theory because they all seem to me to be children of the Enlightenment – which was great, but just based in a single cultural tradition. From the perspective of cross-cultural psychology, I see liberalism and Marxism as twin progeny of the same cultural roots, engaged in a century-long dialectic predicated on Western dominance. As the world is a much more pluralistic place in terms of the division of influence and power, I can't see that this debate has as much centrality in the 21st century. What is Castoriadis' treatment of Islamic fundamentalism or Confucian relationalism? Are the language and tools they offer to analyse global society sufficient, or are they similarly from a too narrow base as Fukuyama's analysis?

For me, much of the debate cited in el-Ojeili's work seems self-referential and predicated on premises that can no longer be sustained. Liberalism is a growth model based on the natural rights of the individual, harnessed to a rule by law that

favours the propertied classes. Marxism is its dark shadow, picking up the flaws of the liberal model in terms of its inability or unwillingness to manage inequality by promising a utopia it was not equipped to deliver. These are two twins, mutually constituting one another in a dialogue past use-by date. The very notion of Marxism in China is dead as an intellectual project. I asked every post-graduate student I could about what they understood of Marxism when I was in Beijing for sabbatical last year. All of them were party members and not one of them appeared to understand Marxism or care about its premises, even though all of them had taken mandatory courses in the topic throughout their formal education. They were all too busy trying to learn psychology, publish a paper in an international (English) language journal, and thereby earn a position and make a living.

What maintains the ruling mandate of the Chinese Communist Party is not based in ideology or social theory but a pragmatic blend of socialism and capitalism that produces 9% growth per annum. The strongest element of Communism that remains in China is strict Leninist party discipline among a cadre that care for their self-interests over any ideology. Mao's little red book is sold as a curiosity for foreign tourists now, utterly refuted by two sayings of Deng Xiaoping's that have the most resonance in China today: 'If a cat catches mice, it doesn't matter if it is black or white it is a good cat;' and 'It is glorious to get rich.' Both these are "post" statements, the first a refutation of Mao's notion of perpetual revolution and class struggle, the second a call for surrender (or marriage?) to capitalism. I have no idea what Castoriadis means when he dismisses Soviet/Mao era economics as 'state based capitalism.' The Soviet/Mao era was characterised by a top-down, centrally-planned command economy. What China has now looks a lot like state-based capitalism, but the distance from Mao and Lenin to China today is massive. So I often don't know what the big words mean in his work other than generalisations based on social theory rather than empirical observations.

Castoriadis' phrase equating "really existing socialism" as being marked by planning, nationalisation, and commodity production as "total bureaucratic capitalism" was provocative as well, mainly because my experience of China was just the opposite. It is a much more vibrant, less totalitarian society in 2010 than it was in 1984, when I first visited and the imprint of Mao was still strong. My general feeling is that Westerners can't seem to come to grips with the idea of a

benevolent authority – a centralised authority that tries to control things, and in the main only manages to do a pretty good job of warding off chaos, and directing people's energies. It is simply not equipped to manage everything, let alone produce a totalitarian society without the consent of the people. Chinese people got tired of totalitarianism in Mao's last years and the reign of the Gang of Four. I'm just not sure how adequate the vocabulary of social theories cited by el-Ojeili is to describe the choices that Chinese people are wrestling with now, because from my perspective everything they are faced with is influenced by a very ancient system of beliefs that nuances all the modernities coming in from the outside.

I agree with el-Ojeili that it is a 'very short-sighted view of things to imagine that we've said goodbye to the working class.'[5] They've just been located out of sight to the developing world and to the margins of developed economies. The working class has been thoroughly outflanked by capitalists and top-down authoritarian governments who have combined to create a global economy where the interests of the working class in the developed and developing world are utterly at odds with one another. They are one source of not-so-cheap labour against another source of cheaper labour, mobilised in a reactionary and futile ways by political elites against a global system of control way beyond their ken. The solidarity of the working class is and always was a myth that is now over and done. Davos rules, or tries to. All we have left is Facebook, and even this is not global, for Facebook has no constituency in Chinese or Russian, where different scripts other than the English language alphabet prevail.

I don't find much comfort in el-Ojeili's conclusion that Marxism is back. I think it might be back in the small corners of academia where all it has to compete against is an array of effete posts, but that's not saying much in the grand scheme of things. How do they match up against Deng Xiaoping's two posts? Is "socialism with Chinese characteristics" something that can be dealt with on its own terms, or is it a non-sequitur that makes social theorists so uncomfortable they have to fold it back into familiar discursive shapes? Any analysis of globalisation has to step outside the confines of Western social theory to confront that reality in which the economy of China is growing by 9% per annum and is projected to overtake the United States in volume by 2027.

We are truly at a Spenglerian moment in world history, where the West is in decline, and there is nothing in any of its social theory that I have read here that offers any ideological or psychological comfort to me. The barbarians are at the gates, but the question is, are they barbarians at all, or just agents of karma come round to roost? If we can't get past the Western dialectics of *Jihad vs McWorld*,[6] it's lights out: so onward to a new global holism, one that must be sourced in a dialogue between Western and non-Western traditions, rather than a tired old dialogue between liberal democracy and Marxism.

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[1] Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Avon Books, 1992)

[2] Ronald Inglehart & Wayne E. Baker, "Modernization, Culture Change, and the Persistence of Traditional Values," *American Sociological Review, 65* (2000), 19-51

[3] J. H. Liu, M. C. Li, & X. D. Yue, Chinese social identity and intergroup relations: The influence of benevolent authority. In *Oxford Handbook of Chinese Psychology, 2nd Edition*, ed. M. H. Bond (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 579-598

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Creating Lines of Flight and Activating Resistance: Deleuze and Guattari's War Machine

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In *A Thousand Plateaus* Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari re-introduce the assemblage they label the war machine and establish it in opposition to the apparatus of state power. However the war machine has very little to do with war proper and is better understood as a radical type of thought that forms a central aspect of the Deleuzean politico-philosophical project. In other words it is a war of becoming over being. This article will explore the concept of the war machine and attempt to explain its relevance to contemporary political and everyday life. The war machine potentially involves everyone as it provides a radically different ontology for both the globalising tendencies of capitalist power and the various forms of resistance to that mechanism of power. This I conclude arguably clears the way for an understanding of contemporary power relations that situates the war machine as a creative and challenging form of politico-cultural resistance to the current ordering of global politics.

Introduction

'Never believe that a smooth space will suffice to save us'[1]

In an essay called "Nomad Thought", first published in the 1970s, Gilles Deleuze identifies what he believes to be the exemplar of counter-Enlightenment culture in the figure of Friedrich Nietzsche. Deleuze sees in Nietzsche the triumph of speed, movement, and warrior nomadism over the Kantian and neo-Kantian weaknesses of the dialectic. In place of binary opposites the Nietzschean war machine replaces opposites with difference and becoming over being. As Deleuze notes, 'difference is the object of a practical affirmation inseparable from essence and constitutive of existence. Nietzsche's "Yes" is opposed to the dialectical "no"; affirmation to

dialectical negation; difference to dialectical contradiction; joy, enjoyment, to dialectical labour; lightness, dance to dialectical responsibilities.'[2]

The nomad thought of Nietzsche the warrior supplants the sedentary nature of codification and recodification of the three elements of philosophical discourse Deleuze identifies as being central to societal codification; 'law, institutions and contracts.'[3] On the contrary Nietzsche's discourse is according to Deleuze:

> …above all nomadic; its statements can be conceived as the products of a mobile war machine and not the utterances of a rational, administrative machinery, whose philosophers would be bureaucrats of pure reason. It is perhaps in this sense that Nietzsche announces the advent of a new politics that begins with him (which Klossowski calls a plot against his own class).[4]

If nomadism was first identified in the figure of Nietzsche it reached its logical conclusion, paradoxical and still elusive in the second volume of *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia.* The purpose of this paper, therefore, is to ask a number of questions. Firstly, what is nomad thought and the war machine in Deleuze and Guattari? Secondly, what is the war machine's relationship to contemporary power? And, finally, can the war machine, when not captured by the apparatus of the state form, be considered as a meaningful and ultimately positive form of politico-cultural resistance to global capital?

In contemporary societies we now see this interplay between the nomadic and the sedentary in all aspects of existence, from disembodied social networking to the global "war on terror". It is not simply a refusal to be identified; rather it is intrinsically implicated in the instability of identities, whether that takes on an aesthetic value viewed in positive terms or even in the most venal acts by state terrorists and retail terrorists alike. For example, the suicide bomber is celebrated by many and cannot be said to be a "worse" person than the controller of a drone aeroplane who sits in an aircraft hanger in Nevada, and neutralises others "from a distance". Is it the quintessential modernist figure or the body that speaks? Which one of these two can be considered a warrior? The one who seeks death or the one

who fights and kills without being exposed to danger? Perhaps it is both, each with a radically different and changing subjectivity. It is as, Deleuze highlights in Nietzsche, a refusal to be fixed or to be pinned down, to be always moving even if one doesn't go anywhere; for example the soldier-warrior who sits, rather than marching. Deleuze says as follows: 'even historically, nomads are not necessarily those who move about like migrants. On the contrary they do not move; nomads, they nevertheless stay in the same place and continually evade the codes of settled people.'[5] In short it is *war*: a war of becoming over being, of the sedentary over the nomadic. Becoming different, to think and act differently. This form of ambiguity of the decentred self, continuously shifting defines both the warrior who "wars" without war and the warrior who "wars" without the chance of "winning". They both denote a shift in the calculus of modern war.

Deleuze asserts that it is with Nietzsche that creative force can be utilised for revolutionary ends while avoiding the repetition of the state-form that revolutionary struggle fights against. He argues that there is no point to overthrow the state-form merely to re-create it. Rather he points to the originality of Nietzsche who 'made thought into a machine of war – a battering ram – into a nomadic force.'[6] Nomad thought, then represents a fundamental shift in the thinking of the left as it breaks completely with the idea of the mass party being the motor of resistance to capital. Deleuze sees through the emptiness and ultimately the futility of such movements and posits a radical re-thinking of thought; a type of thought that is intrinsically subaltern, experimental, and uncertain but in a non-negative sense. In other words it is celebratory of the ambiguous nature of being, or more accurately for Deleuze, of becoming[s].

Deleuze sees in Nietzsche's experimental "nomadism", a form of non-philosophy that escapes the confines of the philosophical discourse of his time. This discourse is firmly rooted in the outside or exterior to the philosophy of state or of sovereignty. The philosophy of state is characterised by a principle of interiority and a system that is centred and hierarchical. By way of contrast, nomad thought is characterised by a principle of exteriority and a system that is decentred and rhizomatic or non-hierarchical. It implies movement, speed, and unexpected irruptions and sets itself in opposition to the tired and worn effects of dialectics;[7] in other words the affirmation of chance, creation and most of all in the eternal return.

The dicethrow in Nietzsche confirms 'affirmation of the many. But all the parts, all the fragments are cast in one throw; all of chance, all at once.'[8]

However, although Deleuze and Guattari argue that the war machine originated with nomads, there is nothing especially important about them. At one level of thought, many social forms can constitute war machines. They can take the form of artistic movements all the way to revolutionary movements and they draw 'a plane of consistency, a creative line of flight, a smooth place of displacement.'[9] These are war machines but of consequence only insofar as they demonstrates groups' abilities to carve out space, rather than occupy the space created by a higher or pre-given ordering principle or process (hylomorphism). As Deleuze and Guattari argue using the example of metallurgists,[10] they are assumed to be sedentary but this is not necessarily the case as 'they had to enjoy a certain technological autonomy, and social clandestinity, so that even controlled, they did not belong to the State any more than they were themselves nomads.'[11]

Itinerant metallurgists occupy an ambiguous relationship with the state form similar but not coequal to the stonemasons and artisans who constructed Gothic cathedrals. Their action or "betrayals" avoid the over-coding of the state apparatus. Although it has to be noted that in this case, i.e. of itinerant metallurgists, they can constitute a war machine assemblage in their own right but also can be put in the service of the state as weapon makers. So the artisan formation has at least a dual purpose and a particular ambiguity. The first form is in the making of tools (and weapons) external to the state-form but once captured by the state-form being in its service (in part or whole). In this sense many social formations have the potential to constitute a war machine, but one of relatively little importance when it comes to the consideration of active and effective resistance to the globalising tendencies of contemporary capitalism. As Deleuze and Guattari say 'it is not the nomad who defines this constellation of characteristics; it is the constellation that defines the nomad, and at the same time the essence of the war machine.'[12]

What is important in Deleuze and Guattari's identification of many types of war machine is that they are all irreducibly social in nature. It is the social base of all war machines that enables the conceptual tension of the term "war machine" itself to be appreciated. War machines are assemblages and all assemblages as well as

possessing material properties possess enunciative ones as well. It is not only nomads that can form a war machine, but eventually the state itself can become something altogether different; a war machine formed by social formations that proceed to "take over" the state apparatus itself; Nazi Germany for example.[13]

At this early juncture it may be useful to capture the conceptual tension inherent in the word "nomad". It has become popularised and too easily equated with a postmodern form of freedom of the subject, but we should stop momentarily to ponder carefully on nomads and their sedentary counterparts. It may well be true that whilst we surf the net, seek out new forms of expression and style and so on that we dwell for a while on the nomads who are not free to choose – migrants, refugees, people literally creating lines of flight from conflict zones and so on. However, this is not a "line of flight" in the Deleuzean sense. Creating a line of flight does not mean to flee but to re-create or act against dominant systems of thought and social conditions. Thus Deleuze and Guattari maintain that a "line of flight" 'never consist in running away from the world but rather in causing runoffs… There is nothing imaginary, nothing symbolic, about a line of flight.'[14] So we should tread carefully when discussing nomads and migrants in the modern world with "nomad thought". They are not the same phenomenon. As Noyes notes, 'it is a miserable plight to be a postmodern nomad, to be homeless, wandering, a refugee, following not a dream of disembodied bliss but a slim hope for survival.'[15] What type of existence is to be found at the fringes of globalising capitalism? What type of freedom is found in homelessness and in being up-rooted? Is it merely the freedom to starve, to be marginal, unable to speak[16] and to be marginal(ised)? This may be the case and cannot be equated with freedom or emancipation from oppression in all its forms. But I hope to demonstrate in the pages that follow that this tension can indeed be resolved.

So it is with caution that we should seek to apply the concept of the war machine to specific instances or events in the contemporary world. It may be tempting to try to find empirical examples to "apply" nomad thought to but in most, if not all cases, it is a fruitless task to do so. There is the temptation, seen earlier in the use of philosophers of all shades to "squeeze" their work and concepts into spaces where they do not belong. Similarly there is a tendency that should be avoided in the discipline of International Relations to appropriate the concept of the "war

machine", to celebrate "Otherness" and to valorise modern-day "nomads". Deleuzean concepts are very specific and are conceived philosophically in the traditional sense; they do not translate well into generalised situations or events and scholars in International Relations do not do themselves any favours when they appropriate nomads and war machines and mis-use them to make them "fit" into International Relations literature. This essay hopes to serve as a warning against the received wisdom of "nomad thought" for both adherents and critics alike in the current debate on the use and mis-use of Deleuze in International Relations. "Nomadism" and the "war machine", when applied properly (non-metaphorically) are creative, affective and affirmative concepts, although we should always be aware of the negative potential of every war machine, for it to become something other, destructive, cancerous, suicidal, fascist.[17]

As Deleuze and Guattari maintain, fascism comes in at least two distinct forms. The first is the historical fascism associated with Hitler's Germany and Mussolini's Italy (molar) and in smaller, localised settings (molecular), i.e. the fascism to be found in 'rural fascism and city or neighbourhood fascism, youth fascism and war veteran's fascism, fascism of the left and fascism of the right, fascism of the couple, family school and office.'[18] Whereas for Foucault it is power that permeates all social relations, Deleuze and Guattari see fascism everywhere and although there is a conceptual tension between these two interpretations of the societal formation, Foucault in his preface to *Anti-Oedipus* is generally approving of Deleuze and Guattari's reading of social power relations.[19] This molecular type of fascism may or may not eventuate in the molar or state level but they argue that molecular fascism prefigures the molar form. However, on the same page they also state that 'there is fascism when a *war machine* is installed in each hole, in every niche.'[20] Although the war machine is exterior and opposed to the state it does not by definition mean that something "good" will eventuate.

They go on later to suggest that 'the very conditions that make the State or World war machine possible, in other words, constant capital (resources and equipment) and human variable capital, continually recreate unexpected possibilities for counterattack, unforeseen initiatives determining, revolutionary, popular, minority, mutant machines.'[21] So we have forces of destruction and oppression and forces of

creation and freedom entangled in a complex interplay at the same time and in the same spaces.

What is the War Machine?

Deleuze and Guattari present two key axioms with regards to the war machine. Firstly they attest that 'the war machine is exterior to the State apparatus' and secondly,that 'the war machine is the invention of the nomads (insofar as it is exterior to the State apparatus and distinct from the military institution).'[22]

The first axiom is accompanied by a proposition which states that 'this exteriority is first attested to in mythology, epic, drama and games.'[23] Deleuze and Guattari borrow from the work of Georges Dumézil the Indo-European myth of the double-headed nature of political sovereignty embodied in the figures of the magician-king and the jurist-priest. The magician-king and the jurist-priest each represent the twin poles of political sovereignty, requiring each other to express their sovereign legitimacy and in conjunction form an apparatus of capture; they seek to bring all elements (people and things) under their jurisdiction. The point of this expression is that in a similar way to Foucault's panoptic mechanisms the model of sovereignty does not allow escape. By way of contrast the war machine 'comes from elsewhere'[24] and is thus not reducible to capture by the apparatus of the state. The war machine resists and in fact is not able to be fixed on the Foucauldian grid or by the multitude of codes that are embodied in the state apparatus.

Deleuze and Guattari use the example of chess against the game *go*. Chess is clearly a game of state but *go* is fluid, implying perpetual movement and a game of exteriority. This is not to state, however, that *go* is without rules or is without form. All games follow rules. In chess there is a grid and the space of chess is "striated". There is no exteriority to the grid of chess where each piece possesses intrinsic properties and limited powers. A pawn is always a pawn (except paradoxically unless it can avoid destruction and undergo a metamorphosis when it is promoted at the eighth level, becoming something other, usually a Queen). A Queen, however, cannot become a pawn. But all of the pieces in chess follow pre-written rules or axioms. Each piece can only move within the pre-ordained grid and there is

no way to modify or escape the codes of chess. By contrast, Deleuze and Guattari stress that the war machine in this form has very little to do with war proper, but as in the game *go,* it follows a guerrilla logic and 'it is a question of arraying oneself in an open space, of holding space, of maintaining the point of springing up at any point: the movement is not from one point to another, but becomes perpetual, without aim or destination, without departure or arrival.' Deleuze and Guattari note that 'in the case of the striated, the line is between two points, while in the smooth, the point is between two lines.'[25] In the example here this is typified by the "smooth space" of *go,* as against the "striated space" of chess.[26] Moreover, the war machine is a 'form of thought so radical that it wages the violence of war on existing orders of knowledge [and] condition's Deleuze's politico-philosophical project in its entirety.'[27] This is Julian Reid's understanding of the potential for a type of postmodern left resistance to the globalising tendencies of capital, and which has been popularised by Hardt and Negri. However in contrast to Hardt and Negri, Reid does not valorise the vagueness of the "multitude", which is so effectively undermined by Boron. As he notes in his critique of *Empire:*

> …if we applied Hardt and Negri's work to the prosaic reality of contemporary Latin America, we should ask ourselves if the paramilitaries and death squads that razed Chiapas…swing terror and death, are included in the multitude; or the landowners who organise and finance a great part of the private repression exerted in those countries against peasants and aboriginal communities…Do humiliated and exploited peasants form part of the multitude too?[28]

So again we should be careful in what we think it is plausible to state about two things. Firstly, the war machine is not here to save us and neither is nomadism to be taken out of context. Although Boron is largely correct that the paramilitaries and the death squads are not part of the "multitude", they most certainly constitute a certain type of war machine as noted above, namely those social formations that can potentially be at antagonistic to the state form but eventually become part of it or "take it over". This should serve as further warning to scholars in International Relations who (quite rightly) are attracted to a form of leftism that escapes the

codification found in the mirror of the state-form, i.e. the vanguardism of the Party, and secondly, the "multitude" as espoused by Hardt and Negri, a different celebratory type of vanguardism without substance, which is at best illusory and, as Boron goes on to say, is a concept that Hardt argues is to be understood poetically and not as fact.[29] In other words there is not much empirical support for the "coming together" of such disparate "political communities".

However, when considered as a particular modality of thinking then the Deleuzean concept of the war machine can be taken non-metaphorically as a conceptual tool of politico-cultural resistance. It does have the potential to have real-world significance, but only if understood in the sense of all concepts Deleuze (and Guattari) espouse. In other words, war machines have at least a double function. They can, on the one hand, serve as affective and active agents of resistance, but by the same token can be captured by the state form. So, as Reid goes on to argue, although resistance and power are caught up in shifting arrangements of deterritorialisation and subsequent reterritorialisation (by capital), 'it is not, therefore, a question of occupying a position of exteriority to power. Rather, the exterior is a *limit* towards which a body projects (emphasis added).'[30]

Mobility and resistance are central to this type of thinking and one can immediately see in the war machine, which is set in opposition to the apparatus of state capture, the distinctions Deleuze and Guattari make between "smooth" and "striated" space and *go* against chess. The apparatus of state capture will always attempt to "striate" space, whereas the war machine will always attempt to create "lines of flight" that make space "smooth". Similarly chess, no matter how complicated, will never be a game of complexity. It follows axioms, whereas *go* follows a generalised complex model of continuous change, despite its general rules. *go* becomes something other, always. In this sense *go* is similar to the point made at the beginning of *A Thousand Plateaus* in which Deleuze and Guattari highlight the essential feature of the war machine as follows:

> The problem of the war machine, or the firing squad: is a general necessary for *n* individuals to fire in unison? The solution without a General is to be found in an acentred multiplicity possessing a finite number of states with

> signals to indicate corresponding speeds, from a war rhizome or guerrilla logic point of view, without any tracing, without any copying of a central order.[31]

The distinction drawn between the sedentary and the nomadic here can be generalised across practically all aspects of existence as well, from pre-modernity to modernity and in the postmodern condition, too. The word "nomadic" takes on different connotations from the pre-modern nomad and denotes adaptability, movement, shifting patterns of behaviour, "phase transitions" and a continuously shifting calculus between humans and nature. Deleuze and Guattari also introduce here the themes of spontaneous self-organisation, non-linearity and the adaptive nature of complex systems, some things that could also be read as quite sympathetic to a certain ill-defined strain of anarchist thought. Or maybe a certain form of romanticism left remaining as a hangover from *Anti-Oedipus*, perhaps?

Although Deleuze and Guattari present Plateau 12 as 1227 A.D., as the date when the ungoverned steppes of inner Asia existed in its pure form for a moment, James Scott argues in his recent book *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* that Zomia (the mountainous regions, roughly the size of Europe, that traverse slices of seven Asian countries) have for the past two thousand years contained a number of groups that have actively resisted the attempts to be incorporated fully into the states that surround them (the Karen people are perhaps the most well-known). In this sense, Scott presents a direct challenge to the generally accepted narrative of civilisational progress, whereby pre-civilised nomads become civil(ised) by virtue of becoming incorporated (tamed) to one state formation or another. However Scott demonstrates that "societies without states" have used numerous tactics to escape capture by state-makers, from geographical dispersal, living with an oral culture, agricultural practices that encourage mobility, becoming sea gypsies (*orang laut*) [32] and resisting co-option into expanding state machines.

In other words, Scott presents Zomia as the ultimate war machine; the social machine of resistance par excellence. The Zomian war machine thus serves as a timely if not uncontroversial reminder that, basically speaking, Deleuze and Guattari have got it right. Axiom two related to the nomads: 'the war machine is

the invention of the nomads.' The Zomian war machine, embedded in peoples occupying vast swathes of territory and existing for more than just a moment continue to exist on their own plane of immanence. Although Scott's thesis is contestable, the war machine is not simply negation to over-coding. It is creative and affirmative; it engenders a double movement. Firstly, resistance to the codification of life itself by others, e.g. empires, tyrants, invaders and the purposeful expression of positive desire not to become sedentary, coded, classified, fixed in space and time. In the case of invaders we can still see this decoding in operation today in the form of movement without possession of territory. Possession of a territory implies that the territory itself has to be defended rather than creating a "line of flight" to a new and still un-possessed or partially possessed territory; perpetual movement, even if the movement is contained within one physical space.

Secondly, the Zomian war machine creates its own lines of flight creating smooth space and this space is a space of (but not pure) freedom. Freedom not necessarily *from* but freedom *to*… remain beyond and exterior to attempts to be co-opted into a confined and coded geographical space. If we view the state-form in a *non*-romantic view through the prism of the peoples of Zomia, we see a great deal of sense in active resistance to state-making and the solidification of states and their fusing with capital; a "fire machine" that for many meant and still does mean not war as the general model of operations, but extreme violence (police) and enslavement (imprisonment, work). Thus it should really come as no surprise that being "against the State" is not simply a negation, but the recognition of a different mode of becoming and a willingness to 'seek a kind of war machine that will not re-create a state apparatus, a nomadic unit related to the outside that will not revive an internal despotic unity.'[33] In this sense we see elements of the emancipatory potential of the war machine and the activation of axiom two related to the nomads; 'the war machine is the invention of the nomads.'

Deleuze and Guattari find in the work of Pierre Clastres support for axiom two. Contrary to the accepted narrative of civilisational progress noted above and challenged more recently by Scott's account of Zomia, Clastres breaks with the standard account that a required level of economic "development" be achieved prior to the founding of a state apparatus. He also breaks with the notion that

primitive societies are not sophisticated enough to make the evolutionary jump from levels of economic development to the organisation of complex forms of ordering principles and practices.

As Deleuze and Guattari state:

> Primitive, segmentary societies have often been defined as societies without a State, in other words, societies in which distinct organs of power do not appear. But the conclusion has been that these societies did not reach the degree of economic development, or the level of political differentiation that would make the formation of the State apparatus both possible and inevitable: the implication is that primitive people "don't understand" so complex an apparatus.[34]

Clastres breaks with this reading of modern ethnology which states quite simply that societies evolve almost linearly from nomadic to agricultural, eventually developing complex social relations of power that somehow enable the formation of a state apparatus. Clastres describes in detail numerous "primitive" societies that are in effect stateless, but where groups actively repress the social power required to establish a state formation. Clastres notes that these societies are 'an extraordinary patchwork of "nations", "tribes", and societies made up of local groups that take great care to preserve their autonomy.'[35] This is not to state that these societies are isolated and do not have any power relations at all. That would be to suggest that they are in fact not societies at all. What is suggested throughout Clastres' work is that power is exercised through various forms, for example, the warrior chief who loses all his power when a particular conflict ends. In other words, Clastres suggests a more socially embedded and situational form of power. He goes on to note that 'the tribal universe is unquestionably an effective means of preventing the establishment of socio-political groupings that would incorporate the local groups and, beyond that, a means of preventing the emergence of the State, which is a unifier by nature.'[36]

The appeal for Deleuze and Guattari in Clastre's work is that he identifies '*war* in primitive societies as the surest mechanism directed against the formation of the State: war maintains the dispersal and segmentarity of groups, and the warrior himself is caught in a process of accumulating exploits leading him to solitude and a prestigious but powerless death (emphasis added).'[37] The implication of this reading is that bands or packs have complex mechanisms for warding off the State form and that far from being unable to "understand" what a state formation implies, primitive peoples had a very clear idea of what the consequences of the state was and took quite complex pre-emptive action to keep it at bay. '[G]eronimo, the last of the great North American war chiefs, who spent thirty years of his life trying to "play the chief" and never succeeded…'[38] Geronimo was only a chief in the sense that he was needed to lead in battles, not war. Once the particular battles, skirmishes and so on ended he was no longer automatically assumed to be *the* leader. In other words the power he held was specific to the battle, not war. Dispersal follows battles. At this point Deleuze and Guattari are at pains to point out that the war machine, is not, by definition "better" than the state apparatus, merely that it operates according to different principles, the 'fundamental indiscipline of the warrior, a questioning of hierarchy, perpetual blackmail by abandonment, or betrayal, and a very volatile sense of honor, all of which, once again impedes the formation of the State.'[39]

What Deleuze and Guattari are presenting is a genealogical view of the philosophy of history in terms of relations of force. On one pole there is the unifying force of state formation noted above. On the other pole are forces of fragmentation that resist these tendencies, "the war machine". Two models of social organisation that will always be at odds, though it is fair to say that at present the state/capital formation has the upper hand and that, as Deleuze and Guattari correctly point out earlier in *Anti-Oedipus*, 'a pure nomad does not exist; there is always and already an encampment where it is a matter of stocking – however little – and where it is a matter of inscribing and allocating, of marrying, and of feeding oneself.'[40] What they are presenting is instead a counteractive force to the decoded flows of capitalism itself. This is the actually quite straightforward reading of the meaning of the war machine. It has very little to do with real nomads and those critics of nomadology and nomad thought who equate it with "style", subversion, and a postmodern lifestyle choice. They seem to be missing the point.[41]

As Ronald Bogue correctly points out 'Deleuze and Guattari's object is not to systematise received anthropological taxonomies; rather it is to articulate two tendencies – the nomadic and the sedentary – that have each a certain inner coherence – that manifest themselves in various mixed forms. Essential here is the differentiation of observations *de facto* (of fact) and *de jure* (of law or right), a distinction of long standing in scholastic legal theory and the philosophy of natural law.'[42] This is a tactic long used by Deleuze and borrowed from Bergson. There is nothing postmodern about nomadology. Nomad thought is central to Deleuze's critique of representational thinking in Western metaphysics. As Deleuze states at the end of his essay "Nomad Thought", 'we must ask ourselves, "Who are our nomads today, our real Nietzscheans?".'[43] And as Nietzsche himself said, 'those fearful bulwarks of which the state organisation protected itself against the old instincts of freedom – punishment belongs above all to these bulwarks –, caused all the instincts of the wild, free nomadic man to turn backwards *against man himself… such* is the origin of "bad conscience".'[44]

Thus the genealogical account of the state form against the war machine becomes Nietzschean/Foucauldian in its expression. The apparatus of the state form in Deleuze and Guattari is quite similar to that found in Nietzsche, including the machinic language used to describe social formations. State formations appear for Nietzsche not as an outcome of economic development which gives rise to social complexity, but instantly and fatefully, imposed from the outside 'as a crushing and thoughtless machinery, until such a raw material of common people was finally not only kneaded and malleable but also *formed*.'[45] This coming together re-inforces the sentiment that it is with Nietzsche that we see the introduction of the sedentary against the nomadic type of being.[46]

The War Machine and Power

Having now established the fundamentals of the war machine and the state form, the sedentary and the nomadic, it is now necessary to ask what relationship (if indeed any) the war machine has with contemporary forms of power. Most people live in states and most people are settled. Institutions, contracts and the law have successfully captured most people. They pay taxes, are marked and inscribed from

birth and are subject to panoply of biopolitical interventions that cut through all elements of their existence via education systems, the factory, the barracks, the prison, control of movement via passports, constantly surveilled both physically and virtually, i.e. in cyberspace. Furthermore, many settled people have what they think is a *stake* in the present system, rather than viewing it as a system of oppression that they actively desire. One of the wonderful aspects of the system of capitalist social relations is the ability of capitalism to be truly revolutionary in the sense that it too, like the nomads and unlike the apparatus of the state, which feeds from it, is in perpetual motion. It has to be. As Deleuze and Guattari note, '[capitalism's] interior limits under the specific conditions of capitalist production and circulation, that is in capital itself, but it functions only by reproducing and widening these limits on an always vaster scale. The strength of capitalism indeed resides in the fact that its axiomatic is never saturated.'[47] What chance then for the war machine, to make itself meaningful as a positive politico-ethical and politico-cultural force?

Is it possible that war in the contemporary world, as Hardt and Negri argue, has become the "*permanent social relation*" on a global scale?[48] In other words war becomes the organising principle for all social relations and forms of control irrespective of the level of violence or bloodshed involved. Hardt and Negri are following Foucault in this line of reasoning who argues that war is the general model of biopolitics for society and, as Hardt and Negri note, is 'applied to forms of competition and relations of force that do not generally involve lethal violence or bloodshed, such as sports, commerce, and domestic politics. In all of these contests, one has competitors but never really enemies properly conceived.'[49] The settled people are encouraged to think that this mode of being is "good" and natural, normal, timeless even. It is, after all, fundamental to capitalism to reward this type of behaviour and can be seen in everyday life. In the realm of economic exchanges a particular discourse is utilised; the focus of this discourse is on "economies" and the "fundamentals" of the "economy". Fundamentals are a euphemism for the *right* policies that will underpin a sound economy. These fundamentals include *tight* money, a *sound* macroeconomic framework, the *correct* relationship between government and business, and perhaps most importantly the *fight, struggle,* or *war* against inflation.

This is a discourse of control societies, largely organised through a discourse around fear and other forms of self-regulating behaviour. Since around the mid-1970s inflation, for example, has been described, amongst other things, as a "scourge", "disease" and "evil".[50] In this narrative the concept of inflation becomes biopolitical, operating on the individual consciousness, lending credibility to technocratic claims that it (inflation) is undesirable and a threat to society. The individual's response to this societal threat should be to actively combat this evil curse. Inflation is not *normal*, *war* must be waged upon it, and *we* must remove it as we would any external threat. The settled people are imbued with the discourse of war. This is reasonably clear and points to the important argument made in *Anti-Oedipus,* which is the re-statement of Wilhelm Reich's problem: '[a]fter centuries of exploitation, why do people still tolerate being humiliated and enslaved, to such a point that they *actually want* humiliation and slavery not only for others but for themselves?.... under a certain set of conditions, they *wanted* fascism, and it is this perversion of the desire of the masses that needs to be accounted for.'[51]

The on-going financial crisis is another example of this tendency. The continuing unrest in Greece, for example, reveals much about the triangulated relationship between the population, the state form and global capital. There is no bailout for the Greeks as has often been suggested. What we are witnessing instead is an intra-capitalist argument about how to bring a member state form into line, about how they will bring a peace worse than war to the Greeks (and most surely to others as well). As Deleuze and Guattari maintain, there is nothing intrinsically good about the various forms of war machine. In this variation, a war machine assemblage involving representatives of transnational capital, credit rating agencies, hedge funds, finance ministers, European Union bureaucrats, heads of state and representatives of the European Central Bank are in the process of re-configuring social relations of power in Greece according to the dominant axioms of capital.

The interests of the global capitalist war machine are what are at stake here, despite appearances of this particular financial assemblage being statist in function and form.[52] Global capital is a war machine of a wholly different type and one in which the apparatus of the state form has failed to incorporate or fully tame.[53] The whole tragedy has very little to do with the Greek population themselves. There is a fundamental disconnect between the interests of global capital, the state form and

lastly the population. Popular euphemisms are utilised to conceal the axiomatic nature of capital. Terms such as the "market" and "international creditors" are used to conceal and obfuscate the tendency of global capital to add to its axioms, whilst media representations give the impression that the apparatus of the state form is in some way superordinate to the apparatus of capital. There is no real concern for the state form from global capital. Sovereign credit downgrades, or the threat of one, raising the cost of capital on the international capital markets and the inability of states to regulate in increasingly stochastic and fluid system attest to these simple facts.

As for the Greek and other "weak" European populations, they will be told what to do, whilst wearing their masks of protest. They will continue to have momentary war machines when they take to the streets, blurring the fault lines of the state form and the axiomatic nature of capital, but they will be just that; moment[s]. As for the German population (whose state representatives are supposedly the prime architects of the Eurozone bail-outs), they are not involved either. A few are, the rest are observers, or appear in the mass media to re(present) the narrative of the state-capital nexus. Furthermore, any attempts at authentic dialogue between the social body and capital are swiftly polarised by media representations of the very basics of the relationship between capital and labour. Therefore it seems quite clear, in Europe at least, that new tactics are required.

By way of contrast to the settled people the war machine can, as Deleuze and Guattari state, manifest itself in many forms and in itself it presents a radical form of opposition to modernity itself. However it should be made clear that the anti-modernism epitomised by war machines are not *primitive* or *regressive*. On the contrary they are above all active and affective. It would be a mistake to view the relation to currently dominant forms of global power to all that seek alternative ways of being and knowing as a series of binary opposites. Binary oppositions belong to a time long gone, to the standing armies of Europe, who used to stand arrayed in lines in open space, but at the same time striated by cartography and war-craft in general. The fortification or the Maginot line has long been superseded by speed of intensities and movement. This is evidenced by all of the instances in what is sometimes called "asymmetrical warfare" or more recently re-classified and

labelled as the "war on terror". It is more accurate to consider non-state forms of terrorism in many instances as complex adaptive systems.[54]

For example, in modernist systems of thought it is not necessary to "see" things in their physical space. Recall the drone operator subject mentioned at the beginning of this essay. It is only necessary to have the "relevant" and usually quantified knowledge about them to exercise a form of power over the said object. We can see that it is a general point relevant today in the form of drone aeroplanes and surveillance mechanisms. The object in question can range at the micro level of the individual within a firm, for example, to the macro-level of the governance of nation-states via complex systems of surveillance and financial, disciplinary power. Although it should be noted that Deleuze in his later writings felt that many of the institutional practices associated with discipline were being superseded or rendered obsolete by mechanisms of control. This type of thinking is more analogous to the Deleuzean argument that we have moved from disciplinary societies to control societies.[55]

If we continue with this analogy though we see that it encounters problems and severe limitations in the field of knowledge when the "target" is fluid, as is the case of complex financial transactions, or subaltern forms of resistance to non-state forms of terrorism (all of which can constitute a type of war machine). These phenomena can no longer be fixed for the purposes of control or destruction. Problematic questions of authenticity are raised here and for Deleuze and Guattari, in their opening salvo in *A Thousand Plateaus*, a denial/negation of the unitary, unified and authentic subject. So we have a double problem. There no longer exists a stable grid or table with which to assemble the requisite knowledge of the "target". What this implies is a movement towards movement itself as a general category of understanding complex flows of people and things, with many of these things having taken on characteristics of virtuality, becoming non-things in the process. Therefore the "reality" of these examples becomes precisely one of *becoming* and never one of *being*. The point of being is arguably the point of disappearance or destruction, the moment in time when the phenomenon appears on the temporal plane only to exit and to reappear as something altogether different. This is a type of power that the apparatus of capture is least comfortable with as it escapes, it creates, it morphs and moves, and perpetually, i.e. it is a fluid.

However it also points to the ambivalence of the meaning of the war machine in *A Thousand Plateaus.* The war machine promises transformation, but sometimes at too high a cost, perhaps? As Deleuze and Guattari note, 'lines of flight are realities; they are very dangerous for societies…'[56] This condition is due to the fact that a line of flight does not have pre-determined points and it is not always possible to know if the line of flight will be 'itself the living weapon it forges.'[57]

The Apparatus of Capture and the War Machine

It seems fair to state that we are living in what Antonio Gramsci called an interregnum, in, which 'a great variety morbid symptoms appear.'[58] Gramsci was writing specifically about historical fascism in the Italian setting, but his comments seem to resonate as powerfully today. In Gramsci I see affinities (as well as very clear dissonances) with the works of Foucault and of Deleuze and Guattari. Gramsci was all too well aware of the realities of the state and its apparatus of capture in both senses of the word. Literally incarcerated by Mussolini and also cognisant of the way in the way in which the state-capital nexus needs to control the desires of humans in order to make them "fit" the logic and imperatives of capital. Gramsci recognised early on in Fordist production the *need* or *desire* for a new type of worker that would comply with mass industrialisation being introduced early in the twentieth century. In his discussion on the reconfiguration of labour and society following the methods of Taylorism and Fordism, Gramsci points out practices that render the worker that can meet the requirements of the producer, such as being diligent, consistent, calculable and (reasonably) sober; having a stable domestic existence. In other words Gramsci recognised the need for workers to be *trained* to conform to certain patterns of behaviour, regularities based on the control of time, movement and sexuality. The common theme that runs through these practices is delayed gratification, i.e. waiting to be paid, waiting to be gratified at home, the delay of desire, all of which is subject to the regime of calculability.[59]

Returning to Deleuze and Guattari, they argue using different language, a different time frame but in similar vein that people are organised on a large-scale according

to the underlying logic of capital and the accumulation of surplus value. As they say:

> a State apparatus is erected upon the primitive agricultural communities, which already have lineal-territorial codes; but it *overcodes them*, submitting them to the power of a despotic emperor, the sole and transcendent public-property owner, the master of the surplus or the stock, the organiser of large-scale works (surplus labor), the source of public functions and bureaucracy. This is the paradigm of the bond, the knot. Such is the regime of signs of the State: overcoding, or the Signifier. It is a system of machinic enslavement: the first "megamachine" in the strict sense, to use Mumford's term.[60]

What Deleuze and Guattari suggest is that it is indeed the state (or ordering practices) that renders human beings calculable but also disciplined as 'predisabled people, preexisting amputees, the still-born, the congenitally infirm, the one-eyed and one-armed.'[61] It is the state that takes hunter-gatherer societies and introduces agriculture, metallurgy and lastly public works, not the other way around. As such the state is an alien formation in relation to societies; societies who may indeed have maintained quite complex networks of exchange, for example, but which nonetheless had no desire to be captured by an exterior force; an alien force not really required but imposed. The logic is reasonably straightforward and can be expressed by the desire to capture the energy of bodies and put them to use for extraction of that energy. The human body is simply energy-matter and the apparatus of capture needs to extract as much of this energy for itself; the creation of surplus value. In line with Foucault's reasoning, the population is an undifferentiated mass that requires naming, classifying, encoding and ordering, largely through the tripartite system of power he outlines in *Discipline and Punish*.

Manuel DeLanda, again using different language but expressing the same sentiment argues that society and the population that inhabits it:

> …appears as just another ensemble of fluxes, with reservoirs of potentials of different kinds (water, energy, population, wealth etc.) driving those fluxes. From the point of view of the machinic phylum, we are simply a very complex dynamical system. And like any other physical ensemble of fluxes, we can reach critical points (singularities, bifurcations) where new forms of order may spontaneously emerge.[62]

And it is this *potential* that the apparatus of capture embodied in the state formation seeks. It is at this point that we must take one variant of the war machine and ask: what does it have to offer in terms of resistance to capture? Deleuze and Guattari seem to argue near the end of Plateau 13 that it is perhaps to be found in the minoritarian politics of 'the revolutionary movement (the connection of flows, the composition of nondeumerable aggregates, the becoming-minoritarian of everybody/everything).'[63] This variant of the war machine is the one that we are most interested at this juncture.[64] Becoming-minoritarian is set in opposition to what Deleuze and Guattari call "Royal Science".[65] Royal Science is primarily established and maintained to act as a reactive blocker. Royal Science, for Deleuze, is concerned with identifying and reproducing invariant laws from matter. This "matter" can include human subjects, for example, and "Royal Science" suggests that this matter follows universal laws. It establishes boundaries, sets the parameters of the correct questions to be asked and ultimately serves to *police* the legitimacy of knowledge. For example, it goes almost unnoticed that practically all discourse of "others" is subject to the Royal Science of the superordinate referent of the "West". Nomad thought or Minor Science is established as a counter-force, primarily to create thinking and speaking spaces blocked by Royal Science and its associations with the state form and apparatus of capture. Nomad or Minor Science is not concerned with a constant, but follows the singularities or variations of matter. The question then is what does minoritarian thought have to offer?

Those seeking a plan, an alternative, a manifesto, should be disappointed, or confused by the antagonism between the line and the point. The *point* of the line is, as I have been arguing, to follow the line; to be at a point between lines and not travelling from point to point. Consider escape along lines of flight as journeys;

journeys where one does not know the destination but where 'other world's are (already) possible.'[66] There is an emancipatory aspect to this line of thinking that is looked at disapprovingly by some of those on the left, who prefer the politics of the manifesto or plan (point by point). By this I mean those on the left who do not move with the exigencies of the times or in the Machiavellian sense of *il tempi*. What the above suggests is the enormous contribution Deleuze and Guattari's excursus on the sedentary and the nomadic can add to the analytical armour towards an understanding the modern subject, both in the sense of individual subjectivities and forms of various political communities and how they are literally assembled. What they highlight are the absurdities of those seeking ready-made solutions. On the contrary Deleuze and Guattari emphasise the experimental, the ambiguous, the misleading and the aleatory nature of becoming and of life itself. In turn this opens up theoretical space for others beyond social theory to re-conceptualise the concrete assembling and disassembling of many entities without recourse to mainstream International Relations neo-realism, or to more recent challenges from constructivism. And in the spirit of sampling, splicing, improvisational jazz, and re-mixing found in musical creation, this logic is perfectly applicable to intellectual creations, too, such as this essay or a book. Viewing this essay as an emergent assemblage as opposed to some(thing) that has to be listened to or read as being on the register of intellectual authority has merit and shares similarities with the Deleuzean attentiveness to the emergent possibilities of the "social", as well as the 'ambiguous, complex and contested flows that International Relations focus on stable, unitary actors and identities can at times obscure.'[67]

Conclusion

I have attempted to illustrate here that there is in the conceptual schema of Deleuze and Guattari's war machine a way of creating theoretical space for thinking about what it means to resist the apparatus of capture in modernist societies. Resistance, like the war machine, has a multitude of meanings. Resistance, as Gramsci famously noted, does not have to be in the first instance a war of manoeuvre; it takes time to build capabilities, to formulate the problem properly, to assess the actuality of late modernist imperialism. There are no ready-made formulas, no

cookbooks, no *Transitional Programmes*[68] and so on for the interregnum that we find ourselves currently facing, with perpetual war as the operating principle of global order. Added to this we have the various "wars on…." to contend with, and regressive neo-conservatism in the heart of the globalising capitalist system to deal with. All of this may seem too overwhelming to allow thinking about ordering the whole world in different, fairer and socially just ways. However to give in to a form of late modernist nihilism is probably exactly what those who have always known exactly what they are doing would desire. Get people away from public spaces, bemoaning the state of their existence, and as the more dis-associated from self and others they become the more easily they become "willing victims" of this particular form of ordering of social and political relations. When the city space is "striated" then the imperative is to seek out the "smooth" space of freedom, not in an abstract sense but in a material sense.

Consider for a moment the people who interact in a dynamic and fluid way in cityscapes with their bodies. I am thinking of those practitioners of *Parkour* or "free-running", for example; materialists who resist (or perhaps reassemble) the pre-given codification and control of urban space, people who resist the "is" of a wall or set of stairs and re-codify these objects by adaptation, absorption and movement. Rather than seeing the obstacles of the enclosure of public space, the practitioners of *Parkour* see obstacles as something to be overcome by intensities of speed and movement.[69] As such they deny the ontological certainty of the meaning of any object in public space and appropriate it for their own ends. It should be clear by now that there are war machines everywhere and that there is the potential for them to globalise, much in the same way that capital has globalised. However, this is not a retreat into an idealised form of political community that will cohere horizontally tomorrow. And *Parkour*, just like so many other subaltern activities and subcultures, will and already is being commodified. Free runners (*traceurs*) are not here to save us or to speak for us or for others. They speak with their bodies. However they do demonstrate the potential for radical and novel forms of material practices not only about the objects that surround us in our everyday lives, but more importantly to enable us to question what objects are for, what they can do, and on a global scale.

The creative and emancipatory potential of war machines to be realised will take a struggle of forces or a multiplicity of forces, and one cannot fall into the trap of imagining that such a multiplicity of forces will be easy to establish. However, in the spirit of the concept of the war machine imagination, and above all creativity, are required; creativity to imagine not merely destruction (perhaps an unfortunate interpretation of the war machine) but to imagine alternative worlds. This will be no easy task, as the axiomatic nature of capital, as noted above never seems to become saturated. As Deleuze and Guattari state, 'there is no assurance that two lines of flight will prove compatible, compossible. There is no assurance that the body without organs will be easy to compose. There is no assurance that a love, or a political approach will withstand it.'[70] However, if the aims of disparate groups in International Relations discourse and practice are to extricate themselves from the dominant axioms of the discipline and associated real world practices – to overcome being overlooked, despite the strength of their cause or argument – then the various journeys along equally indeterminate "lines of flight" and following the logic of positive war machines will be worth the throw of the dice.

To sum up, this essay introduced the concepts of nomad thought and of the war machine in Deleuze and Guattari. In doing so it highlighted the ambivalence of these concepts. I argued that although the war machine has been given many meanings by Deleuze and Guattari, not all of which can be considered positive, the most promising interpretation of the war machine is stated in the two axioms: the war machine is exterior to the state and the war machine is the invention of the nomads. I argued that only in exceptional circumstances does the war machine take war as its object; rather the object of the war machine is the creation of a radical form of *becoming* that is resistant to the overcoding of the apparatus of the state form and its associations with the axiomatic nature of capital, and is embodied in practices that resist being fixed on the grid or table of modernity. However I also argued that although in most instances war proper is subordinate to escape, a war machine can become part of the apparatus of capture. However this is a war machine of a different kind, i.e. a war machine that has been taken over, captured and put into the service of the state form or taking over the state itself and becoming the state, either as fascist or totalitarian in form.

In that sense there may be accusations of romanticism, or even basic errors of virtual concepts serving a double purpose, thus claiming to be read on the grounds of pure philosophy but backed up with real-world representations and anthropological and ethnographic examples.[71] The claim is made that the war machine is simply yet another vague anarchist utopia whereby desire is freed from the shackles of capitalist overcoding and the apparatus of state capture. Yes, it is difficult to escape the mayfly effect, to think and act as if the state formation is not the normal mode of being; most are born into it after all, and most likely die under its care. There may also be accusations that this analysis is pessimistic and defeatist. That is not the case. Many other forms of social organisation are possible. Everybody already knows this. What they are prepared to do about it is the proper formulation of the problem which, as Bergson and Deleuze correctly state, is the real task at hand.[72] In that sense truly novel forms of being and knowing do indeed remain as future goals, but not impossible ones, despite the police of Royal Science who would like to maintain its current monopoly on the disciplinary boundaries of knowledge, whereby so called debates occur within and without the academy, according to the established and entrenched axioms of capital. Or, as Jameson argues, it might be preferable to view the antagonism between nomadism and the state form in the age of the global capitalist axiomatic as 'the return of myth and the call of utopian transfiguration.'[73]

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[1] Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis & London: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 500

[2] Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy* (New York: Colombia University Press, 1996), 9

[3] Gilles Deleuze, "Nomad Thought," in *The New Nietzsche: Contemporary Styles of Interpretation*, ed. David B. Allison (Cambridge Mass. & London: The MIT Press, 1985), 148

[4] Ibid., 149. See also Pierre Klossowski, *Nietzsche and The Vicious Circle* (London & New York: Continuum, 2005)

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.

[7] For a more detailed discussion and critique of the Deleuzean objection to dialectics see Lutz Ellrich & Marion Picker, "Negativity and Difference: On Gilles Deleuze's Criticism of Dialectics," *MLN*, 111:3 (1996), 463–487; John Grant "Foucault and the Logic of Dialectics," *Contemporary Political Theory* 9:2 (2010), 220–238. Deleuze and Guattari make extensive use of non- binary oppositions, some of the more well-known are the smooth and the striated, nomadic and sedentary, apparatus of capture and war machine, rhizomes and trees.

[8] Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 29

[9] Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 423

[10] Proposition VIII in a *Thousand Plateau*s states as follows: "Metallurgy in itself constitutes a flow confluent with nomadism", Ibid., 404
[11] Ibid., 405
[12] Ibid., 422–423
[13] Eugene W. Holland, "Schizoanalysis, Nomadology, Fascism," in *Deleuze and Politics*, eds. Ian Buchanan & Nicholas Thoburn (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), 82–83
[14] Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 204
[15] John K. Noyes, "Nomadism, Nomadology, Postcolonialism," *Interventions* 6:2 (2004), 159
[16] Not to be confused with Spivak. See Gayatri C. Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak," in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, eds. C. Nelson & L. Grossberg (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 271–313
[17] Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 165, 230
[18] Ibid., 214
[19] Foucault writes in the Preface to *Anti-Oedipus* that 'Paying a modest tribute to Saint Francis Sales one might say that *Anti-Oedipus* is an *Introduction to the Non-Fascist Life*.' Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), xiii
[20] Ibid., 214
[21] Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 422
[22] Ibid., 351, 380
[23] Ibid., 351
[24] Ibid., 52
[25] Ibid., 480
[26] Ibid., 353
[27] Julian Reid, "Deleuze's War Machine: Nomadism Against the State," *Millennium; Journal of International Studies* 32:1 (2003), 59. Douglas Kellner has a similar problem with Hardt and Negri's valorisation of the "multitude". See Douglas Kellner, "Theorizing Globalization," *Sociological Theory* 20:3 (2003), especially fn. 9, 293
[28] Atilio A. Boron, *Empire and Imperialism: A Critical Reading of Hardt and Antonio Negri* (London and New York: Zed Books, 2005), 88
[29] Ibid., p.88
[30] Reid, "Deleuze's War Machine," 74
[31] Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 17
[32] James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 328
[33] Deleuze, "Nomad Thought," 149
[34] Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 357
[35] Pierre Clastres, *Society Against the State: Essays in Political Anthropology* (New York: Zone Books, 1987), 213
[36] Ibid., 213
[37] Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 357

[38] Clastres, *Society Against the State*, 212
[39] Ibid., 358
[40] Deleuze & Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 148
[41] See Ulrike Kistner, "Raison d'état," *Interventions* 6:2 (2004), 242–251; and Christopher L. Miller, "The Postidentitarian Predicament in the Footnotes of a Thousand Plateaus: Nomadology, Anthropology and Authority," *Diacritics* 23:3 (1993), 6–35
[42] Ronald Bogue, "Apology for Nomadology," *Interventions* 6:2 (2004), 172
[43] Deleuze, "Nomad Thought," 149
[44] Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals* (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 65
[45] Ibid., 66
[46] Ibid, 66-67
[47] Deleuze & Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 250
[48] Michael Hardt & Antonio Negri, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2004), 12
[49] Ibid., 13
[50] See for example Stuart Corbridge, "Plausible Worlds: Friedman, Keynes and the Geography of Inflation," in *Money Power and Space*, eds. Stuart Corbridge, Ron Martin & Nigel Thrift (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1994)
[51] Deleuze & Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 29
[52] See Ismail Ertürk et al, "Hedge Funds as 'War Machine': Making the Positions Work," *New Political Economy* 15:1 (2010), 9–28
[53] See Robert Deuchars, "Towards the Global Social: Sociological Reflections on Governance and Risk in the Context of the Current Financial Crisis," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 23:1 (2010), 107–125
[54] See Euel Elliott & L. Douglas Kiel, "A Complex Systems Approach for Developing Public Policy Towards Terrorism: An Agent-Based Approach," *Chaos Solitions and Fractals* 20 (2004), 63–68; E. Ahmed, A. S. Elgazzar & A. S. Hegazi, "On Complex Adaptive Systems and Terrorism," *Physics Letters* 337:1-2 (2005), 127–129
[55] Gilles Deleuze, "Postscript on Control Societies," in *Negotiations: 1972-1990*, ed. Gilles Deleuze (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 178
[56] Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 204
[57] Ibid., 204. See also Paul Patton "Politics and the War-Machine in 'Mille Plateaux'," *SubStance* 13:3/4 (1984), 61–80
[58] Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1991), 276. There is clearly a problem equating the thought of Antonio Gramsci with that of Deleuze. Gramsci was a believer in the Party as the motor of change, whereas Deleuze did not. However, their analysis of fascism is very similar. They both distinguished and recognised the fundamental importance of the molecular forms of fascism that required clear distinction from the molar or state form of fascism proper. In similar vein the anti-fascism of Gramsci in the form of subaltern thought is similar to the anti-fascism found in the nomadism of Deleuze and Guattari.

[59] Ibid., pp.279-318
[60] Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 427–428
[61] Ibid., 426
[62] Manuel DeLanda, *War in the Age of Intelligent Machines* (New York: Zone Books, 1991), 124
[63] Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 473
[64] See Andrew Robinson & Simon Tormey, "Living in Smooth Space: Deleuze, Postcolonialism and the Subaltern," in *Deleuze and the Postcolonial*, eds. Simon Bignall & Paul Patton (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 20–40
[65] Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 367
[66] See Arturo Escobar, "Other Worlds Are (Already) Possible: Self-Organization, Complexity and Post-Capitalist Cultures," in *World Social Forum Challenging Empires*, eds. Jai Sen & Peter Waterman (Montreal, New York, London: Black Rose Books, 2009), 393–404
[67] Duncan Wilson "International Relations, the Washington Consensus and International Financial Institutions: Dissembling Theory and Theorising Assemblages," unpublished manuscript, 2009, 9
[68] See Leon Trotsky, *The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution* (New York: Pathfinder Press Inc, 1973)
[69] See Oli Mould, "Parkour, the City, the Event," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 27 (2009), 738–750. It should be noted that Mould is critical of Deleuze and Guattari's view of the smooth and the striated. He argues that Badiou's concept of the event is a more appropriate lens with which to view Parkour. I do not share this interpretation, but he does open up space for debate on urban subcultures such as Parkour.
[70] Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 205
[71] Space constraints preclude me from going into this debate in much detail. It is, however, important. See Eugene W. Holland, "Representation and Misrepresentation in Postcolonial Literature and Theory," *Research in African Literatures* 34:1 (2003), 59–173; Amroise Kom, "Nationalists and Nomads: Essays on Francophone African Literature and Culture," *Research in African Literatures* 31:3 (2000), 175–178; Christopher L. Miller, "'We Shouldn't Judge Deleuze and Guattari': A Response to Eugene Holland," *Research in African Literatures* 34:3 (2003), 129–141
[72] Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism* (New York: Zone Books, 1990), 15–16
[73] Fredric Jameson, "Marxism and Dualism," in *A Deleuzean Century?*, ed. Ian Buchanan (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1999), 34

Response to Robert Deuchars: Romanticising Resistance? Deuchars, Deleuze and the Possibility of Living Differently

Ben Thirkell-White

This chapter is part of Robert Deuchars' broader project of correcting a fixation with state power within the international relations discipline. He draws our attention to more subtle forms of global power that have a pervasive influence over international politics right down to the level of the formation of individual subjectivities.[1]

This particular chapter draws on Deleuze and Guatarri's conception of the "war machine". It argues that we are currently dominated by the state, both as physical disciplinary power and as mode of thought (rational, categorising, rule-based, ordered, statistical). The idea of the "war machine" (again both as assemblage and as way of thinking) offers the potential for creative and assertive ways to escape the imprisoning structures of capitalist modernity. In the process, Deuchars refers to James Scott's work on indigenous struggles against the state in Southeast Asia to provide some concrete empirical support for Deleuze's arguments.

In this brief response, I begin by drawing out what I find compellingly provocative about the Deleuzean project Deuchars is engaged in, through an alternative exegesis of the meaning of the war machine. I then go on to draw on some of Scott's writing to suggest that Deuchars doesn't fully escape the charge of "romantic anarchism". However, his writing is provocative in uncovering the difficulties we all have in escaping the biases of modernity.

The War Machine Revisited

Deleuze and Guattari's writing is plainly not analytical philosophy. It doesn't proceed through proposition and logical argument. In a sense it is closer to art. It is

designed to display a different point of view to the reader through example, through highlighting aspects of our experience that are often ignored or suppressed. Deleuze and Guattari try to beckon us into alternative thought spaces, rather than obliterate our existing views through careful, rationalistic argument.

In keeping with this strategy, the war machine is never defined. It emerges onto the page and we learn about it as more of its attributes and historical appearances are revealed to us in the text. At first sight, the war machine appears to be the binary opposite of the state in something like the following schema:

State	**War Machine**
Order	Anarchy
Grid	Undefined space
Creation of fixed categories	Subversion of fixed categories
Laws	Creatively applied techniques
Political programmes	Spontaneous and creative resistance

However, while the state does attempt to stand for grid-like, law-governed order it always fails to live up to its ambitions for itself. It can never fully control the war machine. Meanwhile, the war machine is ideally something fluid and anarchic that comes from outside the state and subverts its laws, but it is always possible for the war machine to take over the state and produce pure terror. Both, though, are ways of thinking as much as they are concrete political institutions or assemblages. The State stands for something like modern natural science and rationalism as well as for governments and bureaucracies. Likewise, the war machine may be an actual band of warriors or a spontaneous, creative and productive form of thought and action. What we have are different poles or assemblages of related concepts or even associations, rather than law-like relationships and clearly articulated categories. There aren’t rigid boundaries or separations anywhere. In this respect, Deleuze and Guattari’s writing itself is a demonstration of the kind of slippery nomad thought that escapes settled, clearly-defined classifications.

Nonetheless, the association and connection between the historically existing state and modern thought, with its fixation on order, sharply defined categories and law-like generalisations, is extremely important. Deleuze and Guattari are at their most provocative and interesting when they discuss the varieties of nomad thought as a way of highlighting the pervasive dominance of state thinking through counter-posing alternative and equally valid but incompatible forms of thought. These alternatives are best experienced through engagement with their text. To give a brief flavour, though, *Nomadology: The War Machine* makes a comparison between architect-planned buildings, where as much as possible is ordered and specified before building begins, and the arches of Gothic Cathedrals, whose shape emerges as masons shape stones in accordance with tradition and with the quality of stone they encounter. Both are logics that produce buildings, but one is fluid, emergent, quasi-spontaneous and creative while the other is "scientific", structured and ordered.

Deleuze and Guattari argue that we are fixated with the architect-style scientific techniques and frequently disregard the very possibility of nomad thought, yet can we conclusively say that modern architecture surpasses that of gothic cathedrals? Through this fixation with modern thought the state comes to govern us in under-acknowledged and arbitrary ways that reduce the potential for human spontaneity, freedom and creativity. Not only does the state govern us through law, policing and the courts; the pervasiveness of state thinking also obscures or excludes the lessons we might learn from curves, surfaces, points, eruptions and difference as opposed to lines, grids, and logical laws and similarities.

Nomad *thought* may be as much part of what is needed for emancipation as material "lines of flight" or "activation of resistance". Certainly reading Deleuze and Guattari's categorisations of the two forms of thought can unsettle, as they are intended to do. Do we really leap into modern (state) ways of thinking because they are inherently superior? Or do we arbitrarily exclude other ways of thinking because we have gradually become comfortable with the State we're in through accumulated structures of knowledge and power that systematically privilege bureaucratically oriented laws, border and homogenisation in the interest of global social control?

Making Nomadology Concrete: Scott and Peasant Resistance in Southeast Asia

Deuchars uses some of James Scott's writing to illustrate his claim that the state is something learned and imposed, rather than the product of a natural (and therefore presumably desirable) developmental telos from simple society to complex "state". Scott's *The Art of Not Being Governed*,[2] which Deuchars draws on, might be presented as part of a trilogy of works that are Deleuzian in spirit, if not in epistemology or language.

In *Seeing Like a State*,[3] Scott points to the ways in which bureaucracy, statistics gathering, planning and evaluation techniques are part of what is required for effective "stateness". He goes on to argue that, whilst these techniques satisfy the internal imperatives of state bureaucracies, their inability to map onto the messy realities of the actual social world frequently mean that development projects springing from the state's vision are subject to unintended consequences, subversion and failure. A fixation with modern thought is powerful when one looks at state identified regularities but may look more fragile when one looks at the state's interaction with the more nomadic practices of the developmental periphery.

In a third book, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*,[4] Scott identifies some of the kinds of unpredictable and uncontrollable ways by which those at the margins of the State subvert and undermine unwanted programmes of state and elite-orchestrated social and economic "modernisation" (in this case, the arrival of green revolution agriculture in Northern Malaysia). Scott uncovers the ways in which the state fails to achieve the kinds of total transformation that it attempts. Scott documents dogged resistance on the part of poor peasants to both new material practices and new ideologies. He shows calculated surface conformity, subverted by uncoordinated acts of resistance, such as petty theft and animal killing. Likewise, the poor never fully accept the rationalisations they are offered by the rich – transformation is seen as inevitable but not legitimate.

However, Scott's work also emphasises the extent to which nomad's form of existence and space for lines of flight are continually shaped by elites, something

Deuchars also acknowledges. In the end it is clear that Scott's peasants are fighting a losing battle, or at least that they will be confined to the margins. Reading Deleuze in conjunction with Scott it is difficult to cling to Deuchars' sense of the proud, subversive, creative independence of nomadism. Is it possible, then, that while the state will never be fully immune from the war machine, the war machine will be confined to ever smaller and less frequent flashes of independence against a background of growing conformity and (self) discipline?

Concluding Questions

The cynical might argue that the modern ways of the state are not just an arbitrary choice but are also more intrinsically powerful – better at shaping, controlling, organising and harnessing human activity towards particular collective ends. For me, the most important part of Deuchars' argument is the insistence that such "objective" assessments are themselves loaded judgements *of* the state, based on the state's modernist criteria. We are programmed to seek and find order, predictability and organisation. We have far better (or perhaps more highly valued) analytical tools for thinking and dealing with the world in the language and vision of the state and so we systematically underestimate and undervalue deviations from our all-pervasive norms. Deuchars' campaign is to press us to compensate for these deeply seated biases by a more active search for positive, active lines of flight or forms of resistance, to look for alternative possibilities, to seek creative outlets, to see the world differently. Only when we have exhausted that search will we be justified in ruling out such possibilities. The state has taught us to give up before we try. I still need a little convincing that there is as much scope for this kind of thing as Deuchars suggests, but I am at least a little less sure of my ground than I was before I engaged with his work.

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[1] See, for example, Robert Deuchars, "Towards the Global Social: Sociological Reflections on Governance and Risk in the Context of the Current Financial Crisis," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* Vol.23 No.1 (2010), 107-125

[2] James Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009)

[3] James Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press 1999)

[4] James Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance, 2nd Edition* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1987)

Response to Robert Deuchars: The War Machine, Power and Humans as Social Animals

Ronald Fischer

To present a commentary on the war machine is a formidable challenge. I cannot offer a fundamental critique or insight into the major themes of the essay. I am writing as a social and cultural psychologist, drawing upon some experience working in extreme parts of the world. My task or goal will be more limited. On one hand, I will examine the central words of "war", "machine" and "nomads" and briefly reflect on some of their connotations. The second aim is to shed some doubt on the aspirations of the war machine, that is, the goal to present an alternative mode of social existences, resisting the need to be incorporated into a fixed grid of power originating from the state.

The war machine was invented by nomads. The words "war", "machine" and "nomad" resonate strongly in a world where war is continuously waged, most strongly now identified with a continuing and expanding war on terrorism. This war and its principal agents act as a war machine. The term, as used by Deleuze and Guattari,[1] can be easily misunderstood in today's political context. This war machine organised and financed by global capital causes suffering, bloodshed and death on a daily basis. The victims of this modern war machine are the real nomads, those people unfortunate enough to live in a place that is touched, burned and razed by this inhuman machine driven by humans. The victims of this modern war machine become nomads, being displaced and driven from their rightful lands, surviving in bleak refugee camps with no prospects of returning. Many of these try clandestinely to cross borders to create a human existence elsewhere. Their aspirations are to *return* to a normal life, governed by a state, with clear social expectations, an established grid of norms, visible power relations and formal rigidity. They inhabit a lawless place, often suffering further humiliations and abuse by others within and outside this lawless system.

I have been visiting and working with Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, driven from their land in successive waves of Israeli state aggression. It is hard for those of us

living in the secure realms of state security and enjoying a middle class existence to imagine the daily life of these nomads in the real world. Until very recently, these refugees (some families living there for generations, with the first being displaced in the creation of Israel in 1948) are barred to work outside the camps, have no prospect of formal education, no prospect to find a decent job, marry and bring up children who will have a secure life ahead of them. One mother told me the story of how all of her sons, the youngest being a mere teenager, were taken in the mid-1980s by Israeli forces when they invaded Lebanon. All male members of a family, never mind their age, had to line up and were taken prisoner. They disappeared. Despite many requests and formal inquiries, this desperate mother still has no idea about the fate of her four sons. The only hope that she nourishes is a picture of a secret prison in Israel, published many years afterwards in an Israeli newspaper. A clipping of this paper was smuggled across the border and was given to her. On the blurred picture you can see a sea of faces and bodies, thin male bodies with haggard faces. One of these anonymous faces has features that remind this mother of her eldest son. This image is the life beam for her, kindling her hope and her vision of meeting at least of her sons again and leading a lawful life, somewhere, anywhere. I met many people and made friends among these modern nomads, people without land and resisting various state powers, one that has driven them from their rightful lands, another state power now using them as bargaining chips in global politics, yet another global set of powers ignoring their plight. Yes, these people live and create an alternative form of existence. But this alternative existence is imposed on them. The aspirations are to return to "normal" life, governed by a benevolent civil state with clear rules and laws. Meeting and working with these individuals, the real nomads of our times, created by a war machine, inverts the meaning and significance of the central thesis of the argument.

However, let us assume for a moment that there could be a war machine that resists our formalised mode of being. How likely is it that humans created in the current system of power relations can create a state beyond current laws and rules? I think the chances are slim. In a series of experiments, Henry Tajfel and colleagues[2] created what is called minimal groups. Get a group of university students together, the most alternative and liberal part of society, separate these young idealists into two randomly created groups, then ask these potential visionaries of a new society to divide some fixed amount of money between the two groups. What is the typical

and well-replicated outcome? If there was a sincere hope of an alternative and egalitarian society, we could find a more or less equal allocation of money between individuals, independent of these randomly created and meaningless groups. However, the most likely outcome is that the creation of minimal groups now encourages individuals to allocate more money to members of their own group than members of the other group. The mere classification of individuals into meaningless groups creates in-group favouritism and in-group bias. This is the foundation stone of a modern state, built on inequality and social exclusion of distant others. My own research[3] shows that is often nomads experiencing great uncertainty that then produces the greatest need to discriminate against others.

Furthermore, humans are social animals. With the ability to communicate, love and kill each other over long distances. But we need each other, we need to live in groups. Once we have groups, a different set of experiments and studies lead by Jim Sidanius and Felicia Pratto[4] shows that all human groups and societies develop hierarchies of power. These hierarchies may be organised around age or gender or arbitrary sets of characteristics (e.g., race, abilities, intelligence – leading to our current problems of racism, social class, etc.). Observations in anthropology of the most remote still existing tribal groups and examinations of any other social animal as currently known by biologists similarly point to the need for social organisation that involves some form of hierarchy. Can we overcome the need to structure social relations into hierarchies, when given the opportunity? I do not think we, as humans, can do this.

We may not like the outcome of these experiments. There are many arguments now that the human mind is conditioned to act this way, due to evolutionary pressures of survival. It seems to make sense to me to accept that humans had to discriminate in favour of their own kin against others competing for the same resources. This leads to the above noted tendency to favour one's own group. Furthermore, even the simplest human form of relationship, the family, has at least two hierarchies, the gender and the age hierarchy.[5] Only women can give birth to children. Children need to be taught how to survive in the world. These hierarchies, driven and conditioned by biological facts, then generalise to society in large. Any form of alternative existence will re-create these basic human propensities. Given these constraints, what can be the outcome of this 'radical form of being or becoming'?

In writing this, I am an optimist. The main ideas of the essay on the war machine for me is the vision of a society that follows formal rules and law, but that creates a living space that is affordable to individuals. It will have discrimination and hierarchies that restrict some groups of individuals in their form of expression and gives other groups more power. But my vision would be that we can achieve a balance, where the human tendency towards discrimination and hierarchy is off-set by an institutionalised concern even for the weakest individuals and groups. I think this is the real power of an utopian state, to be able to make sure that all individuals can have a meaningful existence and making the current nomads suffering in our world disappear.

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[1] Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1987) 423

[2] Henry Tajfel, Michael Billig, R. P. Bundy & C. Flament, "Social categorisation and intergroup behaviour," *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 1 (1971) 149-178; Henry Tajfel, *Human Groups and Social Categories* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981)

[3] Crysta Derham & Ronald Fischer, "Is In-Group Bias Culture-Dependent? A Meta-Analysis Across 18 Societies," Manuscript submitted for publication, Victoria University of Wellington (2010)

[4] James Sidanius & Felicia Pratto, *Social Dominance: An Intergroup Theory of Social Hierarchy and Oppression* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge, 1999)

The Nature of Human Beings: East and West

J. L. Shaw

The aim of this paper is to discuss the nature of human beings, both from the Western and the Eastern perspectives. The first half will deal with Western concepts of human being, beginning with Plato. Since we come across four views in Western philosophy, this chapter will be divided into four sections, dealing with the following views: a) rationality as the defining property of human beings; b) certain attitudes or experiences, such as caring, loving, and so on, as the defining properties of human beings; c) theological concepts of human beings, and d) the existentialist concepts of human beings.

The second half will deal with Indian concepts of human beings. Since the form of life of human beings cannot be described in terms of a particular character or property, I shall focus on the following six features, or dimensions, of human beings: e) the concept of ought and ought not; f) free will, presupposed by the concept of ought; g) the concept of infinity, or participation in both finite and infinite concepts; h) creativity, as well as suggestive meaning; i) the realisation of *rasas*, and j) liberation (*mokṣa, nirvāṇa*) or freedom from bondage.

Rationality

Traditionally, human beings are defined as rational animals. Hence, *x* is a human being if and only if *x* has rationality and animality. Since rationality is the distinctive feature of human beings, we have to explain this concept. Regarding the use of the term "reason", it is said to be 'a word used in many, various, often vague senses, with complex and sometimes obscure connections, one with another.'[1]

I think the following uses of this term may be mentioned:

> i) *x* has rationality if and only if *x* can apprehend universals which are eternal, non-spatial and non-temporal entities.

This type of thesis we come across in the philosophy of Plato, as he has divided the human soul into three parts. The highest part of the soul is reason. Reason, being a faculty of the mind, or soul, apprehends Platonic Ideas, and the relationships between these Ideas.

The other two parts are irrational and called "noble" and "ignoble" respectively. It is claimed that emotions such as love, courage, and so on, belong to the irrational noble part of the soul, but sensuous appetites belong to the ignoble part of the irrational soul. The noble part can be treated as instinct, not reason. Plants possess only the ignoble, or the appetitive part of the soul, but animals possess both the noble and ignoble parts of the soul. Human beings alone possess all the three parts of the soul. Hence, human beings are to be distinguished from other beings in terms of reason, which is the immortal part of the soul. Since the rational part is the faculty of knowledge, human beings alone can have knowledge. Hence the knowledge of ideas such as redness, blueness and colouredness, or the knowledge of ethical ideas, such as justice, beauty and goodness, is due to the rational part of the soul. Moreover, it is the rational part of the soul which transmigrates and recollects the ideas, as this part of the soul lived in the realm of ideas, or Plato's Heaven.[2]

> ii) *x* has rationality if and only if *x* is able to use deductive, inductive, or abductive arguments.

According to the Aristotelian definition, deduction is a valid inference, such that the premises are more general than the conclusion. Hence, a syllogistic inference such as "all human beings are mortal, all kings are human beings, therefore all kings are mortal", is an example of deduction. Similarly, a valid inference, having a general premise and a particular premise and a particular conclusion is an example of deduction. For example, "all kings are mortal, Ozymandias is a king, therefore Ozymandias is mortal".

In induction we proceed from a set of particular premises to a general conclusion. But these definitions are not acceptable, as in a valid deductive inference both the premise(s) and the conclusion may be particular. For example, "*a* is taller than *b*, therefore *b* is shorter than *a*". Similarly, in an inductive inference both the

premise(s) and the conclusion may be particulars. For example, “the crow in my garden is black, the crow in your garden is black, therefore, the crow in the garden of John is black”.

Modern logicians do not define deduction or induction in terms of generality. According to them, in a valid deductive inference, the conclusion *necessarily* follows from the premise(s). But in an inductive inference this does not happen. In other words, in a deductive inference if the premises are true then the conclusion cannot be false. But in an inductive inference, the conclusion may be false or probable, although the premises are true. Therefore, in a valid deductive argument the conclusion cannot be denied without denying the premise(s). However, in an inductive argument the conclusion may be denied without denying the premise(s). For example, “swans in New Zealand are white, swans in Asian countries are white, therefore all swans are white”. The premises are true, but the conclusion is false, as black swans have been discovered in Australia.

Regarding abduction, some philosophers, such as C. S. Peirce, treated it as the third type of inference. This type of inference corresponds to the postulation of a scientific hypothesis to explain some given phenomena. Suppose a set of facts, say *y*, are given. In order to explain these facts, the hypothesis *x* may be postulated, such that if *x*, then *y*. Hence, the hypothesis *x* is treated as probable, or highly probable, although falsifiable. In this context it is to be noted that Aristotle has used it to refer to a syllogistic inference such that the conclusion is merely probable, although the major premise is certain, and the minor premise is merely probable.[3]

iii) *x* is rational if and only if the reasoning of *x* leads to an action.

It is claimed that the practical reason of Aristotle leads to an action. To quote Aristotle, ‘I need covering; a cloak is a covering. I need a cloak. What I need, I have to make; I need a cloak. I have to make a cloak. And the conclusion, that “I have to make a cloak”, is an action. And he acts from a starting-point. If there is to be a cloak, there must necessarily be this first, and if this, then this. And this he does at once.’[4]

It is claimed that, according to Aristotle, we must act in order to realise our reason, which is the intrinsic good of a human being. Hence, the good of a human being lies in performing actions which exhibit reason. The nature of life of a human being is determined by the function of reason, as the human good lies in reason. Since Aristotle's ethics is treated as virtue ethics, the good of an agent lies in having virtuous characters or dispositions. If a person is virtuous, then he or she chooses the right object, or acts in the right ways, at the right time and place, for the right reasons. Wisdom, justice, courage and temperance are considered virtues by Aristotle. Since, human good is a function of reason, the decisions justified by reason are considered as good. From the above discussion it follows that a function of practical reason in Aristotle is to correlate means with ends.[5]

> iv) *x* is rational if and only if *x* can apprehend certain categories or generic universals, such as unity, plurality, totality, existence, possibility, necessity, and so on, or intuit moral principles.

We come across this type of rationality, theoretical or practical, in the philosophy of Kant. According to Kant, certain categories which are forms or principles of synthesis are necessary for knowledge.[6] Kant deduces his categories from the faculty of judgement or thought, as the unit of thought is judgment. Since there are twelve types of judgements, he accepted twelve categories, one corresponding to each judgement. There are three types of judgements of quantity, namely, singular (this *s* is *p*), particular (some *s* is *p*) and universal (all *s* is *p*). The categories corresponding to these judgements are unity, plurality and totality. Similarly, there are three types of judgements of quality, namely, affirmative (*s* is *p*), negative (*s* is not *p*), and infinite (*s* is not-*p*). The categories corresponding to these judgements are reality, negation, and limitation respectively.

According to relation, judgements are divided into categorical (*s* is *p*), hypothetical (if *s* is *p*, *q* is *r*), and disjunctive (*s* is either *p* or *q*). The categories corresponding to them are inherence-subsistence, ground-consequence, and reciprocity between agent and patient respectively. Similarly, modal judgements are divided into problematic (*s* may be *p*), assertoric (*s* is *p*) and apodeictic (*s* must be *p*). The categories corresponding to these judgements are possibility-impossibility, existence-nonexistence, necessity-contingency.

It is to be noted that these categories are contributions of understanding, which is a faculty of theoretic reasoning. The faculty of reason, which is a technical term in Kant, produces the Ideas of the unconditioned, such as soul, God, or the world. Reason, in its practical aspect, or in morals, produces the principles of morality, which are categorical, not hypothetical. These principles are called Categorical Imperatives. Kant has formulated them in the following five ways:

1) Act as if the maxim of your action were to become, through your will, a universal law of nature;[7] 2) Act only on that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law;[8] 3) Act in such a way that you always treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never simply as a means, but always at the same time as an end;[9] 4) The idea of the will of every rational being as a will which makes universal law;[10] 5) Act as a member of a "kingdom of ends."[11]

Regarding the relation between the theoretical and the practical reason, opinions have been divided. Some claim that the latter is derivable from the former. Others claim that the theoretical is derivable from the practical. But in Kantian philosophy, they are manifestations of, or the functions of, the same reason.[12]

v) *x* is rational if and only if *x* is real.

We come across this type of concept of reason in the philosophy of Hegel.[13] According to Hegel, thought or reality is moving dialectically from thesis and antithesis to synthesis, which is higher than both of them. The synthesis becomes a new thesis and leads to antithesis. Again, both of them lead to a higher synthesis. This process goes on until the opposition between thesis and antithesis is fully resolved. Since human beings, according to Hegel, are rational beings, they are real. The evolution of the absolute is the progressive realisation of the reason manifested in the world.

If we consider everything as real, then they would be equally rational. Hence the distinction between human beings and other beings cannot be drawn in terms of reason, as it is present in other beings as well. Of course, we can draw the distinction in terms of degrees of manifestation of reason, but not in terms of kind.

On the contrary, if it is claimed that other beings lack reason, then they would be unreal. For this reason it is difficult to use the Hegelian notion of reason to draw the qualitative distinction between human beings and other beings.

From the above definitions of reason it follows that the function of reason is: 1) to correlate an end with a means, sometimes with the best available means; 2) to apprehend certain categories, generic universals, principles, ends or goals; 3) to apply the principle to a particular case or to be guided by these principles, goals or aims.

It seems to me that these concepts of rationality cannot be used to differentiate human beings from certain higher animals. Higher animals such as chimpanzees can correlate certain means with certain ends; they are also guided by certain goals or ends; they can also apprehend certain categories, such as existence, non-existence, plurality and causality. Hence, rationality, theoretical or practical, is not adequate to draw the qualitative distinction between humankind and animal kind.

Attitudes or Experiences

In this section I would like to discuss some definitions of human beings or persons proposed by pro-abortionists.[14]

> i) *x* is a human being if and only if *x* is formed by certain experiences, such as loving, caring, learning, and so on.

Pro-abortionists claim that a foetus, or an unborn child, is not a human being, as it does not have the experience of loving, caring, etc.[15] Hence, the destruction of a foetus, or the termination of pregnancy, does not amount to murder or killing a human being.

This definition is also not adequate to draw the distinction between human beings and other higher animals, such as chimpanzees. This is due to the fact that we cannot substantiate the thesis that higher animals do not have experiences, such as loving, or caring, or learning.

The following definitions also suffer from similar shortcomings:

ii) *x* is a human being if and only if *x* can communicate with others.

iii) *x* is a human being if and only if *x* possesses a concept of self as a continuing subject of experiences and other mental states.

Since higher animals can also communicate with others, have expectations, or continuity of experiences, and recognise objects or creatures, the above criteria cannot be used to distinguish human beings from higher animals.

Theological Concepts

Now I would like to mention the views of theologians, especially those from the Orthodox Christian tradition.

i) *x* is a human being if and only if *x* is created by God after His image.

This definition is put forward to explain our idea of God as a perfect being, or the idea of perfection itself. Human beings are conscious of their defects or finitude because they compare themselves with the absolute perfection of God. Since God has created human beings after His imagine, they are born with the idea of perfection or perfect being. Other beings are created by God, but not after His image.[16]

ii) The Hasidic concept of human being, which has its origin in the Kabbalistic concepts, emphasises the origin of the soul, creation, and the participation in the Divine Realm.

Hence it may be stated thus: *x* is a human being if and only if the soul of *x* has its origin in the divine, *x* is formed after the model of the supernal elements, and *x* has influence in the Divine Realm. This view emphasises the reciprocal relation between human beings and God. To quote Jacob Teshima:

> God gives man life, blessings and judgement, and man in his turn restores the cosmic order through his devotion, eventually strengthening the upper world. To the Kabbalists, the divine origin of the soul was most important in dealing with the nature of man, because it is by virtue of the soul that man is qualified to participate with God.[17]

iii) *x* is a human being if and only if *x* is ensouled.

According to Orthodox Christianity, a foetus gains a soul at the moment of quickening, when the mother feels its movement. Hence, according to this view, ensoulment distinguishes human beings from other beings.

But the views of theologians lack empirical or rational justification. They depend on a number of assumptions which are difficult to accept or substantiate. Hence, these views are either dogmas, or articles of faith, or myths.

Existentialist Concepts

In this section I would like to mention the views of existentialist philosophers such as Søren Kierkegaard, Martin Heidegger, Jose Ortega y Gasset and Jean-Paul Sartre. Following the suggestions of these philosophers, the following definitions or characteristics of human beings may be suggested:

i) *x* is a human being if and only if *x* is an emotional being.

In this context the expression "emotions" refers to some turbulent states of mind, such as anxiety, dread, alienation, forlornness, abandonment, and so on. It is to be noted that the traditional concept of human beings emphasises the cognitive, or the rational, aspect, but the existentialist philosophers focus on the emotional, or non-cognitive, aspect of human beings.

Philosophers of the Enlightenment claim that reason can solve not only problems of science, but also the problems of human beings. 'Reason, in the form of the

scientific method, was viewed as the magic wand by means of which ignorance, injustice, prejudice, and superstition were to be eliminated.'[18] But existentialists such as Kierkegaard claim that reason cannot solve central problems of life. The self is to be understood, not in terms of rationality, or thought, but in terms of possibilities, dread, or anxiety, and the decisions that follow them.

Similarly, truth is not revealed by reason. Truth depends on our choices or decisions. Kierkegaard also claims that anxiety, or dread, is the defining property of human beings. Animals have fear, but not anxiety. He says, 'one does not therefore find dread in the beast, precisely for the reason that by nature the beast is not qualified by spirit.'[19] Anxiety has no object, but fear has an object. Hence, it is claimed that nothingness is the content of anxiety. The possibility of freedom appears in anxiety or dread; 'dread is the dizziness of freedom.'[20]

But, according to Heidegger, the object of anxiety is not anything particular. It is also claimed that, since the object is not any specific thing, it is everything in general, and this everything is the world. For this reason, a human being asks "why am I here?" or "why am I being abandoned in this world?" Regarding anxiety he also says that 'anxiety reveals in human beings the being of the possibility of being ones own, that means, of *being free for* the freedom of choosing and defining oneself.'[21] He also claims that it is anxiety that *individuates*, pulls us back from the world of everyday living, where we are a part of what one does, what one says, what one thinks.[22]

ii) *x* is a human being if and only if the essence of *x* lies in its existence.

We come across this type of characterisation in Heidegger. It is claimed that the essence of a human being (*Dasein*) lies in its "to be". Hence, its essence must be conceived in terms of its existence.[23] The so-called properties of human being are to be conceived as 'possible ways for it to be.'[24] Hence, there are no Platonic essences anywhere. Since each mode of being of an individual is its essence, each of them would be particular. Hence, neither the Platonic essences, nor the universals, are to be postulated for the explanation of the nature of a human being.

iii) *x* is a human being if and only if the being of *x* is ahead of oneself, always on the way (*unterwegs*).

We come across this type of characterisation also in the philosophy of Heidegger. In order to understand his use of the word "*Dasein*," which refers to a human being, we have to understand his use of the word "*sorge*", translated as "care". To quote Heidegger, 'the primary factor of care, "being ahead of itself", however, means that *dasein* always exists for the sake of itself.'[25]

There is always something outstanding in *Dasein* which has not yet become real, although it remains as a possibility of its being; 'A constant unfinished quality thus lies in the essence of the constitution of *Dasein.*'[26] In other words, we cannot give an account of a human being without reference to his or her projects, hopes, aspirations, intentions, and so on. Hence, a human being is always in the process of becoming. The reference to the process of becoming, or striving for something, will define or describe a particular human being. Hence, an individual is necessarily unfinished or incomplete. According to Heidegger, we can never grasp the wholeness of *Dasein*. This is due to the fact that it reaches its wholeness in death, and when it happens, *Dasein* loses its being of the there. Hence this view emphasises the becoming aspect of our being.

iv) *x* is a human being if and only if *x* is what *x* is not.

We come across this type of view in the philosophy of Spanish existentialist Ortega y Gasset. According to Ortega, human beings do not have nature, but history. They live in the realms of planning, hopes and aspirations which are constructed throughout their history. Regarding desire, he says, it is 'a constant mobilisation of our being towards something beyond itself; [an] untiring bowman, shooting without rest on exciting targets.'[27]

His conception of future is worth mentioning, as we live in the future coloured by past and present. The existence of a human being is what it is going to be, not what it is. Human beings are characterised in terms of future, unlike other beings, who are characterised by present. This is due to the fact that we are constantly betting on projects, and struggling for their achievement. To quote Ortega:

> First of all, living is running into the future. No, it is not the present nor the past what we first live; life is an activity executed towards, and present and past are only discovered later, in relation to the future. Life is making future, life is what it is not yet.[28]

Hence, the time of human being is future. Past and present are interpreted in terms of future. We are living in our unrealised future projects. It seems to me that he is emphasising the unfulfilled aspects of our life, not simply *unterwegs* (on-the-way aspects of our lives) or the becoming aspect of our life. Hence, iii) emphasises incompleteness of our being, but iv) emphasises the unfulfilled aspects of our being. This is how we can draw the distinction between iii) and iv).

> v) *x* is a human being if and only if *x* is constituted of a set of free choices or decisions. In other words, *x* is formed out of choices.

According to this view one individual can be distinguished from another in terms of sets of choices and the circumstances in which those choices are made. Since a set of decisions is the defining property of an individual, he or she does not have any essence prior to his or her existence. For this reason, the existence of a human being precedes his essence, not the other way around. Moreover, the essence of a human being is not universal, as it explains the uniqueness or the individuality of the person. Regarding choice, Sartre says: 'the choice is nothing other than the being of each human reality, this amounts to saying that a partial particular behaviour is or expresses the original choice of this human reality since for human reality there is no difference between existing and choosing for itself.'[29]

As an example of a situation for the exercise of freedom or free choice, Sartre mentions the condition of a young man who cannot decide whether to join the French Liberation Forces or to serve his ailing mother. Sartre claims that there is no pre-existing guideline or moral rules for making a choice in this situation. He has to choose. This is what is meant by the word "abandonment". To quote Sartre: 'we are left alone, without excuse. That is what I mean when I say that man is condemned to be free.'[30]

As regards the nature of choice or exercise of freedom, Sartre has rejected the traditional "cause-intention-act-end" model or "motive-act-end" model. He claims that the motive is to be understood in terms of an end which is non-existent. To quote him: 'the motive is understood only by the end; that is, by the non-existent. It is therefore in itself a *negatite*. If I accept a niggardly salary it is doubtless because of fear; and fear is a motive. But it is fear of dying from starvation; that is, this fear has meaning only outside itself in an end ideally posited, which is the preservation of life which I apprehend as "in danger".'[31]

Sartre also claims that a motive is not the cause of an act, as motive, act and end constitute a single upsurge. To quote him again: 'the motive, the act and the end are all constituted in a single upsurge. Each of these structures claims the two others as its meaning. But the organised totality of the three is no longer explained by any particular structure … it is the act which decides its ends and its motives, and the act is the expression of freedom.'[32]

From the above discussion if follows that Sartre defines human beings in terms of choices which are not caused by any antecedent motives or desires. It is doubtful whether the causal model can be rejected for the explanation of human freedom. Moreover, it is difficult to distinguish human beings from other animals in terms of certain emotions which are precursors to the exercise of free choices. A chimpanzee also experiences anxiety, or dread, in the absence of her child or partner. She also experiences grief, or abandonment, if there is mishap. Hence, the feelings of higher animals are similar to ours, although there may be difference in degree. They also make choices similar to ours. Similarly, they have also hopes and desires. They are also in the process of becoming. Hence the above characterisations of existentialist philosophers are not adequate to distinguish human beings from higher animals, although they have rightly emphasised the emotional or the free-choice aspect of human beings.

Indian Approaches

In this section I would like to discuss the nature of human beings from the perspective of Indian philosophers. Indian philosophers do not tend to define

human beings in terms of reason or certain attitudes, such as caring, or in terms of certain emotions, such as anxiety. This is due to the fact that these properties are present in higher animals, such as chimpanzees, although not in the same form present in human beings.

According to Indian philosophers, human beings exhibit not only rationality at the level of thought, or anxiety at the level of emotion, but also certain other characteristics which will distinguish them from other higher animals.

Ought and Ought Not

Regarding the form of life of human beings, Indian philosophers emphasise that some of our actions are guided by the concept of *ought* or *ought not*. In other words, human beings are guided by the concept of *dharma* (righteousness), or *adharma* (unrighteousness). The word "*dharma*" has been used in a very wide sense by Indian philosophers. The core meaning of the word "*dharma*" is derived from the root "'*dhṛ*", meaning "to hold" or "to support". Hence *x* is a *dharma* means that: 1) x supports the world (*dharati lokān*); 2) x supports the human society as well as the world (*yo-lokān-dhārayati, yena-mānava-samājo-dhṛtaḥ-sa-dharmaḥ);* 3) *x* will help those who have fallen, are about to fall, or will fall (*patitaṁ-patantaṁ-patisyantaṁ-dharatīti-dharmaḥ*); 4) *x* is the foundation of the universe as well as the world (*dharmo-viśvasya-jagataḥ-pratiṣthā*); 5) x also leads to something higher, such as peace and bliss (*ya-eva-śreyaskaraḥ-sa-eva-dharmaśabdena-ucyate*);[33] 6) *x* is real or truth (*yo-dharmaḥ-satyaṁ-vaitat*); 7) If you put an end to *x* (*dharma*), then it will put an end to you; if you restore *x*, then it will restore you (*dharma eva hato hanti, dharmo rakṣati rakṣitaḥ*).[34]

From these uses of the word "*dharma*" it follows that our total wellbeing is dependent on *dharma*. The laws of *dharma* are as real as the laws of nature. Hence any type of violence, which is a type of *adharma*, will cause our suffering and would ultimately lead to the elimination of living beings. It is to be noted that the Yoga system has mentioned 81 types of violence, three of them cardinal or non-derivative. These are: 1) killing or torturing someone, 2) ordering to kill or torture someone, and 3) approving of killing or torture. The word "approval" implies both

implicit and explicit approval. Remaining silent or not opposing violence is also another type of approval. Here the word "violence" is used in such a way that the cause leading to violence or destruction is also considered as violence. Hence the destruction of nature that causes suffering or leads to the extinction of living beings is a type of violence.

Free Will

The concept of *ought* presupposes what we can do and what we cannot do. In other words, if I ought to do *x*, then it follows that I can do x. Again, the latter presupposes freedom. Almost all the systems of Indian philosophy have accepted some concept of freedom or other. It is to be noted that most Indian philosophers are either compatibilists or libertarians, although some of them do not fit into either category neatly. By and large Indian philosophers emphasise the ability and the achievement of human beings by their effort. Human effort or freedom has been emphasised from the very dawn of Indian philosophy. Indian philosophers argue that some of the problems of our existence can be solved by our effort. To quote *Maitri Upaniṣad*:

> Samsara is just one's thought, with effort one should cleanse it.
> ...
> The mind, in truth, is for mankind the means of bondage and release.
> If bound to objects, bondage follows, from objects free – that is called release.[35]

From this passage it follows that we can overcome some of the obstacles to our existence by our effort of free will. In the Yoga system also we can overcome our suffering by controlling our senses or internal organs, including various modifications or "modes of mind". Through our effort we can transform our minds, which is necessary for liberation.

The practice of yoga to control our internal and external senses is present not only in the Hindu tradition, but also in the Buddhist tradition, especially the Yogacara system. According to *Laṅkavatāra sūtra* (a Buddhist text) an enlightened mind, or a pure mind, is transformed into the Buddha's mind. To quote: 'suchness, emptiness, excellence, nirvana, realm of truth, the various bodies made from mind – I call these Buddha.'[36]

In the *Mahābhārata* also human effort plays a great role, as there is no scope for fatalism. What is called "fate" ("*daiva"*) is nothing but the karmic residue of one's effort. To quote:

> Just as a field sown without seed is barren
> So without human effort there is no fate.
> ...
> The doer himself enjoys the fruit of his or her actions
> This is seen clearly in the world in regard to activity and inactivity.[37]

Since there is no limit to what a human being can attain, Godly power has been ascribed to human effort. To quote: 'heaven, enjoyment, and the desired state are all attained by actions or human effort here in this world.'

The *Yogavāsiṣṭha*, which can be considered a proto-epic, containing the philosophical thoughts of *Vedānta*, *Yoga*, *Saṁkhya*, *Śaiva Siddhānta*, and *Mahāyāna* Buddhism, lays much emphasis on human effort than on anything else. It is claimed that our actions determine our future, as there is no fate. To quote a few passages from the *Yogavāsiṣṭha*:

> Whoever wishes to turn back fate by human action
> has his/her wishes completely fulfilled
> in this world and the other world.
>
> Those who abandon their diligence
> and take their last resort in fate
> destroy all righteousness, wealth, and pleasure

> and are their own enemy.
>
> By human exertion Bṛhaspati became
> teacher of gods.
>
> A person is born in this world,
> grows up and ages.
> There is no fate seen here,
> merely the progression from childhood to old age.
>
> By pure creativity, pure results are gained quickly,
> Impure always follows impure.
> That which is called fate does not exist.[38]

According to the *Yogavāsiṣṭha*, liberation, or freedom, can be achieved in the bodily form, and there is no difference between the embodied and the disembodied types of liberation. As regards the nature of a liberated person, it is said:

> Although externally engaged in worldly actions, he or she has no attachment in his or her mind to any object whatsoever... he or she behaves like an ideal citizen and friend of all.
>
> He or she is free from the restrictions of caste, creed, stage of life, custom, and scriptures.

It is also claimed that activities of a liberated person are free from personal desires. This type of person spreads happiness around. To quote: 'having seen him or her, having heard about him or her, having remembered him or her, all creatures feel delighted.'[39]

From the above discussion it follows that Indian philosophers, by and large, have emphasised free will or effort for achieving our desired ends, including metaphysical freedom or liberation. Hence fatalism has no role to play in the context of Indian philosophy.[40]

Infinity

Human beings are guided by the concept of infinity. This is the case for both morality and knowledge. There is an inherent craving for the unknown and a search for the knowable. We ask the question whether there are any unknown or unknowable objects. Some systems even claim that whatever exists is knowable. No matter how much I know, I can say "I could have known more". Similarly, no matter how many righteous activities I perform, I can say "I could have performed more". Hence the form of life of a human being exhibits participation in infinity both at the level of knowledge and morality.

Since we participate in infinity or there is a craving for infinite knowledge, love or compassion, it is said that we are potentially infinite. Several scriptures have also mentioned that we are infinite knowledge and bliss. Now the question is, how can a finite being be infinite in certain respects? When it is said that we are potentially infinite or infinite bliss or knowledge, what is meant is that we cannot draw any limit to our knowledge, practice of *dharma*, compassion, or love.

Regarding the origin of the concept of infinity, it may be said that it is derived from our knowledge of arithmetic, as the number series has no end. Moreover, since we know what a finite object or being is, we also know, at least implicitly, its correlate, which is infinite. From our conception of time also, we derive the concept of infinity, as time series has no beginning.

Creativity

Another dimension of our form of life is creativity or suggestive meaning. This is exhibited in our language or understanding of language, art, music or literature. At the level of literature or art, suggestive meaning has been introduced in addition to conventional or metaphorical meaning. It is claimed that those who understand only the literal meaning do not realise the significance of speech. It is said in the Vedas that the person who understands only the literal meaning is the person who sees, but does not see, or hears, but does not hear.[41]

Let us consider the sentence "the village is on the Ganges" ("*gangāyaṁ ghoṣaḥ*"). The literal meaning of the word "*gangā*" is the river Ganges. Hence the literal meaning of the sentence is "the village is on the river Ganges". Since the literal meaning gives rise to inconsistency as the village cannot be on the river, we take resort to metaphorical meaning, and interpret the sentence as "the village is on the bank of the river Ganges".

But the suggestive meaning goes beyond the metaphorical meaning in several directions. There are no rules for suggestive meaning as we have for metaphorical meaning. Moreover, it presupposes creativity on the part of the subject. For this reason one may attribute holiness or purity to the village, and still another may consider it to be a suitable place for making a journey. Similar is the case with the sentence "the sun has set". Hence a person may interpret this sentence as "now the time is to go back home". Another may interpret it as "it is time to worship". Still another as "it is time to meet my beloved", and so on. Hence, we cannot put any limit to the suggestive meaning of an expression. The creativity of human beings gives us a clue to our life which is not purely mundane or governed by a fixed set of rules.

"Rasas", or "Super Mundane Emotions"

The realisation of certain *rasas* that are impersonal in nature, suggests the spiritual nature of human beings. *Rasa* cannot be identified with our usual emotions, although it presupposes our ordinary emotions for its manifestation or realisation.

According to some literary critics, there are ten permanent emotions (*sthāyibhāva*) and thirty-three variant emotions (*vyabhicāribhāva*). The permanent or the abiding emotions are: 1) *rati* (love); 2) *hāsya* (mirth or laughter); 3) *ṣoka* (grief); 4) *krodha* (anger); 5) *utsāha* (inspiration); 6) *bhaya* (fear); 7) *jugupṣā* (disgust); 8) *vismaya* (wonder); 9) *sama* or *nirveda* (state of tranquility or spirit of renunciation);10) *bhakti* (spirit of devotion).[42]

The last two are very important for distinguishing human beings from others. They are latent in human beings, and are manifested under certain conditions, such as

association with noble or saintly persons, study of scriptures, spiritual discourse, or association with holy places.

It is to be noted that these permanent emotions are abiding impressions of our mind, and produce *rasas*, a type of realisation. A *rasa* is a kind of super mundane (*lokottara*) experience, although it has its origin in certain intense emotions. Hence it cannot be identified with an emotion even if it is caused by it. *Rasas* are enjoyed by sympathetic readers of literature or spectators of drama or performances. The process which leads to the realisation of a *rasa* is called "*sādharaṇī-kṛti*" ("universalisation" or "impersonalisation"). By this process a mundane emotion is transformed into a super mundane, blissful experience, or *rasa*. Hence emotions, such as grief, anxiety, or dread are transformed into a universal experience. Thus *laukika* (mundane) state of mind becomes *lokottara* (super mundane), and the individual self is dissolved into a universal self. Viṣvanātha, a literary critic, describes the states of the realisation of *rasas* in the following way:

> These states belong to me and do not belong to me;
> they also belong to others and do not belong to others.
> *(parasya na parasyeti mameti na mameti ca;*
> *tadāsvāde vibhāvādeḥ paricchedo na vidyate.)*[43]

Hence at this level we rise above the difference between I and thou, or between you and me, as we participate in universal state of mind. Some philosophers have recognised the following *rasas; śṛiṅgāra* (love), *vīra* (courage), *hāsya* (mirth), *rudra* (fury), *karuṇa* (compassion), *vibhatsa* (disgust), *bhayānaka* (fearful), *āścarya* (wonder), *sānta* (tranquility), and *bhakti* (devotion). It is also claimed that *bhaktirasa* is intrinsically super mundane, as it is a state of the realisation of divinity in us. It is enjoyed by anyone at any stage of one's life. Hence the realisation of *rasas*, especially *bhaktirasa*, is another spiritual dimension of human beings.

Metaphysical Freedom

Human beings can realise metaphysical freedom or liberation (*mokṣa* or *nirvāṇa*) in varying degrees. Systems of Indian philosophy have interpreted the term *mokṣa* or *nirvāṇa* in different ways. The connotations may be classified as positive or negative. Negatively, it is a state of mind free from sorrows, suffering, craving, selfishness, or defilements.

The word "*nirvāṇa*" consists of the word "*ni*" plus "*vāna*" or ("*nir*" plus "*vāna*"). The negative particle "*ni*" signifies absence, or cessation, and the word "*vāna*" signifies weaving or craving. Hence the word "*nirvāṇa*" means cessation or extinction of all types of craving, including physical, vocal, imaginary, or dispositional. If there is no craving then there is no transgression of ethical conduct. Therefore, the state of *nirvāṇa* does not imply the extinction of the individual or the person, but only the cessation of one's craving or desires which are due to attachment, aversion, or delusion. It implies the extinction of the life of illusion, passion, and craving.

Positively, *mokṣa* or *nirvāṇa* is a blissful experience. The Advaita Vedānta characterises it as realisation of truth, knowledge and bliss. The Dhammapāda, a Buddhist text, has also emphasised its blissful nature. To quote: 'health is the highest gain; contentment is the greatest wealth; trustful are the best kinsmen; *nibbāna* (derived from "*nirvāṇa*") is the highest bliss.'[44]

The life is also characterised by enlightenment as there is wisdom or higher knowledge. Hence, the mind of a liberated person is characterised by peace, bliss, compassionate feeling, or love for all beings or the entire creation. Even if these are ideals, human beings can realise these ideals in varying degrees in this life.

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[25] Gordon Marino, ed., *Basic Writings of Existentialism* (Modern Library, 2004), 299-300

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Response to Jay Shaw: Reason and Persons in the Classical Greek World

Xavier Márquez

Let me start with a very old joke. In one of the lesser-read dialogues of Plato, the *Statesman*, there is a discussion of the definition of human being. But the definition that the Eleatic Stranger (the main character in the dialogue) proposes is not what you would expect (something noble and special, like human beings are rational animals). On the contrary, he says that human beings are "featherless bipeds",[1] a definition that, if we are to judge by its presentation in Diogenes Laertius[2] (3rd century AD), achieved a certain kind of comic notoriety, giving rise to a joke about Plato and Diogenes the Cynic.

The joke is worth re-telling, since it makes a point related to the argument I would like to make. Diogenes (the Cynic, 3rd century BC, not Laertius) heard that Plato had defined man as a featherless biped. On hearing this, Diogenes plucked a chicken and announced 'here's your man.' The definition was then amended to say that a human being was a featherless biped with broad nails [τὸ πλατυώνυχον], or in other words a *platonic featherless biped*: a plucked chicken, but an "ideal" one. We are not so different from plucked chickens. But the point had already been made by Plato himself.

Only a few lines before the definition of man as the featherless biped the Eleatic Stranger had suggested that an equally good definition of human being was the "two-legged pig" (or more precisely the two footed animal that is kin to the pig[3]), and in the discussion leading to these odd conclusions the Stranger had explicitly argued that it is not a good idea to treat the human possession of rationality as the defining characteristic of human beings. To claim that human beings are distinct from other beings because of their possession of reason is to ignore the possibility that other animals might also be rational[4] and indeed to forget that divine beings are also rational (the rational cranes would be inappropriately "making themselves sacred" if they claimed to be special in virtue of their rationality). In sum, there is something much like "pride" in attempting to distinguish human beings from all

other animals by the criterion of rationality, as the Stranger suggests in criticising young Socrates (the main respondent in the dialogue; he is not related to the elder Socrates, who is the main character in most of Plato's other dialogues) for his excessive haste in trying to separate human beings from the other animals on that basis.[5]

I simplify a bit. The joke about humans and pigs rests on a comparison between the square root of four (likened to the nature of the pig) and the square root of two (likened to the nature of man) which has the effect of suggesting that *in reality* the natures of human beings and pigs are "incommensurable" even though the Stranger has just made them commensurable by a quirky mathematical "squaring" procedure (and even though, oddly, human nature is the one that turns out to be "irrational").[6] The claim that human beings are "featherless" uses a rare and poetic word (πτεροφυής, literally "feather-growing") that points to a passage in the *Phaedrus*[7] suggesting that human beings can "grow wings" and hence rise to gaze upon the forms of order – the good and the just, but especially the noble or the beautiful – even if they do not have such wings at present.

But regardless of these complications, throughout the dialogue human rationality is clearly presented as something deeply problematic, and certainly not as something that unambiguously marks the boundary between humanity and animality. Thus, even though the dialogue appears to be explicitly concerned with the question of what is a human being,[8] the Eleatic never gives a simple and satisfactory answer to this question, much less asserts that that human beings are "rational animals"; on the contrary, his answer(s) merely emphasises the *physical differences* between animals and humans (their featherlessness, lack of horns, etc.). In the extraordinary myth that the Stranger makes up shortly after that discussion (a story about a time when life ran "backwards") he speaks about talking animals and attributes rationality not only to human beings but to a number of other embodied, animated creatures, including the universe as a whole,[9] which is indeed described as a kind of rational "animal". To the extent that human beings have reason, the myth implies, it is divided into a multitude of forms of knowledge or arts which serve to make up for physical deficits that most animals do not have, rather than integrated into a genuine wisdom that truly differentiates us from them. Moreover, these arts are likened to the things that came out of Pandora's box,[10] increasing our physical

powers (and hence allowing us to defend ourselves from wild animals) but not necessarily our ability to rule ourselves in a wise and reasonable way (but on the contrary creating the possibility of warfare and other political conflicts). Art or knowledge, in other words, is not for the most part presented as what distinguishes us from other animals but as the adaptive mechanism that enables us to survive *as* animals (just as horns or hooves are some of the adaptive mechanisms that allow animals to survive as animals).

Thus, whatever one may think of Plato's ultimate views, it is not clear that he was overly concerned with saying that human beings are distinguished from animals on the basis of their rationality, or that he thought that the question of what distinguishes human beings from animals is easily answered by a formula. Moreover, it is not clear that Plato and later Ancient Platonists, in comparing human beings to pigs (or birds, for that matter) simply assumed that pigs were especially risible or low, as Stephen Clark points out.[11] On the contrary, there is some evidence that they considered that 'curious, naked omnivore' (Clark's words) worthy of respect. (And Plato perhaps followed the Pythagoreans in thinking this). If the Eleatic points to the *continuity* between human beings and other animals, he does not necessarily imply that this is a sufficient reason to think that human beings are of little interest or importance, though he does suggest that we should not be too quick to assume our superiority.

To be sure, Aristotle and the Stoics are perhaps more concerned than Plato with the question of what distinguishes humans from other animals, and more definite about the essential difference between humans and animals; indeed, for the Stoics, the definition of human being as the "rational animal" would become a sort of commonplace (see, for example, Chrysippus, *On Emotions*, of which the relevant extant fragment is found in Galen).[12] But contrary to popular belief, Aristotle himself, working in the shadow of Plato, never did clearly define human beings as the rational animal: the passage normally and erroneously quoted to this effect[13]

actually has him saying that human beings are the "two-footed animal" (τὸ ζῷον δίπουν), as if quoting Plato's *Statesman*.[i]

This is not to say that Aristotle did not believe human beings were rational (he clearly thought that an important feature of human beings was their capacity for rational deliberation), or that they were not "higher" in some sense than other animals (he does say elsewhere that plants and animals exist "for the sake of" human beings, generating a natural hierarchy of beings which is not quite as easy to find in Plato). Yet it does suggest that Aristotle did not think that the question of the *definition* of human beings *vis à vis* other animals was the most important question we could ask about the nature of human beings. Indeed, to the extent that Aristotle is preoccupied with the question of human nature, he tends to emphasise that human beings are preeminently *political* animals,[14] a characteristic which they share with cranes, wasps, ants, and bees,[15] (even if they are *more* political than these other animals. The important differences between human beings and animals do have something to do with the human capacity for reasoned speech (which only humans truly have, according to Aristotle), but these differences are ultimately best understood as differences of *degree* rather than of kind, for other animals have a capacity for communicative speech (though not reasoned argument or *logos*) and social or political life as well as human beings.

The reason for bringing all of this up is that I am less sure that the question of what a human being is was as important to the classical Greek philosophers as Shaw makes it sound, or rather, that they were overly concerned with fully distinguishing human beings from other animals. In particular, I would argue that for Plato the idea that human beings are rational is a kind of *hypothesis* or *aspiration*, not a well-established fact; the interesting question, for him, is how we can actually *become* properly rational, and what follows from our being rational or our lack of rationality for our ability to rule ourselves wisely, not the question of whether we are the *sole* rational animals. Much less hinged on determining whether or not reason is the distinguishing mark of the species than in determining what the

[i] For example, the article on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotle-metaphysics/) erroneously asserts (at least as of October 2010) that *Metaphysics* Z.12 defines human being as the rational animal

possession of reason implies for our ethical, moral, and political lives; and the nature of reason was itself put in question. (And also: the classical thinkers were *much weirder* than we give them credit for. The fact that they have been absorbed for so long into the history of Western thought should not prevent us from seeing them as just as foreign as the Indian thinkers that Shaw studies; they came, after all, from a world that was very different from ours in every important economic, cultural, and social respect).

Ultimately, Plato and Aristotle were concerned with the *imperfect sociality* and *rationality* of human beings: because we are not perfectly social or rational, our lives are not always wisely arranged; though we may have a potential for rationality, we do not always actualise it. And the question of the definition of human being – and, we should note, of freedom as well – was thus placed for them in the context of reflections on how to wisely arrange our social and political lives, i.e., of the kinds of knowledge of ourselves that we need to have if we are to arrange our lives wisely; it is not a merely academic question.

It is also worth saying a few words about the problem of freedom, since Shaw also touches on this topic in his paper. Greek thinkers did not expend great energy on the question of the freedom of the will. It is only with St. Paul and, more importantly, with St. Augustine, that this question becomes an important metaphysical problem. It is not that Greek philosophers had no inkling of the concept – Aristotle clearly distinguishes between voluntary and involuntary actions, and there is much of philosophical interest in the reflections on freedom of Stoics and Epicureans – but that the *problem* of freedom in classical Greece was always seen in the context of an answer to the question of what it is *not* to be a slave. The different answers given to this question – not to be a slave to desire, to others, to other cities, etc. – all resulted in different traditions of philosophical thought, from the Stoics to the Epicureans to the Peripatetics.

The transformation of this rich tradition of thought about rationality and freedom into a mere formula – that man is the rational animal – closed off some of the avenues for thinking about the nature of human and animal rationality that were still open to Plato and Aristotle. Much later on, however, Kant would turn the idea of man as the rational animal upside down to emphasise that what mattered for

moral and political thought was not *human* being but *rational* being: the categorical imperative and other moral laws apply to *rational* beings, not just *human* beings, and Kant does not assume that there is only one *kind* of rational being (he is probably the first person in Western philosophy to devise thought experiments based on stories about great but non-human and non-divine intelligences – rational but non-human beings that would fit well in a Science Fiction story – to argue that such creatures would still need to conform to the categorical imperative).[ii] And similarly, in contemporary times, many ethical thinkers (such as Peter Singer) suggest that whatever characteristic is important for ethical or moral life, it is important across *all* beings sharing it, whether or not they are human; what matters is not the question of who is a human being, but who is the subject of ethical concern (a feature of Singer's thought that accounts for its apparent callousness: some human beings lack the requisite characteristic, whereas some animals have it).

These thinkers take, in their different ways, the Eleatic's critique of Young Socrates seriously: being excessively concerned with distinguishing human beings from animals (as some of the 20th century existentialists were, by the way) bespeaks a kind of unjustified "pride". Though humans and other animals are clearly different, it is all too easy to take excessive pride in whatever difference is found (tool use, language, reason, "freedom", etc.) and hence set ourselves up as "sacred" without justification (as the cranes in the Eleatic's view). It is too similar to the same processes that lead us to identify with this or that nation (as the Eleatic indicates by using examples of "nationalist" classification in his criticism of young Socrates[16]), those arbitrary lines that distinguish among human beings on the basis of their ability to "interbreed" (the joke is too complicated to explain here). To the extent that we ought to be concerned with the question of what is a human being, it is because, as the Eleatic Stranger suggests, we need to gain the knowledge necessary to rule ourselves wisely; and such knowledge depends on understanding those features of human beings that make our social and political life difficult.

And perhaps we can go further today, in the shadow of Darwin: most truly significant distinctions between humans and others are ultimately matters of

[ii] See Kant's mention of the "Great Aeon" in his essay *Perpetual Peace*

degree, though these degrees may be significant in various ways. If human beings and other animals are all ultimately related in a web of descent with very fuzzy borders, it may not make sense to try to fix these frontiers and erect imposing border control regimes. That only encourages unclear thinking. To be sure, there will be differences between "us" and other living beings; but it may make little sense to determine the meaning and moral consequences of these differences *a priori*. I do not know how we are to relate to elephants, or whales and dolphins, or the great apes, all beings that are political animals in the strict Aristotelian sense of the term, displaying language enough, and family structures, and politics and war enough; or how we may need to relate to Artificial Intelligences one day perhaps, or indeed to ourselves, in all our multifarious variety of social forms. But I do suspect that to attempt to find something that strictly distinguishes us from these other beings as if that characteristic were of ultimate importance, is to fall into young Socrates' error. What distinguishes us from other similar beings may not be the most important thing about us; it may just be our featherlessness.

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[1] Plato, *Statesman*, 266e, http://www.perseus.tufts.edu

[2] Diogenes Laertius, *6*, VI.40, http://www.mikrosapoplous.gr/dl/dl06.html#diogenis

[3] Plato, *Statesman*, 266a

[4] cf. 263d on the possibility of "rational cranes" [!]; Plato, Statesman, 263d

[5] Plato, *Statesman*, 262a; also Plato, *Statesman*, 263d

[6] See Lewis Campbell, *The Sophistes and Politicus of Plato, with a Revised Text and English Notes* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1867; reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1973), note *ad. loc*. for a full explanation

[7] Plato, *Phaedrus*, 251c, http://www.perseus.tufts.edu

[8] Plato, *Statesman*, 261b-266e

[9] Plato, *Statesman*, 269d

[10] Plato, *Statesman*, 274d; Hesiod, *Theogeny*, 523, http://www.perseus.tufts.edu; Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 42, http://www.perseus.tufts.edu

[11] Stephen R. L. Clark, "Herds of Free Bipeds," in *Reading the Statesman: Proceedings of the III. Symposium Platonicum*, ed. Christopher Rowe (Sankt Augustin: Academia Verlag, 1995)

[12] Hans von Arnim, *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta Volume 3: Chrysippi Fragmenta Moralia* (Munchen & Leipzig: K. G. Saur, 2004), 113

[13] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1037b, 13-14, http://www.perseus.tufts.edu

[14] Aristotle, *Politics*, 1253a, http://www.perseus.tufts.edu

[15] Aristotle, *The History of Animals*, I.i.11, http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/a/aristotle/history/

[16] Plato, *Statesman*, 262d-263a

Response to Jay Shaw: Alternative Models of Freedom in Buddhism

Michael Radich

In his paper, Shaw gives a lot of attention to the search for a criterion that will enable us to clearly distinguish between human beings and animals. This question has certainly been a characteristic preoccupation of modern thought, embedded as it is in a scientific worldview that assumes this visible, material world, including the realm comprised by the kingdoms of biology, as its fundamental point of reference and object of understanding. However, from the point of view of Buddhist traditions – and not wanting to overgeneralise and claim to be saying anything about other Indic traditions – this question strikes me as something of a red herring.

In Buddhism, there may indeed be distinctions between animals and humans, though they are not often, to my knowledge, the object of systematic inquiry. Far more pertinent for understanding both what we are, and how any project towards our freedom should be oriented, is the class of *sentient* being, rather than human being – and this broad class includes both animals and humans, though not quite on a footing of "equal opportunity".

In fact, the Buddhist class of sentient beings comprises five or six main sub-classes: animals; beings living in hells; the chronically needy spirits of the departed (*preta*); humans; and gods; with the *āsuras* (something like "titans", lesser but still mighty cousins and adversaries of the gods) as an optional sixth class. Within this schema, the problem of bondage and freedom that confronts animals and humans is the same as the one that confronts all so-called "sentient beings". The main differences are in degree, not kind. That problem, briefly, is that *all* (sentient) existence within "the world" is characterised by chronic, ineluctible suffering. The primary kind of freedom Buddhism expects such beings to seek (and texts use, among a raft of numerous other terms, terms with clear semantic overtones of freedom from the root */muc,* such as *mokṣa, vimukti* etc.) is freedom from this round of suffering, which is identical and coterminous with the round of rebirth and redeath, which

was a common assumption of most Indic traditions from approximately the late Vedic (Upaniṣadic) era.

In other words, for Buddhism in general (and normatively defined) the highest freedom – arguably the only one that ultimately matters – is not freedom *to* do anything within the fold of the world, but freedom *from* this world entire, as it was understood in the relevant cultures and times. This might remind us in passing, perhaps, of Heidegger's dictum, as Shaw characterises it, that the proper object of anxiety is 'everything in general, and this everything is the world.'[1] However, in Buddhism, there are some key differences:

1) The affective problem is not this anxiety or dread, which, to the extent we feel it, is entirely right and justified; but rather, that we are usually too benighted to abhor the world *enough*, and instead, in our ignorance, are hypnotically drawn to it.

2) This problem is shared by all sentient beings, rather than being a putative monopoly of humans.

3) A radical alternative is posited, and escape is held to be possible. From this vantage point, the resolute existentialist embracing, or pretendedly self-aware assumption, of existentialist suffering and tension in the world might appear, not as "freedom", but as a particularly perverse, subtle and incorrigible form of bondage.

I said that this freedom *from* the world is, if not the only one Buddhism acknowledges, the only one that ultimately matters. This is because Buddhism, which is a highly ramified and complex tradition, naturally also recognises and sometimes extols other freedoms. These, too, however, are somewhat startling, from our modern vantage point.

For instance, after his spiritual freedom from the round of suffering and redeath, the other main "freedom" (if we wish to call it that) enjoyed by the Buddha is radical freedom from all the usual physical and metaphysical laws. Many branches of the tradition, that is to say, propose that all Buddhas freely exercise superpowers of clairvoyance, omniscience, telekinesis, bilocation and so forth, and generally can abrogate or suspend all normal processes of natural causality.

Again, a text like the *Sāmaññaphala sutta*[2] does present the Buddha as recognising that certain worldly freedoms are, in a limited sense, goods in and of themselves. We might recognise such freedoms as more readily as conforming to our modern aspirations and definitions of freedom: freedom from political subjugation, from slavery, from duty, from family, and so on. Even here, however, the text undercuts the value of these freedoms in two senses: 1) it presents the discussion of these goods as a mere entry-level expedient, intended to arouse the interest (and attract the patronage) of a very wordly and morally flawed king (the famous patricide-regicide Ajātasattu/Ajātaśatru); 2) it clearly shows that in the larger scheme of things, these freedoms and goods are only such insofar as they are instrumental preconditions to the eventual pursuit and realisation of the more radical freedoms of the spiritual path.

So what, if anything, *is* special about human beings, and their place in the pursuit of freedom, in this picture?

I think that the most salient feature of human being, here, is that, within the overall context of the larger category of "sentient beings", the Buddhist traditions understand that humans are those *most* free to pursue the spiritual path. Rebirth as a human being, the texts reiterate, is to be treasured for just this reason. On the one hand, beings reborn in the three so-called "evil destinies" (*durgati*) – hell beings, spirits of the departed, and animals – suffer too much, and have faculties too dull, to give them much leisure or ability to contemplate or pursue moral good. On the other hand, the gods are ironically held to suffer too *little;* as a result, they sink into a spiritually feeble contentment with their lot, and have insufficient motivation to find a way out. In line with the typical Buddhist preoccupation with the happy medium, humans in general, by contrast, are held to suffer enough to revile the world, but little enough to have attention to spare for the task of doing something about it.

However, even this limited "freedom" of humans, we should note, is no real freedom in the ultimate Buddhist sense. First, it is at best a tempered freedom, within the wider, encompassing bondage of *saṃsāra* (the cycle of rebirth and redeath) as a whole. Second, this freedom is not evenly distributed, even within the

limited scope of the human realm. This is because some humans – most notably, monks and nuns – are held to enjoy much more of this freedom than others.

Third, it is also not an absolute human monopoly. If animals, for instance – to refer back to Shaw's main point of reference – had absolutely *no* such capacity or "freedom", they would be eternally doomed to suffering. In keeping with this ambiguity, Buddhist narrative literature (most notably the *jātaka* or "birth" tales of the Buddha's former lives as a *bodhisattva*) do present some extraordinary animals as engaging in extraordinary acts of moral awareness and good. While interpretation of such examples is complex, they arguably reflect at least some ascription of similar freedoms to animals, so that once more, the difference between animals and humans is one of degree, not kind.

Finally, I would like to add one more caveat to Shaw's remarks, again from a strictly Buddhist perspective. In the second part of his paper, Shaw was keen to assert that in Indian systems the emphasis is on human will and effort as the key power that enables the attainment of freedom. In the Buddhist case, I think this statement needs serious qualification.

In Buddhism, only Buddhas can find their way unaided to full liberation. The rest of us – humans and other sentient beings alike – depend upon the guidance and teaching of a Buddha. Furthermore, while the boundary line between human and animal, for instance, may be blurry, the boundary line between sentient being and Buddha is not. Even very early texts (often interpreted by an older generation of romantic Orientalist scholarship as the bastion of a supposedly "pure", "rationalist" Buddhism) are unequivocal on this point. For instance, they show the Buddha, when questioned, as adamantly maintaining that he is not man, nor god, nor tree-spirit, etc., but only *buddha* ("awakened") – and apparently, therefore, entirely *sui generis.*

This tendency in Buddhist thought was arguably taken to its logical endpoint, rather than developed into anything new, in Mahāyāna "Pure Land" doctrines of Buddhas such as Amitābha, as radically other-worldly, transcendent saviours by "other-power" (Ch. *tali,* Jpn. *tariki*; something very much like "grace"). In the Buddhist case, at least, then, we should be very cautious about assuming that

freedom is an innate human capacity, or at least, not without very careful qualification.

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[1] 206, above

[2] DN 2, *Sāmaññaphala sutta*

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