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The Importance of Group Moral Agency on Environmental Responsibility and Beyond

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Due to the specifics of ocean currents, the Northern Pacific (or Eastern) Garbage Patch, approximately the size of the state of Texas, has been accumulating plastics entering waterways west of the North American continental divide since the dawn of the "Age of Plastic." Plastics do not biodegrade like paper or cardboard. They *photodegrade*. Sunlight breaks plastic down into smaller and smaller pieces, but these pieces retain their molecular structure—they just become "plastic dust"[1]. Within this Garbage Patch, researchers, in 2006, found 6 lbs. of plastic for every 1 lb. of zooplankton, the foundation of the food chain of the ocean. Any species which relies on zooplankton within the Garbage Patch will be ingesting six times the amount of plastic as zooplankton. It would be only a slight exaggeration to say that every piece of plastic that has been made since the 1950s remains somewhere on this planet. The implications for the web of life of the oceans and for future generations of humans is staggering.

I will argue in this paper that the responsibility for the environment grows proportionately with the contribution to its degradation, and that we cannot think about this responsibility solely on an individual-by-individual basis. We can and we must make every effort to develop the virtue of groups, even groups as amorphous and unwieldy as nations or societies.

Introduction

Iris Marion Young has proposed the "social connection model" of social justice which combines notions of individual responsibility with the compelling concerns of globalization and industrialization in the 21st century.[2] Notions such as moral responsibility, accountability and agency can no longer be reserved for theoretical debates confined within the conceptual borders of societies, she argued. The borders of the contemporary world are much too porous. The inevitable interactions between ethnically, racially, economically, demographically and

culturally diverse peoples—the economic, political, environmental, social and, clearly global, interdependencies, that currently exist and continue to be created—require that moral, social and political philosophy, and thus philosophers, step up to the plate. Young argues that when a moral agent, by his or her intentional and voluntary action, contributes to the perpetuation of a harm (even if that harm was not intended), be it an isolated and episodic event or one embedded in a larger structural interconnected process or practice, she or he has a responsibility to "work to remedy" those harms.[3] And, it is the later phenomenon—those embedded in the larger structure—that interests her the most.[4] The more indirect or unintended, the more challenging the exploration of responsibility, but Young squarely faced that challenge. Her work draws attention to the likelihood that if we cannot talk about responsibility here we become paralyzed morally. Some of the world's greatest harms stem from these structural processes and are unintentional results of generations of accumulated practices and processes.

Young is aware of the inability of any one of us to take any action or actions that will, by themselves, cure the larger structural social injustices of which she is concerned. But she focuses on the personal responsibility of each of us—especially those privileged enough to be educated and informed and with access to power. Agreeing with Larry May, she argues for the importance of "shared responsibility"—each individual in the group as partially responsible, as opposed to "collective responsibility," where the organization or group might be responsible while no one individual is.[5]

I argue that this notion of shared responsibility as it relates to the individual will come to naught if we do not include the possibility of the development of a virtuous society. I find Donald Beggs work on "group moral virtue" very helpful in this regard.[6]

I will briefly sketch Young's view that questions of justice do and should extend outside a society's borders and why we are all morally obligated to attend to those issues (sections 1 & 2). The third section will work out in some detail, in part following Beggs, the importance of the notion of group moral virtue as separate from individual notions of virtue. The fourth section connects the recognition of moral obligation to the necessity of this group virtue. And, lastly, fifthly, I suggest that addressing global issues such as environmental degradation is highly unlikely, in any practical sense, without the existence of group moral virtue. A group's obligation in the face of structural injustices will have many facets. One of the foundational facets, in my view, is environmental accountability. What every being on this planet shares is a desire, implicit or explicit, for a healthy environment. A shared interest, as Beggs, May and others, point out, is one of the necessary conditions for group virtue.

Section 1: Justice beyond Borders

With the utmost respect to a Rawlsian approach to justice, which assumes that the notion of justice operates more or less within the confines of a given society—"a cooperative venture for mutual advantage."[7] I agree with Young's argument that our "obligations of justice" do not end at our borders.[8] (This is also the point of Nussbaum's *Frontiers of Justice*.[9]) It would follow, if they did, that the borders in some way create the obligations, or at least limit them. This cannot be so if our understanding of justice—as Rawls too would have it—stems from our capacities as rational creatures rather than our borders. Moreover, if our borders have historically been drawn by assertions of power rather than assertions of rationality or morality, it would be ill-conceived to begin with them for our conceptions of justice.

The point for Young is that our obligations extend beyond our borders when our social relationships extend beyond our borders, and wherever these relationships exist so too do our

obligations of justice.[10] While, like Nussbaum, Young finds plenty to criticize about the social

contract approach to human relationships, she also acknowledges: "The great insight of social

contract theory" is that "social connection is prior to political institutions."[11] These international

relationships themselves are a kind of society,[12] a recognizable set of structures and standardized

practices of various kinds;[13] a "cooperative venture for mutual advantage."

Section 2: Moral Obligation to Injustice beyond Borders

As Young argues, globalization obscures responsibility because these transnational social

relationships exist at a physical distance and at a "degree of separation" that encourages a state of

denial. The working conditions and quality of life of complete strangers in other countries,

ethnically diverse, and more or less powerless—the ultimate Other to the majority of

Americans—can easily be ignored or dismissed. These transcultural, but almost invisible,

relationships develop out of a "socio-historical" context which involves complex relationships

and conditions and backgrounds on top of which particular actions and decisions now must be

made. Young writes,

> "[s]tructural injustice exists when social processes put large categories of persons under a
> systematic threat of domination or deprivation of the means to develop and exercise their
> capacities, at the same time as these processes enable others to dominate or have a wide
> range of opportunities for developing and exercising their capacities."[14]

These structures produce (often) unintentional results, many of which qualify as unjust.

No one person set out to create circumstances wherein the poor and powerless are sicker and

weaker and hungrier and more desperate than the privileged. But the lack of intention, according

to Young, and I agree, does not discharge our responsibility. Why are we obligated if we didn't

intend the harm? Simply because our actions help to perpetuate the already occurring harm. No

"rule of double effect" for Young. Young's example (mine will be, in Section 5, the Eastern

Garbage Patch) from 2006 is sweatshops. The demand for "fashion" in the U.S. and elsewhere

motivates major retailers to feed that demand. Competition pressures these companies to seek

cost-effective exporting firms to contract with small foreign businesses to produce the goods.

These businesses in turn rely on young unskilled workers who migrate to where the jobs are.

The workers are at the mercy of the owners. Competition encourages the manufacturers to pay

little and expect a lot. Regulatory oversight is practically nonexistent. Documentation of

conditions in these sweatshops includes evidence of sexual harassment, unhealthy working

conditions, physical violence, oppressive conditions of many kinds.[15] These harms exist so that

(mostly) Western consumers can have everything from *haute couture* to the bargains at Wal-

Mart.

If there are such things as moral obligations then they arise from within our connections

with others. Participation in "schemes of cooperation" that perpetuate unjust structures obliges

us to work to eliminate the injustice.[16] Certainly, our daily social (i.e., human-to-human)

relationships create these kinds of moral obligations. Other kinds of relationships may too—as

animal rights and welfare theorists and environmental ethicists will argue. The last section of

this paper will head in this direction.

However, it cannot simply be the participation that creates the obligation for Young.

Suppose I become aware of the sweatshop labor that produces my favorite brand of jeans. Do I

dispel my moral obligation to "work to" eliminate the injustice if I simply switch to a union-

endorsed "sweatshop-free" label and give all my old jeans away? This is not Young's intention.

She is calling for a greater degree of awareness of how the American consumerist mentality,

membership in the most powerful and wealthy society in the world, and the insatiable hunger for

material goods, generally and systematically, works to perpetuate injustice in the world. Implied

in every word is the proportionate increase in responsibility that comes with privilege. For

instance, she writes, "[o]ur responsibility derives from *belonging together with others* in a system of interdependent processes of cooperation and competition . . . that produces injustice.[17]

Larry May's notion of "shared responsibility" harmonizes well with Young's "social connection model" of responsibility. The distributed kind of personal responsibility for harmful outcomes that May advocates, even when no one individual created the harm and no direct line can be drawn between the harm and individual action, is exactly what Young promotes. I want to argue that personal responsibility is not enough. Considering the scale of the structural issues under consideration, we need what Donald L. Beggs calls "group moral virtue."

Section 3: Moral Virtue: Group vs. Individual

Obligation goes hand-in-hand with responsibility. As David Copp highlights, if an entity bears particular kinds of responsibility, as all moral agents do, then he/she has an obligation. If one has an obligation, she/he bears responsibility.[18] If moral responsibility requires understanding our obligations to those to whom we are connected, and I think it does, than it makes sense to talk about the development of that responsibility in terms of a virtue or a care ethics. I won't spend time on the vast amount of literature dedicated to defining/refining the notion of responsibility. For my current purposes, a sufficient condition for responsibility arises when an intentional action by a moral agent contributes to injustice. The intentionality does not have to include an understanding of the potential harms. Consistent with Young, this sort of responsibility can be fairly obscure. The harms caused may be quite removed from the intentional action of the agent, when we're talking about a piece of a larger structural process that itself contributes to injustice. It is our job, Young is implying, to follow the connections—educate ourselves on the more distant ramifications and act accordingly.

Becoming aware of one's responsibility is separable from "becoming responsible." As Hannah Arendt would have it in *The Life of the Mind*, certainty about one's judgments occurs only during the activity of thinking. As one is working out the logic or the reasonableness of one's conclusion, one can be fully aware, fully understanding of the topic at hand--but only during that time. Once the thinking is over, what remains is the judgment, not how one got there.[19] The point is, "becoming aware" is the activity of thinking. "Becoming responsible" is a different process. In order to "be a responsible person," one has to, following Aristotle, acquire the corresponding trait. One can act responsibly in a particular single moment in time following upon a singular period of discovery of one's responsibility. Alternatively, one can, over time, acquire "being responsible" as part of one's character. To become responsible, as I will use the phrase, is to acquire the trait, or virtue, of—let's call it—"accountability." If accountability is a part of what it means to be a moral agent, than it is a simple step to imagine a virtue that fits that notion. "Accountability" is a state of being that can be acquired through practice.

To address the structural issues that Young raises as it relates to one's responsibility, I think we need to talk about virtue. And, I do not believe that the virtue of any one individual will be sufficient. If I am responsible for contributing to the continued existence of sweatshops, in however limited a way, an episodic act of being responsible about my purchases (say, during my annual jeans purchasing) does nothing to address the structural conditions in place that create the injustices of a sweatshop. Becoming accountable—developing over time a disposition to habitually act in a way that responds to this injustice—on an individual basis, will also ordinarily be insufficient to effect change. One accountable individual in an ocean of consumers will generally have no affect on the structures.[20]

We need the virtue of accountability, but we need it in a larger way. And, so, I want to argue, with the help of Donald Beggs, that groups can develop virtue and thus be accountable. And, I want to go farther than Beggs would go. I want to argue that a society, as Rawls defines it, can acquire the virtue of accountability.[21] Some virtues may be easier for such groups to acquire than others.[22] Aristotle is a firm believer in a city having the capacity for virtue. In fact, for him, a city should have virtue in order to ensure the production of individuals with virtue. Just as Confucius said. And, of course, the individuals need to be virtuous in order to maintain a virtuous society.[23] However, Aristotle was also convinced that size mattered. If a city-state (or society) gets too big, individual shared interests in the on-going functioning of that society dissipate.[24] Is that necessarily the case? I turn to Beggs to consider.

First of all, Beggs says a "collective predication of moral dispositions" is attributable to groups of various kinds.[25] That cities can have dispositions is no stretch. New York City is an archetypal, vibrant, world-class city. Steve Carell's character on *The Office*, which is set in Scranton, PA, describes New York City as "Scranton on speed, acid, and steroids."[26] My hometown of Crosby, ND is sleepy, isolated, proud, friendly. 'Friendliness' is a moral disposition—of a collectivity. Not every individual in Crosby exudes friendliness, so it is not appropriate to credit the individual members of the town with this trait. But the town itself can be described that way, as having a disposition, an acquired trait.[27]

Beggs quotes Newton Garver: "[j]ustice is a process rather than a state . . ." Agreeing with Garver, Beggs continues: "if justice is a kind of dialogue, then it is a properly collective moral activity."[28] The notion of agency can be, and often should be, attached to a collectivity. Particular kinds of agency may be seen as coming from the dispositions of collectives. Justness

is one. In fact, Garver's (and Beggs's) argument is that if justice exists, it <u>necessarily</u> comes from a collective; from a group.

Following the work of Larry May, Beggs describes the necessary and sufficient criteria for the agency of groups. 1) Groups must have <u>solidarity</u> to act as a collectivity. The shared interests generated from that solidarity must be causal factors in intentional outcomes. And, 2) decision practices/procedures must be attached to the group as such.[29] Beggs reminds us of Aristotle, "our moral dispositions are formed as a result of the corresponding activities."[30] True of individuals. True of groups with solidarity and practices/procedures. Just as with individuals, groups also have to have a history within which their practices develop.[31] As example, the U.S.'s Pacific Northwest—another kind of collectivity—has a decidedly different attitude towards the environment than the other side of the continent—e.g., the Northeast "corridor." There are identifiable differences between the practices in place in Eugene, Oregon or Longview, Washington and the practices in place in Baltimore, MD or Coatesville, PA, regarding attention to environmental issues. These differences developed over time through different socio-historical processes and practices. I suggest this with some caution. While there may not be very many of these sorts of demographically distinct differences in terms of dispositions, environmental consciousness is surely one the Pacific Northwest has to a greater degree than the Northeast. Two pieces of evidence supporting this claim are 1) the number of voter-generated ballot measures relating to the environment that, every year, make it to the November ballot; and 2) the differences in level of awareness of the college students I encountered teaching at public institutions in Oregon and in Pennsylvania. Environmental awareness is part of the culture of the Northwest, embedding in the minds of all who spend significant time there.[32]

For group dispositions to be virtues, according to Beggs, they have to be "morally praiseworthy practices that are contingent upon certain sorts of collective decision procedures/ practices, and also continent upon certain sorts of solidarity."[33] The difficulty of agreement on what qualifies as "morally praiseworthy" does not prohibit the possibility.[34] Beggs gives examples of a quilting group and what he calls an "affinity group" (a political activist group). In either case, over time, with regular meetings and commitments to the group by its members, it will have evolved specific kinds of decision-making procedures. Perhaps the quilting group identifies with sufferers from AIDS and begins to use some of its energies to help those with the disease. This, in Beggs's example, is not something that any one individual in the group would have done by themselves, but a product of the group's solidarity and decision-making practices.[35] In this example, we could not credit anyone's individual virtue with this activity. The virtue—developed over time out of a history—applies to the group specifically. The friendliness of Crosby, ND does not come from any one individual. The environmental consciousness of the Pacific Northwest is not creditable to specific individual citizens, even though there may be specific individuals who indeed are particularly environmentally conscious or especially friendly. It would be impossible or foolish or ineffective for any one individual to attempt what the group could take on.

It is the "history of internal dynamics"[36] that has generated the group virtues discussed above. The group has become something over time that the individual members acting in isolation could never be. That dynamic is akin to what Aristotle would have us understand about the development of moral virtue…practicing an activity until it becomes habitual, engrained, part of one's self-definition.

Section 4: Recognition of Obligation as Necessary for Group Moral Virtue

If, as Young proposes, having a connection to injustice creates accountability, and accountability for injustice creates an imperative for action, then when a group has a connection to an injustice, that group will have accountability also. This does not deny that individual members, where individual connections exist, will also have separate accountability. But it recognizes that the individual alone could not accomplish what the group could when it comes to institutionalized injustices. One is not held responsible for something it is impossible to do. And thus it also acknowledges a separate level of accountability at the group level.

So here's my argument:

1) If connection to injustice creates obligation (Young),[37] and

2) If that obligation is best addressed over time through the development of the virtue of accountability, and

3) If groups can be seen as having virtues not reducible to the individual members of that group (Beggs), and

4) If groups are best equipped to address at least some kinds of structural or institutionalized injustices,

5) Then, it follows that groups have an obligation to develop virtues that address these injustices. They *should be or become* accountable.

I see accountability as a kind of "primary" virtue. When an entity has agency, obligation follows. Excelling at fulfilling one's obligation is an acquirable trait—the virtue—of accountability. True of individuals. True of groups. Being accountable will have many different <u>facets</u>. These facets may be interconnected as well. For instance, the consumerist mentality may have implications not just for the environment, but for issues of class and race and

gender, etc., as well. For this paper, the specific <u>facet</u> I have in mind is the topic of the final section.

Section 5: Shared Interest in Healthy Environment as Group Moral Virtue

As we grow more and more aware of the environmental crisis taking shape before our eyes, the more aware we become of how the consumption rates of the developed nations, and especially of the U.S., contribute disproportionately to the existence of environmental degradation. Environmental degradation fits well with Young's definition of structural injustice.[38] Young defines "structural injustice" as a harm that "occurs as a consequence of many individuals and institutions acting in pursuit of their particular goals and interests, within given institutional rules and accepted norms." That there are 6 lbs. of plastic for every pound of zooplankton in the Eastern Garbage Patch is a harm because at every level of the food web/land pyramid these plastics are turning up. This is unquestionably the result of "many individuals and institutions acting in pursuit of their particular goals and interest." Fish and birds can't distinguish plastic from food. Individuals and entire species are put at risk; ecosystems are threatened, beaches are polluted, livelihoods put at risk, loss of habitat and resources inevitable, damage to aesthetic and recreational environments, costs accumulated of beach cleanups, lost tourism, damaged vehicles, and on and on.

As Young argues: everyone who is a part of the structure is morally obligated to work to eliminate injustices caused by the structure. Often, those most morally obligated are those most advantaged[39] because they will often be the first ones with 1) access to the information, and thus to the opportunity for understanding, and 2) to the resources, and thus to the "power to influence."[40]

So. Our learned responses, our cultural conditioning, will have a great deal to do with how ready we are to address the injustices of the world. And, so it's an obligation of the culture to encourage particular kinds of understandings. Clearly, that is what has occurred in the U.S. in places like the Pacific Northwest—at least on the western side of the Cascades. My university, in the Northeast corridor, is coming to recognize its obligations to the larger world in new ways. Several years ago we instituted a "diverse communities" general education requirement that requires all students to have taken a course which teaches them about the dynamics of race and gender and sexual orientation, etc. and the institutionalized effects of the unearned advantages that come with membership in the dominant group and the unearned disadvantages that come without that membership. Currently we are working on implementing a globalization requirement so that students will be required to take a course that teaches the interconnections and the relationships and the impacts of the transnational interdependent global environment that they will find themselves in upon graduation. We are also working on an environmental literacy requirement that goes hand in hand with an understanding of globalization.

Group moral virtue develops over time. A "history of internal dynamics" has to evolve. Not everyone is going to be in firm agreement with my university's new requirements. My organization is not going to be immediately endowed with the virtue of global or environmental accountability. But, as time goes on, this institution will become more and more "about" these understandings. The share history and shared interests of this community will be developing for quite awhile. Over time, within my institution, a group virtue will develop, of awareness of institutionalized oppression, awareness of the impact of globalization and the commitment to sustainability (all of which I believe are related). If all goes well, these three ideas will be

imbedded in the tissues of the culture of my university, will be an active feature of our mission and will be about *who we are* as an institution.

I want to argue that the same can be envisioned for an entire society. A tougher dynamic by far than my little corner of the northeast, but the difference between a university and an entire society must be a matter of degree and not a difference in kind. The fractious state of our current political system does not preclude the possibility of what I am describing. The sweeping range of differences between subcultures does not prohibit the attainment of this sort of virtue.

Solidarity and shared decision-making procedures/practices—necessary and sufficient conditions for group status—is what a society is; even if some individuals within that society would prefer to be elsewhere or aren't paying attention (so don't feel solidarity) and even if some individuals do not operate according to the procedures and practices delineated by that society. Some of us don't vote. Some of us (most of us, at one time or another) break laws. But we are all here, invested in the flourishing of this society whether we are consciously aware of it or not. Since that flourishing has consequences worldwide, we are obligated to attend to the injustices our attempts at flourishing create. Young's adaptation of May's "shared" rather than "collective" responsibility is especially relevant here. Or rather, we need both to be happening at once.

The obligation, then, for members of a society is to become accountable for the role we play in the creation and perpetuation of injustice. Globalization will continue—relationships with others beyond national or cultural borders are facts of our existence. The threats to the environment are facts of our existence. The dead zones and the garbage in our oceans, extermination of species, war, factory farming, desertification, hormone disruption documented in individuals in hundreds of species—all scientific and observable facts. The most privileged—

the wealthiest, most influential, most powerful—have an increased level of obligation to address

injustice because their actions have more and deeper impact on the injustices of the world.

Those virtues that should be developed within a society, are, at the very least, those that "work

to" eliminate the injustices that "decision-making procedures/practices" of that group create.

Thus, in my view, group virtue is necessary for addressing issues of injustice brought about by

globalization. How the development of that virtue is produced/perpetuated is a paper for another

time.

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[1] ORV Alguita, Inc. "Captain Moore and Crew Return form 4th Alguita Voyage to the North Central Pacific Gyre, August 15, 2005," ORV Alguita, Inc., http://www.alguita.com/research/research_voyage_2005.html, accessed 7/1/07 and 9/17/07.

[2] Young, Iris Marion (2006), "Responsibility and Global Justice: A Social Connection Model," *Social Philosophy & Policy*, vol. 23, 102-130.

[3] Young, 103.

[4] While space constraints require limited exposition of this interconnection, I encourage all readers to seek out Young's work. The interconnected structure of which Young and others speak contributes to the power dynamics that create injustice. A multitude of theorists, political and philosophical, feminist and not, have analyzed this dynamic. Simone de Beauvoir, Paulo Freire, Franz Fanon and Michel Foucault are amongst the most influential.

[5] May, Larry (1993), *Shared Responsibility,* Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 36-54.

[6] Beggs, Donald L. (2003), "The Idea of Group Moral Virtue," *Journal of Social Philosophy*, vol. 34, no. 3, 457-474.

[7] Rawls, John, (1971) 1999. *A Theory of Justice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 4.

[8] Young, 104.

[9] Nussbaum, Martha (2006), *Frontiers of Justice,* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

[10] Nussbaum's emphasis is different. Her understanding of human rights grounds what she understands about obligations. Whichever approach we take, it seems to me, we will be faced with the same responsibilities.

[11] Young, 105.

[12] Young tells us this is Charles Bietz's point, 105-6.

[13] Young, 105.

[14] Young, 115.

[15] Young, 108-113. She cites the following sources: Peter Kwong, "Forbidden Workers and the U.S. Labor Movement," *Critical Asian Studies* 312, no. 1 (2002): 69-88; Edna Bonacich and Richard P. Appelbaum, *Behind the Label: Inequality in the Los Angeles Apparel Industry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Kimberly Ann Elliott and Richard B. Freeman, *Can Labor Standards Improve under Globalization?* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for International Economics, 2005); Ellen Israel Rosen, *Making Sweatshops: The Globalization of the U.S. Apparel Industry* (Berkeley, University of Capacity Press, 2002); and Naomi Klein, *No Logo* (New York: Picador, 1999).

[16] Young, 115.

[17] Young, 119, emphasis mine. As she writes elsewhere, paraphrasing Liam Murphy: "Where there are serious injustices in a society, this is a sign that moral agents are not doing all they ought to do to respect one another and attend to the legitimate interests of others. Thus in a society with serious injustices, each agent's moral responsibility consists in doing what one would be doing in a society in which all agents complied with the demands of justice. In the nonideal world in which we live, this implies that most moral agents ought to give up some resources and privileges and go out of their way to make social relations more just." http://socpol.anu.edu.au/YoungRespStrInj6.05.doc accessed 9/17/07.

[18] Miller, Seumas, and Pekka Makela (2005), "The Collectivist Approach to Collective Moral Responsibility," *Metaphilosophy*, vol. 36, no. 5, 634.

[19] "For the need to think can never be stilled by allegedly definite insights of "wise men"; it can be satisfied only through thinking, and the thoughts I had yesterday will satisfy this need today only to the extent that I want and am able to think them anew." Arendt, Hannah (1978), *The Life of the Mind*, New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 88.

[20] There are exceptions of course. Al Gore and his movie is one recent example. Accountability alone did not create the phenomenon however. A long political career, a good deal of money, Hollywood connections—i.e., socio-historical structural relationships—contributed to the Gore phenomenon. Cindy Sheehan might be a better example.

[21] Members of the audience to whom I delivered this paper in July 2007 at the Social Philosophy conference at Millersville University raised concerns about my use of the term "society," seeing my use of the concept better handled by terms such as "nation" or "country." Embedding my discussion at least in part in the Rawlsian tradition, however, compels me to retain the original.

[22] Nussbaum says: "Institutions impose on all, in a suitable fair way, the responsibility to support the capabilities of all, up to a minimum threshold," 2006, 310. She is supporting the notion that institutions are what can best respond to these structural injustices.

[23] And, all of this is to be accomplished through education. *Politics*, Book 2, Ch. 5., e.g.

[24] Aristotle, *Politics*, Book III, Part III, for instance.

[25] Beggs, 459.

[26] http://www.geodig.com/d/geo/na/us/pa/scr/scr.html. accessed 7/6/07. *Citing* February 2006 episode of NBC series adapted from the original BBC marvel.

[27] From discussions at the Social Philosophy conference, July 2007, it indeed can be the case that individuals associated with a particular place would not recognize all of that place's traits. What I suggest in the last section, though, is that conscious attention to the acquisition of a trait is exclusive of this phenomenon.

[28] Beggs, 460.

[29] Beggs, 464.

[30] Ostwald trans., 1103b 22, *quoted in* Beggs, 464.

[31] Beggs, 465.

[32] The ease and understanding with which college students in Oregon discussed environmental ethics questions, the level of sophistication they expressed on complex environmental issues and land use debates, how bicycle-friendly and energy conscious they were, are just a glimpse of the depth of the differences between the Northwest and the East.

[33] Beggs, 466. The difficulty of agreement on what qualifies as moral

[34] The work on ethical pluralism by Susan Wolf, Lawrence Hinman and Martha Nussbaum, e.g., all speak to ways in which this agreement could be addressed: Wolf, "Two Levels of Pluralism, *Ethics*, vol. 102, no. 4, July 1992, 785-798; Hinman, *Ethics: A Pluralistic Approach to Moral Theory*, 3rd ed., Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2002; Nussbaum, "Non-Relative Virtues: An Aristotelian Approach," in *Quality of Life*, eds. Amartya Sen and Nussbaum, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.

[35] Beggs, 468.

[36] Beggs, 469

[37] I do not mean to imply that others have not also made this argument.

[38] YoungRespStrInj6.05.doc

[39] It would not be rational to say "always." The most privileged have the most economic and political power. The least privileged may have the most knowledge. Alison Jaggar's notion of "epistemological privilege" comes to mind. Jaggar, Alison M. "Love and Knowledge: Emotion in Feminist Epistemology," In Alison M. Jaggar and Susan R. Bordo (1989), *Gender, Body/Knowledge*. Rutgers University Press, 161.

[40] Young, 125.