

THE KENOSIS OF SOCIOLOGY, OR
SOCIOLOGY & ANSWERABILITY:
ESSAYS TOWARD A 'WEAK PROGRAM' IN THE SOCIOLOGY OF MORALITY

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation surveys sociological approaches to morality. First, I distinguish the ‘strong programs’ of Marx and Durkheim, which subordinate morality’s form *and* content to social scientific conceptual analysis, from Max Weber’s ‘weak program,’ which attempts to preserve the independence of moral action from domination by expert social science. Siding with—while critiquing—Weber’s weak program, I turn to three more recent academic disputes, each of which proposes a concept as a potential candidate for resolving the ongoing dilemma of sociology’s relationship to morality. These concepts are character, anxiety, and practice. I discuss each of them in the contexts of particular academic disputes: 1) the situation vs. character dispute in moral philosophy and social psychology; 2) the status anxiety vs. moral concern dispute carried on between studies in moral regulation and communitarianism in the 1980s and 90s; 3) the contrasting views of practice developed by Pierre Bourdieu and Alasdair MacIntyre. Each concept is subjected, in these disputes, to a kind of crucible, and each, in some way, fails the test. In each failure I suggest a remainder, a kind of ‘residual category’—in Parsons’ sense but without his scientific judgement. With a nod to Bakhtin, but without binding myself to ‘dialogics,’ I have called that remainder ‘answerability,’ and give a variety of definitions that differ/defer from any operationalized concept. Taking my basic theme from Adorno’s critique of identity thinking, I argue that answerability constitutes a minimal criterion that can performatively structure a ‘weak’ program in the sociology of morality, applying symmetrically to the sociological vocation and the question of morality. Definitional deferrals indicate, in addition to the influence of Adorno—but also Derrida, and Butler’s notion of the subject’s failed but necessary accounting for oneself—that the sociology of morality exceeds the Habermasian model of ongoing conversation. *Answerability* refers to more than criticizable validity claims. It points to avenues of experience, expression, and reflexivity that may not find their way into ‘rational discourse.’ It points, with Gillian Rose, to political action in the gap between law and morality, is and ought.

For my parents, Jim Carlson and Susan (Krahn) Carlson

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INTRODUCTION: RETURN OF THE SOCIOLOGY OF MORALITY

The centrality of morality to the sociological agenda is not debatable and remains remarkably strong. (Lamont 2010:vi)

A. THE RETURN OF THE MORAL?

How central is morality to sociology? Contrary to the claim made by Harvard cultural sociologist Michèle Lamont, in her brief introduction to the *Handbook of the Sociology of Morality* (Hitlin and Vaisey 2010), the question is eminently debatable. One need look no further than the collection of articles that she introduces to find evidence of morality's uneven and rather perplexing relationship with sociology. As Steven Lukes puts it in his contribution to the *Handbook*, "What is clear is that what 'morality' denotes is subject to endless contestation" (2010:550; see also Lukes 2008). Indeed, the centrality of morality to the sociological agenda has often been debated and its meaning and salience have been persistent, but also persistently ambiguous. To begin with, are we talking about the word (morality), or about some sort of stable (or unstable) referent behind the word? Should we favour 'ethics' over 'morality' (and individual autonomy over conformity to group norms)? Shall we equate morality with the 'normative,' or with 'cultural values,' or something else? Are sociologists interested (or disinterested) in the term 'morality,' or the 'thing in itself?' And in that case, is morality a kind of Durkheimian 'thing' (i.e., a 'social fact'), a social product whose substantiality is unproblematic but difficult to represent, and that we may approach in a variety of ways—a variety celebrated in a conventional manner by Lamont—or does the "broad umbrella" (Lamont 2010:vii) provided by the editors shelter deeper underlying divisions in what we understand by 'morality?'

It gets worse, for we must also ask whether morality—as form? As substance? As relation?—needs to be applied to or embodied by sociology itself (e.g., as ‘ethical’ research methods) (cf. Bourdieu 1990a:177). Can we prevent this from becoming a ‘bad infinity’ (cf. Rose 2009:227). Can we separate ‘descriptive’ from ‘normative’ sociologies of morality? With respect to morality are sociologists poised to offer expert scientific analysis? Or should we concern ourselves with the motes in our own eyes, the amoral or immoral quality of our own practices, or perhaps our un/justifiable ‘moralistic’ contributions to ‘governmentality’ (Dean 1999) or to ‘regulating the poor’ (Piven and Cloward 1971)? What is more, in Judith Shklar’s terms (1984), does this mean ‘putting cruelty first?’ Or should we be, along with Nietzsche, ‘putting hypocrisy first?’ Which, if either, constitutes a more important “epistemic value” (Putnam 2002:31) for sociologists, whether ‘liberal,’ like Shklar, or ‘radical,’ like Nietzsche?

The subtitle of Lamont’s introduction, “The Return of the Moral,” belies her own suggestion that sociological attention to morality has “remained” strong, suggesting, instead, that it has had, perhaps, a tidal quality, ebbing and flowing with the decades. According to an alternate metaphor, the sociology of morality may have gone on an ill-advised journey, returning now like a prodigal.¹ If I have resisted Lamont’s remark about debatability, I have no impulse to quibble with the notion of a return. Sociologists do seem to be returning to something they call morality. In fact, Hitlin and Vaisey’s

¹ The ‘Prodigal Son’ parable (Luke 15:11–32) provides a paradigmatic narration of the distinction between conventional (legalistic) morality (the elder brother’s) and the ‘true’ morality (as *metanoia*, conversion/return) of the humble prodigal. Is the sociological return of morality also its *metanoia*? Turning and returning remain relevant throughout the dissertation, which deals with a number of ‘turns’ (e.g., linguistic; practice; affective). See also, on turning, Sara Ahmed’s essay ‘Feminist Killjoys’ (2010:50–87).

collection, which contains 30 chapters by 43 different authors, appears to constitute a kind of morality renaissance all by itself. This dissertation, which concerns itself with sociological attempts to understand morality, is doubtless part of the same social current, or has imbibed from the same punchbowl of collective consciousness. It was conceived and composed independently of the Hitlin and Vaisey collection even though it intersects with some of the work that appears there. A few descriptive remarks are in order, since the *Handbook* provides some sense of the *conscience collective*, which includes both sociology (e.g., Bargheer 2011; Black 2011; Hodgkiss 2013; Morgan 2013; Tavory 2011) and anthropology (e.g., Howell 1997; Robbins 2004; Rydstrøm 2003; Zigon 2009), from which the dissertation arose.

What does this renascent sociology of morality look like? The Hitlin and Vaisey collection includes articles by aging scholars (e.g., Raymond Boudon, Steven Lukes, Edward Tiryakian), authors in mid-career, recent recipients of the PhD, and some students still in graduate school. They look to be mostly men and mostly Americans.

The *Handbook's* thirty chapters fall under four headings: 1) What is morality? 2) Where does it come from? 3) How does it work? and 4) Future directions. This language helps to present the sociology of morality as a straightforward empirical project, but these headings succeed only marginally in sorting the collection. In some ways the reader encounters a motley assembly, representing a variety of sociological traditions and approaches. In other ways, it is a remarkably homogeneous American soup, equal parts small 'p' pragmatism, functionalist Durkheimianism, and rational choice theory.

Durkheim is the most-referred-to author (his name appears 120 times), with Weber coming a somewhat distant second (76 references in the 610 page volume). Marx, Simmel, and Parsons receive relatively equal coverage (33, 32 and 35 respectively), but most of the Parsons and Simmel references appear in Donald Levine's chapter, while 9 separate chapters refer to Marx, but none take his work as the guiding perspective or the central focus. Raymond Boudon and Andrew Sayer give significant attention to Adam Smith and *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Boudon linking him to Weber and Sayer connecting him to Pierre Bourdieu. The collection contains only three (passing) references to Freud and just six to Nietzsche. American pragmatists Cooley, Dewey, and Mead receive relatively little mention (4, 7, and 12 references, respectively). Amongst more recent sociologists, Alexander, Boltanski, Bourdieu, Garfinkel, Giddens, Goffman, Habermas, Lamont, Christian Smith, Swidler, and Wuthnow all receive some attention.

Leaving aside the word 'morality,' references to 'emotion' led all other indexed topics, followed—in roughly this order—by *values, work, culture (or cultural), tradition, right, actors, status, community, commitment, meaning, and status*. References to community occur about three times more than references to capitalism (Andrew Sayer's extended discussion of Bourdieu creates a closer ratio between 'community' and 'capital'). 'Culture,' however, more than doubles 'community' in popularity (168 appearances as compared to 77).² Given the 'warm' connotations of 'community' and 'culture,' and the 'cold' connotations of 'capitalism,' and the 'economy,' morality

² All of these numbers have been derived, in the main, by perusing the index and counting (with the aid of the index finger). There may be some minor errors, but my basic counting skills are quite good.

appears, then, to be implicitly associated with warmth—whether as in ‘warm and fuzzy’ or as in ‘that makes my blood boil.’ This also tacitly links morality to emotion, which is similarly caught up in a set of heat connotations, as Hochschild makes clear in her rather Goldilocks usage of warm/cool metaphors in her article “The Culture of Politics: Traditional, Postmodern, Cold-modern, and Warm-modern Ideals of Care” (1995). What kind of assumptions have already been made when we treat morality as a ‘warm’ object? To what extent does this limit analysis to a game of hot and cold that culminates, as much contemporary moral philosophy does, in an appeal to moral intuitions?

The chapters tend to be Durkheim-inflected (whether or not they advocate ‘value freedom’). They tend to emphasize the importance of emotions, especially the intertwining of emotions with rationality. Suffering and pain, however, receive little attention, remaining in the background even in Tiryakian’s chapter “The (Im)morality of War” (2010:73–93), which focuses on interaction processes related to overcoming prohibitions of killing, often involving narratives of sacrifice and the sacred. Morality is linked more closely to culture (whatever that is) than to economy (whatever that is). Its relationship with evolution is not emphasized—only Jonathan Turner’s chapter (2010:125–145) tackles evolution directly—although emotion could easily serve as a link between them. That it does not suggests that ‘emotion’ might actually be serving as an inoculation against the ‘reductionism’ of evolutionary perspectives.

Radical political critique (another evasive species) makes few appearances, if any, and the same goes for the ‘hermeneutics of suspicion,’ whether of Freudian, Nietzschean,

or Marxian varieties. There are few hints that morality might be an ideological obfuscation of more powerful underlying motives, whether social or asocial, economic or instinctual, though many chapters emphasize the importance of emotions to morality. There is also a dearth of critical reflection on the motives of the authors themselves.

B. REVIVING THE SOCIOLOGY OF MORALITY

Handbook editors Hitlin and Vaisey argue that sociologists have neglected morality for decades (2010:3). While fields such as psychology, neuroscience, law, and philosophy, have been busy studying morality, sociology has been slower to reengage with this fundamental topic and risks missing its moment. Hitlin and Vaisey blame disciplinary fragmentation, long-term disagreements about how to define morality, and the backlash against the Parsonsian ‘values and norms’ approach to culture (cf. Levine 2010:57). Interdisciplinary engagement has been hampered, in turn, by suspicions about the reductionism of biological, psychological, and philosophical approaches that define or experimentally construct social situations so narrowly that they lack “ecological validity” (Hitlin and Vaisey 2010:10; Lamont 2010:v; Firat and McPherson 2010:362). Hitlin and Vaisey enjoin sociologists to work past these obstacles and vigorously engage with other approaches or forfeit the chance to contribute to increasingly public debates about the nature and direction of morality. In their words, “More than anything, we simply need to roll up our sleeves and engage with our colleagues from other fields, challenging, confirming, and complementing their models as warranted by research not yet conducted” (2010:11–12; see also Hitlin and Vaisey 2013).

The closing chapter of the *Handbook*, “What’s New and What’s Old about the New Sociology of Morality?” (Abend 2010:561–584), provides a focused discussion of the contemporary scene. Like Hitlin and Vaisey, Gabriel Abend emphasizes aggressive interdisciplinary engagement in order to ensure further progress in developing and institutionalizing a reinvigorated sociology of morality. Abend, one of the vanguard in the current generation of US-based sociologists of morality, argues that, more than a century after the initial surge in scholarly interest, sociology of morality is finally coming into its own. Abend’s opening summary includes the standard references:

There were many earlier calls for a sociology of morality. For example, in 1970 Maria Ossowska made a “plea for a sociology of morality” (1970:27–29). In 1973 Steven Lukes lamented that “the sociology of morality is the great void in contemporary social science” (1973:432). In 1991 Craig Calhoun lamented that “[f]or the most part, sociologists have not carried forward Durkheim’s task of creating a sociology of morality” (1991:232). But we had to wait until the beginning of the twenty-first century for a self-aware intellectual social movement to emerge (see Frickel and Gross 2005). Today no eyebrows are raised when “sociology of morality” is used as an attributive noun—e.g., someone may teach a sociology-of-morality class or write a sociology-of-morality paper. Naturally, institutionalization lags a bit behind, but some small steps have already been taken. (562)

With this quasi-biblical frame in place, according to which an exilic period characterized by yearning and lamentation finally gives way to a period of progress on a journey, a narrative that appears to endorse this institutionalizing development, Abend turns to “three old issues” for the sociology of morality:

(a) whether morality can and should be scientifically investigated and how this scientific investigation might differ from academic moral philosophy, popular moralizing, and normative arguments in general; (b) whether and how morals vary across time and place; and (c) whether and how social

factors can causally explain these variations. (563)

Classical sociologists thought that they *should* investigate morality and that this research would lead to practical recommendations, but the “current orthodoxy”—and here Abend includes “most of the contributors to this *Handbook*”—confines sociology to description and explanation, ruling out value judgments and recommendations (566). Abend argues that this position is dated and oversimplified. Sociologists need to reengage with moral philosophy, which is now “much more sophisticated” (572) and suggests that there is no simple alternative of opting in or out of value-neutrality. For example, Hilary Putnam’s critique of the fact/value dichotomy suggests that we cannot make airtight distinctions between objective facts and subjective value statements. Facts and values are intertwined, and science presupposes “*epistemic values*” (Putnam 2002:4) such as coherence and simplicity. We have grown less certain about our capacity for “pure” objectivity and less certain that values lack truth content just *because* they are grounded in subjective judgements or preferences (cf. Davydova and Sharrock 2003).

On the question of cultural and societal diversity in morals, Abend reiterates the importance of developments in moral philosophy. He suggests that sociologies of morality, old and new, usually begin by acknowledging moral variation and then attempt to describe and explain this variation. This involves addressing the attendant question of ‘metaethical skepticism’: Does moral *variation* entail moral *relativism*? Abend describes classical sociological approaches (e.g., Harriet Martineau; Lucien Lévy-Bruhl) to moral variation as “multifaceted and thus difficult to pigeonhole” (2010:568). Much

contemporary sociology of morality, by contrast, too easily posits metaethical skepticism (i.e., moral variation disproves a universal moral sense or set of principles).³ Abend's own position on moral truth is *pragmatically agnostic* (Abend 2008): sociologists should exclude claims about moral truth rather than assume a skeptical position (2010:574).

Whether we take a skeptical or an agnostic position, if the fact of moral variation bars traditional claims concerning the innateness or universality of morality, the problem of explanation or causation remains. Classical 19th century sociology of morality (exemplified by Martineau and Lévy-Bruhl, again) made *mechanistic* or *deterministic* claims about the relationship between environmental factors (as independent variables), and morality (as a dependent variable). For Martineau, morals develop out of 'circumstances' and 'influences,' including class, gender, occupation, population density, and so forth (Abend 2010:571). According to Abend, 21st century sociologists of morality also tend, like their classical counterparts, to treat morality as a dependent variable and to hunt for the underlying causes of particular moral phenomena, but they "tend to make probabilistic rather than deterministic causal arguments" (571).

Interestingly, Abend says nothing about treating morality as an independent variable, as Jeffrey Alexander and the 'strong program' (Alexander and Smith 2003) do with respect to culture. His general historical picture depicts a move away from normative ethics and towards value-neutrality, away from moral absolutism and towards metaethical skepticism, and finally, while still treating morality as a dependent variable,

3 Chernilo's recent book (2013), by contrast, traces the persistence of universalistic 'natural law' theory in modern social thought.

explanations have moved away from determinism and towards probabilism.

According to Abend, metaethical developments such as Putnam's discussion of the fact/value distinction have consequences for how one does the sociology of morality. If it turns out that 'moral truths' cannot be ruled unscientific on the basis of being 'subjective,' it may also turn out, as Putnam argues, that beyond Weber's acknowledgement that research begins with an evaluative claim (i.e., that the research is worth doing, or 'value relevant'), it is also impossible to develop truly value-neutral *descriptions*, whether of morality or of something else (Putnam 2002:63). As already mentioned, Abend draws the agnostic conclusion that the sociology of morality should *not* use 'moral truths' in its explanations because we cannot be sure that they exist. However, it is not so easy to bracket moral or evaluative convictions, even in our 'scientific' descriptions. Could we have a completely impartial and non-judgmental sociological discussion of the Holocaust? Would it be an empirically adequate sociological analysis? Abend chooses not to take a side, because his point in referring to fact/value debates in moral philosophy is not to endorse normative sociology (that would assume certain 'moral truths' to be self-evident and obligatory for sociology) but to argue that the problems posed there should not be avoided:

...the problems of moral truth...can't be quickly dismissed with a wave of the hand. While ultimately philosophical, they may have important sociological implications. Perhaps the sociologist who wishes to attain a complete explanation and full understanding of moral views, practices, and institutions can't reasonably bracket and ignore their content and/or their worth. (Abend 2010:575)

This "Perhaps" reasserts Abend's agnostic position on moral truth, while also asserting

his commitment to the epistemic values of “complete explanation” and “full understanding” by suggesting that sociologists ought to keep up with developments in moral philosophy. For Abend, agnosticism drives research, rather than limiting it. Sociology is not philosophy, and the question of moral truth is “ultimately philosophical.” The relative autonomy of their discipline allows sociologists to ignore developments in moral philosophy, but this contradicts their disciplinary commitments. The sociologist is one who “wishes to attain a complete explanation and full understanding” (575). As Weber put it with regard to both ethical or scientific commitment, “it is not a cab, which one can have stopped at one’s pleasure; it is all or nothing...if trivialities are not to result” (1958a:119).

Abend then turns to a second new challenge, the one posed by current developments in moral neuroscience. These threaten, Abend suggests, “to make the sociology of morality irrelevant” (2010:576). If contemporary moral philosophy challenges the sociology of morality by complicating issues of impartiality and objectivity (but perhaps without directly threatening institutional resources or public prestige) the rapid development of moral neuroscience looks to be marginalizing sociology from the opposite direction, that of ‘hard’ empirical science, and with evident significance for the power and influence of sociological pronouncements on morality:

...if the journals *Science* and *Nature* are a reliable indicator of what we think of as our best, most important, state-of-the-art scientific knowledge, then the current experts on morality are neuroscientists, psychologists, biologists, and primatologists. Surely not the sociologists of morality. (576)

It is an odd statement. A general survey of the usual articles published in *Science* or *Nature* delivers a picture in which sociologists do not function as experts on much of anything, so it is not clear how these journals could be used as bellwethers on this particular issue. What *Science* and *Nature* tell us is something about where sociology in general fits in prestige and influence in relation to other ‘scientific’ disciplines. Be that as it may, a serious question ‘going forward’ may be who commands more public prestige and institutional resources in the form of research grants, university chairs, media attention, and policy influence. Here Abend correctly, I think, points to moral neuroscience as a significant competitor for public resources, attention, and respect. He engages in question-begging, however, with respect to the notion that sociologists of morality should aspire to the role of social expertise, his supposed agnosticism—which would play a different role in sociology, presumably, than the cautions suggested by Bernard Williams with regard to moral philosophy (1985)—notwithstanding.

Assuming that we want to struggle for scientific status and public respect, Abend offers several responses: 1) We may suggest that sociological fluency in social variables like education, religion, and socioeconomic status, provides an advantage over moral neuroscientists in predicting moral judgments and behaviour; 2) Sociologists may argue that some moral phenomena are group-level emergent phenomena (e.g., societal levels of blood and organ donation) that cannot be explained at the individual level; 3) As already mentioned, we may argue, along the lines of Hilary Putnam, that the study of morality cannot involve a hard and fast dichotomy between *description* and *evaluation* of morality

“because the description has the evaluation built into it” (Abend 2010:579). Here we can use contemporary moral philosophy to criticize contemporary moral neuroscience. Since moral neuroscience tends to deal with abstract, rigidly categorical, or ‘thin’ moral concepts, it provides only a partial picture of morality, leaving out many ‘thick’ moral concepts (such as cruelty). This gets at what Hitlin and Vaisey called ‘ecological validity.’

Abend is not trying to refute moral neuroscience or contemporary moral philosophy, but sociologists of morality need to take these fields into account, whether this accounting results in integration or in contestation. Like Hitlin and Vaisey, Abend recommends a pragmatic approach. Sociologists of morality need to be energetic, strong, and assertive. They need to recognize and to understand their competitors in other academic disciplines while forging ahead with aggressive research programs and projects of institutionalization. At the same time, they need to recognize the newly emerging complexities attending moral discourses and scientific practices.

Whether in spite of or because of his agnosticism, Abend sees contemporary American sociology of morality as confronting a variety of *tasks*. Caught between philosophy and neuroscience, which bring sociology into question from opposite angles, *work* is the salve for epistemic uncertainty. Abend offers the same advice as Hitlin and Vaisey: let us roll up our sleeves and set to work. Is it surprising that Max Weber offered the same advice in his ‘Science as a Vocation’ lecture? Is it surprising that *work* is offered as the way out of an aporia? Should we suspect that this is still the ‘Spirit of Capitalism’ operating, with its compulsive attempt to substitute ‘productivity’ (apparently carried out

under conditions of peaceful competition) and value for moral reflection and action? These productivist solutions beg the question, as the conceptual ‘work’ of Frankfurt School critical theory has tried to explore (cf. Adorno 2001:137; Benjamin 1968:258–259), with concepts like ‘repressive desublimation’ (Marcuse 1964). For a more recent critique of productivism, see Kathi Weeks’ *The Problem of Work* (2011).⁴

Abend’s pragmatically agnostic program in the sociology of morality fits with the generally moderate ambit of the *Handbook*, which tends to (liberally) endorse moral ‘diversity’ while acknowledging moral diversity’s attendant ambiguities and offering qualified assertions about universal (cross-cultural) moral fundamentals (e.g., Rawls 2010:95–121). The collection thrusts the reader toward further *work* in the sociology of morality while disregarding the possibility that sociology itself (as an historically and socially institutionalized set of practices; as part of a ‘discursive formation,’ in Foucault’s sense) may be fundamentally brought into question by morality. What kind of *work* are we talking about? What relations of production underly this work? What forms of governance (of self and others)? What processes of commodification or instrumentalization? What (perhaps ‘forced’) division of labour? These are questions, as we will see, that were addressed by classical sociologists. Why not here?

Abend addresses metaethical skepticism (skepticism about universal moral truths), but his recommendation of pragmatic agnosticism skirts the question of skepticism about the vocation of sociology. His conclusion tacitly echoes the position —“We shall set to work and meet the ‘demands of the day’”—articulated almost a

⁴ In *Against Love* Laura Kipnis pungently registers her position: “*Fuck work*” (2003:109).

century ago in Max Weber's 'Science as a Vocation' lecture (1958a:156), but Abend leaves out Weber's most troubling insight: agnosticism about moral truth entails agnosticism about the moral value of doing sociology. Abend and other contributors to the *Handbook* do not address this problem, which calls for deeper reflexivity (or perhaps resistance to reflexivity), as metaethics (or metacritique). Instead, Abend attempts to limit the problem by maintaining a distinction between philosophical and sociological questions⁵ and between disciplinary recommendations and personal vocational questions. This results in an overall vulnerability to the accusation of *petitio principii* with respect to the basic relationship between morality and sociology. His most recent work continues in this direction, rightly criticizing the imperialism of evolutionary psychology, but remaining rather too sanguine in endorsing a happy family of 'multi-methods' (Abend 2013), as if being a busy jack-of-all-sociological-trades solves the vocational dilemma.

Suppressing the dialectic between the sociological vocation and the sociology of morality entails suppressing basic puzzles of subjectivity, puzzles whose lineage we typically trace to Augustine's confession: "I had become to myself a vast problem" (1998:IV.9). This puzzle of subjectivity with respect to understanding sociology of morality as a vocation is more than a question of quietistic navel-gazing. It is a concrete problem of making sense of and acting from within one's situation in the social world, with its attendant peculiarities, tensions, challenges, and contradictions (cf. Smith 1987).

Maintaining a distinction between the spheres of sociology and philosophy can

⁵ Adorno suggests, from the other direction, that sociology infiltrates philosophy: "You may observe in this context that the usual distinction between social science and pure philosophy cannot be sustained because social categories enter into the very fibre of those of moral philosophy" (Adorno 2001:138).

amount to an implicit endorsement of the socially prevailing division of labour, a division of labour which can be questioned, even if it cannot be easily escaped (Adorno 1991:198). The fact that the Hitlin and Vaisey collection appears in Springer's quickly expanding *Handbook* series provides the most obvious and ironic signal, here (and potentially self-consciously so, except that the question is never raised). The 'handbook' framework recruits associations to straightforward instruction-manuals, tempting a (perhaps Heideggerian) discussion of the morality of the (in/visible) hand (cf. Levinas 1989) and a querying of the craft ethos implicitly claimed for the book and its authors (cf. Sennett 2008), which, as I shall argue in the chapter on *practice*, evades broader critical reflection (cf. Bourdieu 1988; 2008a) on the social division and reproduction of academic labour. There were at least 15 other 'Handbooks' available in the series at the time this one was published, and Springer Science+Business Media is the second largest academic publisher in the world, after Elsevier. In short, these *Handbooks* are caught up in a massive system of knowledge commodification.

Abend, like the *Handbook* as a whole, shirks the ambiguities associated with current neo-liberalizing and corporatizing processes within the university and, consequently, any problems associated with embracing aggressive lines of sociological research aimed at garnering a larger share of an increasingly commodified and industrialized knowledge economy (cf. Newson 2012; Thornton 2012). This reinforces the impression that we are dealing with a basically uncritical text that demands an unquestioned faith in the value of (commodified) intellectual production as an end in

itself. Ultimately, this kind of academic productivism begs the vocational question, and Abend's lack of critical reflexivity on this question belies his deferral to the 'sophistication' of contemporary moral philosophy. As a counterweight to this placidity about sociology's right (*Recht*) to study morality, we turn now to Zygmunt Bauman's strident critical review of standard sociological approaches to morality.

C. ZYGMUNT BAUMAN'S AMBIVALENT PRE-SOCIETAL MORALITY

It is not an accident that Zygmunt Bauman's withering critique of 'orthodox sociology of morality' (2000a [1989]), appears only fleetingly in the *Handbook*. Gabriel Ignatow dismisses Bauman in a few pages (2010:415–417). Bauman then appears briefly in Abend's chapter (2010:567, 574) in references linked to Abend's earlier programmatic piece, "Two Main Problems in the Sociology of Morality." There Abend oddly assimilates Bauman to a 'Durkheimian' approach to morality (2008:89) while annexing Bauman's 'orthodox sociology of morality' phrase and applying it to 'value-free' sociology of morality (which Abend dubs the 'Weberian Paradigm'). Thus, Abend doubly misleads, for Bauman's 'orthodox sociology of morality' (Bauman 2000a) refers (somewhat unfairly) to 'Durksonian' (Bauman 1976) approaches that assimilate morality to socially prevailing legal norms (Bauman 1990a:12). Instead of recognizing that Bauman discards Durkheimian (and Parsonsian) sociology of morality in favour of a Levinasian ethical *a priori*, Abend equates Durkheim's relativist notion of moral validity with Bauman's universalist claims about ethical subjectivity (Bauman 1990a:34).

Abend's attempt to bracket the severity of the problems of agnosticism for the

sociology of morality can be linked to his misrepresentation and/or misunderstanding of Zygmunt Bauman's attempt at a wholesale critique of the 'orthodox sociology of morality.' While Abend characterizes the orthodox position as advocating the neutral objectivity of a 'value-free' approach, Bauman sees the elements of sociological orthodoxy rather differently. According to Bauman, the standard sociological view assumes that individuals require society as a moralizing force because of their innate moral depravity. In addition, the standard view places scientists in a legislative/expert role (i.e., society needs us because individuals lack capacities of moral self-regulation). According to Bauman, morality is innate, society should be seen as primarily *constraining* or manipulating (rather than enabling) our innate moral impulses, and social scientists should be *interpreters*, not experts or legislators (Bauman 1987; 1990a).

Abend's and Bauman's very different interpretive approaches to the Holocaust illustrate the gap between them. Abend uses the Holocaust to test the possibility of scientific value-neutrality, and concludes that if we wish for a complete explanation, *perhaps* we will not be able to treat the Holocaust in a value-neutral fashion (i.e., since 'thick descriptions' of moral or immoral qualities will tend towards an indictment of Nazi society). Bauman, by contrast, wants to question the notion of *relative moral-validity* (i.e., Durkheim's thesis that each society has a morality that is appropriate to it). For Bauman the question is not that of 'thick' or 'thin' moral concepts or even of 'ecological validity.' Neither is it a question of an alternative between value-free and normative sociology. The issue, for Bauman, is whether it is immorality rather than morality that is a

measurable social substance (i.e., a ‘social fact’ in Durkheim’s sense).⁶ According to Bauman, while *immorality* has peculiar societal forms, morality has universal pre-societal sources in basic human *sociality*, which constitute *a priori* conditions of possibility for society: the sociology of *immorality* help explain how, in Nazi Germany, human morality was constrained and neutralized by emergent and then institutionalized social practices.

Bauman goes much further than Abend’s suggestion that sociologists should pay attention to contemporary moral philosophy. He follows Emmanuel Levinas in arguing that morality should be treated as ‘first philosophy’ (Levinas 1979:43), as prior to socialization, as necessarily distinguished from institutionalized social forms, and as riven with equivocation and *ambivalence* (Bauman 1990b; Junge 2008). This is not the same as approaching morality *agnostically* (and thus that sociological analysis of Nazism and the Holocaust should not presuppose that moral truths may be found there). Levinas begins *Totality and Infinity* by claiming that “Everyone will readily agree that it is of the highest importance to know whether we are not duped by morality” (1979:21). We cannot proceed agnostically. We begin by getting our metaethics in order. Morality should be approached with Kierkegaardian fear and trembling, for morality does have a truth: absolute responsibility in the face of the ethical demand of the Other (cf. Løgstrup 1997).

Abend is more sanguine. On his reading, sociology does not need to base itself on moral philosophical premises. We should consult moral philosophy, but if it does not supply us with a consensus on morality, that is okay. He suggests, on the one hand, that “most...empirical research on morality is based on hopelessly bankrupt

⁶ Chapter 2 argues that this is one way of reading Marx’s position on morality.

epistemological/methodological foundations” (2008:88) and that sociologists should better acquaint themselves with recent “advances” in moral philosophy, but then suggests that “given the fundamental disagreements that persist in the philosophical literature, any authoritative verdict about their worth would be questionable” (90). The tension, here, bordering on contradiction, is surely a common experience for those who engage in interdisciplinary exploration. The difficulty of adjudicating between competing authorities in a field in which one has not received a primary formation can weaken the conviction that interdisciplinary conversation can be effective. If no authoritative verdict is available, can Abend be sure that moral philosophy has advanced or that sociologists should consult it?⁷ What is more, this claim of progress constitutes his own authoritative verdict. But was that really the Owl of Minerva that you saw flying at dusk, or just bats?

Bauman, in contrast to Abend, aligns himself with a particular moral philosophy, and assumes the validity of the claims it makes about moral truth. In a move with more in common with Weber than with Durkheim, however, Bauman sees this moral truth as *lacking in legislative force*. That is, Levinasian moral philosophy asserts the existence of a primordial moral sociality in the form of a categorical imperative, a formal duty whose content must be supplied by each individual. Concrete ethical decisions cannot have their legitimacy supplied by expert or collective authority. Bauman does not present morality as a contest between fundamentally opposed values, as Weber does—as the ‘ethic of absolute ends’ vs. the ‘ethic of responsibility’ (1958a)—but his characterization of

⁷ These were the stakes of the debate between Luhmann and Habermas about the autonomy (what systems theory refers to as *autopoiesis*) of different fields of discourse. Neither Abend’s article nor any of the other articles in the *Handbook* deal in any detail with this balkanization problem.

morality as fundamentally *ambivalent* has affinities with Weber's emphasis on decision.

Abend's pragmatic agnosticism allows one to continue with disciplinary activity while lacking certainty about the (true) worth of one's work. But this is a real aporia. Why should we begin working on such a shaky foundation? It requires great faith in the broader meaningfulness of pragmatic work procedures. While Abend correctly points out the importance of engaging with philosophical and moral neuroscientific approaches to morality, he underplays the extent to which this derives from the permeability, underlying instability, and perpetual questionability of disciplinary practices as such (cf. Halberstam 2011). Similarly, while he provides an engaging review of some questions typically addressed by sociologists of morality, this pragmatic 'style' appears unserious insofar as it treats moral questions as reducible to the question of objective moral *knowledge*, not also as questions constitutive of (sociological) subjectivities.⁸

Levinas, by contrast, (and following him, Bauman) demotes the epistemological question, posed in the Cartesian and Kantian tradition (i.e., of beginning with skepticism), by making the ethical question into the fundamental transcendental condition, and subordinating the true (both epistemology and ontology) to the good: "Not 'Why being rather than nothing?', but how being justifies itself" (Levinas 1989:86). However, while the aporetic notion of ethics as absolute responsibility for the other may sideline the epistemological problem of moral knowledge or the ontological question of being, it may actually block the sociology of morality, or reduce it to disciplinary self-

⁸ A question for all forms of pragmatism (as types of functionalism), whether Abend's or other recent formulations (e.g., Morgan 2013): pragmatic for whom? If the answer is 'everyone,' we are necessarily pushed back into foundational questions (e.g., like universal categorical imperatives).

critique, or to a sociology of *immorality*, as in Bauman's reading (2000a [1989]; 1993; 1994; 1995). On this view, which takes the moral impulse to be

a challenge that precedes all socially created and socially run ontological settings...society is primarily a contraption for reducing the essentially unconditional and unlimited responsibility-for-the-Other, or the infinity of the 'ethical demand,' to a set of prescriptions and proscriptions more on a par with human abilities to cope and to manage. (Bauman 2008:48)

On this view, then, Nazism and the Holocaust do not indicate *the failure* of the social to restrain our innate moral depravity, the 'return of the repressed,' but rather *the success* of modern socially constructed forms of *adiaphorization*, which effect the *neutralization of the moral impulse*. Sociology can only diagnose the social conditions that limit and constrain morality and thereby enable specific forms of immoral action.

Terry Eagleton has suggested, however, that Bauman and Levinas's revision of Kantian duty-focused morality—which revises away from Kant's deduction of the categorical imperative from the transcendental conditions of practical reason and towards the face-to-face encounter with the other, rendering the moral and the ethical something "to be approached through sensibility rather than through cognition" (Eagleton 2009:224)—demands too much. On Eagleton's reading, Levinas exaggerates the priority and the absolute alterity of the Other, and as a result Levinasian "Absolute responsibility...is really a case of Hegel's 'bad infinity'" (237). Eagleton suggests that when we read morality transcendently/phenomenologically as constituted by the pre-societal 'party of two,' the confrontation with the face of the absolutely other, we cut ourselves off from the possibility of concrete moral (and political) action: "Levinas seems not to recognise that

to strip the subject of its social context is to render it more abstract rather than more immediate, and thus more akin to the bloodless Enlightenment subject he detests” (227).

Gillian Rose develops a reading that is broadly consonant with Eagleton’s, suggesting that the Levinasian position installs “repetitive dualisms of power and otherness” (1996:10), rendering activity (including sociological activity) permanently melancholic rather than engaged in genuine (ethical/political) acts of mourning (11) or social transformation. This melancholia is mobilized by a *ressentiment* that loses itself in declarations of absolute guilt or absolute victimhood (e.g., the sacrificial sublimity of the Holocaust, from which Bauman tries to derive *too much meaning* by reading it as a thoroughgoing indictment of Enlightenment reason). The Bauman-Levinas position, in other words, has affinities both with what Hegel called ‘unhappy consciousness’ (in the transition from self-consciousness to Reason) and with what he called the ‘beautiful soul’ (in the transition from Spirit to Religion), and seems to conclude with a mere declaration of guilt in the face of the other. The problem, here, lies not with the declaration of guilt, but with the failed attempt to invert Kant’s first two critiques and to make (and this is Ignatow’s point in labelling Bauman an ‘inverted Kantian’) ‘practical reason’ the transcendental basis for ‘pure reason.’ On this question I follow Rose and J.M. Bernstein, who argue that Kant represents, above all, the philosophical (if not the material) origin of the tragic modern diremption or ‘trisection of reason’ (Bernstein 1997), in which truth, goodness, and beauty are incapable of being unified under an act of comprehensive reason. This diremption cannot be repaired by making ethics into first philosophy (i.e., by

subordinating truth to goodness).

Bauman's transcendental ethical position appears at times to reject all forms of sociology that would conceive of morality as a human construct, a concrete form of ongoing human activity, what American sociologist Alan Wolfe calls "the precious gift society is" (1989:23). For Bauman, morality remains ambivalent, but human values are timeless. As a result, in a certain sense morality has no history. Only the social institutions that constrain and limit our moral impulse in various ways have a history. Only immorality has a history. Though the two universal human moral values of *freedom* and *security* (Bauman 2008:13) are persistent, history shows us that, "instead of following a path of linear progress toward more freedom and more security, we can observe a pendulumlike movement: first overwhelmingly and staunchly toward one of the two values, and then a swing away from it and toward the other" (13–14). At the moment, we live, on the one hand, in the era of the consumer; social forces of globalizing capitalism and individualizing consumption of commodities have enabled us to break away in new ways from our primordial 'ethical demand' as they 'adiaphorize' new spheres of activity, neutralizing and rendering our moral impulse irrelevant. On the other hand, the value of security is reduced to an American empire-sponsored 'war on terror' that takes advantage of that adiaphorization in order to enable the 'smooth functioning' of military policies that (perpetually) attempt to 'cleanse' and 'purify' the world of 'terror.'

Against this view of immorality as having a social history, while morality is ahistorical and focused entirely on 'the face of the other' (i.e., 'the moral party of two') as

absolute but abstract otherness, Gillian Rose proposes a neo-Hegelian reading of social change and of the (moral/izing) encounter of self and other as a “dialectic of misrecognition” (1996:74). (Historical) mediation is an essential element of morality, and not just its reduction or its socially constrained expression. The mediating element, here, what Rose calls ‘the broken middle,’ deserves to be distinguished both from Axel Hönneth’s ‘struggle for recognition’—because that assumes a too-idealistic (and one-dimensional) view of the trajectory of human nature (cf. the critiques of Hönneth by Butler 2008; Geuss 2008; Lear 2008) or rests on an incomplete analysis of power relations (cf. McNay 2008)—and from Habermas’s ‘criticizable validity claim’—because this assumes a too-rationalistic view of particularity, and too narrow a view of how motivation and expression are linked together or reducible to a content to be directly communicated and debated. As Bernstein (2001) argues, Habermas endorses ‘double men,’ with passions and sensuous experiences, on the one hand, and discursive reasons on the other, too formally endorsing the law as the embodiment of a process of democratic will-formation. His notion of communicative reason is too incommunicable.

Though she does not accept his rejection of style, nevertheless, like Habermas and unlike Bauman, Rose gives central standing to the *mediating* role of *law*. While the Bauman-Levinas view of morality suggests that we are “inborn moral beings” (Bauman 2008:54–55), Rose argues that it is through a risky sublimation/endorsement of the law, through immanent critique, through an act aimed at the good of all, that we discover, experience, and establish usufruct on new moral territory and manage to deconstruct the

exclusionary logic of social solidarity achieved through scapegoating (1996:35–36). Through acts of this sort (e.g., Antigone illegally mourning her slain brother) ‘mourning becomes the law,’ not law as a system of prohibitions and punishments, except insofar as it is also the law of risky obligation for which we must discover new modes of fulfilment.⁹ This may be on the basis of an ‘inborn’ morality, but the law in this sense is not the silencing or the minimizing of morality, as in Bauman, but one of the conditions of its excitation, although not exactly in the sense conceived by Habermas. For Rose, as for Habermas, law is the middle. It is, however, a ‘broken middle,’ for Rose, precisely because law and morality are more fundamentally and traumatically split than Habermas has argued. Nevertheless, we cannot preserve our morality by turning away from the law, but only by enacting the law in the face of its actually existing forms, perhaps by breaking it. In the notion of mourning becoming the law rather than remaining the melancholy illegality of much criminalized behaviour, Rose points to the phenomenon Hannah Arendt (1998) called *natality*.

Against the sanguinity of pragmatic agnosticism, Rose’s model entails faith (in the law) and risk in the face of avoidable danger. And perhaps this formulation best renders visible the criteria for a weak program in the sociology of morality. In any case, whether I have been fair to Abend or to Bauman, this dissertation properly begins here,

⁹ See, on this point, the contrasting readings of shame’s role in identity and social relation-formation developed by sociologist of emotion, Jonathan H. Turner (2011) and affect theorist Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (2003). Sedgwick’s discussion of shame’s role in shaping identity and relation in a way that precedes prohibition and repression (based upon Basch 1976) supports Rose’s notion of a political dialectic of misrecognition, and appears to offer a subtler resource in thinking about morality’s relation to the law than Turner’s structural and quantitative approach to ‘the problem of emotions.’

with the sense that uncertainty (and ambivalence) provoke an accountability that is neither an *a priori* absolute nor, on the other hand, reducible to expressions of agnosticism, and that answerability for scholarly practice forms a key element of the sociology of morality.

Still, what passes for answerability may be no more than a moral narcissism linked to an inflated (or absolute) sense of responsibility (cf. Cremin 2012), what Butler refers to as “the reduction of ethical philosophy to the inward mutilations of conscience” (2005:135). To counter this possibility, we need to combine Butler’s claim that there is a permanent gap between truth and the subject—a gap which means that I can never fully account for myself, but that “my own foreignness to myself is, paradoxically, the source of my ethical connection with others” (84)—with Foucault’s distinction (1997:223–252) between self-knowledge and ‘care of the self.’

This approach may allow us to avoid the ‘bad infinity’ that dogs the Baumanian-Levinasian position—which always needs to bracket (phenomenologically) the effects of socialization—without reverting to Abend’s pragmatic agnosticism—which needs to bracket (analytically) the existence of moral truths in order to act (sociologically). Bauman is unable to consistently maintain the Levinasian distinction between primordial sociality and societal moral forms. His discussions of morality depend on a social stock of exemplary moral accomplishments—such as resistance to Nazism—and moral heroes that have been supplied through particular and institutionalized forms of memorialization, cultural narration, education. He claims (2000a; cf. Arendt 1998) that sociology cannot

explain the moral heroes that he celebrates, but surely the virtues he assigns these heroes, like Lech Walesa's *hope*, *courage*, and *stubbornness* (Bauman 2008:30), can be traced, without being explained away, to antecedent (but not *a priori*) social experiences which may serve as social determinations, although certainly not mechanistic causes, of action (cf. Morgan 2013). On the other hand, Abend is unable, as he has himself begun to admit, to 'scientifically' bracket non-agnostic assertions about moral truth.

This dissertation diverges from Hitlin and Vaisey's collection of Durkheim-heavy approaches because it emphasizes the paradoxical or aporetic relationship between sociology and morality. The sociology of morality has constantly fallen into contradictions. These contradictions have been rooted in the paradox that, instead of simply 'explaining' moral phenomena, sociological concepts of morality tend to displace and replace everyday morality with expert concepts. How can we approach sociological conceptualizations of morality without merely displacing the social objects, practices, and realities to which they respond? It is, in an important sense, a question of symmetry. To change metaphors abruptly, the loose thread that stitches the chapters that follow, whether tying or simply entangling them, is the concept of answerability. This is the thread with which I hope to suture some paradoxes seemingly inherent to sociology of morality.

D. ON THE MEANING OF A WEAK PROGRAM: ANSWERABILITY

How can a social science hope to succeed if it deliberately neglects a fundamental property of its object and ignores the fact that persons face an obligation to answer for their behavior, evidence in hand, to other persons with whom they interact? (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006:37)

...any system of thought that takes up the question of the institution of the social is simultaneously confronted with the question of its own institution. It cannot restrict itself to comparing structures and systems once it realizes that the elaboration of coexistence creates meaning, produces markers for distinguishing between true and false, just and unjust, imaginary and real; and that it establishes the horizons of human beings' relations with one another and with the world. It attempts to explain itself and, at the same time, to explain its object. (Lefort 2006:155)

'...I am no doubt not the only one who writes in order to have no face. Do not ask who I am and do not ask me to remain the same: leave it to our bureaucrats and our police to see that our papers are in order. At least spare us their morality when we write.' (Foucault 1972:17)

This dissertation sets out an approach to the sociology of morality that I have been calling, a 'weak program' (cf. Alexander and Smith 2003; Bloor 1976; Vattimo 2007; Vattimo and Zabala 2011; Hönneth 2009:43–53). A key aspect of this weak program is the reflexive project of developing scholarly practices that advance thought without advancing social and political domination and that advance personal autonomy without generating arbitrary and one-sided forms of personal authority. It takes cues from Horkheimer and Adorno's claim that, as Simon Jarvis summarizes it, "all rationality to date has been entangled in some way with social domination and the domination of nature, while...none the less, reason does not have to be like this" (Jarvis 1998:24).

This is a theoretical project, and its contours are intended to emerge within the broad outlines of 'critical theory,' taken here to include both the Frankfurt School, the work of Foucault and Bourdieu, and a range of research concerned with the relationship between science and democracy (e.g., Harding 1993, 2008; Latour 2004, 2010; Brown 2009). It is also beholden in various ways to the critical neo-Hegelian thought of J.M. Bernstein, Judith Butler, Gillian Rose, and Slavoj Žižek.

With respect to morality—whatever that might turn out to be—a weak 'science of

morality' is equally a weak 'morality of science.' This symmetry indicates that the weak approach does not advocate the arrogation of social, moral, and political authority by the university,¹⁰ even if it still risks, as Gillian Rose suggests in *The Broken Middle*, "...the ever-incipient fatality of arrogating the authority of beginning" (1992:308). Sociologists need the audacity to be the authors of sociological acts. But if the social sciences really do in some way aim at a transformation of social practices such that legitimacy conditions authority's appearance rather than being the rationalizing veneer that one provides for already existing relations of domination, the substitution of arguments *to* authority—what Habermas formulates as 'criticizable validity claims'—for arguments *from* authority, authority itself needing to be constituted in a transformed manner (in Rose's phrase, 'mourning becomes the law') that dismantles what Althusser thought of as the permanence of ideology, then the goal is not philosopher kings, or August Comte's infamous sociological priesthood, or technocratic rule by experts, or even domination of the academic field in the Bourdieusian sense.¹¹ Rather, in a weak program—acknowledging that the sociality of morality entails critical reflection on (moral) authority—scholars of morality would work, paradoxically, to undermine their own authority (a seeming mixture of Weber's charismatic, traditional, and legal-rational forms), in part so as not to reproduce or to extend existing 'relations of ruling' (cf. Smith 1990; also Bauman 1987; Williams 1985), recognizing that the current institutionalization of the social sciences exhibits, as Habermas puts it, "The lack of symmetry between

10 The role of experts is itself limited by the proliferation of even more experts (Giddens 1991:179).

11 On domination of the 'field,' compare Wacquant's (2013) eulogy of Bourdieu's 'take-over' of French sociology with Turner's (2012) curmudgeonly critique of the 'de-intellectualization' of American sociology.

capacities for self-reflection and for self-organization that we have ascribed to modern societies as a whole” (Habermas 1990a:364–365; cf. Wallerstein 1996). At the same time, recognizing that this asymmetry exists in the university, sometimes as a kind of neo-Scholastic, petty bourgeois dream of becoming aristocracy, does not entail endorsing the neo-conservative position (e.g., Horowitz 1997) that today’s university intellectuals constitute a subversive and conspiratorial power, “...seducers in the garb of enlighteners—who share in the priestly domination by the New Class” (Habermas 1990a:74). Furthermore, persistent priestly/patriarchal aspects of the university differ from emerging ‘knowledge economies’ that refashion students as consumers (Newson 2012; Thornton 2012; Luxton and Mossman, eds. 2012).

Still, this is not to say that a weak program recommends auto-deconstruction as a form of purity or other-worldliness, an impermeable barrier between science and the political, or an obsessive ‘morality of method.’ By no means! On this point, at least, I identify with Rosenstock-Huussy’s confession, “I am an impure thinker” (2001:2; cf. Bourdieu 2000:3; Adorno, in Jarvis 1998:159), while also following Foucault in being suspicious of the Rousseauian confessional, which luxuriates in voluptuous and self-subjugating autobiography. To be sure, there is no easy way around the power/knowledge nexus of subjectivity that characterizes post-Christian modernity and for which Rousseau’s *Confessions* (2000) remains prototypical. Nevertheless, I can examine my conditions of im/possibility without explicitly writing autobiography (cf. Campbell 2010). Rather, the proposed weak program attempts to extend and to explore the

Enlightenment critique of authority as well as the ambiguities attendant upon the special dispensation claimed for scholarly thought, most famously in Kant's distinction between the public and the private use of reason. It does this via a general notion of *answerability* (Bakhtin 1990; Nielsen 2002; White and Peters 2011), of *call and response*, which does not culminate with the tendencies of some forms of *reflexive* sociology—including Bourdieu's, which ostensibly focuses on raising awareness of social suffering (e.g., Bourdieu, et al. 1999), but still tends towards paternalism (cf. Rancière 2012)—nor with the neo-Kantian abstraction from experience entailed by Habermasian discourse ethics.

The concept of answerability will need to be defined in a way that preserves enough latitude to be useful in each of the conversations developed in the chapters of this dissertation. It will take up, then, a negative space. It is, indeed, an intentionally residual category, inhabiting space left over by other, failing, concepts. This dissertation focuses, in particular, on notions of collective representation, charisma, interpellation, character, affect, and practice, but we may also include communicative action (Habermas), rational choice, community values, virtue ethics, and so on. The main purpose of the concept of answerability, as a permanently residual category, is symmetry between sociologist and everyday citizen. When it comes to morality, is there another option? The 'weak program' in the sociology of morality asserts, then, that the sociology of morality involves, minimally, answerability in the sociologist *and* in the 'object.' A passage from Judith Butler's *Giving an Account of Oneself* articulates this premise nicely: "...when the 'I' seeks to give an account of itself, an account that must include the conditions of its

own emergence, it must, as a matter of necessity, become a social theorist” (Butler 2005:8). The converse, of course, at least historically speaking, has not been true. When social theorists have attempted to account for themselves, accounts that include the conditions of their own emergence, they have not always had to account for their ‘I’ (cf. Rancière 2011a:40). Nevertheless, answerability appears to constitute the basic but ambiguous moral structure of contemporary vocational life, including the lives of social theorists (cf. Tilly 2006; 2008). It resembles, in some ways, the concept of ‘testing’ developed by Boltanski and Thevénot (2006). As Boltanski and Chiapello put it:

in order to avoid an idealistic construction that is overly reliant on verbal argumentation, Boltanski and Thevénot considered that people’s claims had to be confronted with the real world, hence pass a series of more or less standardised procedures they called *tests* (*épreuve* in French). In the end, it is the outcome of these tests that lends substance to the judgements people make. (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005:167)

Answerability is vocational, but in what sense, and by whom are we called? We are now faced with a variety of puzzles of ‘interpellation,’ puzzles given a classical conceptual frame and also a personal and perhaps tragic form by Louis Althusser (1971:170–183; 1993). In what sense are sociologists ‘called?’ Who calls and who answers? In what sense is this vocation a ‘self-calling?’ In what sense might the scientific vocation be *resistance* to “the re-formation of a vocation in a society in which reflection dominates” in favour of “revolutionary practice” (Rose 2009:235)?

If we cannot accept Althusser’s distinction between the ‘technical’ and the ‘social’ division of labour (Althusser 2011), what can justify the role of the intellectual in capitalist society? What, after the student movements of the 1960s and the events of May

1968, can we say about ‘science as a vocation?’ If we accept Rancière’s polemic against paternalistic academic Marxism (and against Althusser, one of his own paternal figures), in which he claims that “workers, *don’t need our science, but our revolt*” (Rancière 2011a:12), does that mean we can follow in his footsteps in forming our own academic vocation (Brown 2011)? That is, should we try to fashion our own trajectory on the model of breaking away from paternal interpellation and conversion (*metanoia*) or ‘turning’ to ‘the people,’ with Maoist faith in the intelligence of the masses, dedicating ourselves to an attempt to “echo the expressions through which the struggles and questions of our present seek to give voice to a new freedom” (Rancière 2011a:124)?

To begin with, the ‘call’ to which a weak program responds is irreducible either to communication (Habermas’s ideal speech situation) or to discourse. As Foucault famously insisted, “discourse is not life, its time is not your time” (1972:211). Sociology of morality as answerability cannot be reduced to the communicative transcendentals that Habermas attempts to defend with the developmental theory of human nature derived from his reading of Mead and Piaget (and extended and adapted by Axel Hönneth). Habermas’s approach to child psychology underestimates the importance of archaic and traumatic experiences in the pre-history of infancy (cf. Laplanche 1976) even as his deferral to Mead’s ‘I’ and ‘me’ theory of the (negative) freedom inherent to (voluntarily) constrained action (Mead 1967) deserves serious consideration alongside Althusser’s (1971) Lacanian influenced ideological determinism. However, answerability—as against the archaeology of Foucault’s middle period, with its focus on the ‘rules’ of discursive

practice (cf. Foucault 2002:52)—refers at least to a sociological spectator embedded in observed (and perhaps non-discursive) practices, embedded in a manner that renders observing and interpreting activities *immanent* to the practices that are interpreted or observed.¹² Answerability entails symmetrical involvement of subjectivity and objectivity, sociality and morality, the social relational obligation to ‘give an account of oneself’ and the obligation incurred by thinking to acknowledge the ‘priority of the object’ (over the concepts with which we render our accounts) (Adorno 1973).

At the same time, this *answerability* differs from accountability in the neo-liberal sense that one should be obliged to provide ‘the taxpayer,’ for instance, with a prompt justification of the ‘practical’ worth of one’s research. The move being made, here, is *metacritical*, in Adornian terms (Jarvis 1998:155) rather than practical. Answerability would entail, among other things, the answerability of the social sciences not to taxpayers, but to the critical thought, whatever its origin, recognizing social scientists as accomplices to the processes of history and modernity, processes that go on “piling wreckage upon wreckage” (Benjamin 1968:257).¹³

The metacritical question concerns, on the one hand, how we can combine sustained thinking about sociality and morality with the critique of authority in light of the ambiguous social position occupied by social scientists and other intellectuals (i.e., those Bourdieu calls a ‘dominated fraction of the dominant class’). On the other hand, rather than being a simple sociology of knowledge, issues regarding the nature of reason,

¹² As against the archaeological Foucault, the late Foucault drops the notion of scientific detachment, as both Butler (2005) and Rabinow and Dreyfus (1983:100) have pointed out.

¹³ More prosaically, community-based participatory research constitutes a type of answerability.

of thinking as such, are at stake. The weak program suggests that we simultaneously develop and weaken the force of sociology. We might call this, drawing both pretentiously and by compulsion (or perhaps seduction) upon theological poetics, the *incarnation* and *kenosis* (cf. Philippians 2:7) of sociology.¹⁴ This means recognizing that the secularizing impulse of the social sciences, in carrying out the left Hegelian critique (cf. Hönneth 2009:52) of religion as the translation/sublation into human terms of acts and attributes historically considered divine, may also be read as a desublimation or repetition of God-becoming-human or humans-becoming-gods (e.g., the concept of the social construction of reality contains an implicit element of ‘deification’ of human capacities for ‘world-creation’) (cf. Bewes 2002:5). The rigour and vigour of academic practice ought simultaneously to render me vulnerable and capable, human *and* divine, and to orient me towards my dwelling-in-the-world and my capacity for bearing the ‘guilt’ of human action. A mere wish? Or the diremption of thought trying to think itself?

Second, this means recognizing, along with Marx, the ongoing bourgeois revolution; all that is solid melts, and not just the remnants of feudalism, but bourgeois

14 The ‘public sociology’ debate initiated during Michael Burawoy’s 2004 ASA Presidency (cf. Burawoy 2005; Clawson, et al. 2007; Hanemaayer and Schneider 2014; Nyden, Hossfeld, and Nyden 2012), while important, tends not to really address the permanent ambiguity of the quasi-aristocratic social position of a state-funded intelligentsia with academic freedom (which sometimes attempts to defend itself against a corporate-funded intelligentsia oriented to the market), and may be underwritten by a “functionalist fallacy” (Selg 2013:15). See also what Merton called “The misplaced masochism of the social scientist” (1968:49). Chapter seven discusses Bourdieu’s sometime ‘martyr complex.’

The weak program keeps an eye on aspects of ‘slave morality’ in the sociological tradition, not to replace this with a sociological ‘master morality,’ but to explore Bernstein’s analysis, according to which even ‘public sociology,’ as a form of “communicative action, in the weak sense, has been constituted by power relations that render invisible the operation of the causality of fate; and thereby defuse the claims of reciprocity that its avenging power is said to reveal” (1997:262). Public, pragmatic, communicative sociology, none of these can magically reduce the “affective deficit left by the systematic rationalization of the lifeworld” (262) nor alter underlying asymmetries between sociologists and ‘their’ publics.

institutions like the modern university, too. The kenosis of sociology, then, as a (perhaps ironic) form of *De Imitatione Christi* (cf. Vattimo 2007:36), would indicate the ‘self-emptying’ of an already incarnated (i.e., ‘public’) sociology, an alternate path to that suggested by Bourdieu’s aggressive neo-Marxian field theory or the luxuriousness of Oxbridge nostalgics, both of which fall prey to meritocratic ideology. With the concept of answerability I am stuck in a difficult spot (or non-spot) (cf. van Riessen 2007), trying to stake out something between Levinasian ‘reception to the other’ and Habermasian ‘intersubjectivity.’ I look for support from notions of political and aesthetic action developed by Bernstein and Rose in their critical readings of Adorno. In Adorno’s terms, “our aim is total self-relinquishment” (1973:13; cf. Moltmann 1974). Taken together, incarnation and kenosis constitute a negation of the negation. However, the weak program reads this as a negative dialectic in Adorno’s sense: “The name of dialectics says no more, to begin with, than that objects do not go into their concepts without leaving a remainder” (1973:5). This indicates, on the one hand, that ‘incarnation’ and ‘kenosis’ are not proper names for what a weak program accomplishes with regard to the sociology of morals. Something in sociology, in the social and the moral, eludes these names. On the other hand, the ‘sociologizing’ of (metaphysical) theology also leaves (or retains/sublates) a remainder. The transformation or secularization (the subject of much recent analysis and debate) of theological language leaves something behind (Baum 1975; Carroll 2007; Eagleton 2009b; 2010; Flanagan 1996; Lefort 2006; Milbank 2006; Tester 2010; de Vries 2008; Žižek and Gunjevic 2012). When we attempt to articulate and/or enact legitimate

sociological authority, authorship, or vocation, we find ourselves entangled in god language, especially when we try to leave it behind, whether through public ‘incarnation,’ which brings sociology ‘down to earth’ (Henslin 2007), or through ‘kenosis,’ which exacts self-relinquishment as the task of science/thought.

Self-relinquishment was also embedded (and dis-embodied) in the dualistic Cartesian formula *cogito ergo sum*, which skeptically bracketed the body, and which forms the basis of so much of the effort spent attempting to produce a scientific ‘view from nowhere’ (Nagel 1986). In the language of the virtues, we would simply call it *humility* (never forgetting humility’s link to humiliation). We see it in the famous seventh and final proposition of Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus*, “What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence” (2001:89), which provided 20th century analytic philosophy with the formula of its ironically unsuccessful attempt to humbly bracket metaphysics and to de-transcendentalize thought. According to Sloterdijk (2009:5), this proposition was carried to completion, in sociology, by Niklas Luhmann. For Nietzsche, of course, scientific humility reads as an attempt to generate a priestly ‘spiritual’ power and privilege.¹⁵ Answerability, however, would be less an ascetic search for purity than the pursuit of what Rosenstock-Huussy formulated in rewriting the Cartesian formula to read *respondeo etsi mutabor* (‘I respond although I will be changed’) (2001:2).

Theological remainders belie Habermas’s claim that “the normative content of modernity is stored in rationalized lifeworlds” (1990a:366), merely waiting to be

¹⁵ See, for example, David Noble’s book *A World Without Women: The Christian Clerical Culture of Western Science* (1992). For an approach closer to the tenor of this dissertation, see Walter Benjamin’s “Capitalism as Religion” (1996; also Hamacher 2002; Löwy 2006).

‘translated’ in order to give strength to ‘autonomous public spheres.’ They exceed the ‘discursive redemption of the sacred,’ in which the sociologist or moral philosopher sublates religion or theology (or art) “by taking up the position of interpreter on behalf of the lifeworld” (Bernstein 1997:259). According to Bauman, communicative reason cannot discharge the fundamentally ambivalent situation of the ‘moral party of two,’ since “Discursive redemption destroys the very moral reality it purports to redeem” (Bauman 1993:184). Even if Bauman goes too far, it is no accident that Habermas’s concept of ‘discursive redemption’ appears not to have finished paying its theological debts, as commentators (Miller 2011:ix) and his more recent publications now admit (e.g., Habermas 2002; 2008; Habermas and Ratzinger 2006; Habermas et al. 2010).

Nevertheless, the appearance of theological language in the weak program signals neither the submission of sociology to theology’s authority nor the translation of sociology into theology. It signals, rather, our ongoing conceptual incapacity to cash out (i.e., redeem) our ‘sensuous particularity’ in terms of criticizable validity claims, and the need for a further secularization or profanation (Agamben 2007) of sociality *and* of sociology if we are to respond to Adorno’s claim that “The matters of true philosophical interest at this point in history...are nonconceptuality, individuality, and particularity” (Adorno 1973:8).¹⁶ This claim demands to be taken beyond the anthropocentric humanism reached in Durkheim’s ‘cult of the individual’ via his distinction between the sacred and the profane, which Durkheim purported to be the scientific ‘redemption’ of the

¹⁶ Consider, for instance, the ambiguities of the seemingly simple issue of the relationship between the university and the spaces (or neighbourhoods) where it is located (cf. James 2012:30).

elementary forms of religious life, and of human social life as such, a view that Bataille and the Collège de Sociologie attempted to carry forward in their attempt to develop a ‘sacred sociology’ (Richman 2002).

I use theological language, here, to focus the project on what Adorno referred to as “metaphysical need” (1973:399), a notion with roots in Walter Benjamin’s definition of philosophy as “the representation of truth and not as a guide to the acquisition of knowledge” (Benjamin 2003:28). Sociology cannot satisfy metaphysical need, but it may be able to cultivate it. Adorno indicates the intertwining of theology, philosophy, and social theory in his well-known programmatic statement in *Minima Moralia*:

The only philosophy which can be responsibly practised in face of despair is the attempt to contemplate all things as they would present themselves from the standpoint of redemption. Knowledge has no light but that shed on the world by redemption: all else is reconstruction, mere technique. Perspectives must be fashioned that displace and estrange the world, reveal it to be, with its rifts and crevices, as indigent and distorted as it will appear one day in the messianic light. To gain such perspectives without velleity or violence, entirely from the felt contact with its objects —this alone is the task of thought. (2005:§153, 247)¹⁷

J.M. Bernstein, a secularist (cf. 1992:9), renders this verdict: “The dilemma is profound: if the Weberian diagnosis as interpreted by Adorno is correct, then as yet we have nothing approaching a normative account explaining *how a wholly secular form of life can be rationally compelling and intrinsically motivating*” (2001:18; cf. Zuidervaart 2007:12).

E. NO RIGHT LIFE IN THE WRONG ONE

Under the influence of Adorno and the critical tradition that has followed him, then, the

¹⁷ It is true that my use of theological language does not follow Adorno’s, who would perhaps interpret a phrase like ‘the kenosis of sociology’ as ‘wishful thinking’ rather than as responding to ‘the need in thinking’ (Adorno 1973:407–408).

weak program reads the history of the modern social sciences, and the sociology of morality more specifically, as an outworking of long-standing contradictions with peculiar forms in modern capitalism, tensions between theory and practice, autonomy and heteronomy, mental and physical labour, individual freedoms and collective goods, expert knowledge and personal experience, rational systems and instinctual life. It is also a tragic history of political and conceptual failures, and perhaps of radical evil. The objects of modernity do not go into the concepts of modernity without a remainder. The remainder indicates that there is no ‘final solution,’ and that, grievously, the way has been repeatedly tried (cf. Agamben 1999). Read in this way, the history of the social sciences continues to be a history of failures, and not just in the institutional sense of failing to become a true science (Turner and Turner 1990), but in the broader sense of failing to become the dreamed of panacea capable of socially mending all that has been socially broken. To join in, as an author, is to attempt to contribute one’s own failure, looking, through this process, “to know, to misknow, and yet to grow” (Rose 1992:310). This means assenting not just to an ironically pragmatic conception of thought as a process of, as Beckett put it, “Try again. Fail again. Fail better” (1989:101) but also to Rose’s claim that we live, in modernity, with “the diremption of law and ethics” (Rose 1992:xiv). In Adorno’s famous phrase, “wrong life cannot be lived rightly” (Adorno 2005:39).

Among other problems, although we are able to recognize a variety of possible ways to live (i.e., ‘forms of life’), we are not able to take the measure, in terms of knowledge or, more importantly, in terms of *experience*, of the life we are living (cf.

Bernstein 1992:8). Instead, to quote Adorno once again, here with a grimly ironic image probably inspired by his exile in Hollywood, “Men are reduced to walk-on parts in a monster documentary film which has no spectators, since the least of them has his bit to do on the screen” (55). Judith Butler delivered a lecture on this statement on the occasion of receiving the Adorno Prize. In her lecture title she renders Adorno’s German phrase, ‘Es gibt kein richtiges Leben im falschen’ in the form of a question: ‘Can one lead a good life in a bad life?’ (2012). The occasion itself modelled the dilemma, the ‘diremption of law and ethics,’ as the event was protested by people unhappy with Butler’s critique of Zionism, labelling it anti-Semitism. The published version of the essay illustrates this dilemma with several photos of these protests.

To speak directly to the academic context, we live and make shift in the midst of a mutating and circulating surplus labour supply, in which individual success for one means failure for others, although we do not know which others, how many others, what will happen next, or what *meaning* to attach to these successes and failures. Weber was already acutely aware of this problem when he tackled the problem of conceiving of ‘Science as a Vocation’ in a truly secular and immanent manner. Despite his personal proclivity for martial virtues, he did not propose ‘honour’ as a means of synthesizing the radical pluralism of modern value orientations. Just so, we cannot simply adopt the value system of the ‘professional group,’ and endorse the honours and rewards offered on the basis of the *sensus communis*. This communitarian option is simply not available to us at the level of experience (Bernstein 1992:8), even if it may happen to ‘work’ on an

individual basis as a source of ‘motivation.’ In this world the fragile but still existent relative autonomy of the university from the dictates of both political and economic ‘steering mechanisms’ has the at least ironic and perhaps perverse effect that aggressive (even ‘radical’) criticism of the political, economic, and even the academic system may be precisely the means by which one is provided with a relatively stable and privileged position within that system (cf. Rancière 2011a) and thereby ‘incorporated’ into the ‘warmth’ of the scholarly community, sheltered from various ‘cold monsters,’ whether the state (Nietzsche 1954:I.9, 160) or the economy.¹⁸

Where life exceeds our capacity to experience it—a phenomenon classically articulated for modernity by Simmel (1950)—the possibility of an incarnational and kenotic sociology slips away, just as the possibility of divine incarnation moves, as Lefort suggests (2006:187), from the realm of the symbolic to the realm of the imaginary. As the saved view the drowned (Levi 1989), and as the ‘Angel of History’ (Benjamin 1968:257–258) sees the victims of human history piling up, we see the possibility of a symbolically structured and guaranteed good life and good death vanish. We are left with only an imaginary vocation to the imitation of Christ, or to a Socratic death, to an altruistic sacrifice, or to a sociology capable of dropping out of the ‘dialectic of enlightenment’ (Horkheimer and Adorno 1988) so as to avoid another round of (anti-)social engineering by means of atom bombs or wars on drugs or on terror. The idea of being a good

18 The musicians on the Titanic, who reputedly played til the end, during the sinking, are remembered as heroes, but is it entirely perverse to link their actions to the famous (apocryphal) claim that Nero ‘fiddled while Rome burned?’ In the face of a dysfunctional division of labour—many passengers on the Titanic died needlessly—were they engaged in a work of mourning or over-identifying with their role in an act of bad faith? In any case, the dualism involved in any claim to a ‘life of the mind’ needs to be registered.

sociologist of the good is a tempting fantasy, perhaps irresistible. Again in Adorno's stark and what we wish were hyperbolic phraseology, we are faced with the paradox of

The guilt of a life which purely as a fact will strangle other life, according to statistics that eke out an overwhelming number of killed with a minimal number of rescued, as if this were provided in the theory of probabilities—this guilt is irreconcilable with living. And the guilt does not cease to reproduce itself, because not for an instant can it be made fully, presently conscious.

This, nothing else, is what compels us to philosophize. (1973:364)

Bernstein takes up this Adornian compulsion, suggesting that ethics is best understood as a work of mourning and an attempt to recognize and to develop expressions of guilt:

At best, our ethics can be just a kind of non-complicity with official culture, while at the same time being an aporetic realisation of there being no possibility (and no real legitimacy) for any serious noncomplicity. Perhaps, then, it can be an ethics which acknowledges the harm it has done to the nonidentical and an expression of guilt for having done so. (Bernstein 2001:20–21)

The 'ethical demand,' however, requires more than an expression of guilt. Faced with the diremption of law and ethics, between facts and values, the weak program follows Rose's claim that we retain synthesis as a goal. Even though each attempted synthesis fails, these failures, insofar as they acknowledge the oppositions and attempt to engage in the "process and pain" of taking the "risk of coming to know" (Rose 1992:xiii), need not end in despair (or masochistic declarations of guilt). Nor do they need to end by 'failing towards functionalism,' a failure Rose attributes to both Giddens and Habermas. These humourless sociologies 'in the severe style' (Rose 1992:245) become positivist and functionalist by replacing the diremption of law and ethics, the 'guilt in thinking,' with analysis "grounded on posited 'dualities' ...[and]...The result is an intellectual culture in

which anxiety of beginning is displaced by voluminous sociology; equivocation is replaced by 'integration'; the broken middle translated into 'steering media'" (246).

Taking a (hopefully) cautious stand against discourse ethics, Habermas's procedural 'weak' program, my conception of a weak program in the sociology of morality does not confine itself to clarifying the 'ideal speech situation,' in which experiences embedded in the lifeworld find discursive redemption when formulated as criticizable validity claims. On this point I follow Bernstein's critical remark:

By suppressing...the pull of the world in our reasoning...Habermas drives out of consideration the deepest reasons we have...The search for impartiality in communicative reason forces us to take a stand outside the circle of reasons and experience that typically underwrites our allegiance to moral norms. (1995:221)

Although I am somewhat skeptical of the Rousseau at the base of Bernstein's argument, I follow his claim that "the separation of the moral [as public and social] from the ethical [as personal conviction] cannot be sustained" (113), since *the expression of subjective experience* is an essential element of ethical life which cannot be bracketed off from a moral sphere characterized by discursive translation and focused solely on action coordination via "consensus about the rightness of binding norms" (113). Just so, neither moral theory nor the sociology of morality can be sustainably separated from the morality of sociology (or of moral theory). Indeed one could formulate it as a speculative proposition along the same line as Hegel's 'the real is the rational,' which Rose paraphrases as 'reality is ethical' (cf. Rose 2009:235) and which may perhaps be rephrased once again as 'the social is moral.' As a speculative proposition, however, this

phrase refuses the identity thinking which would suggest that the social is *identical* with the moral, or that the moral is identical with the sum of successfully formulated ‘criticizable validity claims,’ a process that critics argue is just the consistent and stable means by which the actors that monopolize dominant modes of ‘sophisticated’ moral discourse have their viewpoints symbolically legitimated (e.g., as law).

The weak program in some ways resembles, then, but remains non-identical with the Habermasian ‘tension’ theory, which sees law as mediating *Between Facts and Norms* (Habermas 1998). Habermas attempts to turn the Adornian problem into the very condition of “communicative” society, a state of permanent “tension between facticity and validity” (1998). As long as the intermediary between fact and norm is communication, the goals are public discourse, criticizable validity, enlarged social access to the public sphere, and so on. This procedural solution does not succeed in dissolving the dictum (i.e., ‘no right life in the wrong one’), however. In part this is because discursive action is an insufficient source of social motivation. Habermas endorses a procedure in which actors abstract and extract an argument from personal experiences and motives in order to qualify as participants in the public sphere.¹⁹

Habermas’s concept of the public sphere as a realm of discursive and criticizable validity claims in which *law* is the mediator between facts and norms, systematically evades the tragic quality of the “trisection of reason,” taking the demand that communicative reason be impartial as “a legitimate disarticulation” of reason (Bernstein

¹⁹ An examination of the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, which held hearings in which residential school survivors were given a forum to talk about their experiences, could provide a relevant case study in the Canadian context.

1997:257) rather than a diremption or deformation.²⁰ This displaces Habermas's earlier (1991 [1962]) conception of the public sphere and, what is more, "colludes with the very diremption of reason it now seeks to undo by taking up the position of interpreter on behalf of the lifeworld" (Bernstein 1997:259). The later Habermas, indeed, has moved to *law* as the mode through which "morality can spread to *all* spheres of action, including those systemically independent spheres of media-steered interactions that unburden actors of all moral expectations other than that of a general obedience to law" (Habermas 1998:118). Habermas divides problems up by assuming that only "anonymous networks" (1998:117) can provide avenues for the universalization of "postconventional morality."

The Adornian problem is presented clearly:

...the unmistakable duty to preserve even anonymous neighbors from starvation conspicuously contrasts with the fact that millions of inhabitants of the First World allow hundreds of thousands in poverty-stricken areas of the Third World to perish. Even charitable aid can be transmitted only along organized paths...a structural improvement would require no less than a new economic world order. Similar problems that can only be managed by institutions arise in one's own region, and even in one's very neighborhood. The more that moral consciousness attunes itself to universalistic value orientations, the greater are the discrepancies between uncontested moral demands, on the one hand, and organizational constraints and resistances to change, on the other. (116)

For Habermas, 'positive law' has to fill in the gaps left by 'weakness of the will' (117).

Habermas, like Durkheim, suggests that nihilism is a symptom of a lack of organization and regulation, not the source of the problem (118). Motivation is supplied by 1)

socialization and 2) individual conscience, but this needs supplementation by

²⁰ On this point Gabriel Abend, with his relatively easy conscience about separating philosophical from sociological questions, would surely agree with Habermas, and would perhaps take this entire discussion of 'diremption' for maudlin hysterics.

organization and regulation. For Durkheim, professional groups provide this, on the one hand, in the form of protection and relief from the over-regulating tendencies of the state and, on the other hand, through unique forms of moral regulation that are appropriate to and more directly fashioned by the members. For Habermas, this comes in the form of “systemically independent spheres of media-steered interactions” (118) bound together by a system of laws/rights that balance “private and public autonomy of the citizen” (118). He suggests, optimistically, that “Under conditions of high complexity, moral contents can spread throughout a society along the channels of legal regulation” (118). At the same time, however, as Bernstein points out, Habermas concedes that “rationalized moral theory decontextualizes and demotivates” (Bernstein 2001:81; Rousseau 1974:41), for “The search for impartiality in communicative reason forces us to take a stand outside the circle of reasons and experiences that typically underwrites our allegiance to moral norms” (Bernstein 1995:221).

In the weak program, instead of looking to law as an institution with one foot in the lifeworld and one in the world of autopoietic systems, capable of mediating ‘between facts and norms’ as an element of communicative action aimed at reaching understanding or co-ordinating action, we give special weight to non-impartial acts *expressive of subjective experience* and arising from answerability. Furthermore, as Bernstein argues, “it is false to claim, as Habermas routinely does, that our choice is between acting communicatively...and acting strategically” (1995:186). Answerability is reducible neither to communication, nor to argumentation, nor to instrumental action. In addition,

as a key element of a weak program in the sociology of morality, answerability suggests that the sociological vocation has a more deeply ambiguous relation to *law* than Habermas wants to suggest. If one sense of weakness suggests that weak sociology lacks legislative powers, in what sense, on the other hand, are sociologists still ‘before the Law,’ in Kafka’s sense? Gillian Rose argues, against Habermas, that rather than law mediating between facts and norms, political action forms the broken middle for law and ethics (Rose 1992, 1995, 1996). Insofar as the ‘weak’ program remains capable of political action, it may be that this involves attempts to express hitherto invisible forms of experience, to ‘fail better,’ and to mourn better (perhaps by defying, and thereby potentially transforming the law).

Why engage with these tensions at all? Why develop a ‘program’ in the sociology of morality? Why not locate sociology within Habermas’s realm of “private autonomy that can also be described as liberation from the obligations of what I call ‘communicative freedom’” (Habermas 1998:119)? Why should sociologists be dialectically answerable with respect to morality? J.M. Bernstein wants to place his trust in aesthetic modernism: “If the non-discursive, because non-demonstrable, judgement of the body inflicted with pain provides motivation for resisting domination, this can be no idle point with Habermas, since a perpetual difficulty for his theory has been the absence of a motivational base for taking up the claims of communicative reason” (1997:252).

This brings us back to the question of sociology as a calling, or vocation (cf. Newson and Polster, eds. 2010). What does it mean, in contemporary life, to have a

calling? What does it mean in the context of neo-liberal economics, which has been widely criticized for its negative impact on the university (Washburn 2005; Etkowitz, Webster and Healey 1998; Inglis 2014; Randle 2002)? What does it mean, in the Canadian context (cf. Curtis and Weir 2002; Crocker 2003; O'Malley and Hunt 2003; Weir and Curtis 2003)? In late modernity, as Anthony Giddens points out, “in many areas of social life—including the domain of the self—there are no determinant authorities” (1991:194). As a result, the reasons, motives, or justifications that are offered for what one does, although they may be drawn from more places than ever before, encounter a social world that may or may not be interested, that may or may not be convinced, that may or may not provide formal institutional, bureaucratic, or spiritual approval or disapproval, or effective formation and remonstrance. Giddens reiterates what Weber already recognized: modern society throws us back upon our own resources. In the era of Durkheim’s ‘cult of the individual,’ our callings must, in the end, be auto-interpellations.

Still, although within liberal democratic society there can be no unified social authority that designates one’s social position, the question of sociology as a vocation draws together the reason for doing and the thing done within what we are calling answerability—rather than ‘responsibilization’ (Roth 2010). The doing of sociology *entails* bringing oneself into question as a sociologist. Analyzing morality sociologically *entails* analyzing sociology morally. And so on. In each chapter of the dissertation, I argue that attempts to ‘solve’ the problem of founding a sociology of morality fail towards answerability.

Once again, what keeps answerability from being a form of Habermasian ‘communicative reason,’ is that answerability refers, here, not so much to the pragmatics of communicating and agreeing, or “reaching understanding” (Habermas 1998:14), as to the ‘guilt’ or ‘need’ in thinking, the recognition of misrecognition, the communication of miscommunication. These constitute, in significant ways, works of mourning. The Habermasian model of establishing solidarity through action-coordinating efforts aimed at communicating a particular discursive meaning content misses the possibility that social bonds, and ethical relations in particular, may appear precisely where ‘speech acts’ fail rather than where they seem to succeed, where, as Butler puts it, the ‘I’ *fails* to narrate itself to the other: “Then the ‘I’ is no longer imparting a narrative...the ‘I’ is staging a scene, recruiting the other into the scene of its own opacity to itself. The ‘I’ is breaking down in certain very specific ways in front of the other...” (2005:69; cf. Halberstam 2011). Rather than the Kantian notion that society would fall apart if we could not trust each other to tell the truth, which Habermas attempts to recruit as a constitutive and *a priori* condition of possibility of communication and social order, the weak program assumes that our social conditions of possibility entail constitutive misrecognition and ongoing incapacity for truth-telling, according to which the moral of the story is recognized in its narrative gaps.

F. BETRAYAL OF TRADITION, TRADITION OF BETRAYAL: GUILT & HISTORY

...in the etiological structure of time and history that Benjamin has in mind, here, every state of the world is guilty to the extent that it releases another deficient state of the world and bears the guilt for it. Every state of the world is therefore an incomplete one, a morally or legally lacking condition. Guilt is “the highest category” of history, because it is the category of the causation of deficiencies. Thus it must follow that history is guilt, and that it is guilty: it is history only to the extent that it is guilt history, a history *out* of guilt and a history *of* guilt. Guilt can only exist where there is history, and every history is a phenomenon of deficiency. And, conversely, there can only be history if a condition or an occurrence severs itself from another one without, however, completely losing all relation to it. Guilt is thus a deficitary relation, a relation to that which is lacking or missing. All history is therefore the history of guilt in the sense that the form—and only therefore also the content—of history is determined by guilt. There is no history that is not about guilt... (Hamacher 2002:83–84)

Immediately following the selected text quoted above, Werner Hamacher points out that Walter Benjamin’s other characterization of the time of history (other than ‘guilt history’) is the time of fate (*Schicksal*). Whether as guilt or as fate, ‘our time’ involves a grappling with the past, what Nietzsche viewed as fundamentally entangled with revenge, and called “the will’s antipathy towards time and time’s ‘it was’” (2006:276). As Bakhtin points out, “answerability entails guilt, or liability to blame” (1990:1), and the weak program follows Bernstein following Adorno in endorsing the notion that “acknowledgement of complicity and guilt is the ethical gesture that makes critique possible” (Bernstein 1992:11). In *Negative Dialectics*, Adorno declares that, after the Holocaust, the new categorical imperative has become ‘never again.’ This categorical imperative cannot be merely ‘discursively’ redeemed. Still, there is something ambiguous about this partnership between answerability and guilt. Adorno settles some of this ambiguity for us, also expressing the only real contestant against Nietzsche’s position:

...is guilt itself perhaps merely a complex, and bearing the burden of the

past pathological, whereas the healthy and realistic person is fully absorbed in the present and its practical goals? Such a view would draw the moral from the saying: ‘And it’s as good as if it never happened,’ which comes from Goethe but, at a crucial passage in *Faust*, is uttered by the devil in order to reveal his innermost principle, the destruction of memory. The murdered are to be cheated out of the single remaining thing that our powerlessness can offer them: remembrance. (1998:91).

This statement entails the claim, in addition, that despite whatever ‘sociological validity’ may adhere to Giddens’ claim, against Freud, that “The characteristic movement of modernity, on the level of individual experience, is away from guilt” (1991:155), this is insufficient at the level of the ‘need in thinking.’ According to Giddens, modern civilization is characterized by a shift away from guilt and towards *shame*, since, increasingly, “The individual no longer lives primarily by extrinsic moral precepts but by means of the reflexive organisation of the self” (153). Instead of anxiety about failures to obey moral imperatives, the modern individual tends to feel insecurity in the face of complex and evolving social systems. Nevertheless, in the effort, as Arendt put it, “to think what we are doing” (1998:5), we are called to respond to this guilt, this debt of thought. In attempting to think sociologically about morality, or about the good life, we necessarily orient to the guilt-determined forms of our history, to our indebtedness to the conditions of our own possibility. This Adornian ‘need in thinking’ may be understood as a very specific alteration and ‘reorientation’ of Kant’s discussion of the ‘needs of reason’ in his essay “What does it mean to orient oneself in thinking?” (1998). Kant suggests that we need to postulate a highest being in order to engage in (theoretical and practical) reason. For Adorno, by contrast, the need comes from the opposite direction: no concept

can be adequate to experience. The need in thinking is a form of guilt, and not just the postulate of a healthy mind. ‘Never again’ is not a categorical imperative derived by universalizing a maxim, then, but a ‘minim,’ as the title *Minima Moralia* indicates, that smells the blood, as Nietzsche suggested, behind the ‘maximization’ of a maxim. The transitional form of this reorientation may be found in Kierkegaard’s formula, in the first ‘upbuilding discourse’ at the end of *Either/Or* part two, “The Upbuilding that lies in the thought that in relation to God we are always in the wrong” (1987:339–354).

At the same time, the ‘need’ in thinking requires that we struggle to distinguish, following Nietzsche’s genealogical exposition of the complications of motive, between ideological interpellation, narcissistic self-preoccupation—like Lebedev in Dostoevsky’s *The Idiot* (2002)—and legitimate demands of thought. Although the quote from Lotze inserted at the beginning of the second of Benjamin’s “Theses on the Philosophy of History” may be questioned for its suggestion that the present cannot envy the future, Benjamin’s claim that happiness is hermeneutical still serves as a fitting reference point:

Reflection shows us that our image of happiness is thoroughly colored by the time to which the course of our own existence has assigned us...In other words, our image of happiness is indissolubly bound up with the image of redemption. The same applies to our view of the past, which is the concern of history. The past carries with it a temporal index by which it is referred to redemption. There is a secret agreement between past generations and the present one. Our coming was expected on earth. Like every generation that preceded us, we have been endowed with a *weak* Messianic power, a power to which the past has a claim. That claim cannot be settled cheaply. Historical materialists are aware of that. (1968:253–254)

Although I have been critical of Bauman’s project for its tendency to treat morality too

much as a transcendental a priori, which constrains his ability to recognize sociologically conditioned but also socially transformative moral and political action, his adherence to the Adornian dictum, ‘never again,’ particularly through the project of developing and lending sociological concepts to efforts at ‘remembrance of the slain,’ harmonizes with the weak program. The weak program diverges from the transcendental project of Bauman and Levinas by deferring to political action from below and in its consideration of morality in negative dialectical terms. On my view, following Gillian Rose, the moral emerges via politically enacted immanent critiques of law (whether this means natural law, positive law, or laws of the social), political acts that subject law to answerability. If law, and the god that underwrites it (whether the Christian one, or the god of Capitalism), activate and generate guilt, political acts of answerability bear the weight of guilt, while contributing to the “self annihilation of the guilt-system” (Hamacher 2002:101), the deactivation of the logic of guilt by forgiveness. This dissertation focuses primarily on ways that sociologically formulated ‘laws’ may be subjected to answerability, and so in the chapters that follow, I attempt to follow this ‘in theory.’ This means, primarily, tracking a sort of negative dialectic of selected sociological concepts of morality, observing our ‘images of redemption’ as they fail, in a way that demonstrates the persistence of answerability and social science failing towards what Latour (2010:35) dubs ‘symmetrical anthropology,’ without losing the capacity to recognize and potentially to participate in political action and to initiate works of mourning. Thus the ‘weak program,’ which is certainly not Nietzsche’s ‘gay science,’ tries not to be Adorno’s

‘melancholy science’ (Rose 1978) either.

G. CHAPTERS 1 & 2: FROM MARX TO NIETZSCHE

The first two chapters of the dissertation deal with Marx’s ‘strong’ program in the sociology of morality. In chapter one, I argue that the ‘strength’ of Marx’s approach resides, to begin with, in his refusal to treat morality as an autonomous subject matter. Instead, Marx treats morality as something that follows from political economy, from relations of production and from social class divisions. Class societies generate morality as class morality. This class morality is abstract and one-sided, lacking *content*, while simultaneously rendering *formal* and class-based judgements (positive judgements about one’s own class and negative moral judgements about the antagonistic class). The ‘goods’ valued by particular classes, then, are partial and contradictory. Science overcomes this partiality, subordinating the *good* to the *true*.

In this vein, this chapter traces Marx’s assessment of bourgeois morality as hypocrisy, and discusses his appreciative but critical rejection of previous social and political philosophies of morality, those of Aristotle, Adam Smith, and Hegel, in particular. With respect to Aristotle, I argue that Marx rejected *phronesis* in favour of *revolutionizing practice*. With respect to Hegel and Adam Smith, Marx advocated attention to the social history of creative production over the abstract dialectics of recognition or the bourgeois moral *imagination* of the ‘impartial spectator.’ In part, this redirection away from the bourgeois imagination is based, I argue, in Marx’s acceptance of a Rousseauian notion of *pity*, based not in the imagination, but in a direct and

instinctive negative response to visible suffering. On Marx's reading of social history, the rise of bourgeois morality, which is such a breakthrough in Smith's terms of detached and impartial spectators, involves the suppression of (or alienation from) natural morality (as pity).²¹ If Smith saw morality as fundamentally a work of the imagination, Marx thought true morality must be unified with truth, and could only follow from scientific revelation, unveiling bourgeois hypocrisy while making way for political organization.

As Marx's approach emphasizes history and social production over abstract imagination, he prizes intellectual virtues over moral ones. He views truth, and the public statement of the truth, to be simultaneously a political act and an organizational call for revolution in the relations of production. Intellectual virtue, which entails non-participation, crucially, in projects that lack it (cf. 'Critique of the Gotha Program'), becomes his de facto vocation in the absence of an explicit self-justifying discourse.

Chapter Two continues with questions of scientific vocation, discussing the ambiguity of Marx's position, an ambiguity not necessarily solved by implicitly linking intellectual virtues to revolutionizing practice and to the production of knowledge. This ambiguity persists in the projects attempted, throughout the 20th century, by Marxists, who have continued to struggle with the notion of academic vocation, positioned, as it is,

21 Here I take a position opposed to Louis Althusser's still influential one, which distinguishes an early humanist Marx (presumably the Marx influenced by Rousseau), from a later scientific Marx, whose critique of Smith's notion of the moral imagination is not based upon Rousseau, but upon the '*change of terrain*' or the

metamorphosis in the gaze...only produced in very specific, complex and often dramatic conditions...[the] real transformation of the means of production of knowledge...in which the 'subject' plays, not the part it believes it is playing, but the part which is assigned to it by the mechanism of the process. (Althusser and Balibar 1979:27)

On my reading, Althusser's argument is interesting word-play, theorizing through shifting metaphors from visual to spatial (and structural). It does not, in the end, convince on the young Marx/mature Marx front.

within what Bourdieu calls a ‘dominated fraction of the dominant class.’ In the midst of founding sociology as a professional and professionalizing practice, Max Weber and Emile Durkheim faced this ambiguity more directly, and drew different conclusions, not able to claim that their academic practice could be assimilated to or harmonized with politically revolutionizing practice, and compelled to give more explicit justifications for their occupation and its value to actually existing society.

The second chapter explores the ambiguity of academia’s complicity with the processes of modernity through a discussion of the tensions between Marx and Nietzsche, especially Nietzsche’s different reading of human nature and his notion of the ‘will to truth.’ Nietzsche’s critique of the will to truth as a form of ‘slave morality’ driven by *ressentiment* and by the distinction between good and evil, suggests that Marx’s scientific approach conceals a deformation of will to power. Marx circles around the ambiguity of his own position through his analysis of class positions, which depends, for coherence, on isolating the root of social evils within a particular ‘class.’ ‘Speaking truth to power,’ a prophetic vocation proudly claimed by certain contemporary journalists, academics, and ‘public intellectuals,’ sometimes turns out to be a good way of contributing to the commodification of the ‘truth’ and to the bourgeois revolution rather than the proletarian one, in spite of Marx’s attempt to distinguish use value from exchange value and in spite of the utopian goal invoked in *The Communist Manifesto* that the present come to dominate the past. The chapter concludes with the suggestion that another version of slave morality, one not fully articulated in Nietzsche, is that which

refuses answerability (in favour, perhaps, of authenticity), thus repressing guilt into the unconscious and preparing the way for a future return of the repressed.

H. CHAPTERS 3 & 4: DURKHEIM & WEBER

Chapter three turns to Durkheim, the classical sociologist most often connected with the sociology of morality. The chapter begins with a conventional presentation of Durkheim's approach to morality, an approach that includes an explicit defence of sociology as a profession and a positioning of sociology as authoritatively *interpreting* but not *generating* moral energies. In this regard, Durkheim gave a threefold interpretation of modern morality as consisting of 1) the cult of the individual mediated through forms of nationalism; 2) a growing obligation to *charity*; and 3) a self increasingly divided against itself with regard to social and biological demands (with regard to suffering, Durkheim argues that society has no justification if it does not provide us with a little bit of peace in our hearts and with each other. This reveals the still Hobbesian basis of his analysis).

The chapter continues by arguing for the inadequacy of Durkheim's notion of collective representation as societal self-representation. Durkheim's neo-Kantian approach viewed collective representations as attempts to express group feelings of unity in order to turn them into 'experiences' (meeting Kant's requirement for turning sensuous material into experience, that it be subsumed under a concept). I argue for the need to think about social 'learning' and collective representations, especially the exploration of indigenous notions and collective representations that push sociality beyond the bounds of human relations to include 'all our relations.'

There is a lack of ‘answerability’ in Durkheim. Although he suggests that there is an underlying truth to collective representations, he reserves the right to offer the authoritative interpretation of the meaning of those representations. On this, he is followed by Habermas, who, under the guise of offering a constraint on what discourse ethics can offer, actually oversteps his interpretive authority (as Bernstein and Rose point out). Furthermore, self and other are not adequately dealt with in Durkheim’s theory of representation (inadequate politically, religiously, etc.). Durkheim’s version of dualism conceives of answerability in terms of the tension between individual physical impulses and societal demands. Conscience, which may indeed cause us to resist social pressures or norms, is still just that set of societal demands that we have internalized, perhaps elaborating it more consistently than presently existing practice, or attempting to apply a professional ethic more broadly than hitherto, but still tied to the notion that, though societies evolve and morality changes, there is at any given moment a collectivity that is identical with itself in substance (membership) and meaning, and this substance and meaning may be scientifically specified. On this point, however, Durkheim’s sociology of morality is only as good as his understanding of the relationship between the social and the political, an understanding that may be criticized from a number of angles (e.g., that developed by Jacques Rancière).

While Durkheim oversteps his interpretive authority as a sociologist, Weber goes too far in trying to constrain scientific boundaries. In chapter four I discuss Weber’s attempt to elaborate a value-free but value-relevant methodology and then turn to a

discussion of his concept of charisma to make the case for the aporetic nature of his attempt to make a value-free evaluation of a religious concept. While I would defend a version of the fact/value (or ‘value-neutral’/‘value-relevant’ distinction), I critique Weber’s attempt to deal with charisma as a non-moral concept. His approach to charisma as a form of *authority*, as a kind of individual domination over a group, functions as a residual category—although not in the terms specified by Stephen Turner (1993; 2003)—for which Weber gives no real sociological explanation. Weber implicitly posits that the only escape from (modern) suffering is through mastery (Nietzschean heroism), which is also to say a non-rational form of *obedience* to a mysterious force (i.e., to one’s *daimon*). Suffering becomes meaningful through an act of will, and science becomes a vocation through an existential decision (‘to see how much I can take’). Against this version of (non-moral) authority and vocation as individual will, I propose that we think of charisma as an ambiguous, but socially-conditioned form of *answerability*.

I. CHAPTERS 5 & 6: SITUATION, CHARACTER, & THE AFFECTIVE TURN

The next chapter turns from these two founding figures of professional sociology to a contemporary debate about the concepts of character and situation, a debate carried out primarily in philosophy and social psychology. With respect to social suffering, can character save us? I argue, first, that character and situation can be seen as complementary rather than competing sociological frames. Secondly, I argue that the term character should be thought of within the full variety of its everyday uses rather than reduced to a narrowly technical application. Finally, I argue that in certain contexts we

should give a positive moral evaluation to ‘weak’ character, understood in the context of acts and practices that constitute emancipatory reversals. Once again, the chapter closes with references to answerability as constituting a non-synthetic link in a negative dialectic, this time between situation and character.

Earlier in this introduction I made passing reference to the prevalence of studies that link morality to emotions. In Chapter Six I discuss the ‘affective turn’ and affect as a methodological consideration. How do you get ‘in the mood’ to do sociology? It does this through a discussion of three separate strands of social science research 1) American communitarianism; 2) studies in Moral Regulation; and 3) the Feminist ‘ethic of care’ approach. Each of these strands of research make some fundamental assumptions about ‘mood.’ Communitarians, I argue, try to adopt a (paternalistic) attitude of ‘concern.’ Moral Regulation studies, by contrast, locate ‘anxiety,’ and even ‘moral panic’ in the bourgeois subjects that they study, while implicitly constructing their own maturity and existential authenticity and steadfastness. Their implicit methodological recommendation for social scientists is ‘do not panic.’ It is especially important not to project one’s anxieties about social changes that may affect one’s social positions (and privileges) onto socially marginalized groups and individuals. Finally, the ‘ethic of care’ approach criticizes abstract and detached moral evaluation, and puts forward an ethic based on (women’s) experiences of connection, relation, and care. The ‘ethic of care’ is presented as both empirical finding and methodological ideal for feminist social science practice.

Each of these approaches recommends, on my reading, an ‘affective’ solution to

the problem of constituting a sociology of morality. We just need to be in the right mood. I conclude by arguing that, while none of these approaches on its own can constitute an adequate resolution of the problem of founding a sociology of morality, they provide a kind of constellation that may help to make visible the aporetic quality of the sociology of morality. Once again, I argue that answerability constitutes a minimal criterion that can performatively structure a ‘weak’ program in the sociology of morality.

J. CHAPTER 7: RIVAL VERSIONS OF PRACTICE

Chapter seven turns from the ‘affective turn’ to the ‘practice turn.’ Practice, like affect, has been viewed as a potential means of bridging the is/ought divide and solving problems related to the sociology of morality and to sociology as a vocation. From the various extant forms of practice theory I take two particularly influential ones in order to try out the tensions in the notion of practice. Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of practice uses the concept of practice as a tool in the hermeneutics of suspicion, unveiling subtle forms of self-interested action that serve to reproduce (unjustified or ‘unmerited’) social inequality, privilege, and marginalization. On the other hand, Alasdair MacIntyre uses the concept of practice in an attempt to critique instrumental action and to develop a notion of human flourishing that may provide the inhabitants of modernity with a way out of the ‘iron cage’ of instrumental reason (other than what MacIntyre calls ‘emotivism’). Both approaches present us with notions of practice that advance significant promises regarding its role as a basic building-block of morality. Their respective approaches also offer an opportunity to revisit questions concerning sociology as a vocation. Rather than

decide between the two approaches, I conclude that the concept of practice does not settle issues of vocation or morality. Once again, I argue that we should view practice theory as providing a *constellation* and a vision of *answerability* that opens up avenues of experience, expression, and reflexivity without supplying definitive interpretations of social life. The dissertation concludes with a brief restatement and summary.

CHAPTER 1: REVOLUTIONIZING PRACTICE, IMAGINATION, & INTELLECTUAL VIRTUE: MARX'S STRONG PROGRAM

It should have been stated what is meant by an “effective” liability law. Be it noted, incidentally, that in speaking of the normal working day the part of factory legislation that deals with health regulations and safety measures, etc., has been overlooked. The liability law only comes into operation when these regulations are infringed.

In short, this appendix also is distinguished by slovenly editing.

Dixi et salvavi animam meam.

(Marx [1875 ‘Critique of the Gotha Program’] 1972:398)

A. INTERPRETING MARX'S ANTI-MORALISM

What Marx writes about morality usually seems calculated to reveal its illusoriness. So why suggest that he has a ‘strong program’ in the sociology of morality? In Marx’s writings, when morality comes up, it is attached to the realm of politics and abstract right. In ‘On the Jewish Question,’ Marx equates the moral person with the formal *citizen*: “Political emancipation is a reduction of man, on the one hand to a member of civil society, an *independent* and *egoistic* individual, and on the other hand, to a *citizen*, to a moral person” (1972:44). Moral personhood, this building block of bourgeois morality, *reduces* the human to the level of the abstract rights of liberty and equality and hides the realities of exploitation and inequality. To take this abstract moral discourse as more than the ideology of ‘the advantage of the stronger,’ as Plato has Thrasymachus define justice in the *Republic* (1997:I.338c, 983), and which Marx echoes in the *Grundrisse*, is to be taken in. Marx calls it a kind of *forgetting* (1973:85, 88). Abstract moral discourse forgets the material basis of society in concrete forces and relations of production and forgets that the ‘advantage of the stronger’ needs to be recognized as an historically constituted social power of creation that reflects current class relations rather than being an external,

eternal, unchangeable nature. Nevertheless, in this chapter as well as the next, I will argue that Marx *can* be described as having a ‘strong program’ in the sociology of morality. It is a ‘strong program’ because 1) the point is not merely to interpret the world, but to change it, and 2) in Marx’s work, moral virtues are subordinated to intellectual virtues. The *good* must also be *true*, and “slovenly editing” (Marx 1972:398) can be neither.

In the first volume of *Capital*, Marx writes that since bourgeois morality is illusory, the realities of capitalism must be dealt with, as capitalists themselves claim (when it suits them), without any appeal to sentiment or to the heart, without any illusion that ‘equal rights’ is a moral claim with real substance. The reality of capitalist social relations is conflict between classes, and “Between equal rights force decides” (1978:225). In the case of the working-day “...the determination of what is a working-day presents itself as the result of a struggle, a struggle between collective capital...and collective labour” (225). Bourgeois morality is imaginary, made up of fantasies and fetishes. And bourgeois morality forgets. In the *Manifesto* Marx and Engels attempt to replace bourgeois morality with historical understanding, a kind of remembering that allows the transformation of the present by undoing the domination of the past (1972:347). The moralizing myths of bourgeois society must be replaced with scientific history.

By conflating morality with ‘bourgeois’ morality and attaching it to processes of ‘merely political’ emancipation, Marx implies that morality, like religion, does not (or would not) have a place of its own (a sphere of ‘relative autonomy’) in a society that has achieved real social (and not merely political) emancipation. If morality, treated as an

independent sphere, merely forms an ideological discourse that justifies injustice by means of abstract principles or mythical superstition, there is no need to formulate any specifically moral discourses for the communist society because there would be no need for ideological and abstract circumlocution (cf. Engels 1972:667–668). In any case, one could not do it in advance of such a society’s advent. Indeed, this is generally how Marx has been interpreted. And so, for a long time, “Critical social scientists, influenced by Marxism, regarded theorizing values and ethics as purist ideology” (Weir 2008:369; cf. Miller 1984; Tucker 1961; Wood 1980). Valid theory must be unified with practice. Moral philosophy must be subsumed by *praxis* in order to end its one-sidedness.

A ‘strong program’ seeks to accomplish precisely this unification. This comes first, however, in the form of a critique of all hitherto existing moralities. It would be a mistake to take Marx’s rhetorical posture toward bourgeois morality for a rejection of morality as such. This misses the fact that, rather than a ‘neutral’ scientific discourse, Marx produces equal amounts of satire and diatribe; and, like other radical forms of social critique that contrast ‘the present age’ with an age ‘to come’ (by means of a messianic or quasi-messianic structure), he indicts the immorality of current law/morality (i.e., the ‘white-washed sepulchre’) by contrast with a law-transcending spirit or grace that will transform the present system (cf. Tucker 1961). On this score, liberation theology (cf. Moltmann 1974; West 1991) provides the more apposite—if also, and ironically, more ideologically ‘impure’—interpretation of Marx. To read Marx’s economism, even that of *Capital*, as ‘reductionistic’ or ‘utilitarian’ (e.g., Hönneth 2003:127) is to perform a reductionistic and

utilitarian reading of Marx. Anyone accusing Marx of economism needs to critically address the gap Marx posits between production and commodification.

B. THE WORKING-DAY & THE SABBATARIANS: MARX ON SENTIMENT & HYPOCRISY

One of Marx's most sustained polemics against the concrete practices of capitalism appears in the first volume of *Capital*, in the section entitled 'The Working-Day.' Based largely on the reports of 19th century British factory inspectors, in the sixty odd pages of 'The Working-Day,' Marx meticulously documents the hypocrisy of bourgeois morality (e.g., Marx 1978:232n.1; 252n.1). The tone is consistently sarcastic, with direct moralizing generally confined to the many long quotations from the inspectors' reports. This indirect technique of moralizing through sarcasm and irony generates an account of the struggle for the length of the working-day stretched between objectivity and involvement; throughout *Capital* Marx generates a form of discourse that navigates in an original way, and without foundering, around and through scientism, sentimental sermonizing, and Swiftian satire.

'The Working-Day' presupposes that the attempt to divide moral and economic discourse into separate spheres is fundamentally self-contradictory or hypocritical and Marx exposes this division as a form of willfully sloppy thinking. He then pursues this division of spheres, exploiting the contradiction between neutral and evaluative modes. The struggle for the working-day, Marx writes, in an ironic paraphrase of business language, is not a matter of morality, "for in money matters sentiment is out of place" (1978:225). On the previous page, however, one has encountered this famous image:

“Capital is dead labour, that, vampire-like, only lives by sucking living labour, and lives the more, the more labour it sucks” (224). Marx mobilizes the reader’s disgust by means of a grotesque image and then forces the reader to choke on this disgust by immediately suggesting that the economy is no place for sentiment. Throughout the section, Marx sustains this contradiction between the suffering of the industrial working-class and the neutrality of ‘business speak,’²² nudging the reader towards high dudgeon at the hypocrisy of bourgeois morality.

Marx’s style fits well amongst 19th century moralizing, which could draw from a rich spectrum of literary genres and evoke a set of newly articulated emotions, especially new forms of expression for sympathy, disgust, isolation and outrage.²³ ‘The Working-Day,’ and *Capital* in general—as distinct from his political pamphlets, which are more directly moralistic and focused on fomenting revolution. ‘The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte’ [1852] and ‘Reflections on the Civil War in France’ [1871] thematize the guilt, cowardice and hypocrisy of the bourgeoisie and the innocence, courage, and integrity of the proletariat—develop a unique mode of moral discourse that denies the validity of investigating morality as an independent formal sphere while simultaneously attempting to further a morally-transformative social revolution. *Capital* may be distinguished from the genre of satire only by the sincerity of its scientism. Jeffrey

22 “Capital only speaks of the system in its ‘normal’ form” (1978:248).

23 Marx’s relationship to Rousseau—the inventor of the modern form of intimate confession and reflective self-consultation (Arendt 1998:38–41)—is an important one. Marx explicitly rejects both nostalgia for the ‘state of nature,’ and optimism about the liberal citizen, but remains heavily influenced by Rousseau’s ideal of transparency, what Arendt refers to as “a close relationship between the social and the intimate” (1998:40) (cf. Starobinski 1988).

Alexander claims that Marx “cloaked his moral concern in immanent economic laws” (2006:18), but this only gets at a single element of Marx’s discourse, and misses the tension that Marx generates between different affective modes.

Marx’s style was an innovation in a century of discursive innovation and scientific specialization (and anxiety over specialization), and the innovations were not merely stylistic. With regard to morality, it was the century of working out the consequences of ‘Enlightenment’ thinking. One of the questions was this one: Is Enlightenment corrosive to morality, or does it enable its reconstruction on rational principles? To resolve this question one must first work out whether theory and practice are to be distinguished and, if so, which one has priority. Here Marx accepts Hegel’s critique of Kant’s abstract and therefore empty concept of *Moralität* and refuses, along with Hegel, Kant’s division between theoretical and practical philosophy. We need “integral people” (Marx, quoted in Althusser 1971:30) that unify theory and practice. Marx’s strong program attempts to illustrate the current and concrete reality of social contradictions, while working toward the negation of the division between theory and practice, form and content, is and ought.

Marx’s synthetic approach in some ways returns to classical conceptions of morality, but it comes with conceptual innovations in addition to the stylistic-affective innovations already mentioned. We now address Marx’s relationships to Aristotle, Hegel and Adam Smith, concluding with reflections on the unique qualities and limitations of Marx’s strong program.

C. ARISTOTLE & MARX: FROM *PHRONESIS* TO *PRAxis*

As the condensation of Marx's strong program into aphoristic form, the eleventh and last of the 'Theses on Feuerbach'—"The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to *change it*" (Marx 1972:109)—recapitulates, with radical additions, Aristotle's claim, in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, that "we are not conducting this inquiry in order to know what virtue is, but in order to become good, else there would be no advantage in studying it" (1962:II.2, 1103b26–28). As recapitulation, *praxis*, or 'revolutionizing practice,' referred to in the 'Theses on Feuerbach,' like Aristotle's notion of *phronesis*, or practical wisdom—defined as "...a true and reasoned state of capacity to act with regard to the things that are good or bad for man" (VI.4 1140b5–6)—is necessarily analytical *and* practical. Both Marx and Aristotle deny the desirability and even the coherence of a non-participatory analytical frame.

Epistemologically speaking, thesis eleven implies that adequate knowledge of truth comes only through active, transformative engagement in social and political life: "Man must prove the truth...in practice" (Marx 1972:108). If *phronesis* is the key to Aristotle's moral philosophy, *praxis* forms the heart of Marx's strong program in moral sociology.²⁴

However, although both Aristotle and Marx described their respective predecessors as 'idealists' in need of critical empirical correctives, Aristotle's empirical critique appears to lack an historical-r/evolutionary element. As a result, Aristotle wonders how *individuals* can 'become good' rather than how *the world itself* can be

²⁴ Aristotle also has a concept of *praxis*, but *phronesis* is generally considered to be the relevant comparative term (Lobkowitz 1967).

transformed in order to meet human needs (and even to generate and to fulfill new ones). In his *Politics*, Aristotle criticizes Plato for outlining ideals that are appealing in their perfection (Aristotle 1941: II.6 1265a10–15) but unrealistic, whereas “We should consider, not only what form of government is best, but also what is possible and what is easily attainable” (IV.1 1288b35). For Marx, this is an empiricism of adjustment, not revolution. He aimed at eliminating social evils, not at perfecting individual virtues.

Aristotle ties *phronesis* to an understanding of individual character formation as an accumulation process activated by natural aptitude, habituation, education, and experience. Through right action, teaching, and repeated exercise of practical judgement, inborn abilities develop into practical wisdom in human affairs. The principle that *phronesis* is best exercised in situations of *leadership* has the important consequence that it tends to depend upon, reproduce, and to justify hierarchical and tutelary relations.

Aristotle’s theory of individual character is linear, but his theory of socio-political change is cyclical, based upon a formal typology of governments (i.e., Monarchy/Tyranny; Aristocracy/Oligarchy; Polity/Democracy), that periodically give way to each other in a kind of circuit. According to Marx, Aristotle could not conceive of revolutionary change or of history in the modern sense because he assumed human relations of domination and subordination to be permanent and natural, especially those between 1) free male citizens and women, slaves, and children (i.e., the political realm vs. the household); 2) rich and poor; and 3) teacher and student. One finds little sensitivity in Aristotle for the subtle ways in which experiences of hierarchy and inequality might

deform the practical reason of both dominated and dominant groups. His biological metaphysics restricted his concept of *phronesis*, rendering revolution circular and repetitious, not linear and potentially novel. Chapter seven will address the work of Alasdair MacIntyre, whose critical and Marxian re-reading of Aristotle attempts to ditch Aristotle's insistence on 'natural slaves' and to synthesize Aristotle's focus on individual virtues with Marx's insistence on revolutionary transformation in a renovated concept of 'practice.' Some followers of Alasdair MacIntyre now trumpet a program of Marx-inflected "Revolutionary Aristotelianism" (Blackledge and Knight, eds. 2011).

We conventionally distinguish Marx's notion of *praxis* from *phronesis* in several important ways. First, *praxis* implies reality's historical and dialectical 'fluidity,' and its potential for radical and novel change. One of the keys to this fluidity lies in the nature of *praxis* itself as an emergent form of activity that develops from a particular position within a social order, transforming that order. Thus bourgeois society emerged within feudal society as the revolutionizing practice of an emergent and *competitive* business class. Second, *praxis* develops through *class formation* rather than through individual development. In the case of *proletarian praxis*, it will do so in a manner that ultimately subverts hierarchical relations (and class) rather than stabilizing them. Above all, *proletarian praxis*, as a form of work, *produces*; rather than merely responding to the decision-demanding dilemmas of the human condition, as in Aristotle, it actively and directly creates that human condition itself. Revolutionary proletarian praxis, as opposed to practical wisdom, or *phronesis*, will emerge from a society organized around inequality

and exploitation, but it will burst these relations of domination and subordination. This implies some freedom with respect to *character* as something permanently *stamped-on* from the outside, as *unfreedom*. Alienated labourers are transformed and transform themselves into the gravediggers of capitalist society. They complete the process of organization begun by the capitalist mode of production. *Revolutionizing praxis* reclaims the sociality of character, embedding it in a dynamic dialectical process.

While Aristotle develops an individual, linear, and cumulative conception of character formation, Marx theorizes character formation—implicitly rather than explicitly—historically and in terms of classes rather than individuals. What accumulates are not so much virtues as class characteristics (e.g., the bourgeoisie as vampiric) that emerge dialectically from forms and degrees of socially produced inequality and exploitation. Through periods of accumulation classes develop distinct characteristics based upon the division of labour and their material life conditions, but since their relationships with each other are conflictual rather than mutual, these periods systematically deform sociality, intensify contradictions between classes, and ultimately culminate in revolutionary moments of crisis that generate new social systems and social classes. These revolutions are not mere repetitions of the past. They are transformations that produce novel social forms and new social characters. The bourgeoisie differ greatly, as a ruling class, from the landed aristocracy that they displaced.

On this view, history, while driven by class conflict, appears as a revolutionarily punctuated unrolling. In a way, Marx sublates the Aristotelian notion of human

flourishing, which Aristotle had confined to individual history, or at least to civilizational cycles. In Marx, human flourishing is both humanly created and determined (denaturalized), and historically emergent. His theory of revolution emphasizes the productive and novel possibilities of socio-political *crises*. As a form of *praxis* develops it may break the bonds of the past, revolutionizing the forces and relations of production, and transvaluing previously dominant morality. In the proletarian revolution, rather than being bound to their class character as to an *investment*—as the bourgeoisie are bound to their bank accounts and to the logic of capital—the proletariat will produce a character reversal that releases humanity from the bonds of hitherto existing forms of character, character as a measure of personal qualities that is confined to systems of unequal social relations. Within class society, the dominant class accumulates the bulk of socially recognized and rewarded virtues and a near monopoly on (virtuous) character,²⁵ just as they accumulate the bulk of the material wealth by controlling the means of production.

Marx's third thesis on Feuerbach makes the point:

The materialist doctrine that men are products of circumstances and upbringing, and that, therefore, changed men are products of other circumstances and changed upbringing, forgets that it is men who change circumstances and that it is essential to educate the educator himself. Hence, this doctrine necessarily arrives at dividing society into two parts, one of which is superior to society (in Robert Owen, for example).

The coincidence of the changing of circumstances and of human activity can be conceived and rationally understood only as revolutionising practice. (Marx 1972:108)

The 'doctrine' Marx refers to here is not Aristotle's (cf. Carrier 2006), and Owen's

25 One's reputation becomes a characteristically bourgeois obsession, as Weber noted well in his discussion (1958b) of Benjamin Franklin. Bourdieu's influential work *Distinction* (1984) elaborates this logic in instructive ways, as will be discussed in chapter seven.

criteria for dividing society into two parts were not Aristotle's, but Aristotle and Owen both accepted a division between active and passive classes and a relationship of necessary tutelage between them. Owen, the wealthy 19th century English industrialist, fancied himself capable of transforming social relations into cooperative ones by means of paternalistic social engineering. For both Aristotle and Owen, good governance comes from above. They also shared a view of human character conceived as the gradual development of virtues (cf. Owen 1966:23–24). Since Marx has such a different notion of character, and little to say, directly, about the virtues other than to puncture bourgeois claims to them, it is only by means of an hermeneutic reconstruction that a Marxian conception of the virtues could be elaborated. Like Owen and Aristotle, Marx believed that only some people were in a position to develop particular abilities. However, in Marx's view, the crucial individuals with regard to the changing of social circumstances were embedded in social circumstances rather than from a class somehow 'superior to society.' With regard to the proletarian revolution, the key actors were embedded in working-class struggle, in the direct enactment and production of revolutionizing *praxis*, through which society undergoes tutelage by the working-class itself.²⁶

26 It is well-known that in the *Manifesto* Marx and Engels give a privileged position to two groups: 1) the "small section of the ruling class [that] cuts itself adrift and joins the revolutionary class...a portion of the bourgeois ideologists who have raised themselves to the level of comprehending theoretically the historical movement as a whole" (1972:343); and 2) "The Communists...the most advanced and resolute section of the working-class parties of every country...they have over the great mass of the proletariat the advantage of clearly understanding the line of march, the conditions, and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement" (346). These two concessions, the first of which makes room for Marx and Engels themselves, and the second of which makes room for the Party, those dedicated entirely to labour organizing, do not, technically, describe groups that are 'superior to society,' but they were used as the ideological justification for the hierarchical Soviet party system. Marxist and Marx-inspired theories of education have been struggling with this dilemma for over a century (cf., Gramsci, Freire, and Rancière). Althusser's solution, the overcoming of 'class instinct' by adopting a proletarian 'class position,' (1971:12–13) does not satisfy,

According to Marx, Aristotle took social divisions as natural and permanent divisions because of his social context. Marx called Aristotle, “the greatest thinker of antiquity” (Marx 1978:384), but saw him as incapable of comprehending the political-economic basis of his own society. Aristotle condemned market exchange (*chrematistics*), and Marx quoted him approvingly (1978:150–151n.2), but he did not understand its inseparability from *oikonomia* (household economics). Aristotle could not link his critique of exchange value to his appreciation of use value because he lived in a society based upon slave labour, which he accepted as natural:

The secret of the expression of value, namely, that all kinds of labour are equal and equivalent, because, and so far as they are human labour in general, cannot be deciphered, until the notion of human equality has already acquired the fixity of a popular prejudice. This, however, is possible only in a society in which the great mass of the produce of labour takes the form of commodities, in which, consequently, the dominant relation between man and man, is that of owners of commodities. (Marx 1978:65–66)

Marx attributes Aristotle’s inability to understand the truth of social relationships—both the centrality of labour and the character of historical change—to his social context rather than to his lack of intelligence or virtue. The material basis of Athenian society was fundamentally obscure. In spite of the Greek philosophers’ tendency to use metaphors of light and sight to represent knowledge, Greek society lacked the transparency that would enable real insight into its social conditions. Thus, while Plato’s parable of the cave depicts the members of society as enslaved, emancipation takes place entirely in the mind, leaving real material slavery uncriticized, useful only as a metaphor, and the

and I express as much in scattered comments throughout the dissertation.

obscurity of the fundamental social relationships of Greek society undermines Aristotle's attempted critique of abstract idealism. Marx argues that Hegel's philosophy fails for the same kinds of reasons.

D. MARX & HEGEL: REVOLUTIONARY *SITTlichkeit*?

Both Marx and Hegel follow Aristotle's critique of Plato in setting themselves up against their predecessor's abstract idealism. Hegel returned to Aristotle in criticizing Kant's notion of *Moralität* by means of the notion of concrete ethical life (*Sittlichkeit*).

According to Hegel, the synthesis of morality as the subjective will and ethical life as a society's concrete practices and realities, could not be achieved in the abstract form of a universal lawfulness, like the 'categorical imperative' (1991:162, 186). The problem lies less in the categorical imperative itself than in misunderstanding its basis for validity, the practical basis for its actual content. On Hegel's reading, the failure of the French Revolution followed as a consequence of the abstractness of its principles, the product of a misguided attempt to force content into an hypothetical form (on this point Hegel is sometimes compared with the English conservative Edmund Burke). Kant's distinction between duty and inclination, which divides the moral imperative from one's material disposition, is a false dichotomy. Hegel reframes the opposition as that between individual will ('subjective' ethical life) and the social system of rational institutions ('objective' ethical life) (Wood 1991:xii). When these two contradict, as in the classical Greek context depicted in Sophocles' *Antigone*, the system of ethical life becomes tragic.

Marx contended, however, that Hegel's concept of concrete 'ethical life' did not

protect him from also being one-sided and abstract. How does Marx make this claim? Once again, we shall turn to the concept of *praxis*, this time contrasting it with Hegel's notion of ethical life (*Sittlichkeit*). While Hegel's concept is historicist and dialectical, *Sittlichkeit*, like Aristotle's *phronesis*, lacks, in Marx's view, the possibility of successful revolutionary activity. This becomes more apparent in Hegel's later writings, which use the concept, according to Marx, in circular fashion "to transfigure and to glorify the existing state of things" (Marx 1978:29; cf. Engels 1941:13). Hegel's moral theory lacks concrete links to productive labour, and becomes an abstract category in a moral theory attached to contemporary bourgeois moral conventions but detached from contemporary material relations of production (precisely because of the *alienation* inherent in these relations of production). By the time of the *Philosophy of Right*, labour has become sidelined within the "system of needs" (Habermas 1973:162), a concept derived from Hegel's appropriation of the Scottish Enlightenment's concept of *civil society*.

Aristotle criticized Plato for being unrealistic. Hegel made the same criticism of Kant. Marx criticizes Hegel's dialectical idealism not for being unrealistic, but for being upside-down: "With him it is standing on its head. It must be turned right side up again" (Marx 1978:29). Idealistic philosophy mystifies the true relationship between ideas and material reality, making it impossible to recognize either the really existing social relations of exploitation or the actual 'fluid movement' of these social relations. In the dialectical idealism of Hegel's 'reason in history,' it all seems to take place in the life of the mind, rather than in material reality. As Marx puts it, "In Hegel, therefore, the

negation of the negation is not the confirmation of the true essence, effected precisely through negation of the pseudo-essence. With him the negation of the negation is the confirmation of the pseudo-essence, or of the self-estranged essence in its denial” (1972:96). The ‘mobile nature’ of social life is revealed in thought, but simultaneously confined to thought; true existence seems to take place in philosophy (97).²⁷ Hegel is the first to formulate a dialectical account of history, but he becomes as accommodationist as Aristotle, and Marx lumps Hegel and Aristotle with Plato, arguing that the real problem of abstract thought is not too much optimism about the way things could be (lack of realism), but too much acceptance of the way things are (lack of criticism).

Marx locates Hegel’s missteps in the *Philosophy of Right*’s depiction of the relationship between *State* and *civil society*. Adopting the Scottish concept of civil society, Hegel incorporated and integrated egoistic activity into a social whole, thus making a significant move beyond Aristotle’s model (Hönneth 1995:13). According to Hegel, civil society is the realm of individual pursuit of self-interest (Hegel 1991:190). For Hegel this sphere constitutes an objective ‘system of needs’ (225). Following Adam Smith, following Mandeville (following Machiavelli), Hegel sees this egoistic sphere as producing public goods from private vices, that is to say, universals out of particulars. But he does not want to call them vices; neither does he want to use an atomistic model of the social (220). Hegel’s model assumes a primordial sociality while walking the line between Rousseau and Hobbes. He argues that the relation between State and civil society, when mediated by guild-like corporations (*Stand*) dialectically enables the

²⁷ Most famously: “What is rational is actual; and what is actual is rational” (Hegel 1991:20).

further development of Spirit, for

...[Spirit attains its actuality only through internal division, by imposing this limitation and finitude upon itself in [the shape of] natural needs and the continuum [*Zusammenhang*] of this external necessity, and *in the very process of adapting itself to these* limitations, by overcoming them and gaining its *objective* existence [*Dasein*] within them] Spirit is real only when by its own motion it divides itself, gives itself limit and finitude in the natural needs and the region of external necessity, and then, by moulding and shaping itself in them, overcomes them, and secures for itself an objective embodiment. (224)

By means of this dialectical process, the concretion of Spirit occurs in the citizens of the state, and “[their individuality [*Einzelheit*] and naturalness are raised...and subjectivity is *educated* in its particularity] the individual’s character is enlarged” (224).

Although Hegel wants to follow a dialectical movement, he retains a relatively cumulative notion of character development, one based, like Aristotle’s system, on virtues. The relationship between State and civil society, then, is one in which the self-interested sphere of civil society is sublated, emerging as the ethical realm of a State that takes care of the education (*Bildung*) of its citizens. This is not the revolutionary model of character that we find in Marx. Most importantly, for Marx, Hegel fails to address the general effects on *class* character. In conceiving of the dialectical reversal or cancellation of self-interest into ethical life at the level of the individual citizen, who is transformed from a self-interested actor into a conscientious civil servant (cf. MacGregor 1984), Hegel neglects the relations of production and the real material contradictions between classes, accepting, instead, the apparently functional-organicist model of society that Aristotle espoused, with the addition of the sphere of civil society. We will see such a

model again with Durkheim.

Marx accepts the conception of civil society as the realm of “egoistic man, of man separated from other men and from the community” (1972:40), but he does not accept society’s internal differentiation into the spheres of family, corporation, civil society, and State (especially the German state) as its final destination, or as a good thing in itself. Capitalist social differentiation, the increased division of labour, enables increased productivity, but it is productivity tied to the domination and exploitation of a class increasingly divested of all property rights (the proletariat) by a class increasingly possessed of all property (the bourgeoisie). It is pure alienation. For there to be a truly social emancipation rather than a merely political emancipation, State and civil society must themselves be done away with (51). Marx states this in theses nine and ten of the ‘Theses on Feuerbach’ (109). The formation of the proletariat—a class to end all classes—in the womb of capitalistic society, makes such a transformation possible. The collective proletarian experience of capitalism generates class consciousness in the form of a ‘revolutionary *Sittlichkeit*’; rather than the *phronesis* Aristotle attributed to experienced statesmen, the exploitation of the proletariat will produce a practical reaction, the educators will get their much needed education, and human activity will finally be recognized for its power to change circumstances.

Is such a ‘revolutionary *Sittlichkeit*’ likely to develop? And is such a revolutionizing practice as Marx describes (insofar as he actually describes it) capable of doing away with State and civil society, or with class as such? The events of the 20th

century lend little support to such a viewpoint. Leaving this question aside, however, let us return to the question of Marx's 'strong program' in the sociology of morality. We began by arguing that although Marx declines to pursue a science of morality *in the abstract* or in isolation from other spheres (i.e., especially the economic sphere), and though he rejects the possibility of doing this from a neutral standpoint, he does not reject the importance of moral criteria as such. Marx's writings constantly try to undermine both 'neutral' economic discourse *and* hypocritical bourgeois moralizing. His approach attempts to generate a unified model. Marx shares this attitude with both Aristotle and Hegel, who criticize Plato and Kant, respectively, for their abstraction of moral questions from reality. He differs from Aristotle and Hegel, however, because he adds revolution.

Marx argues in favour of a form of revolutionizing practice that will negate capitalistic society and, along with it, the abstractions of citizenship and the obscurities of State and civil society. The bourgeois abstractions of Enlightenment rationality which, via social contract theory, forget history or read it upside-down, as Hegel does, must be exploded by *praxis*, which understands history and then sublates it by means of revolution, "ridding itself of all the muck of ages" (Marx 1972:157) so that "the present dominates the past" (347); only through social revolution will merely political emancipation become truly human emancipation.

But what is truly human emancipation? If the abstractions of contractarian and organicist models of social life produce a kind of forgetting, truly human emancipation must be a kind of re-membering. This, indeed, is what Marx describes. In a truly human

society, all are members, and the character of human species-being becomes fully transparent. The dissolution of class society leads to the constitution of a new classless society. While modern *means* of production are preserved and extended, *relations* of production are reconstituted as collectively organized endeavours.

Transparency is not merely a metaphor, here; it is the telos of the Marxian strong program, which is why the Marxian project is best expressed by an ocular model. Bourgeois society begins the process of tearing away the ‘sentimental veil’ of feudal society by its competitive need to constantly revolutionize the instruments of production. In the famous phrase, “All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses, his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind” (338). What bourgeois society begins, communist society completes. This holds particularly for bourgeois values like the ‘popular prejudice’ of human equality, for once social relations are revealed in their truth, they can be transformed by revolution.

For Marx, social transparency entails full possession of our human senses. In *The German Ideology*, Marx and Engels build their critique of German Idealist philosophy on the basis of its abstractness, its *non-sensuousness*. German philosophy reflects German society’s ‘illusory community’ (1972:124, 125, 129, 137, 139, 151, 152, 159, 161), which is based on an abstract and ‘imaginary’ (130, 131, 137, 158, 162, 163) conceptualization of social relations which have “won an existence independent of the individuals; a power which in the last resort can only be broken by a revolution” (159). The proletariat must come into direct opposition to the State in order to overthrow that State (164).

Overthrowing the State means doing away with the independent, estranged existence of human production (of commodities, the State, law, etc.), leaving only direct human relationships: “The reality, which communism is creating, is precisely the true basis for rendering it impossible that anything should exist independently of individuals, insofar as reality is only a product of the preceding intercourse of individuals themselves” (157). With revolution, the good life will finally be achieved, free of abstract bourgeois moralizing, free of classes, State, and law; we will have a fully transparent social world.²⁸

On the basis of this notion that pure transparency or immediacy (i.e., non-necessity of the mediation of the State) is the condition of the future communist society, Marx suggests that *faith* will not be necessary (1972:36).²⁹ Once reality is no longer hidden by ideological mist, there is no more need to believe in the invisible, or to make it visible by means of imagination or abstraction. In the communist society, everything is transparent and everything is visible.³⁰ To produce this transparency, revolution must dissolve the illusory hopes of bourgeois emancipation. This is perhaps the real difference between Marxian messianic eschatology and its traditional religious counterparts. Rather

28 Althusser’s critique of the “mirror myth of knowledge” (Althusser and Balibar 1979:19) is well known for its argument against knowledge as “the mere relation of *vision*” (19) and his argument that “we must abandon the mirror myths of immediate vision and reading, and conceive knowledge as a production” (24). Indeed, Althusser has a general goal of limiting the power of metaphor in his analysis (26–27). He fails.

29 Universal visibility appears to entail the non-necessity of the ‘sociological imagination’ in the communist society. Was this why sociology was at a certain point deemed unnecessary (and therefore suppressed) in the Soviet Union (cf. Zilberman 1978)? See G.A. Cohen (1980) for a related argument. Of course, this also implies the non-necessity of dialectical thought, as such (cf. Adorno 1973:150). In practice, the demand for transparency, the demand that society take on, in Feuerbachian manner, the attributes of divinity (i.e., omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence, etc.) became the basis, in Stalinist Russia, for the infinite expansion of surveillance. The messianic form, concepts of faith and of hope, and a less ironic use of the theological, returns to Marxism with Ernst Bloch and Walter Benjamin.

30 Visibility (‘seen’) and transparency (‘seen through’) have a rather contradictory relation, of course.

than the consummation of faith, the communist society makes faith unnecessary.

E. TRANSPARENCY VS. REFLECTION: MARX & THE *THEORY OF MORAL SENTIMENTS*

These somewhat simplistic claims about transparency bring us up against models of the social that are based upon a permanent obscurity or mediation in human consciousness due to its intersubjective and *reflective* character.³¹ In the section that follows, two such models will be considered. The first model is that found in Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*. The second model is Hegel's recognition model, taken primarily from the section of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* that deals with the master/slave dialectic, but developing under the influence of Axel Hönneth's project, which developed from the work of his teacher, Habermas (1973:142–169), and focuses on Hegel's earlier writings from Jena (Hönneth 1995). Marx makes the following argument with regard to these two sorts of models: while individual humans achieve full humanity only in social relationships, "the intercourse of individuals" (1972:157) does not need to permanently include a moment of alienation, that is, a losing of the self in otherness in order to regain the self. Of course, 'in all hitherto existing societies' the fundamental dynamic has been class struggle; historically, social groups have come into being in competition with other social groups, defined by relative positions of domination and subordination, by the asymmetrical distribution of property and honour, freedoms and restrictions. But this competitive struggle for recognition, with its necessary detour of alienation and estrangement, is not fundamental to human nature. The struggle for recognition can no

31 Or due to the fallibility or one-sidedness of reason, as in Weber's reading of modernity through the notion of rationalization rather than alienation (cf. Löwith 1993).

more be successfully separated from productive labour than the theory of morality. The fundamental question, as he puts it in the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, is *species life*, “the working-up of the objective world,” the ability to freely “form things in accordance with the laws of beauty” (1972:62).

In the communist society, the otherness involved in the objective world that we *freely create* by our activity involves *objectification* but not *alienation* (Lukács 1967:xxiv). Only our own will constrains our intercourse with the world and with others; we have no illusions about the origins or meaning of this objective world. If there is reflection, it is an un-flickering reflection, without distortion. Alienation arises from concrete relations of production that consist “in tearing away from man the object of his production” (Marx 1972:62). Estrangement from others *follows* rather than preceding this condition: “an immediate consequence of the fact that man is estranged from the product of his labour, from his life-activity, from his species being, is the *estrangement of man from man*” (63). Historical developments in labour and production initiate the fall into estrangement and alienation rather than these being a part of social relations *as such*.

Marx accepts that, historically, the phases of alienation humanity experienced in the different modes of production (i.e., primitive, ancient, feudal, and capitalistic), have enabled the emergence of the coming communist society, but this future mode of society will bring an end to alienation. Therefore, Marx’s notion of self-transparency, whether tied to the so-called ‘early Marx’ concept of ‘species life’ or not, cannot, in the end, be based on a reflective social psychology of the sort embodied either in Smith’s ‘man

within the breast' or in Hegel's model of recognition. The problem of *recognition*, like the problem of morality, must not be dealt with independently of economic considerations.

In his works of political economy Marx cites Adam Smith more than anyone else except perhaps for David Ricardo. It may not seem surprising that he makes almost exclusive use of Smith's *Wealth of Nations* (hereafter *WN*) in the context of economic discussions, but the economic topic of *Capital*, the *Grundrisse*, and other writings, does not fully explain why Marx never explicitly deals with Smith's other major work, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (hereafter *TMS*). He does refer to it in a footnote in *Capital* (1978:579, n.2), and the 'tranquility' passages in the *Grundrisse* dealt with below could easily have been addressed to passages of *TMS* which contain arguments about labour identical with ones in *WN*. So why does Marx ignore Smith's theory of morality?

The simple answer follows our claim that Marx did not want to take up recognition as an isolated question: analyzing Smith's theory of morals would waste time and confuse the reader. Marx's strong program bars him from treating morality on its own. It is best treated as an ideological effect of material social relations. Treating it as an independent sphere simply reifies its force. In this Marx occupies a position at the opposite end of the spectrum from Smith, whose division of spheres seemed so complete that it gave rise, amongst his 19th century German interpreters to 'Das Adam Smith Problem' (Teichgraeber 1981), namely, the difficulty of reconciling the basic thesis of *WN*, the human "propensity to truck, barter, and exchange one thing for another" (Smith 1952:6) with that of *TMS*, that sympathy for others forms the basis of the moral order.

This is all conjecture. Nowhere does Marx give an explicit explanation for ignoring *TMS*. The real question concerns the significance a combined reading of *WN* and *TMS* has for Marx's critical reading of Smith, and here there are two relevant elements: 1) Marx claims that Smith *lacks historical insight* into the social basis of economic relations; 2) Marx rejects Smith's *characterization of work as sacrifice*. After discussing these two critiques, based on *WN*, we will examine their applicability to *TMS*.

With respect to history, in the *Grundrisse* Marx criticizes the economists' lack of socio-historical insight into self-interested activity in the realm of civil society:

...private interest is itself already a socially determined interest, which can be achieved only within the conditions laid down by society and with the means provided by society; hence it is bound to the reproduction of these conditions and means. It is the interest of private persons; but its content, as well as the form and means of its realization, is given by social conditions independent of all. (1973:156)

According to Marx, economists fail to produce a legitimate social history of the present.

With respect to Smith, Marx makes this remark: "What Adam Smith, in the true eighteenth-century manner, puts in the prehistoric period, the period preceding history, is rather a product of history" (1973:156). According to Marx, the political economists did not acknowledge the way that human interaction, and in the modern civil sphere probably more than in any other sphere, takes place in concrete socio-historical contexts. Smith advances significantly over contract theorists like Hobbes and Rousseau by refusing to begin with an hypothetical state of nature, but he stops short of developing a truly historical and concrete view of social development based in real and systematic analysis of human history. Marx has Smith's ahistorical claim about the universality of 'truck,

barter, and exchange,' in mind, here, which asserts the ubiquity of the pursuit of 'private interest' without taking note of the real historical conditions that have gone into producing the modern economic bourgeois class. Indeed, Smith explicitly brackets the question of the 'originality' of the propensity for exchange (1952:6–7).

With respect to *work*, Marx criticizes Smith for considering labour only as a sacrifice or a curse. This leads to a strictly utilitarian and instrumental view of work, in opposition to which “‘Tranquillity’ appears as the adequate state, as identical with ‘freedom’ and ‘happiness’” (Marx 1973:611). The inadequacy of this utilitarian or instrumental view of work as only a means matches the inadequacy of the political economists’ view of history and follows from it. Marx continues:

It seems quite far from Smith’s mind that the individual, ‘in his normal state of health...’, also needs a normal portion of work...Smith has no inkling whatever that this overcoming of obstacles is itself a liberating activity...self-realization, objectification of the subject, hence real freedom, whose action is, precisely, labour. (611)

As part of his concept of alienation, Marx concedes that in all the forms of work that have characterized class society (i.e., slave-labour, serf-labour, and wage-labour) work really does appear as an undesirable activity. However, taking the character of labour in class-society as the nature of work as such signifies another failure to think through the historical nature of social life and the real character of human activity. We need work, and we need to work creatively. In fact, it is through creative work that we become fully human. This form of work, free from the coercion of slave, serf, or wage-labour relations, is not merely its opposite, that is, tranquility, leisure, relaxation, non-seriousness. Not at

all. For Marx, “Really free working, e.g., composing, is at the same time precisely the most damned seriousness, the most intense exertion” (611). Work of this sort becomes possible, according to Marx, when two conditions hold: “(1) when its social character is posited, (2) when it is of a scientific and at the same time general character, not merely human exertion...but exertion as subject...an activity regulating all the forces of nature” (611–612).

To what extent do these two criticisms apply to Smith’s *TMS*? Well, with respect to history, Marx’s criticism is, if anything, more true of *TMS* than it is of *WN*. *WN* attempts to systematically assemble and analyze a wealth of statistical and historical detail, that is, to carry out Rousseau’s dictum in the *Social Contract*, “count, measure, compare” (Rousseau 1968:191). *TMS*, on the other hand, sets out an ahistorical model of moral sentiments that contains a significant nostalgia for Classical Greek society, Stoicism in particular, but without constituting a truly historical and historicizing theory of moral development. Like his contemporary Adam Ferguson’s *An Essay on the History of Civil Society* (1995), Smith’s *TMS* contains significant cyclical themes.

Smith develops a truly sociological theory of morality, in *TMS*, but one built on the social *imagination*, rather than on creative work, or social ‘exertion as subject.’ Thus Marx would take the division of Smith’s economics from his social-psychology/moral philosophy for an evasion which enables Smith to construct a biographical but ahistorical model of self-consciousness and of the moral sentiments based in the individual *imagination* rather than in *social and historical labour*. To put it simply, Smith constructs

a perfectly accurate model of bourgeois morality (or of morality in aristocratic-becoming-bourgeois society), which naturally treats the realm of morality as something distinct from that of the economy. This was implicit in the earlier discussion of Marx's analysis of bourgeois hypocrisy. In fact, this should suggest that Smith's failure to bring *WN* and *TMS* together in an explicit synthesis signifies more than Marx's failure to discuss *TMS*.

It is appropriate to rehearse the basic elements of Smith's important and groundbreaking sociology of morals. To begin with, the division of the economic from the moral sphere allows Smith to begin *TMS* with this rather non-economic claim:

How selfish soever man may be supposed, there are evidently some principles in his nature, which interest him in the fortune of others, and render their happiness necessary to him, though he derives nothing from it except the pleasure of seeing it. Of this kind is pity or compassion, the emotion which we feel for the misery of others, when we either see it, or are made to conceive it in a very lively manner. (Smith 1984:9)

Marx writes in tones of moral outrage tempered by irony, not pity, but as a follower of Rousseau, Marx would agree on pity's importance. Smith conceives of pity differently, and his view of society's effect on 'natural' sentiments diverges greatly from Rousseau's. For Smith, pity, as a pre-social human instinct, is natural, but not very powerful. In most circumstances, although the average person can feel pity for others, "The most frivolous disaster which could befall himself would occasion a more real disturbance" (136) than the catastrophic disappearance of an entire (far off) nation. For Smith, only social interaction can transform this rather 'feeble spark of benevolence' into a power strong enough to produce really sympathetic action. According to Smith, as opposed to the pre-social and largely visually-based feeling of pity, "Sympathy, therefore, does not arise so

much from the view of the passion, as from the situation which excites it” (12).

Sympathetically understanding a situation requires a socially developed power of imagination that exceeds the direct effects of pity.

In social situations we find ourselves compelled to use our imagination, both in our attempts to express our own experiences and in our attempts to understand those of others; for instance, we are commonly impelled to judge the veracity of another’s claims to be in pain. We must use our faculty of imagination, on the one hand, in order to put ourselves in the position of the other with respect to their experience (22), and on the other hand, to imagine how we must appear to them. Both feeling sympathy *for* and evoking sympathy *from* the other require the mediation of imagination.

Smith argues that the repeated need to make such judgments in relation to another person necessitates the development of an established ability to change positions, in the imagination, in order to view the situation “from the place and with the eyes of a third person, who has no particular connexion with either, and who judges with impartiality between us” (135). Smith calls this third, imaginary person, the ‘impartial spectator.’ We develop the ability to consult this ‘impartial spectator’ in the course of everyday interaction with others. Such an ‘impartial spectator’ is necessary for the development not only of moral sentiments, but of self-consciousness as such.

While the development of this ability goes some distance to socially strengthening the original force of our compassion, it is not particularly strong at first (26). Something more is needed, and, indeed, something more is forthcoming, again by means of a natural

development of our social natures. When we combine this ability to imaginatively take the position of others with our strong impulse toward self-interest, it develops into a full-blown conscience, a desire to be able to approve of ourselves and our actions from an impartial perspective. Smith calls this conscience the ‘man within the breast.’³² The dialectical interaction of self-interest and sympathetic imagination transforms our impulses of self-love into the love of the “superiority of our own characters” (137). By combining the weak sentiment of pity with the faculty of imagination, Smith formulates the origins of a force capable of binding individuals to others by their desire to be able to approve of their own actions according to rigorous and impartial social principles standing above their immediate self-interest.

To return to our imaginary Marxian critique, the first thing to suggest is that Marx would have rejected Smith’s emphasis on the development *in the imagination* of the other person’s position. Both the impartial spectator and the ‘man within the breast’ would be, for Marx, bourgeois concepts applying to bourgeois characters living in relatively similar material conditions, encountering each other in the kind of face-to-face encounters that would lead to some conception and acceptance of their real, material equality. Between classes, by contrast, such an impartial spectator would have a ghostly existence indeed. Between classes, in situations of real material conflict, the imagination shows itself consistently incapable of achieving any such moral sympathy, serving, instead, to reinforce rationalizations of inequality and domination (perhaps most effectively in forms

32 While Smith sometimes uses ‘impartial spectator’ and ‘man within the breast’ interchangeably, the latter introjected object is more appropriately associated with fully-developed moral capacity or conscience.

of sentimental but hypocritical bourgeois charity), or finally revealed as an illusion hiding a fundamental conflict resolvable only by overthrowing the class relation entirely. Until their internal contradictions reach a critical limit, notions like the equality of all humans serve merely as justifications through mystification.

Precisely the former sort of conflict relation, one still merely simmering, not yet boiling over, kept Aristotle, the ‘greatest mind of antiquity,’ from recognizing the moral equality of women and slaves with citizens. As an earlier quote suggested, this barrier to sympathy for other classes cannot be surpassed “until the notion of human equality has already acquired the fixity of a popular prejudice” (Marx 1978:65–66), and this is itself a consequence of the material development of the means and relations of production, which has as a consequence, not a cause, the development of the social imaginary (which, do not forget, Marx calls a ‘popular prejudice’).

Marx rates the imagination rather low as a potential contributor to intellectual virtue. It is rooted in material circumstances rather than being a semi-autonomous (and productive) form of reason, much less a science. While Marx everywhere implicitly endorses the force of natural sympathy as the basis for the social bond, this force requires the kind of transparent situation that will allow individuals to perceive at least some aspect of the other directly. The first and most important condition for workers’ solidarity is that the *sameness of conditions* of labour become so clear that a ‘class in and for itself’ can form. The bond becomes *internal* to the members of the class, since they are engaged in shared productive labour. The role of the ‘popular prejudice’ about equality can only at

a certain material point become operative in this regard, as a collectively produced and recognized orientation toward the social world. In a class society, which is based in class conflict, this can only happen when opposed classes become truly visible in their opposition to each other, when the limits of exploitation of one by the other have been reached. Proletarian revolutionizing practice critically mobilizes and then dissolves (shows to be abstract and unreal) the ‘popular prejudice’ about equality espoused or imagined by the bourgeoisie. The terrain *shifts* (Althusser and Balibar 1979).

TMS represents interactional conflict in relatively mild form, primarily because Smith deals anecdotally with conflict between individuals, not classes. This coincides with our suggestion that Smith divides the economic sphere from the moral sphere. However, since Smith’s mirror conception of conscience, one constituted by internalizing an imaginary external position, theorizes consciousness as such, it is perfectly capable of offering explanations for the dynamics of conflictual and asymmetrical relationships. Even conflictual relations, for Smith, are structured by efforts of the imagination. Marx intentionally does not develop a social psychology of this sort. For Marx, any reflective or mirroring aspect of the self is much more material, and not merely metaphorical or imaginary. In Marx, the mirroring happens to a large extent outside of consciousness, at the same time as it happens to consciousness. For Marx, we could say, mirrors are real objects, real products of human labour, and we relate to them via a real material dialectic, as their producers and users, producing effects in our material self-consciousness and orientation toward the social and material world. Instead of mirror metaphors, Marx

refers to *forces* and *relations of production*. Marx considers self-consciousness and reflection at the macro-level, as outcomes of the productive relations of the entire society.

Marx's critique of social illusions, definitively stated in the section of *Capital* entitled 'The Fetishism of Commodities and the Secret thereof' (1978:76–87), derives in general terms from Rousseau, who first made the argument against the illusory nature of bourgeois consciousness, distinguishing the bourgeoisie from both the citizen and the natural man. Rousseau argues that culture, and society generally, which introduce inequality into human relations, have undermined morality by cutting off the possibility of a simple and straightforward relation to the self and its needs. Opposing the Hobbesian state of nature with his own hypotheses, Rousseau argues that in picturing a 'war of all against all' one mistakenly takes a variety of socially produced needs (i.e., those based in the social vices of pride, envy, and greed) for natural needs (1964:129). Marx drops the idea of a pre-societal 'state of nature,' substituting an undifferentiated 'primitive society' (cf. Engels 1942) and adding alienation from others as an initial stage of social development (i.e., a fall from natural to alienated sociality).

Rousseau sees the history of civilization as the gradual deterioration of morality and of authentic self-relation (1964:51). Marx rejects Rousseau's nostalgia but largely adopts his critique of bourgeois morality (initially by adopting the term 'bourgeois' as a term of derision). For Marx, as for Rousseau, individual reflective self-understanding fundamentally misleads, becoming the source of all kinds of social vices posing as virtues. Above all, reflective self-understanding in a class society produces vanity and

hypocrisy; with regard to equality, hypocrisy is the illusion that one judges others by the same standard by which one judges oneself. On the basis of a scientific class analysis, some bourgeois ideologists (in training) can get as far as recognizing hypocrisy, and ‘cutting themselves adrift’ from their class.

Again, following Rousseau, Marx sees the only way out of bourgeois illusion as the creation of a transparent form of society, one driven not by particular wills in competition with each other, nor even by the sum of individual wills, but by the general will. Something good can come from bourgeois society: the eventual destruction of all its own illusions. Although Marx does not accept Rousseau’s model of democracy, he accepts the ideal of a fully transparent society.

For Marx, to see the individual self as arising out of reflective relations fundamentally based in the imagination is to take sickness for a state of health. What Smith reads as the benign development of social sympathies, Marx reads as class struggle hidden by an ideological and one-sided conception of equality. For Marx, ‘impartiality’ sees only one side, and only from the outside. Formal equality renders substantive inequality invisible. The theory of the ‘impartial spectator’ enshrines *estrangement* as a permanent human condition. In fact, Smith argues that the real culmination of conscience comes in the civil sphere, in the realm of strangers. Intimate relations with family and friends are inadequate for the purposes of achieving a real moral impartiality, for “The propriety of our moral sentiments is never so apt to be corrupted as when the indulgent and partial spectator is at hand” (Smith 1984:154). Here a key element of the slide from

the theory of moral sentiments to *laissez-faire* economics seems to have been accomplished, for Smith implies that, in the end, morality reaches its final development, its most impartial form, in the realm of civil society. Again, Smith does not adequately develop this link or its tensions (Mallory 2012).

According to Marx, however, the bourgeois conscience, or ‘man within the breast,’ holds to a variety of hypocritical ‘liberal’ beliefs, or popular prejudices (Marx 1978:66) that serve to justify real inequality by means of an ideology of abstract equality or impartiality. This bourgeois conscience arises at a stage of history that must itself be superseded and does, in fact, supersede itself, for bourgeois activity is as much a form of revolutionizing activity as proletarian activity. The melting of solids, remember, is a process of bourgeois revolution, driven by the principle of *competition* (Panitch 2001:25). Smith’s bourgeois dialectic, by contrast, attempts to circumvent the revolutionary moment by making *conscience* into the endpoint of social development. For Marx, however, agonistic dialectical relations (i.e., in the form of class struggle) would presumably come to an end when, through revolutionizing practice, bourgeois conscience and its partner (i.e., exploitation; estrangement; inequality; fundamental guiltiness of social life) are transcended, along with class society, by the advent of communist society (cf. Adorno 1973:11, 150).

Against this strong program, Smith’s weak program contends that social relations are permanently structured by the detour of the imagination. Importantly, Smith acknowledges the fallibility of this imagination. Indeed, stretching his concept of the

imagination to the point of infallibility would reduce it to the utilitarianism that he steadily pushed to the margins of *TMS*. In fact, for Smith, society works, indeed thrives, precisely because the social dialectics of ‘impartial spectator’ and ‘man within the breast,’ of self-interest and self-regard, have a certain tendency to error built into their functioning. Here Smith’s *laissez-faire* conception of providence, the ‘invisible hand,’ comes on the scene, and a synthesis of Smith’s two great works again appears possible.

Smith’s economic and moral analyses appear to be bound by the notion of unintended but beneficial consequences of action. These unintended consequences are rooted in a certain consistent failure of thought to understand its own purposes; that is, reason fails to recognize the true character of its underlying motives, and consequently misunderstands the results of action. In the economic sphere, our admiration of utility *as such*—our tendency to *imagine*, admire³³ and desire a utility which nonetheless exceeds our own possibilities of use or consumption (1984:179–180)—drives us to forms of productive labour that provide a *surplus*; the result is an increase in the material wealth of all. Our imagination is driven both by the natural appeal of utility for its own sake, and the notion, based on imagining the lives of the wealthy, that wealth will produce happiness. This is a deception, but “It is this deception which rouses and keeps in continual motion the industry of mankind” (183).

Smith’s providentialism remarkably synthesizes Rousseau’s bleak version of the

33 Smith transforms the concept of utility from top to bottom. Some contemporary economists still have not assimilated this insight, especially regarding its applicability to public works projects. The fault may lie with Smith’s own failure to explicitly develop the relationship between *TMS* and *WN*. One avenue for exploring Smith’s contemporary relevance would be a comparison with Bourdieu’s conception of *fields*.

mirror self and Bernard de Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees* (1957), rendering a more benign judgment on the nature of social life than either of his predecessors. Self-interested actors find themselves producing more than they can consume, "and thus without intending it, without knowing it, advance the interest of the society" (Smith 1984:185). At the same time, rather than being lost in envy, greed, and vanity, like Rousseau's bourgeoisie, Smith's citizen, compelled by the formal egoism of civil society, its status as a 'society of strangers,' develops capacities of impartiality and fairness. Self-interested activity advances not only the material interests of society, it also produces an unexpected moral surplus. It is important to note, of course, that Smith did not have absolute faith in the 'invisible hand,' and registered a variety of concerns about future social developments, including the development of capitalistic monopolies, and alienating working conditions (West 1969). In addition, the 'invisible hand' does not ensure happiness but only social benefit or interest conceived as increases in material productivity and wealth (Smith 1984:184; 1952:194).

Marx criticizes bourgeois morality, however, for being hypocritical, not for its fallibility. Class-interest hides behind moral platitudes. The hypocrisy can only be cancelled by social revolution. But if Smith is correct, and we cannot escape the need to render the invisible (self) visible by means of the imagination, our situation is more complicated, for in Smith's system, intellectual error has been turned to the service of society, not in Marx's revolutionary sense that the proletarian revolution was gestating in the womb of bourgeois society, but in the evolutionary-adaptive sense that society was

turning individual-oriented activity to collective account.

Significant consequences for our conception of labour follow from Smith's providential synthesis of error and social benefit. In general, apart from the minimal labour necessary for survival, labour must be motivated and mediated, according to Smith, by the imagination. The appeal of utility exceeds the use of utility (cf. Arendt 1998:154). If there is no separating work from the imagination then, by extension, there is no work, even the production of a perfect work of art, that is not subject to unintended and misunderstood consequences. As a result, there is no possibility of bringing the economy under the completely rational control of utilitarian considerations, since utilitarian considerations are themselves always impossible to isolate from aesthetic considerations or from the underlying social dynamics that give them their social force. Smith's remarks on the 'man of system,' which recall those of Aristotle on the difference between the perfect and the possible, are germane, here, since they place limits on the possibility of social engineering (cf. Giddens 1990; 2003).

Smith's ingenious and individuating combination of utility (instrumental activity) and the imagination would have been read by Marx as, in the end, a way of keeping apart rather than reuniting mental and physical labour. This fundamental dualism (which appears in Weber as the divide between instrumental and value rationality, in Durkheim as the dualism between the individual's biological and social being), implies that the social is always going on in some way *behind the backs* of individuals. Smith's 'invisible hand' operates as a *deus ex machina* guaranteeing the functioning of the whole. By

limiting the efficacy of rationality as such, Smith reveals himself as a Protestant thinker: highly skeptical of Scholastic *casuistry*, but retaining a conception of providence. Social functioning combines rationality and irrationality and makes use of unintended consequences, or indirect inferences (of predestination), rather than being organized as a 'Great Chain of Being.' The 'invisible hand' contains much more Calvin than Aquinas.

For Marx, however, this way of relating work and imagination could not be a synthesis, but only a chimera, a misbegotten attempt to reassemble the fragments of alienated humanity by conceiving of the social bond as something constituted in the imagination rather than through collective action, an ineffective fantasy rather than the creative construction of the social world and the revolutionizing domination of nature accomplished through *praxis*. Smith's use of the imagination re-institutes the division between mental and physical labour as a permanent division within the self, no longer as the division between reason and passion, but as that between imagination and action, self-approbation and self-preservation. In this context, the passions are conceived in such a way that they are constantly crossing the border between imagination and action. Recall that for Smith what ultimately drives the imagination is the desire for self-approbation, and it becomes evident that *anxiety*, too, is a fairly permanent aspect of self-relation, not solved merely by material security but only by developing virtues; by extension, *alienation* is incorporated, as a permanent possibility, into the daily round of interaction, but it is never wholly vanquished; the problem is how to keep the passions from crossing back and forth between imagination and action in self-destructive ways, and this question

is posed at the level of the individual (or perhaps at the level of social institutions), not at the level of class. Smith resolves this tension with selected elements of Stoicism rather than revolution. He (like Marx) fails to resolve, however, the social contradiction between hedonism and asceticism-Stoicism produced along with the material surplus attendant on society's new industrial productivity. Not until Weber would this question receive sustained sociological reflection.

To turn our discussion back onto the track, however, let us return to Marx's argument that Smith sees labour as the sacrifice of 'tranquility' (Marx 1973:611–615), for this conception of labour is what requires Smith to use the deceptions/seductions of the imagination to explain how anyone would work beyond the minimum required. For Marx is correct: in *TMS*, as in *WN* (which was Marx's reference), Smith suggests that "Happiness consists in tranquillity and enjoyment" (1984:149). In a key element of the argument, however, Smith then goes on to suggest that "The great source of...misery and disorders...[arises from] over-rating the difference between one permanent state and another" (149). Again, Smith builds the idea of the permanent fallibility of reason into his conception of social dynamics, particularly with respect to realizing grand projects. Misery and disorder refer here to that case in which the 'man of system' attempts to make all of society over into a new and (delusively) preferable state.

With regard to the key question, the relationship between labour, imagination, and morality, Smith's sociology of morality contends that the desire to be well-loved lies behind the desire for greatness, for wealth and external honours. The tranquility that

Smith refers to is the state of “being trusted and believed” (166), and it is available to any individual who practices the virtues of truth, justice, and humanity. That is, behind the fallibility of the imagination lies the true insight that being trusted and believed (and this includes trusting and believing oneself) is the highest good for the individual person. This insight releases one from the delusions that drive the pursuit of riches beyond one’s own capacity to enjoy them. Overcoming alienation, then, means a form of self-reconciliation accomplished by reining in one’s imagination. But this implies a very Protestant salvation, a split between the good life for the individual and the good life for society. For Smith, the good life is always available to individuals, for “notwithstanding the disorder in which all things appear to be in this world, yet even here every virtue naturally meets its proper reward” (166). Thus there is an element of quietism in Smith, and a remarkably transformed version, via Stoic and Protestant elements, of the Classical notion that *contemplation* is a higher form of activity than *labour*. Without reverting to Classical forms, and while staunchly refusing the value of monastic withdrawal from the world (134), Smith reaffirms the notion that we may effect self-reconciliation by recognizing the disjunction between happiness and the search for it by means of instrumental action (i.e., labour as sacrifice). While the efforts of those captured by the idea of utility may lead to public benefit in the form of increased material productivity, the true path to individual happiness involves bypassing the deceptive elements of the imagination—which keep us struggling to fulfill a series of false needs—and consolidating the moral gains of the imagination in the form of the clear-thinking ‘man within the breast’; stoic

insight rather than revolution. Thus this peculiarly modern approach to morality tends to divide the individual good from the social good. In this way, the ambivalences of both Mandeville and Rousseau live on in Smith's system. While he provides a sociological theory of morality's development through social interaction, he provided nothing like a complete program for its production or maintenance at the level of society. A synthesis of Marx and Smith would need to produce a political notion of solidarity out of Smith's notion of moral imagination and Marx's critique of exploitation.

F. SUFFERING & WRONG: THE INFLUENCE OF ROUSSEAU ON MARX

There is another point on which to use Smith and Marx as foils for each other, and that is on the question of suffering. Writing in the context of 18th century mercantilism, before the full effects of the Industrial Revolution on society could be seen, Smith's economic and moral theories were liberal theories in a conservative climate (cf. Rothschild 1992). Nevertheless, though Smith had nothing like the factory inspectors' reports on which Marx based 'The Working-Day,' it remains a point of some significance, and one that follows from Smith's exhortation to 'live with strangers,' that he is critical of excesses of sympathy. Against the 'whining moralists,' Smith offered the following optimistic remark: "Take the whole earth at an average, for one man who suffers pain or misery, you will find twenty in prosperity and joy, or at least in tolerable circumstances. No reason, surely, can be assigned why we should rather weep with the one than rejoice with the twenty" (140).³⁴ Marx finds such a conclusion impossible, and for two reasons. First, in

Marx's view (and perhaps the century of industrial development between Smith and Marx

34 See Gertrude Himmelfarb (1992) for a contemporary neo-conservative version of this position.

explains some of the difference) the ratio of miserable to prosperous was at least the reverse of Smith's numbers, and getting worse. Second, for Marx, individual and social good are inextricably tied. One cannot truly be had without the other. Alienation for the poor means alienation for the rich as well. Thus, working toward social transformation in the context of capitalism means sharing in suffering, not in happiness.

While, for Smith, the good society limits the visibility of suffering (i.e., we are compelled by the 'man within the breast' to limit our attempts to gain sympathy), for Marx, the good society is transparent, and recognizes and redresses all real suffering, not by illusory religious projections of justice in the hereafter, but by its direct visibility and society's institutionalized responsiveness. For Smith, by contrast, imagining the suffering of those with whom we have no personal connection excites a sterile anxiety (140; cf. Boltanski 2004). It is more natural, and in a certain sense more healthy, to imagine and identify with the happiness of others. The situation best arranged for the development of moral impartiality, then, is the society of strangers. For Smith this would be the sphere most driven by moral impartiality; but he seems to have failed to foresee the paradoxical outcome of this moral impartiality, the possibility of society-wide instrumental detachment. While Marx provided a powerful polemic against this form of morality, it would take Weber to demonstrate the internal logic of this development in his analysis of Calvinism's links with capitalism.

For Marx and Marxists, the starting point cannot lie in identifying with the imagined happiness of others, or in establishing a realm of so-called moral impartiality

whose basis lies in an imaginary realm. This would just be the abstract realm of bourgeois right, the ideology of Capital. The impartiality of Capitalist civil society is simply the bourgeois hypocrisy which succeeds in using ‘equality’ and ‘freedom’ (i.e., ‘free labour’) to prove that the employer has no responsibility for the well-being of the worker beyond the explicit limits of their contract. There are no limits to the development of this detached and ‘impartial’ view. As he puts it in ‘The Working-Day’: “Capital that has such good reasons for denying the sufferings of the legions of workers that surround it, is in practice moved as much and as little by the sight of the coming degradation and final depopulation of the human race, as by the probable fall of the earth into the sun” (1978:256–257). Here is the real impartiality of civil society. This is one reason why Marx almost never uses the language of morality, but quite regularly uses the language of *suffering*. It is a question of *making visible* the real and concrete totality of social life, the contradiction between the forces and relations of production. Although he provokes the reader’s imagination with his descriptions, representing the material conditions of the suffering and labouring proletariat is not reducible to a work of the imagination. ‘The Working-Day’ depicts 19th century working conditions in England, but this making visible of the invisible is the work of painstaking, thorough, scientific documentation and analysis. The imagination is engaged in order to ‘picture’ what has been described. But it may also be engaged to manipulate the ‘popular prejudices’ of the bourgeoisie, their 19th century sentimentality, cultivated so well in the novels of Charles Dickens. Is Marx really not appealing to identification in the imagination? If we follow the ‘strong program’ in

cultural sociology put forward by Smith and Alexander (2003), this is all we need to split Marx's claims open. His texts come into view as rhetorical barrages that constantly draw on powerful and culturally relevant symbolism for their force.

If we follow our earlier suggestion that Marx has a deep connection to Rousseau's theory of morality, it may be possible to discover the hinge between Smith and Marx by noting the difference between Smith's 'man within the breast' and Rousseau's 'law of the heart,' the natural sentiment of pity. While Smith's 'man within the breast' is a social product, Rousseau's pity is pre-social. All theories of morality that put its origins prior to socialization or in excess of socialization (as, indeed, Marx does), must rely on something like Rousseau's concept of 'heart,' that is, an inwardness that is unmediated by any outwardness.³⁵ According to Rousseau, "...pity is a natural sentiment which, moderating in each individual the activity of love of oneself, contributes to the mutual preservation of the entire species. It carries us without reflection to the aid of those whom we see suffer; in the state of nature, it takes the place of laws, morals, and virtues..." (Rousseau 1964:132–133). Pity produces action in aid of others without the mediation of reflection. As civil society emerges it undermines this pre-social sociality, and a replacement can only be produced, as *amour-propre*, through a mechanism of social organization that establishes and maintains the sovereignty of the *general will*. This quick version ignores important complexities and contradictions in Rousseau's thought,³⁶ but it highlights its parallel with Marx and the general arc of loss and recovery in his thought, of an

35 The contrast here is between an artificial and a natural organ: man-within-the-breast vs. heart.

36 Rousseau presents a spectrum of resolutions for politics and love in *The Social Contract* (1762), *The Government of Poland* (1771), and *Reveries of the Solitary Walker* (1778) (cf. Cladis 2000).

inevitable *fall* into society and a *recovery* of self through the emergence of a unified form of society that replaces reflective sociability with collective sociality. Marx breaks from Rousseau by introducing the centrality of creative labour, which points beyond a ‘merely political’ solution (i.e., the cultivation of ‘love of nation’ that Rousseau recommends) to a *human* solution in which unalienated collective creative work founds the possibility of a thriving and transparent society, a *species-being*, to use, again, Marx’s earlier term.

For Smith, pre-social pity cannot be the ground for an unreflective impulse to provide aid. Pity is not strong enough for that. Action of this sort could only be *habituated* action, which is to say, already mediated by the imagination rather than preceding reflection. It would be something like Bourdieu’s *habitus*. Marx, however, dialectically engages Rousseau’s pre-social pity with Smith’s ‘popular prejudices,’ not in order to return to the state of nature, or to praise bourgeois conscience, but in order to develop the contradiction between bourgeois morality and the reader’s natural sympathies, his “innate repugnance to see his fellow-man suffer” (Rousseau 1964:130). In order to avoid the suggestion that what he does here is reducible to the play of imagination mobilized by rhetoric, but that it is the scientific and dialectical presentation of real suffering, which is a direct effect of the contradiction between forces and relations of production, Marx must work under the premise that his scholarly work sublates the play of imaginative reflection rather than being subordinated to it. Natural pity, whose antithesis is abstract *political* emancipation, (i.e., the appearance of bourgeois right as the perfection of *alienation*), shall re-emerge in the form of *human* emancipation. But for this

to be the direct and transparent social bond that Marx demands, it must be a truly *internal and objective* bond, not merely a form of *introjection*, as with Smith's 'man within the breast.' This can only be possible if there is a real difference between the work of the imagination and *creative labour*, between bourgeois morality and human emancipation. *Solidarity* could never be the work of imagination alone, but only the product of imaginative/creative work. In the end, the depiction of the poor working-conditions of men, women, and children in industrializing Britain is not enough to start a revolution, although Marx thought it could be combined with other forms of organization and mobilizing in order to do so.

We began our discussion of Smith by asking why Marx did not address Smith's *TMS*. Most of the preceding discussion has attempted to present a contrast between Smith's bourgeois morality of the civil sphere, a rather celebratory view of modern life with strangers, and Marx's indictment of bourgeois morality as hypocritical, imaginary, and in need of revolutionary cancellation/realization. For Marx, all of the necessary analysis could be done by engaging Smith's political economy, since *WN* is the text that addresses labour directly, the base to which bourgeois morality is the superstructure. For Marx, the sociology of morality cannot be a separate sociological field. It must be a part of a complete science of society. And the imagination cannot be taken on its own, either, but must be addressed in the context of creative work, understood to be social, and understood in a scientific manner, "not merely human exertion...but exertion as subject...an activity regulating all the forces of nature" (Marx 1973:611–612). When

Smith mistakes all labour for *sacrifice* he hamstring his own ability to recognize *suffering*³⁷ as an eradicable element of labour because he has failed to bind his theory of morality closely enough to his theory of economics.

Since Smith never really explained the link between *WN* and *TMS*, he left us with the easy target of an unexplained gap between production and imagination/recognition. For what may have been reasons of political prudence (Rothschild 1992), Smith left so many of the possible links between his two great works un-explicated that two centuries later the popular misunderstanding of the relationship between his moral philosophy and his economic theory could hardly be more pronounced. The source of the misunderstanding, it can be argued, lies in his failure to fully explicate the significance, for both moral and productive action, of the fallibility of reason and the subsequent tendency to misunderstand the basis of one's happiness. Such an explication would have needed to give a more detailed critique of the idea of utility by means of Smith's understanding of the imagination. In particular, it would have needed to develop full-blown alternatives to the Marxian concepts of *reification* and *alienation*. It is in the absence of a complete explication of this sort that the two most significant mis-readings of Smith have developed. On the one hand classical or *laissez-faire* liberals have taken up the idea of the 'invisible hand,' reading only the *WN*, and even that selectively, ignoring its labour theory of value and deploying a straightforward utilitarian/rational choice model for human action. On the other hand, the American pragmatist tradition took up the

³⁷ This is not to suggest that Smith does not recognize suffering, or unequal labour relations. This is clear from, for instance, his well-known but still underestimated claim that "laws and governments may be considered...in every case as a combination of the rich to oppress the poor" (cited in Rothschild 1992:92).

social psychology of the looking-glass self (without adequately giving Smith credit). But they also adapted Smith without fully understanding his point about the mediation of utility by the imagination (which renders our action only indirectly pragmatic), and so, under the influence of evolutionary theory, they fell prey to exaggerations of social ‘process’ and ‘organization’ (cf. Cooley 1962; 1964). In short, both the pragmatists—including Habermas’s Mead-inspired theory of communicative action (1984), which never mentions Smith—and the classical liberals missed this point.

If we take Smith’s social psychological account of individual conscience seriously, not from the overly optimistic side of pragmatism nor the overly ‘realist’ perspective of classical liberalism, we are left with the impression that it is not so easy to subsume the imagination under the rubric of creative labour. Or, rather, it becomes unclear how ‘creative’ should be related to ‘labour.’ For Marx, of course, this is the usual avenue by which to re-introduce the distinction between mental and physical labour, and by which to undermine his entire analysis. It is at the risk of betraying whatever loyalty one might have to Marx, therefore, that one accepts this as a true dilemma. In a perhaps mistaken turn, we shall seek clarification through a related pair of concepts, *production* and *recognition*. This means returning to Hegel.

G. HEGEL & MARX ON PRODUCTION & RECOGNITION

Charles Taylor distinguishes Marx from Hegel in this way:

Since for Hegel the subject is *Geist*, the Spirit of all, reconciliation must come through recognition, since a transformation of the whole universe is without sense. Marx's reconciliation on the other hand must come through transformation, because his subject is generic man; and man, unlike God, cannot recognize himself in nature until he has put himself there through work. (Taylor 1975:550)

At least to start with, we will accept Taylor's characterization as a fair contrast between Marx and Hegel. Juxtaposing Hegel and Marx by means of the recognition/production binary helps to give another angle on the relationship between imagination and work. According to this view, for Marx, the form of production determines the presence or absence of mis/recognition. In Hegel's version, by contrast, self-consciousness is produced by the play of recognition, misrecognition, and nonrecognition and it is this dialectical play that establishes the relations of production. One iteration of this process is described in the master/slave dialectic outlined in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1977).

Even with the help of this initial juxtaposition, the concept of *recognition* sits in an obscure position in relation to *imagination* and *praxis*. While Smith's theory lacks a notion to combat Marx's early conception of alienation and later focus on the 'fetishism of commodities,' the situation is different with Hegel, as Marx is beholden to Hegel for key elements of both concepts. So while the bourgeois imagination described by Smith can be attacked using notions of either alienation or fetishism, Hegelian recognition is not vulnerable in the same way. Nevertheless, a great deal of Hegel's dialectical account of self-consciousness overlaps with Smith's account of the natural development of

intersubjective norms and principles from actors initially supplied only with self-interest, an undeveloped sentiment of pity, and the ability ‘to do and to suffer.’ To begin with, Hegel’s model of civil society, discussed earlier, derives in large part from his reading of Scottish Enlightenment thinkers. Recall, for instance, how in that model self-interested activity in the sphere of civil society led, through interaction with others, to an ‘enlargement of character.’ But while Smith and Hegel both have a dyadic notion of the self coming to be in the reflection of the other’s recognition, two elements present in Hegel’s model are not emphasized in Smith’s. First, Hegel depicts the initial encounter—at least in the *Phenomenology* (1977: ¶178–197, 111–119)—as the life and death struggle between two. Second, *labour* synthesizes this life and death struggle, understood here not merely as sacrifice (of tranquility) but also as self-formation. As a result, Hegel brings labour and self-consciousness closer together than Smith does. But just how close?

With respect to the first element, the life and death struggle, this limited form of the Hobbesian model³⁸ (limited because 1) it comes not in an isolated state of nature, but as a moment in an already-established form of sociality, 2) is between two consciousnesses, rather than ‘all against all,’ and 3) leads to a different outcome, that of a dyadic sovereignty, the master and the slave), terminates, initially, in the death of one.

Later, it results in the submission of one to the other. This relation of domination, in

38 One should not forget to detect the parallel between Hegel’s master/slave model and the model developed by Hobbes’s contemporary, Descartes, in the first of his *Meditations on First Philosophy* (1993 [1641]), where in the course of doubting whatever he can, including his own physical being, he considers whether his perceptions are deceits produced by an evil demon. He turns, in short, to an imaginary contest in which an opponent attempts to mislead Descartes about reality and existence, including his own. Both narratives draw implicitly, if obscurely, on the story of Jacob wrestling with the Angel in *Genesis* 32, as well as, somewhat more directly, on *Proverbs* 9:10 (also 1:7) ‘The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.’

which the master is given a form of recognition (as master), gives rise to a third stage; the newly enslaved one works for the master. The slave then develops a new form of recognition, recognizing him or herself in the course of working and producing things. The slave's labour on nature, then, gives rise to a form of self-recognition denied to the master, since his recognition requires the slave. The master becomes materially dependent upon the slave, while the slave learns that the master's recognition has become unnecessary (once the initial impulse, the coercion to work, is finished with). Of course, he will later be drawn back into the play of universality and particularity as he finds that otherness persists, and that the products of his labour have an independence of their own.

Thus Hegel moves division and conflict to the centre of his discussion, just as Marx does. However, he actually goes further than Marx by positing the primordial character of this division. There is no *fall* into alienation because, in Hegel's version, *otherness* is constitutive of the self. This does not make it permanently impossible to understand one another, but it does make impossible the kind of social fusion, or transparency, that Marx appears to recommend. One of the reasons for this is that, in a way that Marx does not tend to acknowledge, our work on nature is *always* a work of alienation and a production of alienation. We simply cannot, by means of objectification, contain or control nature in the totalizing way that Marx sometimes implies. In the same way, our relation to others always begins with alienation, and continues to draw from alienation. If a passing remark may be permitted, I think that distinguishing between *objectification* and *alienation* is not as satisfactory a solution as Lukács tries to suggest

(1967:xxiv). According to Marx, however, while dialectics serves to explain the constitution of the self in all hitherto existing societies, since these are characterized by class struggle, it cannot explain species-being—or, that possibility of the human that exceeds all hitherto existing societies—which would be in a certain sense beyond dialectics, just as it is beyond class struggle. While Hegel sees all history as dialectical, Marx implies that in a communist society the only dialectic will be ‘from each according to their ability, to each according to their need.’

Marx interprets Hegel’s view of nature as a form of idealistic dualism, a Platonism that takes nature for a defective version of the true Ideas. In the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* he puts it this way:

Externality here [in Hegel] is not to be understood as the *self-externalizing world of sense* open to the light, open to the man endowed with senses. It is to be taken here in the sense of alienation—a mistake, a defect, which ought not to be. For what is true is still the Idea...nature is something defective... (1972:103)

According to Marx, Hegel’s formalistic starting-point builds the division between reason and nature into his logic; in this division, it is *nature* that is deemed to be fallen. As a result, “because the conception is *formal* and *abstract*, the annulment of the alienation becomes a confirmation of the alienation” (99). Once again, Hegel gets it upside-down. For Marx, as we stated earlier, social estrangement *follows* rather than *preceding* alienation from the products of labour. In Marx’s conception, the struggle for recognition comes *after the fall*, as a *consequence*. In his own words, “An immediate consequence of the fact that man is estranged from the product of his labour, from his life-activity, from

his species being, is the *estrangement of man from man*. If a man is confronted by himself, he is confronted by the *other man*” (63). Instead of a fallen *nature*, Marx posits the *social formation* as fallen. Here Marx reveals his fundamental reservations about ‘the social.’ That is, in a certain sense Marx preserves Rousseau’s conception of the ‘state of nature,’ from which we have fallen, in order to preserve the historic messianic arch of fall and redemption (through collective action).

We have suggested that there is no *fall* in Hegel. Dialectical co-constitution is the permanent state of human self-consciousness. We do not fall into separation. Nature is constituted by separation and division, by difference. Reconciliation through recognition, therefore, is in some ways a misnomer, since reconciliation and recognition are always happening, if they happen, *for the first time*. And these reconciliations are only ever partial, since their starting-point is the recognition of difference; to be a *part* of a *whole* is still to be a part. The hermeneutic circle may not be a vicious circle, but this is not to say that there is a way out of it. As Adorno writes, in *Negative Dialectics*, and seemingly in full agreement with Hegel on this point, utopia would be “a togetherness of diversity” (1973:150).

While Hegel’s ‘philosophy of history’ sometimes appears Whiggish, it is not quite a teleological account of history. Nor does it seem to be messianic. In fact, Hegel’s account of temporality seems to undo this sort of eschatological temporality. This is not the place to offer a complete version of this argument. We need, simply, to point out that Hegel’s dialectic tends to highlight the difficulty of maintaining Marx’s sequence of

events, or of maintaining a strictly linear sequence of events at all. Just as Smith's work seems to show that the work of the imagination is more pervasive than Marx wants to admit, so, with Hegel, issues of alienation and recognition do not seem to fit the linear sequence Marx needs in order to preserve his implicit narrative of fall, alienation, exile, and redemption. First, Marx fails to explain the source of the original fall into relations of domination and estrangement. How did it happen? Following Rousseau and his story of groups trapped together on islands by natural disasters, we can use the 'increased volume and density' argument, that competition and inequality are produced by population growth (as Durkheim does, later on), but this tends to drain the narrative of its fall and redemption trajectory precisely because of its character as an immanent and naturalistic history. The narrative of fall and redemption, by contrast, is necessarily transcendental. Time conceived as linear turns out to be more teleological than cyclical time. In the three volumes of *Capital* Marx mutes but does not do away with this element of his thought by avoiding references to revolution or communist society. While the *Manifesto* is filled with promises, *Capital* is not. Nevertheless, the Marxian project is structured according to a promissory motif. *Capital* was meant to be the fulfilment of one aspect of the promise, the scientific analysis of economic relations, and Marx, who questions others but does not explicitly bring himself into question, quietly comes to occupy the prophetic if not the messianic position. In the end, Marx's *dialectical* time is subject to (and fits within) *linear* time. This is an important aspect of his strong program (and not only his).

This is not the moment to take up the questions of temporality and messianism.

These will be taken up later on, however, as we discuss the transition from a strong to a weak program, which may be thought of as a transition from thinking about the promissory quality of human relations through the ‘strong’ messianism of Marx’s philosophy of history to thinking about it through the ‘weak’ messianism of Walter Benjamin’s angel of history. For now, this can be safely bracketed from our more immediate question of Marx’s conception of *creative labour*, or of *revolutionizing practice*, which is the basis for distinguishing between *production* and *recognition* and for giving production priority. While Hegel’s model of the master/slave dialectic seems to undo Marx’s sequence, Marx’s concept of revolutionizing practice is irreducible to Hegel’s model precisely because Marx focuses on collective rather than individual struggle. In addition, there is the simple point that Marx’s empirical and theoretical work on the *exploitation* of labour must be taken seriously. While Hegel’s verdict against *Moralität* in favour of *Sittlichkeit* means that recognition requires a ‘concrete totality,’ Marx’s critique of *Sittlichkeit* and of Hegel’s dialectic generally was that it lacks concrete links to productive labour and is ultimately based in intellectual rather than material conflict. The master/slave struggle turns out to be just a metaphor, for Hegel.

In the last couple of decades, Hegel’s conception of recognition has drawn increasing attention (cf. Gutmann 1994). In general, this renewal of Hegel has come at the expense of Marx, who is consistently accused of economistic reductionism (e.g., Fraser and Hönneth 2003:2). Against this apparent reductionism, Axel Hönneth, following Habermas (cf. Habermas 1990a:75–82), has developed a phenomenological

approach to the ‘struggle for recognition’ that combines the conceptual model provided by the young Hegel, the materialist research of G.H. Mead, and the empirical results of 20th century developmental social psychology (Hönneth 1995).

There are good reasons for suspecting theories of recognition of not taking Marx’s conception of creative labour, of productive revolutionizing practice, seriously enough. In *Redistribution or Recognition? A Political-Philosophical Exchange* (2003), Axel Hönneth and Nancy Fraser debate issues of social justice, but sidestep the question of production by choosing *redistribution* as the foil for recognition. Their discussion takes place entirely within the bounds of the bourgeois liberalism Marx criticized. Dealing with *suffering* and *wrong* without attending to the conditions and possibilities of *creative production* turns a strong program in the sociology of morality into a moralizing form of discourse that is tendentially, to use Nietzschean language, based in *ressentiment*. Furthermore, this kind of discourse tends to squander its sociological abilities. While *ressentiment* is not absent from Marx’s discourse, when he points in the direction of *praxis* as opening onto human emancipation, but does not ‘fill it in’ substantively, he evades the demand for revenge. That the actual ‘revolutionizing practice’ of the twentieth century was often ‘filled in’ with *ressentiment* is a problem for Marx and Marxism, but as impressive as empirical developments in social psychology have been, they do not warrant dropping attention to *production* in favour of the redistribution/recognition binary. Once again, Marx’s strong program demands a unified approach.

If contemporary appropriations of Hegel have unfairly glossed Marx’s attention to

concrete conditions of production as ‘economism,’ Marx, for his part, did not take recognition seriously enough. Perhaps more importantly, Marx did not adequately respond to the question of *desire*. Labour cannot solve all the problems of recognition or of desire. Marx avoided a number of these problems by largely avoiding the problem of childhood. In his critique of child labour, the question of an unexploited childhood is largely a residual category. Habermas, and following him, Hönneth, seem to be correct in turning to the empirical and materialist attention that the American pragmatists devoted to the childhood formation of self-consciousness. Both Cooley’s (1962) descriptions of childhood acquisition of language (mostly derived from observing his own children), and Mead’s (1967) discussion of *play* and *game* show significant forms of social life preceding productive labour.

Axel Hönneth explains this lack in Marx by claiming that while Marx’s political historical writings were expressivist, the Marx of *Capital* is utilitarian, since everything there depends upon the objective conflict of material interests. Insofar as revolutionizing practice is absent from *Capital’s* conceptual apparatus, this seems fair. The struggle for the working-day is pictured as a perpetual competitive struggle over quantities. Like other utilitarian approaches, *Capital* seems at some moments to assume that desire and satisfaction can be treated as quantitative questions. On the other hand, however, *Capital* attempts to establish an unbridgeable abyss between exchange value and use value. But having divided use value and exchange value, Marx proceeds to locate exchange value in labour power precisely in order to establish a strict quantitative equivalence between

surplus value and the rate of exploitation. Use value gets left to the side, and, along with it, the question of human needs and desires. The next chapter will return to the question of use value in the context of a comparative discussion of Marx and Nietzsche.

At the same time, Hönneth argues that Marx sidelines recognition and refuses to acknowledge that bourgeois morality has any substance (Hönneth 2003:150). Hönneth dismisses this move as a tendential utilitarianism (128). Even if Hönneth is correct, however, that Marx's argument seems vulnerable to an utilitarian reduction, this critique does not apply to the concept of *praxis*, in relation to which utilitarianism could only be a reified or abstract form of the question: 'how shall we live?' Marx does not fill in an answer to this question precisely in order to leave it open to the creativity of *praxis*.

The turn to redistribution, however, seems to signify the failure of *praxis* to materialize, a failure to develop forms of activity capable of re-integrating all that the alienated labour relations of capitalist society have succeeded in alienating. Against Hönneth and Fraser's shared turn to liberalism, which recommends *reform* but not *revolution* in the relations of production, Marxian thought insists on retaining the focus on revolution. Hönneth and Fraser develop normative approaches to morality that try to appear as if they are strong, but to a Marxist these are weak bourgeois projects.

H. MARX & THE INTELLECTUAL VIRTUES: MARX'S STRONG PROGRAM

While it has taken the entire 20th century to fully exhibit the failure of *praxis* to materialize in the way that Marx imagined, this failure was already becoming evident in Marx's lifetime. In the absence of truly collective forms of transformative *praxis*, what is

available to one still committed to a unified approach? In the face of the failure of organization, Marx retreats to the territory of the intellectual virtues. Unfortunately, this reinstates a hierarchical differentiation between mental and physical labour.

The last line of the epigraph at the beginning of this discussion of Marx's sociology of morality is the Latin phrase *dixi et salvavi animam meam* ('I have spoken and saved my soul'). Marx used this curious phrase at the end of his 'Critique of the Gotha Program' of 1875, which was a critical response to a proposed unification of two factions of the German Social Democratic Party. In the critique he dismantled the proposed new program of this party, revealing a text full of error and tautology, "hollow phrases [that] can be twisted and turned as desired" (1972:384). Marx was deeply pessimistic about unification between the Lassallean and Eisenach factions. According to István Mészáros, the use of the Latin phrase expresses Marx's "radical skepticism" (1987). Marx expected to be disregarded, and expected that the two factions would go ahead with their unification, a unification that mangles theory not for the sake of *praxis*, but for a confused combination of vague idealism and *realpolitik*. Beyond this 'radical skepticism,' Marx's use of this quotation contains layers of irony, outrage, and resignation. It also reveals Marx's frustration with the carelessness of the document he is criticizing, and his devotion to scholarly integrity.³⁹ For Marx, what holds for a scientific document also holds for a political document: in neither realm are hypocritical platitudes justifiable.

39 In *Capital*, after quoting Wade's 'History of the Middle and Working Classes' approvingly, Marx then calls the historical part of the book "a shameless plagiarism" (1978:233n.4). Althusser claimed that Marx was "fanatical" with regard to "scrupulousness in his references" (Althusser and Balibar 1979:19).

The sense of the phrase, if not the precise wording, comes from the book of Ezekiel, the Hebrew prophet of the Babylonian Exile. In the third chapter of that text, Ezekiel relates a series of divine commands that divide the prophet's obligation to prophesy from the outcome of the prophecy. The prophet is called to speak the truth, regardless of the responsiveness of its addressees. If they listen, they too will be saved. Thus, read literally, Marx's use of the phrase 'I have spoken and saved my soul' indicates that, beyond 'speaking truth to power,' in his prophetic role he takes no further responsibility for the political outcome of the unification of the factions of Social Democrats. They will only be saved if they listen to his words. Of course, a number of perplexities surround Marx's use of religious phrases, which, admittedly, must usually be read as ironical. Nevertheless, the use of this phrase raises interesting questions regarding Marx's analysis of morality. Is this the retraction of his 'strong program?'

I concluded my initial discussion by claiming that Marx refuses to develop a sociology of morals that is separable from political economic considerations. The use of the prophetic formula *Dixi et salvavi*, however, could be interpreted as an assertion that moral ends, at least that of personal integrity, can be achieved even in the face of political failures. To put it in contrast with Adorno's phrase, Marx may be read here as saying that 'wrong life' *can* be lived 'rightly.' In Weberian terms, it may be tempting to interpret Marx as exhibiting here an 'ethic of absolute ends.' A more defensible reading, however, would be to suggest that Marx is simply continuing to deny the possibility of dividing the ideal from the real. The problem with the 'Gotha Program,' as mentioned earlier, is its

contradictory combination of idealism and realism. Fudging the clarity of the party platform, rather than being practical, actually turns the Social Democratic project into something impractical, a set of moral postures with no possibility of being coherently enacted. In short, Social Democracy here lapses into illusory flights of the imagination and the (opportunistic) hypocrisy of bourgeois morality; the Gotha Program only pretends to unite the ‘ethic of responsibility’ with the ‘ethic of absolute ends.’ It would seem, then, that with the turn to intellectual integrity, Marx does not give up on his ‘strong program.’ The *good* must also be *true*, and a political program characterized by “slovenly editing” (Marx 1972:398) can be neither. In Marx’s work, this unification is made possible primarily by appearing to subordinate moral virtues to intellectual virtues.

Imagination plays a key role in the subordination of moral virtues to intellectual virtues. Remember, Marx retained Rousseau’s instinct concept of pity in rejecting the reflective social psychology developed by both Smith and Hegel. The pre-reflective instinct of pity is deformed, however, when labour becomes alienated and social relations subsequently lose their transparency via the distortions of class. In class society, morality develops as a reflective but socially bounded form of self-consciousness. Divided from concrete forms of collective action, moral discourse that is grounded in imaginative or speculative thought merely reflects the class position of the thinker. Not until the imagination has been reunited with non-alienated forms of labour will it be possible to speak positively, and not just critically, about morality. Thus a series of illusory forms of class morality are sandwiched between a pre-reflective and post-reflective morality, and

Marx's strong program turns out to be a project of reclaiming natural pity by means of the modern intellectual virtue of critique, expressed best in the form of satirical scientism.

As a form of revolutionizing practice, however, Marx's approach turned out to be unsustainable, at least insofar as the twentieth century failed to develop a truly post-bourgeois form of revolutionizing practice. More than a decade into the twenty-first century, *competition* rather than *organization* remains the dominant form of revolutionizing practice. This is the case in the intellectual field (i.e., in universities, in technological development, and scientific 'discovery') as much as anywhere else.

In practical political terms, the subordination of the good to the true was used to justify a wide variety of repressive practices by socialist and communist parties and governments. For those who rejected Stalinism and other forms of 'actually existing socialism,' on the other hand, adherence to intellectual virtue developed into a renewed recognition of the division between theory and practice. Following Weber (who followed Kant on this), Horkheimer and Adorno made it part of the tradition of critical theory. In this transition from a strong to a weak program in the sociology of morals, a decisive principle, which has already come up in our discussion of Adam Smith, is the law of 'unintended consequences,' also described as the 'irrationality of rationality.'

The weakening of Marx's strong program consisted primarily in rejecting the subsumption of moral to intellectual virtues, and in reinstating the permanent role of the imagination in the constitution of morality. As we shall see in the next chapters, Weber made this transition to a weak program by means of Nietzsche, rejecting the idea that

intellectual virtue could tell one how to live, reestablishing the gap between the good and the true as the gap between *fact* and *value*. At the same time, Weber and those influenced by Weber kept alive Marx's concern with the connection between knowledge and hierarchical relations. In their critique of the relation between teacher and student, however, their conclusion was that only by dividing science from politics, theory from practice, fact from value, could illegitimate relationships of domination be reduced. Since their basis was in the necessarily asymmetrical relation between adult and child, these hierarchical relations could not be entirely eliminated.

At the beginning of our discussion, I argued that Marx's strong program differed from the classical moral philosophy of Aristotle by its introduction of historical and revolutionary concepts. In order to do this, Marx followed Rousseau's rejection of Aristotle's defense of slavery: "Aristotle was right; but he mistook the effect for the cause. Anyone born in slavery is born for slavery—nothing is more certain...But if there are slaves by nature, it is only because there has been slavery against nature. Force made the first slaves; and their cowardice perpetuates their slavery" (Rousseau 1968:51–52). A linear and revolutionary conception of history can only be developed after naturalistic arguments justifying inequality have been refuted. Marx went beyond Rousseau's conception of political formations and historical change, however, in making explicit the idea that history unfolds as a product of human activity. Against Rousseau's rather immobile model of the democratic 'general will,' a social state that may or may not come, Marx's conception of revolutionizing practice provided a dynamic theory of social action

in which the human world could become fully transparent, a constantly comprehensible product of human intention such that social productivity would be turned entirely to human ends, a system of objectification without alienation or reification.

Marx's program depends upon a fundamental division between the capitalistic present and the communistic future. With regard to present society, Marx distinguishes the *hypocritical* character of bourgeois morality from the *critical* character of proletarian morality, that is, *morality as indignation*. Both forms are confined to capitalistic society, however, and cannot offer the form of morality that would prevail in the post-capitalistic society. That morality will be open-ended; it will be the unification of science and social life; the consummation of morality. Its coming into being in a truly emancipated society happens when one-sided class morality becomes unnecessary; the real appearance of morality coincides with the end of (class) morality; not imagination but praxis, not formal recognition but free and creative production.

Marx formulated his strong program in the sociology of morality in terms that refused to give the imagination a central role because he was suspicious of imagination isolated from *praxis*. Imagination in Smith's sense operates fundamentally as a relatively contemplative means of developing a social bond between two individuals, and it comes into direct contradiction with Marx's notion of collective activity, the shared production of social reality. While *praxis* is *creative*, it is a mistake to turn to a detailed analysis of individual social psychological faculties.

Marx remains the sociological theorist most important for turning our focus back

to the real conditions of work, and to the possibility of transforming social relations through productive activity, through praxis. In addition, Marx's implicit conception of (class) *character* as something that can be both revolutionary and revolutionized distinguishes him from all conservative/cumulative conceptions of character. Finally, in opposition to Hönneth's claim that Marxism becomes utilitarian, the Marxian strong program attempts to leave the question of *use* open, as a question to be decided through concrete solidarity building and through revolutionizing practice.

While elements of the Marxian strong program persist, the continuing failure of a successfully revolutionizing proletarian *praxis* to materialize means that other questions need to be taken up. This chapter addressed *imagination* and *recognition*. On the way to discussions of the classical sociological programs of Weber and Durkheim, the next chapter develops further commentary on Marx in comparison with Friedrich Nietzsche, with special regard to the question of the academic vocation and the will to truth.

CHAPTER 2: GUILT, DEBT, VOCATION, & VALUE: MARX AFTER NIETZSCHE

...in the first volume of *Capital*, in his analysis of “The Fetishism of Commodities”...Marx’s targets here are...those professionals and intellectuals—“the doctor, the lawyer, the priest, the poet, the man of science”—who think they have the power to live on a higher plane than ordinary humanity, to transcend capitalism in life and work.

Why does Marx place that halo on the heads of modern professionals and intellectuals in the first place? To bring out one of the paradoxes of their historical role: even though they tend to pride themselves on their emancipated and thoroughly secular minds, they turn out to be just about the only moderns who really believe that they are called to their vocations and that their work is holy. It is obvious to any reader of Marx that in his commitment to his work he shares this faith. And yet he is suggesting here that in some sense it is a bad faith, a self-deception. This passage is so arresting because, as we see Marx identifying himself with the critical force and insight of the bourgeoisie, and reaching out to tear the haloes from modern intellectuals’ heads, we realize that in some sense it is his own head he is laying bare. (Berman 1982:116)

A. FROM STRONG TO WEAK PROGRAMS: THE GOOD & THE TRUE

The last chapter called Marx’s approach to morality a ‘strong program’ in part because he subsumes morality to science, the good to the true, and in part because Marx directs his efforts to bringing about a social revolution rather than to merely measuring the empirical gap between the good and the true. Any morality not rooted in fully transparent, undistorted and ‘right-side-up’ social relations is only the morality of a particular social class. While rooted in social realities, and in a sense functional for them, the validity of bourgeois morality is confined to its role as an ideological rationalization of prevailing class relations, providing sanction for their organizing tendencies, solidarities, and *teleological* “in order to” (Wood 2004:105), but obscuring their material bases and principles, which are historically constituted, dynamic, subject to alteration, and neither naturally nor divinely sanctioned. Moral rationalizations of mere bourgeois class tendencies, whether formulated in religious terms or not, veil the real sources of social

value, interpreting them with pharisaical snobbery rather than in terms of the historical and ongoing human activities that constitute contemporary social arrangements and preempt a conscious formulation and enactment of collective intention. Bourgeois capitalist logic represses its irrational core and bourgeois history unfolds unconsciously “where the labourer exists for the process of production, and not the process of production for the labourer” (Marx 1978:460).

To make way for *true* morality, for concrete ethical life (*Sittlichkeit*) which would emancipate the possibilities of the good life from the formulations of abstract morality, we need transparent social relations that reveal the conflict between the essence and the existence of social and self relation and offer the possibility that they may, for the first time, be put into harmony. The bourgeois revolution brings about this possibility, against its own intentions and in spite of its own moralizing reformist projects, as it carries out an immense and ongoing transformation and expansion of human productive capacities by means of which “All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses, his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind” (Marx and Engels 1972:338). This evaporation (sublimation) of traditional cultural life and ideology will reveal—or perhaps *produce*—the truth of social life. When this bourgeois revolution advances far enough, the resulting transparency of social relations, especially the visibility and polarity of class conflict, will provoke the proletarian revolution, which will put an end to class conflict and to merely class-based morality. As the American Trotskyist-Marxist George Novack put it, paraphrasing the

New Testament—and the question of the sublimation/persistence of the (theological) tradition is central when one has recourse to “poetry from the past” (Marx and Engels 1972:439; cf. Goeghegan 2002)—“Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (Novack 1969:74).

Thus, although on the one hand Marx attempts to confine himself to a negative project, the immanent critique of bourgeois morality and political economy, his project remains a ‘strong program’ insofar as he does not cede the validity of a separate moral sphere that would be independent of material conditions or subject to the expertise of some other kind of analyst. All talk of the good must be subjected to the dialectical materialist science of the true. So Marx attempts to systematically unveil the hypocrisy of bourgeois moralists and thereby to contribute to the completion of the bourgeois revolution and the preparation of the proletarian one.⁴⁰

Marx follows Hegel’s critique of the abstract formalism of Kantian *Moralität*. The

40 Gillian Rose provides a good summary of the usual Marxist (if not Marx’s own) position: Marxist theory implies that political practice follows from the analysis of class structure and class interests. This does not mean the derivation of ‘ought’ from ‘is,’ but that the universal interest is generated in the dynamic of capitalist development itself. There is, nevertheless, room for action, because if theory and practice are inseparable, they also strain towards each other, as classes-in-themselves become classes-for-themselves in the circumstances of crises of overproduction. The proletariat is represented as the potentially universal class, the class which may genuinely claim that its particular interests correspond to the universal interest. The question ‘What ought I to do?’ is valid within the mesh of theory and practice. Some of my students still pose it: whatever the particular class position of the individual, they yearn to find the mode of effective political action which will *necessarily* further the universal interest. (Rose 1996:61)

According to Rose this perspective “tends to assume that the intellectual, individual or class is somehow innocent of political practice until the theoretical work is accomplished, and the relation between particular and universal interest clarified” (61). However, we are already engaged in political activity, even before we have clarified individual, party, or class interest. Establishing a particular class as the universal class is already political, and the result of this act cannot be guaranteed. One cannot be certain that acting in one’s own interest means acting in the universal interest: “For politics does not happen when you act on behalf of your own damaged good, but when you act, *without guarantees*, for the good of all—this is to take *the risk* of the *universal* interest” (62).

gap between *is* and *ought* that Kant accepts from Hume and reproduces as the antinomy of determinism and freedom—while rejecting and reversing Hume’s understanding of morality as rooted in sentiment—is just the proof, for Marx, that an abstract ought is a contradiction and that abstract formal logic is a kind of lying.⁴¹ In a way Marx reverts to William Wollaston’s pre-Humean position that “All immorality is falsehood” (Hudson 1969:16). The true antinomies are not logical but material and they are not paradoxical and irresolvable, forcing the positing of a transcendental *a priori*, but dialectical and capable of resolution (through revolution). In what I am calling a ‘strong program’ in the sociology of morality, the good is subordinate to the true (i.e., to science), and ‘this-worldly’ (i.e., it can be realized in the material world).

B. GUILT & VOCATION: SOCIOLOGY AFTER NIETZSCHE

Chapters three and four discuss two members of the (petty) bourgeoisie, Max Weber and Emile Durkheim, and their sociologies of morality. Although I will argue that Durkheim, like Marx, has a ‘strong program,’ while Weber’s is ‘weak,’ both Weber and Durkheim appear to be neo-Kantians, at least insofar as they accept a version of the gap between *is* and *ought* that also implies a permanent gap between practical and scientific reason and, subsequently, in the validity of professional bourgeois sociology. Instead of viewing that gap as the fissure through which revolutionary energy should flow, Durkheim adopts a reformist/progressivist position, emphasizing the need for meliorist policies aimed at

41 The simplest response to the claim that ‘ought’ cannot be derived from ‘is’ has always been to point out that there is no such thing as an ‘is’ that is not already imbued with an evaluative charge. Indeed, both Durkheim and Weber accept something like this caveat without therefore rejecting the methodological distinction between facts and values. The methodological distinction between facts and values is just the evaluative starting-point that characterizes science.

addressing inadequate levels of modern integration and regulation. Weber, by contrast, emphasizes the tendency for human action to have unintended consequences and advocates a kind of pessimistic existentialist heroism. To put it briefly, for Marx, revolution, for Durkheim, reform, and for Weber, decision.

I shall prepare the discussion of Weber and Durkheim by means of a comparison of Marx with Friedrich Nietzsche, a thinker that, like Marx, rejected both Kant and academic sociology (cf. their mutual distaste for Spencer and, by extension, for Social Darwinism), but for rather different reasons. Nietzsche's reframing of late 19th century European social philosophy contributed significantly to the ways that Weber and Durkheim diverged from Marx on issues of value, class, and bourgeois morality. Especially important, in this regard, is the relationship between Marx's labour theory of value and Nietzsche's pseudo-economism, which entails, among other things, the philological move by which he associates *guilt* (*Schuld*) with *debt* (*Schulden*) (1989:61–63, 70) setting the stage for his polemic against *ressentiment* and 'slave morality.' The move is pseudo-economistic because Nietzsche's ultimate view is vitalist, not economic ('more life!' exceeds utilitarian calculation). The 'assaying animal' is already a reactive form of human. The 'pathos of distance,' the aristocratic feeling of self-unity that precedes any comparison antedates the 'propensity to truck and barter' and to 'value.' One starts with 'good' and only later considers the other to be 'bad' by comparison. This is Nietzsche's vitalist recasting of Augustine's understanding of evil as privation. In the end Nietzsche is uninterested in grounding a theory of justice in a monolithic theory of

value (whether a ‘labour theory of value’ or a ‘value theory of labour’). The production of new ‘tables of value,’ the ‘transvaluation of value,’ is more original, more *active*, than calculative and comparative assessments of value. Marx, on the other hand, intended for the concept of ‘use value’ to avoid the reduction of human activity to economic valuation. He only partially succeeds in making this distinction.

The gaps and tensions between Marx and Nietzsche on issues of conventional scholarship and morality, and on the origins of value, provide some of the space and potential energy that Durkheim and Weber used to develop their understandings of contemporary morality. They do this in a very general and somewhat indirect sense, since neither Durkheim nor Weber spend much time explicitly addressing Marx and Nietzsche. Nevertheless, Marxian and Nietzschean ‘regions’ of thought affected Durkheim and Weber’s respective views of the role of professional social scientists as they (both) sidestepped revolutionary or radical activity, whether Marxist political activity or Nietzschean ‘transvaluation of values.’ Weber and Durkheim, both suspicious of Marx’s economism, were influenced in varying ways by Nietzsche on the question of value. While Weber accepts the more Nietzschean position, Durkheim sociologizes values by recourse to an analysis of ritual action, locating value in a realm of the sacred distinct from economic behaviour.

Leo Panitch describes “Marx and Engels’s distinctive political practice...[as]...the combination of social-scientific analysis, based on their materialist interpretation of history, with engaged political writing and speaking—pamphlets, lectures...—in which

they tried to make current history intelligible to activists” (2001:116). What neither of them did, however, was to try to found academic disciplines and institutionalize them in the university. Isaiah Berlin, in his influential liberal biography of Marx, suggests that this was not really possible, even had Marx wished to have an academic career. Marx’s academic options disappeared due largely to external events like the death of his father and the political condemnation of the Hegelian left (Berlin 1963:72). So, what happens when scholars attempt what could only be, for Marx, the ill-advised and ill-fated project—insofar, for instance, as it endorses the mental/physical division of labour—of instituting social science disciplines within the university, thus seeming to revert to the Kantian position on the ‘public’ and ‘private’ use of reason (1992; 1996)? To address this question, we must address the idea of sociology as a *vocation*, as well as a secondary idea, the relation of this ‘calling’ to *guilt* or *debt*. That is, perhaps the *profession* of sociology—professing to be a social scientist and professionalizing sociology as an academic discipline—is also a *confession*, an acknowledgement of undischarged responsibility or guilt. To endorse a gap between facts and values, as both Weber and Durkheim did, is to accept the existence of (or even to produce) unfulfilled (and perhaps unfulfillable) obligations.⁴² Adorno later formulates this as ‘the guilt in thinking,’ a guilt arising from the facts of modern life (1973:364).

Marx and Nietzsche rejected some element of what is involved in making this kind of profession (of guilt). Marx viewed it as an unjustified acquiescence to the

42 Here both Durkheim and Weber echoed, in their personal work ethics, Kant’s claim that the highest form of physical pleasure, the most innocent, comes from resting after work (Kant 1974:276).

bourgeois division of labour, one to be avoided by engaging in active political organizing. The guilt of the ‘professional’ scientist is just the guilt of not embracing revolutionary activity. Concern with individual salvation already begins to miss the point. In exchange for security and status one agrees to merely interpret the world instead of changing it. Yet *Dixi et salvavi animum meam*: we save our souls when we speak up and speak the truth, in the crucial political moment, about bourgeois hypocrisy and proletarian suffering. Nietzsche, by contrast, blamed the hemming-in [*hemmung*] of will to power by the will to truth, not the failure to acknowledge economic exploitation or suffering or to build links of solidarity with the working-class. Bourgeois intellectuals may have an admirable “intellectual conscience...[but]...They are far from being *free spirits*: *for they still have faith in truth*” (1989:150).

Weber and Durkheim knew and accepted elements of the critiques of bourgeois science developed by Marx and Nietzsche, but this did not, in the end, dissuade them from playing key roles in the institutionalization and professionalization of sociology in Germany and France, respectively. We can find important elements to understanding the professionalization of sociology in the details of the responses Weber and Durkheim made in the context provided by these two critiques of 19th century Enlightenment science. This period of professionalization incorporated (and perhaps also encrypted) some of the issues and subject matter of 19th century social philosophy of ‘independent scholars’ and ‘learned societies,’ of socialism, radical journals, and the social gospel, while discarding or divesting others. The gendered differentiation/hierarchization that

developed in early Chicago sociology between social work and social research provides a paradigmatic example (cf. Deegan 1988). The optimism (hubris?) of paternalistic professionalizing positivist sociologists can be seen in the work of Franklin Giddings, an early American advocate for both quantitative methods and for its use in eugenics, as can be seen in the article he used to introduce the first issue of *The Journal of Social Forces* (1922). This kind of social-engineering optimism persists here and there in various sociologies even to the present.

Marx rejected politically bourgeois science. Still, in Marx's terms, true members of the bourgeoisie *are* engaged in a type of revolutionizing practice. It is, however, a type of revolutionizing practice that undermines itself by constantly extending the reach of commodification into realms hitherto unexplored by the market while simultaneously rendering its old work uncompetitive or obsolete (as Weber knew). Thus one learns how to 'sell' ideas (cf. Horkheimer and Adorno 1988:197–198). As Marx and Engels put it in the *Communist Manifesto*, "The bourgeoisie has stripped of its halo every occupation hitherto honoured and looked up to with reverent awe. It has converted the physician, the lawyer, the priest, the man of science, into its paid wage-labourers" (Marx and Engels 1972:338). In other words, the bourgeois vocation does away with all fixed vocations, even if one is a "man of science."

Marx and Engels' position here is rather ambiguous. A clear articulation of this ambiguity is found in Marshall Berman's commentary on this position as it is found in Marx's later master-work, *Capital*. In the passage quoted at the beginning of this chapter,

Berman describes the performative contradiction in which Marx and Engels simultaneously covet and criticize the modern intellectual's faith in the sanctity of his calling (1982:116).

Many of the issues of vocation and guilt/debt that emerge in the period of sociology's professionalization can be understood as a response to this tension between vocation and wage-labour. While Berman points out that Marx implicitly includes himself in the ranks of modern professionals, Marx's account attempts to confine guilt to the hypocritical among the bourgeoisie without incorporating a confession of social guilt or debt into scientific method more generally. Marx's science reveals suffering and hypocrisy, and lays blame, but evades the possibility that the scientist, too, even the one that 'speaks the truth,' may be guilty of bad faith, or may speak from a position of moral compromise. Indeed, Nietzsche claims that the 'will to truth' tends not to admit the extent to which the meaning of its activity derives from or parasitizes suffering and hypocrisy. I will discuss the limits of Marx's strategy in terms of two critiques, first of Marx's notion of class, and second of his understanding of human nature and motivation. Nietzsche is important to both of these critiques, and an interpretation of how Nietzsche's writings on science, truth, and human motivation change the parameters of these questions may help us understand why both Durkheim and Weber subject issues of human *classification* and *motivation* to extended analysis.

While on the one hand we can read Durkheim and Weber as responding to Marx's accusations concerning the hypocrisy and mendacity of the bourgeoisie in a way that

partly concedes, partly defends, partly extends, it is also more than this. The ‘moralities of method’ (Rose 2009; Nietzsche 1966:48) that we find in both Weber and Durkheim were attempts to complete, correct, or otherwise sustain Kant’s notion of duty—as a principle that transcends mere inclination—in the context of science, but they were, at the same time, responses to a growing suspicion about the very will to truth that characterizes Marx’s project. Not only does Marx’s concept of class border on metaphysics, his understanding of science’s relation to rationality begins to appear naive in the light of Nietzsche’s critique.⁴³ After Nietzsche we have to answer the question of the will to power behind the scientist’s will to truth; and Marxist conceptions of economic class conflict may not do enough to explain the complexities of the character, motivation, and self-relation of the individual scientist. Accordingly, Durkheim’s and Weber’s moralities of method, their pursuit of the autonomy of reason, lead them to two different neo-Kantian conclusions: the foundational character of *validity* or of *value*. That is, in pursuing the ‘will to truth’ to its end (i.e., methodically carrying out hypothetical lines of reason), we find, at the origin of the truth, a new version of Kant’s ‘Copernican Revolution.’ Truth originates in an act of will, a simple assertion, whether value or validity, whether the individual or the collective will (Rose 2009:1–50).

In the previous chapter we addressed disputes between Marx and the theories of reflection developed by Hegel and Adam Smith. In this chapter, we face some of Nietzsche’s darker claims about the nature of human drives (i.e., that they cannot be so

43 These days we need to keep in mind Foucault’s analysis of the ambiguities of subjectivity and discipline. See Butler’s critical readings of Foucault (e.g., 1990:129–141; 1997:83–105; 2005:22–26, 111–136) and also Pearce’s preference for Durkheim’s reading of subjectivation (2001:156–157n.4).

easily reduced to a self-formative struggle for recognition), and the possibility that bourgeois morality and bourgeois science may be less about economic class divisions and social alienation and more about the sado-masochistic nature of modern selfhood.

C. 'TO FACE WITH SOBER SENSES': REVOLUTIONARY VOCATION

Nietzsche is perhaps only a kind of proxy for changes in late 19th century European social life and thought that compelled Weber and Durkheim to craft a response to a question that Marx was still able to skirt, even if not exactly in the way that Mannheim suggested in *Ideology and Utopia* (1972). As I have already suggested, Marx avoided the question of his own scientific vocation in the same way that he avoided having to lay out a positive moral program: by focusing on world historical questions of revolutionary class struggle against the suffering of the people. For Marx it was enough to identify and analyze how a revolutionary class may find itself faced with its world historical role; the section of the bourgeois class that 'cuts itself adrift' is mentioned in passing and is structured around metaphors of visibility, unveiling, and unbinding, rather than 'calling.' Indeed, insofar as the proletarian revolution is the 'social' revolution—the revolution that does away with *Klassen* in its character as a vestige of religious *Klēsis*, the persistence of 'sacred' callings—it is the kind of answer that does away with, or overcomes (*Aufheben*) the transcendent call. The industrial 'detail worker' must give way to the "fully developed individual...to whom the different social functions he performs are but so many modes of giving free scope to his own natural and acquired powers" (1978:458). Berman suggests that Marx "embraces enthusiastically the personality structure that this economy has produced"

(1982:96) even more than the bourgeoisie, who have a bad conscience about their revolutionizing activity: “In *The German Ideology* (1845–1846), the goal of communism is ‘the development of a totality of capacities in the individuals themselves.’ For ‘only in community with others has each individual the means of cultivating his gifts in all directions...’” (97). Faustian free development in all directions appears as a replacement for the one-sided ‘vocation.’ It follows, Terry Eagleton writes, that “Marxists want nothing more than to stop being Marxists...Marxism is meant to be a strictly provisional affair, which is why anyone who invests the whole of their identity in it has missed the point” (2011:1–2).

Marx emphasizes the class consciousness of the mass movement, not the particular calling of the individual.⁴⁴ The question of individual vocation is, as Rosa

44 Later Marxists (e.g., Lenin, Trotsky, Lukács, Luxemburg, Bernstein, Althusser, etc.) were left to deal with the question of vocation, as the practical demands of governing and organizing unfolded in ways that were increasingly difficult to confine, by repeated identifying “the workers” as the revolutionary class thus skirting individual *anxiety* about one’s calling. The problem of anxiety is addressed in chapter six.

Lenin’s “Better Fewer, But Better” [1923] channeling older understandings of calling, in which practices of discernment are the responsibility of the community and the church, recommended instituting bureaucratic standards of expertise as well as ideological tests (1968:367). Whether Lenin’s bureaucratic and Party-centred approach internally presaged Stalin’s methods or whether opting for the Party over the local soviets was merely a strategic or theoretical mistake remains a disputed question.

In *History and Class Consciousness*, Lukács addressed Party discipline and the Communist Party role in providing leadership to the revolution, arguing that “Organisation is the form of mediation between theory and practice” ([1922]1971:298). Theoretical disputes should be tied to concrete organizational decision-making and problem-solving. The organization mediates between the (spontaneous) mass and the individual actor, and individual vocation only makes sense when addressed as a concrete problem of organization (300). He emphasized the importance of party discipline (315–316), argued that in order to avoid developing a party along the bourgeois pattern (active leaders and passive mass) the party must engage the “total personality” (320), and depicted the party as the solution to the problem of vocation, for

The party as a whole transcends the reified divisions according to nation, profession, etc., and according to modes of life...by virtue of its action. For this is oriented towards revolutionary unity and collaboration...Its closely-knit organisation with its resulting iron discipline and its demand for total commitment tears away the reified veils that cloud the consciousness of the individual in capitalist society. (339)

At the close of the essay Lukács endorses the need for Party purges. Nigel Gibson and Gillian Rose argue that Lukács (and later Adorno) return to neo-Kantian ethical imperatives (Gibson 2002:280,

Luxemburg put it, “the angle of the isolated capitalist” (1973:34). For a Marxist, the call, *in nuce*, is simply this: “Workers of the World, unite!” (cf. Lenin 1968:78). This is not a matter of attending to the ‘still, small voice’ of conscience, but of responding to the harsh everyday realities of economic exploitation. The call, then, is neither ‘inner’ nor ‘transcendental.’ Neither the bourgeois nor the proletarian that becomes a revolutionary responds to a call so much as he or she faces reality ‘with sober senses’ and goes ‘where the action is.’ In Lenin’s “What is to be done?” [1902] the question of the relation between “spontaneity” and “consciousness” renders the idea of vocation an unnecessary mediation. Here he advocates exposures over calls: “To catch some criminal red-handed and immediately to brand him publicly in all places is of itself far more effective than any number of ‘calls’ ...Calls for action...in the concrete, sense of the term can be made only at the place of action...Our business as Social-Democratic publicists is to deepen, expand, and intensify political exposures and political agitation” (1968:51). Recognizing (collective) job insecurity and exploitation, and that, as the saying goes, ‘we must hang together or we will hang separately,’ becomes the main focus, not anxiety about one’s

291n30; Rose 2009). See also the recently reissued ‘Tactics and Ethics’ (2014) written by Lukács in 1919.

The “reform or revolution?” question is also relevant, here. Luxemburg accused Bernstein of inventing this either/or (Luxemburg 1973:8) as well as the question of “ethical” socialism. According to Luxemburg, Bernstein’s revisionism returns to bourgeois morality as to an “ethical simulacra” (58). Siding with reform *against* revolution involves (opportunistic) acceptance of the social distribution of roles and an abortive or merely opportunistic break with one’s (inherited) social position (contemporary labour unions continue such debates). Luxemburg suggests that “dialectics and the materialist conception of history...make Bernstein appear as an unconscious predestined instrument, by means of which the rising working class expresses its momentary weakness, but which, upon closer inspection, it throws aside contemptuously and with pride” (62). In other words, Bernstein unconsciously and accidentally enacts his vocation (like Judas), providing rhetorical flair to a crucial narrative moment in history.

According to Trotsky: “A revolutionary Marxist cannot begin to approach his historical mission without having broken morally from bourgeois public opinion and its agencies in the proletariat” (1969:26). In short, revolutionary movements require a revolutionary notion of vocation involving a kind of break or conversion. After the break, the binding to the party.

vocation. We must replace abstract bourgeois understandings of the individual actor, solipsistically concerned with his vocation, frantically meditating and skimming self-help books—late capitalism’s version of the Robinsonades Marx discusses in *Capital*—with a real historical understanding of how society comes to produce such an anxious individual (Marx 1973:83–84) for whom the question of personal vocation is also a question of personal salvation.

Whether rightly or wrongly, Weber and Durkheim did not (or could not) skirt (or sublate) the question of individual vocation in the same way. While they accepted the idea that the origins and justifications of social arrangements could only be formulated and understood in historical and empirical rather than divine or metaphysical terms or in the abstract terms of 18th century social contract theories, they both saw Marx’s class analysis as inadequate. Their sociological queries required an account of vocation that would be responsive to more than a century of Enlightenment considerations of individualism and autonomy, and though they acknowledged the growing autonomy of the economy, they did not accept the degree to which Marx conceived of economic class as developing into an absolute ‘master status.’ There is little to suggest, for instance, that either saw any convincing evidence that a revolutionary form of ‘class polarization’ was developing. Weber, of course, wanted, on the one hand, to distinguish between ‘Class,’ ‘Status,’ and ‘Party,’ and on the other hand to see capitalistic economic action as part of a broader social process of disenchantment and formal-legal rationalization (cf. Löwith 1982). Durkheim, on the other hand, saw capitalism as anarchic, generating not so much

a disenchanted ‘iron cage’ as a generally under-regulated or *anomic* society (cf. Rose 1992:xiii). Despite these apparently opposing interpretations of modernity, neither saw the working classes as a positive revolutionary force capable of bringing about the fulfilment of individual freedom, in part because they held rather conventional bourgeois notions of the irrationality of the masses and the power of demagoguery.

For Weber and Durkheim, the question of scientific vocation and the social guilt/debt/responsibility it entailed—what Adorno called “the need in thinking” (Adorno 1973:408), a society-wide condition of “matter out of place” (Douglas 2002:44) which Durkheim diagnosed as “abnormal forms” of sociality and as the “forced division of labour” (1984:310–322)—cannot be adequately resolved by economic or productivist notions of capitalist expropriation and accumulation, or by the notion of total social revolution, especially one tied to a prophetic philosophy of history. For Weber and Durkheim, the need to treat vocation in immanent terms disqualifies future-oriented social utopias from being sciences. As Durkheim wrote in his Latin thesis on Montesquieu, “a discipline that looks to the future lacks a determinate subject matter and should therefore be called not a science but an art” (1960:4; cf. Benjamin 2003:27).

The modern notion of an immanent vocation, a self-calling, which Marx attempted to revolutionize/sublate by denying the validity of bourgeois individualism, and which Weber and Durkheim attempted to clarify or strengthen in rather different ways, is rooted in the humanist tradition of 18th century Enlightenment philosophy, a significant strand of which involved anti-clericalism, anti-monasticism, and the

development of new and secular scholastic vocations (e.g., Diderot's Encyclopedia project). Its immanence, part 'this-worldliness' (instead of 'other-worldliness') and part 'inner-worldliness'—instead of what Riesman (2001) called 'other-directedness'—is part of an emergent modern discursive formation sometimes called 'subjectivation' that includes Luther's Reformation-instigating affirmation of individual faith and the individual experience of grace, Descartes' *Cogito*, and a whole series of conceptual and practical moves that individualize and internalize the focus and source of vocation. I am not opening up the historical question, here, but starting from this 'result.'

D. AUTO-INTERPELLATION: THINK FOR YOURSELF

At the close of the 18th century, the debate around Enlightenment (see Schmidt, ed. 1996) produced an important formulation of a peculiarly modern and 'secular' replacement for the inner-worldly experience of divine grace, a formulation that, at the same time, reached back to pre-Christian, Classical thought. In this version of a secular (i.e., late Protestant) Enlightenment concept of grace—*mending* the diremption of law and ethics—enlightenment is the experience of rationally confirming one's own principles, the experience of 'thinking for oneself.' The issue, here, is not philosophical debates about solipsism, or the question of other minds, but the peculiarly modern experience of solitary thought and the social appearance of 'freedom of thought.' The Kantian formulation, *Sapere Aude!* ('Dare to Know!'), emerged within the epistemological frame based upon individual certainty developed by Descartes: not Medieval 'faith seeking understanding,' but 'doubt seeking certainty' (cf. Walsh 2005:35–52). Yet it was clear to

classical sociologists like Weber and Durkheim that in this solitary search for certainty, the medium is the message: the solitude/isolation in which ‘thinking for oneself’ occurs belies all claims to have successfully developed a reconstructive social-moral synthesis.

While Kant did not draw all of the vocational consequences of his use of Horace’s phrase as the slogan for Enlightenment, he argued for a notion of vocation understood as a kind of auto-interpellation, a self-calling. For Kant, each of us was called by our own faculty of reason, to ‘grow up’⁴⁵ and think for ourselves. Kant was content, at the time, to confine freedom of thought to what he called the ‘public use of reason,’ (1983:42) and professed obedience to the Prussian monarch, but he persisted in asserting that the free use of one’s reason is a universal human vocation. For Kant and other Enlightenment philosophers, thinking for oneself means producing our moral principles, our duties, our sense of obligation, right, responsibility, legitimate authority, and so forth, through the use of our reason rather than from divine revelation (or any other heteronomous source of authority). In this life we are not, as the Blues Brothers claim, ‘On a mission from God.’ Or at least, if we are, our only access to the details of this mission comes through the use of our reason.⁴⁶ This entails individual *and* societal self-determination.

Kant begins his essay “An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?” by defining enlightenment as emergence from a “self-imposed immaturity” (1983:41). Kant calls immaturity that which, out of laziness and cowardice, accepts “a pastor to serve as

45 Habermas invokes the notion of Enlightenment as emancipation from “self-incurred immaturity” when he describes the stage of adolescent skepticism as characteristic of modernity (Bernstein 2001:79).

46 In *The Social Contract* (1968), Rousseau formulated the question of an autonomous or self-called vocation in political terms as the problem of the ‘general will’: how can social bonds be rendered legitimate? How can the people be sovereign? How can both the call and the answer have the same source?

my conscience, a physician to determine my diet for me, and so on” (41). According to Kant, critical thought is a moral vocation. Kant’s three critiques combine to reaffirm the classic claim of harmony between the *good*, the *beautiful*, and the *true*. At the same time, Kant introduces a new element of legitimate *disarticulation* or ‘trisection’ (Bernstein 1997) to reason. This harmony is achieved in their common orientation towards the activity of *judging*. In the third *Critique* Kant suggests that “judging strains the imagination because it is based on a feeling that the mind has a vocation that wholly transcends the domain of nature (namely, moral feeling)” (1987:128). ‘Enlightenment’ calls us to realize this vocation. Each individual is called to intellectual maturity, but enlightenment calls us collectively, as a public. And since it is difficult for “any individual man to work himself out of the immaturity that has all but become his nature...that the public should enlighten itself is more likely” (Kant 1983:41).

Enlightenment requires, writes Kant, “the freedom to use reason *publicly* in all matters” (42). For the sake of order, that the government may guide the affairs of the community toward certain ends, one must remain a passive instrument in one’s ‘private’ civic post: “Here one certainly must not argue, instead one must obey” (42). But the scholar ought to have “complete freedom, indeed even the calling, to impart to the public all of his carefully considered and well-intentioned thoughts” (43). To halt ongoing questioning directed at the elimination of error “would be a crime against human nature, whose essential destiny lies precisely in such progress” (44). Obedience to an existing order can only be provisional, as the social order is itself ultimately subordinate to

humanity's rational vocation: "A man may put off enlightenment with regard to what he ought to know, though only for a short time and for his own person; but to renounce it for himself, or, even more, for subsequent generations, is to violate and trample man's divine rights underfoot" (44). This statement was part of Kant's effort to both recognize the 'enlightened' policy of Frederick the Great, and to ensure the continuance of the relative freedom of the university from control by the censor. It reinforces Kant's attempt to identify (while disarticulating) moral and intellectual virtue and illustrates his understanding of how one ought to behave as an academic.

Of course Kant was not particularly adventurous in personally endorsing extensive shake-ups in the everyday roles of average people. His enthusiasm for Rousseau's philosophy and for the French Revolution was, in practical terms, rather muted, and he is usually read as primarily arguing that he and other philosophers like him be allowed to study and think in peace, and that they not be subject to censorship. His general attitude towards 'the people' retained the idea of their 'necessary tutelage.' Nevertheless, this notion of the autonomy of individual reason, and the deontic morality of universal duties or categorical imperatives developed "within the bounds of reason alone," undergirds the next two centuries of attempts by social and political thought to frame a notion of social (rather than natural or metaphysical) morality and human autonomy after the 'Death of God.' His position deeply marks later attempts by social theorists to enunciate the vocation of science in relation to morality even as they bring to bear various metacritical considerations and divergent conclusions.

At the end of the revolutionary 19th century, social theorists were unable to formulate their notions of autonomy in quite the same terms. They had, among other things, to deal more radically than Kant with the question of authority, especially the authority of reason. In what sense can an immanent vocation be binding, but also sufficiently *motivating*? What is it about the nature of internal and non-transcendental personality/subjectivity, whether internal/immanent to ‘the social’ (i.e., democracy; the ‘general will’) or to the ‘self,’ that can produce autonomy? What is the relationship, if any, between autonomy and morality?

Marx accepted Kant’s requirement of intellectual virtue, but rejected the one-sidedness and the abstraction of Kant’s approach. Kant failed to think through the social and economic bases of bourgeois freedoms; his transcendental deduction failed to give full weight to the dependence of bourgeois freedoms upon concrete social relations of domination. ‘Thinking for oneself’ suggests that one start from the position of the isolated bourgeois individual. Consequently, Kantian morality amounts to an abstract negation of material conditions in the form of the demand that moral action be a product of reason itself, free of any material motivation. This puts him in an awkward position at times vis-à-vis the Aristotelian notion of habituation, at least insofar as he is attempting to outline his concept of practical reason. Self-sufficient practical reason is, as Adorno puts it, “a validity that has submerged its genesis,” it is “secretly social” (Adorno, in Bernstein 2001:153). Kant has not seriously asked about his own conditions of possibility. As was pointed out in the previous chapter, Marx followed Hegel’s critique of Kant in demanding

the negation of this negation—that is, the negation/sublation of the abstract ‘think for yourself’ dictum—not the negation of material conditions by an act of abstract autonomous reason but the negation of abstract reason by the transformation of material conditions through revolutionary class (collective) struggle. Only revolutionary transformation could give the categorical imperative a real content; only a real revolution (and not just a revolution in the mind) could establish a ‘kingdom of ends.’

E. AFTER DARWIN: DRIVES, WILLS, & THE SOCIAL

Kant’s notion of autonomy as a kind of ‘good will’ still had mostly to do with the classical problem of weakness of will (*akrasia*). Here will is understood as distinct from *inclination*. A will formed around inclination, an hypothetical imperative (e.g., ‘if it feels good, do it’), lacks moral validity. A truly good will commits to a categorical imperative, to the fulfilment of a *duty* performed out of a reverence that is “*self-produced* by a rational concept, and therefore specifically distinct from feelings of...inclination...” (Kant 1964:69). Marx’s reading of Kant, as has already been noted—a reading that paralleled Marx’s critical reading of Aristotle’s failure to understand slavery—is that the freedom to think for yourself was, insofar as it was not a mere abstraction, founded on the basis of concrete bourgeois freedoms (from the kinds of demands placed upon the proletarian worker) that were ‘secretly social.’ Within the capitalist system of production, however, these bourgeois freedoms can never be made available to everyone since they depend upon the lack of freedom of the working classes and their subjection to the demands of a permanently destabilizing labour market. Only a revolution could provide the social

conditions for the full and concrete flowering of autonomy across all of society, and only the self-conscious solidarity of a revolutionary working class could overcome the weakness of individual wills in order to bring about that revolution.

Marx structured his understanding of autonomy with a critique of Kant, but also by responding to contemporary developments in evolutionary theory. Marx called Darwin's *On The Origin of the Species* an "epoch making work" (Marx 1978:323n.1), and in a letter to Engels, he suggested that "Darwin's book is very important and serves me as a basis in natural science for the class struggle in history" (quoted in Hofstadter 1955:155). He focused on the historical process of adaptation, however, and on the difference that our creative "tool-making" capacity (352n.2) makes to human history as opposed to natural history, as well as emphasizing the difference between animal behaviour and human behaviour. To what extent are the 'organs' of the social qualitatively different from natural adaptations? Above all, we live not just in a natural 'environment,' but in a social 'world.' 'Nature red in tooth and claw' may be the story of natural history, but human history, made by humans, whether characterized by cooperation, competition, anarchy, despotism, hierarchy or equality, is a human construction. Modern manufacturing transforms the human worker into a "crippled monstrosity" (340); and these peculiar social shapes result from the historical working out of creative human activity. This premise underlies Marx's early 'humanist' writings—like the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, which pre-dated the 1859 publication of *Origin of Species*, and where he writes of alienation, of a human free in his "animal

functions” (Marx and Engels 1972:60) but not in his creative human activities—as well as the later ‘scientific’ writings, in which our creative powers operate in conditions of exploitation, distorted by social relations of domination.

Even rejecting Marx’s early ‘humanism’ does not give us a view of the human as essentially driven by domination and conflict. The impulse to creative activity and an instinct of self-preservation constitute Marx’s basic theory of drives. Domination and conflict are secondary processes driven by natural or artificial scarcity rather than primary impulses. Although in the previous chapter I highlighted Marx’s critique of Aristotle, when it comes to his notion of human nature we find, in fact, a modified Aristotelian notion of the human as teleologically aimed at awakening “his slumbering powers” (Marx 1978:173) and developing broad-ranging creative productive capacities. Marx’s most important modification of the Aristotelian view is his Rousseau-inspired rejection of the argument for ‘natural’ masters and slaves and attendant development of a labour theory of value. He understands mastery, in addition, socially and historically, not naturalistically. He takes up Kant’s notion of autonomy in these terms. Most importantly, Marx historicizes human drives and gives priority to creative activity, that is, to *production*,⁴⁷ as “the real point of departure and hence also the predominant moment” (1973:94). As he puts it in the *Grundrisse*:

47 Habermas limits this position to the young Marx:

...the young Marx assimilated labor to creative production by the artist, who in his work externalizes his own essential powers and appropriates the product once again in rapt contemplation...Only this assimilation of labor to a model with normative content allows him to make the decisive differentiations between an *objectification* of essential powers and their *alienation*. (1990a:64)

Production not only supplies a material for the need, but it also supplies a need for the material. As soon as consumption emerges from its initial state of natural crudity and immediacy—and if it remained at that stage, this would be because production itself had been arrested there—it becomes itself mediated as a drive by the object. The need which consumption feels for the object is created by the perception of it. The object of art—like every other product—creates a public which is sensitive to art and enjoys beauty. Production thus not only creates an object for the subject, but also a subject for the object. (92)

The bourgeois subject's inclination to transcend mere inclination, then, would itself be caught up in the historically constituted system of production and consumption: "Thus production produces...the object of consumption, the manner of consumption and the motive of consumption. Consumption likewise produces the producer's *inclination* by beckoning to him as an aim-determining need" (92; cf. Castoriadis 1997).

When the theory of evolution is synthesized, however, with the modern political philosophical tradition built on the work of Machiavelli, Hobbes, Hume, and others, who re-envisioned the relationship between reason and the passions (cf. Hirschmann 1997; Tilmouth 2007), and collapsed the distinction between will and inclination—but without historicizing it, as Marx had done—*strength* of will (whether instinctive or social) tends to look like a bigger problem for autonomy than weakness of will.⁴⁸ On Hobbes' reading, human desire, conceived of as insatiable, leads inexorably, in the pre-political 'state of nature,' to a war of all against all. Freedom, in the form of the free individual pursuit of insatiable desires, unconstrained by political control, leads to self-destruction. Autonomy

48 Does weakness or strength of will produce more problems for morality? Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd* (2001 [1961]) attempted to adjudicate this issue; Habermas, an anti-Nietzschean, sides with weakness of the will (i.e., lack of 'motivation') as the real problem in his attempt to outline a "postconventional morality" (1998:114–118); Heidegger, of course, considered the will itself to be a modern concept (1977).

is saved by sacrificing it, by subjecting ourselves to a political leviathan, giving up natural rights in exchange for social safety. Our will/passion is too strong and too anti-social to be allowed to be free in this sense. When we synthesize the Hobbesian premise with Darwin's theory of natural selection, the resulting conceptualization of instinctual drives implies that alienation and society are coeval. Survival in society becomes a matter of compromises and any and all social arrangements that produce stable social relations necessarily bind the individual will to collective demands and enshrine inner conflict, a 'fall' from Eden that has always already happened (cf. Rousseau 1979:39–40). No social revolution could eliminate the internal tension between social demands and individual drives, between socially assigned vocation and individual impulse, without destroying society altogether.

This version of the problem of harmonizing or synchronizing social relations and self-relations is often called 'the problem of order.' For Marx, however, and for others who theorize the human as being essentially and primordially pro-social, what is at stake is not the problem of how to establish society (conceived as regulation), but the problem of the kind of conflictual social relations that have been built up in the historical present. Marx's optimism about the possibility of overcoming the present conflict and alienation derives from his view that our creative and cooperative inclinations could, ultimately, overcome our tendencies to fear, greed, pride, and so on. His version of the triumph of reason (the good will) over the passions involves *collective* action, of course, but Marx's view of the strength and form of the individual instincts left him relatively sanguine about

the long-term problems posed by human nature. If capitalism had solved the problem of scarcity, what was needed was simply to release individual members from artificially produced isolation, alienation, and want, and to provide them with opportunities to exercise their creative drives (cf. Bergson, Fromm, etc.). In other words, the problem still falls within the realm of *akrasia*, the weakness of the will of the isolated actor. Marx's critique of Kantian morality is just that no individual, living in the conditions of artificially maintained scarcity and competition, could have the strength of will to follow an abstract categorical imperative. What is more, real contradictions in social relations, not a primordial dualism of human nature (whether posed metaphysically or sociologically, as in Durkheim), produce the contradiction between 'good will' and 'inclination.' The main obstacles to social revolution and the reign of equality and justice are not greed, fear, and pride, on their own, but the relations of production that make isolation and alienation the predominant affective states of capitalistic societies. Both Weber and Durkheim take more pessimistic views on harmonizing instincts, social demands, and conditions of life. They work, broadly speaking, with the more pessimistic (and less historicized) reading of the nature of human instinctual drives that developed as a synthesis of Hobbes and the Darwinian theory of evolution. Enter Nietzsche.

F. BOURGEOIS CRUELTY: SUPPRESSION OF PITY OR AGGRESSION TURNED INWARD

Nietzsche introduces a new twist on the Enlightenment dictum that we learn to think for ourselves. Nietzsche argued that the Enlightenment project of thinking for oneself, thinking consistently, being logical, being obedient to one's own premises, keeping

promises,⁴⁹ knowing and telling the truth, and so on, does not ‘come naturally.’ On the contrary, it is a kind of cruel victory over nature: “reason, seriousness, mastery over the affects, the whole somber thing called reflection, all these prerogatives and showpieces of man: how dearly they have been bought! How much blood and cruelty lie at the bottom of all ‘good things’!” (Nietzsche 1989:62). Indeed, binding thought to *a priori* categories of reason, and binding morality to the idea of an absolute *duty* emerging from that use of reason (*not* from inclination), may already signal a nihilistic submission to life-denying values rather than autonomy. Nietzsche viewed Kant’s idea of freedom, as independence from or triumph over physical ‘inclination,’ as a perverse form of cruelty and self-punishment. At the same time, Nietzsche acknowledged that it also meant that we became interesting. So the twist given to the notion of autonomy, of vocation as auto-interpellation, by the late 19th century emergence of the Nietzschean strand—and the later Freudian iteration—of the ‘hermeneutics of suspicion,’ is to suggest that reason, in the form of a ‘will to knowledge/truth,’ may not, pursued as an end in itself, provide the best insight into morality, vocation, or autonomy, precisely because faith in ‘truth’ tends to be naive about the character of human drives. The twist can be summed up in Nietzsche’s remark about Kant that “the categorical imperative smells of cruelty” (65). Instead of producing autonomy, the bourgeois morality of Kantian deontology was a doctrine of self-enslavement.⁵⁰ Instead of autonomy and (social) morality being ultimately

49 At first Nietzsche puts promise-keeping in a different category (calling it ‘conscience,’ not yet ‘bad conscience’), but he fails to maintain this distinction throughout the *Genealogy* (Butler 1997:208–209n.3).

50 The Kantian sociologist Habermas claims communicative rationality as an end in itself. In his view the drive to *communication* rather than the ‘will to power’ serves as the motivating force for the ‘will to truth.’ Against Nietzsche, Habermas contends that lying is parasitic on sincerity, no matter how prevalent

compatible, as both Kant and Marx thought (although at different levels of analysis, since for Marx, morality would simply be subsumed by transparency and autonomy), Nietzsche saw them as mutually exclusive (59) and chose autonomy over morality.

“We are unknown to ourselves, we men of knowledge,” writes Nietzsche in the opening lines of *On the Genealogy of Morals* (15). When we do gain glimpses of ourselves, we do not find solidarity, the unity of class consciousness in-and-for-itself that had previously been hidden under an ideological veneer sealing and concealing the facts of our class position, but an internal and perhaps permanent division rooted in instinct, in an anonymous will to power, anterior to any particular social formation, a will to power as destructive as it is creative. As for self-preservation, Nietzsche refused to give this priority: “Physiologists should think before putting down the instinct of self-preservation as the cardinal instinct of an organic being. A living thing seeks above all to *discharge* its strength—life itself is *will to power*; self-preservation is only one of the indirect and most frequent *results*” (1966:21). Adding to this, Nietzsche also warned against “*superfluous teleological principles*” (21), which would include a ‘laws of history’ reading of Marx.

Marx also believed that bourgeois morality had hypocrisy and cruelty at its heart, but his reasons were different. Nietzsche rejected the 18th century arguments that constructed morality out of a theory of natural sentiments, like pity. Marx tacitly accepted elements of these sentiment-based theories—especially Rousseau’s—while rejecting 19th century bourgeois moralization. Bourgeois morality cruelly suppressed the development

dishonesty, deception, illusion, ideology, and so on, may be in a particular society. On no other basis could we get communication going in the first place and, on the Habermasian reading (based upon Mead, Piaget, etc.), communication is a “motivationally satisfying” (Bernstein 2001:79n.6) end in itself.

of active and practical sentiments of pity or sympathy for others and rationalized alienation from our fellow creatures and from our species-being. This was my point in contrasting Marx with Smith's theory of the 'impartial spectator.' Marx's immanent critique of bourgeois hypocrisy used and implicitly endorsed 'natural' sentiments of pity and sympathy (embedded in an implicitly Aristotelian model of human development) and this appeal to the reader's (conflicted bourgeois) sympathy for suffering sustains the force of his writing. On Nietzsche's view, by contrast, bourgeois morality suppresses or turns our instincts of aggression inward. The 18th century turn to moral sentiments of pity and sympathy was already slavish (1989:19). From a Nietzschean standpoint Marxian notions of social solidarity and egalitarianism are idealizations that deny the anonymous drives underlying human motivation, drives that include aggressive and destructive impulses. On Nietzsche's view, the communistic ideal of universal equality differs from the aristocratic hierarchy of natural inequality because the cruelty of slave morality (whether bourgeois or communist) includes a primordial lie, the denial of the will to power, while the aristocratic cruelty of the simpler master morality is honest, if a bit ironic. As the bird of prey might say in response to being called evil by the lambs upon which they prey: "we don't dislike them at all, these good little lambs; we even love them: nothing is more tasty than a tender lamb" (45).

Slave morality replaces the master's distinction between 'good' and 'bad' with the reactive distinction between 'good' and 'evil,' and it replaces honest and courageous self-relation with universal 'truth' (cf. Wood 2004:143–145). Denying their own aggressive

impulses, communists and socialists attack the powerful for their insatiability, deeming their greed and violence to be the source of all social evil. According to them, capitalism continually generates artificially high levels of inequality and suffering by a division of labour that deforms workers and siphons off an unfair share of society's production. Their 'will to truth' aims, ostensibly, merely to reveal the sources of evil, sources hidden by 'ideology.' On Nietzsche's view, however, they can do this only by first concealing their own primordial 'will to power.' Consequently, Marx's subordination of morality to truth appears to originate in nihilistic *ressentiment* (Nietzsche 1989:161).⁵¹

Marx criticized Kantian, Hegelian, and Smithian morality for abstract reductions of morality to class-based rationalizations that can only be negated by revolutionizing those class relations. For Nietzsche, however, negating the abstractions of bourgeois morality in order to bring about a society of communistic equality amounts to *completing* the victory of slave morality by negating those aspects of aggression and individual mastery that persist in the form of a (priestly/capitalistic) asceticism. Bourgeois hypocrisy and greed do not purify the proletariat or turn its *ressentiment* into something noble, nor will communist revolution do away with the will to power. It will simply deny it and deform it, rendering it ignoble.

In *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, Nietzsche suggested that the negation of abstract (ascetic) bourgeois morality and the emergence of concrete (hedonist/communist) equality merely extends and completes the transition from a logic of sado-masochism (cf.

⁵¹ Calling Marxism a 'politics of resentment' is now a favourite conservative pastime (e.g. Scruton 2006:150–160).

Horkheimer and Adorno 1988:81–119) to that of nihilistic hedonism, from priestly ‘slave morality’ to that of the ‘last men,’ who claim to have invented happiness, and who sit and ‘blink’ (Nietzsche 1954:129). Instead of delivering personal autonomy via collective autonomy, equality in the form of a conforming ‘mass man’ amounts to a reversion to sub-human irresponsibility and passivity,⁵² a passivity structured by a will to power whose energies are now dedicated to self-negation.

For Nietzsche, the move from priestly asceticism to the ‘last man’ is a transition from ‘active’ to ‘passive’ nihilism. According to Marx, by contrast, the proletarian revolution will end alienated labour and artificial social hierarchies and lead to the emancipation of the creative and productive energies of individual and collective alike. While human history may be a history of class struggle, this process of ‘natural selection’ will end with the communist revolution. On the vitalist Nietzschean reading, however, this view (willfully) misunderstands the origin of values (in will to power) and so also misunderstands the dynamics of institutionalizing something like communism. Instead of releasing free, cooperative, creative activity, centralized power and planning requires a systematic self-negation of will to power that could only produce something like the purges and show trials of Stalinism, which ritually enact this self-negation in the form of self-accusations and sensational confessions of guilt. Stalinism, then, would not be a contingent and unfortunate development, but an inevitable return of the repressed, a return prompted by the crisis of meaning that emerges in the long transition between

⁵² The translator Kaufmann points out, here (59n.2), the Nietzschean concept of autonomy developed by David Riesman in *The Lonely Crowd* (2001). See also H.G. Wells’ *The Time Machine* (1895) for a nearly contemporary fictional account of a society of ‘last men.’

these two stages of nihilism, the long drawn-out ‘death of god.’ Indeed, the efforts of some 20th century communist movements, with their Party and their ‘cult of personality,’ have sometimes resembled the desperate efforts of priestly ascetic morality to save itself from the ‘cultural decadence’ of the hedonistic consumer culture of liberal capitalism.

Whose reading of modernity and whose rejection/sublation of bourgeois morality should we accept? Much depends on how we handle questions of *asceticism* and *guilt*, questions intimately related to our understanding of human nature, and at the core of the question of the vocation of the social scientist. Would a truly proletarian revolution free bourgeois society from the guilt of its own hypocrisy? Would the appearance of real equality negate the guilt of bourgeois domination? Is Marxism a theodicy in the sense of making modern capitalism a ‘stage’ in world historical ‘progress’ (e.g., Eagleton 2010:136–137)? Terry Eagleton argues that a main strength of Marxism is its ability to simultaneously acknowledge the horrors and the charms of liberal modernity (2009b:69–70). What would really happen if you negated the ‘logic of Capital?’ According to bourgeois ideology, negating the profit motive means negating ‘incentive’ *as such* (cf. Žižek 2000:17–21). Does Marx’s political economy complete the nihilistic will to truth, a nihilism slowly gaining self-consciousness? Nietzsche argued that the negation of the asceticism of capitalistic production also negates the formula by means of which human suffering was given a meaning through guilt:

The meaninglessness of suffering, *not* suffering itself, was the curse that lay over mankind so far—and *the ascetic ideal offered man meaning!* It was the only meaning offered so far...it placed all suffering under the perspective of guilt...man was *saved* thereby, he possessed a meaning...*the*

will itself was saved... We can no longer conceal from ourselves what is expressed by all that willing which has taken its direction from the ascetic ideal: this hatred of the human, and even more of the animal... a will to nothingness, an aversion to life... (Nietzsche 1989:162–163)

A revolution that did away with our guilt, then, the basis of our asceticism, might do away with our meaning, and with our academic vocation, as well. But in what sense is ‘guilt’ the question, for Marx? And is the communism that Marx envisioned really a playground of undisciplined hedonism (cf. Pearce 2001:161–176)?

If we follow my earlier claim that Marx subordinates the good to the true, then we will subordinate moral guilt to economic debt. This means, to begin with, that Marx rejects the bourgeois apportioning of guilt (i.e., the myth of meritocracy) as hypocritical. In targeting and exposing bourgeois hypocrisy through ‘immanent critique,’ Marx targets and exposes conservative and ideological uses of guilt, in order to release revolutionary *motivation*. On this view, Marxist critique releases suffering from its meaning as the guilt of those who suffer, rendering fresh energies available for revolutionary action instead of self-ab/negation. The crucial consideration remains the question of economic exploitation. The moral guilt of individuals is merely derivative. Capitalism and commodification pose problems for meaning, and the bourgeois revolution melts all that is solid. If there is guilt, it lies in the system that produces unnecessary suffering and in those who occupy privileged positions within that exploitative system. Putting an end to economic exploitation will lead to a flowering of meaning through the proliferation of free and creative human activity. In the short run the guilt of the bourgeois intellectuals may be addressed by cutting oneself adrift from one’s class position and eschewing

positions of privilege.⁵³

One of the problems of this view, however, is that the practice of many Marxists and other anti-capitalists has not been to subordinate the good to the true, but to remain within the moral binary of good and evil, reversing the valence but remaining within “moralistic anti-materialism” (Pearce 2001:162). The good burgher becomes the evil capitalist. Indeed, Marx’s own texts, such as “The Civil War in France,” ([1871]1972) often depict class relations in stark terms of good and evil, heroism and villainy. This continuing moralization of suffering in terms of the guilt and evil of the bourgeoisie fails to go (as Marx certainly intended to do in the scientific volumes of *Capital*) ‘beyond good and evil,’ and remains, on a Nietzschean reading, a *reactive* action that is parasitic upon the revolutionizing practice of the bourgeoisie (i.e., proletarian solidarity of this sort derives from bourgeois solidarity) and also—as Carl Schmitt’s (1996) agonistic argument would have it—upon a political realm structured by the distinction between friend and enemy rather than upon a solidarity positively generated through *praxis*. From this perspective it is no surprise, then, that, although the 20th century saw many revolutions, none of them have done much to eliminate capitalism.

Instead of generating a critical-revolutionary class polarization, the ongoing bourgeois revolution has produced a globalizing consumer society and new forms of political totalitarianism and ethno-nationalism. Do these attest to an historical crisis of meaning or of practical action, or of both? If a crisis, should we understand it in Marx’s terms or in Nietzsche’s? For Marx, the crisis of meaning is rooted in bourgeois hypocrisy,
53 cf. Agamben’s reading of St. Paul’s notion of messianic vocation (Agamben 2005).

in capitalism's incapacity to address the destructive aspects of its own revolutionary activity, and in the fact that its purported freedoms remain abstract and/or commodified. Insofar as the logic of capital is a logic of commodification and exchange value, meaningful social relations will be distorted, obscured, and suppressed, and bourgeois revolution will continue to brew mass movement and social revolution. Still, even if this is the case, and surely capitalism does continue to brew anti-capitalism, capitalism still appears the more dynamic and subversive force, perhaps precisely because of its hypocrisy, its ability to make contradiction productive. Anti-capitalism, on the other hand, appears a perpetually commodifiable form of reaction (cf. Heath and Potter 2005).

A Nietzschean reading of the last century and a half would likely interpret the ongoing process of commodification as a transition, turned quagmire, from 'active' to 'passive' nihilism, a passage-way turned waiting-room between asceticism and hedonism (cf. Marcuse 1964; 1966; Bell 1978) that transforms their guilty tension into an endlessly 'productive' relationship whose nihilism may only be fully manifest in a return of the repressed arriving in the form of environmental catastrophe or resource exhaustion. A Nietzschean reading would also be permanently skeptical about whatever kind of popular revolutionary 'mass' might emerge from these contradictory developments.

G. USEFUL NIHILISM, NIHILISM OF USE: AUTONOMY &/OR MORALITY

For both Marx and Nietzsche it appears at first as if *value* is the key to the dynamics of modernity. On this front, both claim to subordinate moral guilt to economic debt, suggesting that it is a mistake to focus on morality rather than on the economic debt that

it veils and misrepresents. For Marx, value itself appears in a deceptive form. Capitalistic representations of exchange value and the credits and debits made visible by the market veil use value, labour, and the hidden debits and credits functioning within capitalist exploitation. But what does Nietzsche mean with his genealogical claim about *Schuld* and *Schulden*? There is something behind guilt/debt for Nietzsche, too: the will to power.

The question of *value* is a 19th and early 20th century question. It is not a problem of classical moral philosophy, or even of early modern philosophy. Hobbes is a useful starting-point for tracing the emergence of value as a central philosophical concept because of 1) the centrality of his notion of self-interested ‘reckoning,’ and 2) his non-teleological concept of human nature, which replaced the idea of a *telos* with the existence of fears and drives. But it is a concept and a question that really gets going in the second half of the 19th century (cf. Heidegger 1977:70; Rose 2009:8; Adorno 2001:121). Claims about the recency of ‘values’ tend to be made by conservatives concerned with ‘relativism’ (cf. Etzioni 2001:xiv) and the decline of ‘thinking’ (Heidegger 1977) or with the supposedly more stable concept of ‘virtue’ (Himmelfarb 1996). Nevertheless, it is possible to accept the basic history-of-ideas claim about the concept without endorsing the political project that tends to provide the context for the claim (cf. Lambek 2008).

So, Marx and Nietzsche both attempted to subordinate the question of morality to the question of value. Marx proceeded by attempting to develop a science of economic value—the ‘labour theory of value’/‘value theory of labour’ (the second phrasing helps to

emphasize the historical process of commodification, the emergence of ‘value’)—that would reveal the nature of the relationship between use value and exchange value, unlock the secret of ‘surplus value,’ and render economic exploitation visible. Again, it is an issue of deception and ‘unveiling.’ Bourgeois morality is revealed as an ideological apparatus that misdirects our attention, focusing on abstract concepts containing an abstract universality. Liberal individualism grants formal equality (whether in moral, economic, or political questions) in order to ignore substantive inequality.

To develop his criticism, Marx needs to accept the revolutionary bourgeois notion of value, the tendency of economic value, determined through processes of commodification, to reduce all interactions to exchanges, and all qualities to quantities. Instead of directly pursuing a moralistic (e.g., Dickensian) project of nostalgic attacks on the depredations of the industrial revolution, Marx accepts the priority of value to morality. Bourgeois morality, even when it attacks capitalist excesses—as, for instance, in the Romantics, young Wordsworth, or Blake (Thompson 1997)—fails to understand the inner logic of capital and the intertwining of bourgeois morals with economic values. For Marx, however, the science of historical materialism demonstrates that the (materialist) truth of productive labour is the fundamental source of value. The self-negating character of bourgeois ‘creative destruction,’ the nihilism of bourgeois use values that are always and at an ever increasing rate reconverted into exchange value, turns out, ultimately, to be a useful nihilism, which ends by unveiling the really prevailing social relations of exploitation, setting the stage for revolution.

Nietzsche, by contrast, re-narrates, or ‘transvalues’ prevailing moral theories. This entails endorsing the activity of valuation rather than the value of productive labour. For Nietzsche, value and valuation precede morality as activity to passivity/reactivity. The question of the “value of morality” (Nietzsche 1989:19) is answered by pointing to the activities of “Setting prices, determining values, contriving equivalences, exchanging” (70) that led to the emergence of human thought. Valuation is prior to morality *and* labour, and the truth of value lies in the activity of valuation. Further, moral values are just one kind of values. To reach our highest human possibilities, we must surpass them:

...we need a *critique* of moral values, *the value of these values themselves must first be called in question*...What if a symptom of regression were inherent in the ‘good’...so that precisely morality would be to blame if the *highest power and splendor* actually possible to the type man was never in fact attained? So that precisely morality was the danger of dangers? (20)⁵⁴

One reading of these two perspectives would have it that Marx’s distinction between use value and exchange value, and his interpretation of exchange value as rooted in *labour*, avoids the more fundamental (and relativist) question of the origin of values in valuation. Close to Adam Smith in treating the human as the ‘assaying animal,’ Nietzsche’s caustic remarks about utility push on weak spots in Marx’s labour theory of value. First, there is the fact that Marx defines use value as the history of uses we have found for things. According to Nietzsche, starting with *use* is already to miss the origin (*Ursprung*) of values in the activity of valuation, not in use. This reading reduces Marx’s theory, once again, to an historicizing utilitarianism.

54 This is the kind of possibility that Marx’s contemporary Dostoyevsky considered and rejected in novels like *Crime and Punishment* (1991 [1866]) and *Demons* (2008 [1872]).

Going still further, for Nietzsche even the activity of valuation has a prior origin. Here, where Smith brackets the question of a more original foundation of human nature, prior to activities of ‘truck, barter, and exchange’ (which is, in fact, already very different from Nietzsche’s ‘assaying animal’) Nietzsche pushes on, and locates the origin of “the right to create values and to coin names for values” in the “pathos of nobility and distance...the protracted and domineering fundamental total feeling on the part of a higher ruling order in relation to a lower order” (1989:26). Value, or the activity of valuation, originates in “the protracted and domineering fundamental total feeling” (26). In other words, value originates in the pleasure of successfully exerting one’s will. This could sound like Marx’s notions of ‘revolutionizing praxis,’ or ‘creative action.’ The closest equivalent, in Marx, is his famous architect-as-bee image. Here there is a pleasure, perhaps, in planning, in building, in creating, but no explicit focus on an experience of *class domination*. By contrast, as Raymond Geuss suggests in his admirable essay on “Nietzsche and Morality,” by claiming that valuation originates in the ‘pathos of distance,’ Nietzsche places the origin of positive values in relations of class domination:

So originally slavery is not just instrumentally necessary in order to provide (for instance) leisure for members of the upper classes to produce and appreciate various cultural artefacts, but rather slaves were a kind of social-psychological necessity because only if the members of a group have others to look down on and despise as wholly inferior will they be able to create positive values. (Geuss 1997:5)

Geuss is pointing out that ‘master morality’ is just as secretly social as ‘slave morality.’ This notion of a ‘pathos of distance’ that takes creative pleasure in domination of one order over another would signify, for Marx, merely the alienation experienced by the

ruling class. Marx, one could say, saw only *Eros* at the heart of the human drive, while Nietzsche also saw something darker, not quite Freud's *Thanatos*, but the will to power. For Marx, something like a death drive is not primordial, but a deformation, a product of alienation. Nietzsche, however, speaks of "power and consciousness of power" (1989:113), and locates valuation not merely in the creative activity of making, but in the maximization of the feeling of power; what is more, valuation consists of reversals, and of transvaluation, as when slave morality was able to invert and transform the noble categories of good and bad into evil and good: "All good things were formerly bad things; every original sin has turned into an original virtue" (113). Uninterested in questions of economic exploitation, Nietzsche gives us a theory of social revolution and transformation whose crucial distinction is that between self-negating and self-overcoming values.

To see more precisely how Nietzsche's argument applies to Marx, we need to remember that Nietzsche's argument rests on placing the activity of 'valuation' prior to the 'will to truth.' On this reading the 'will to truth' is just one form of valuation, one manifestation of the will to power. Since the first step on this path toward the truth is the denial of the personal will (i.e., the claim to be disinterested, objective, scientific and so on), the first step on the path to truth is a lie. Since this lie concerns the very activity of valuation (i.e., the scientist claims to describe but not evaluate), its basic core is nihilistic: *it wills to will nothing*. Consequently, the victory of the 'will to truth' as a form of slave morality means the victory of a life-denying nihilism, the replacement of noble values

with slavish ones. This means a self-negating civilization. About “the history of the next two centuries” Nietzsche wrote, playing the prophet, “I describe what is coming, what can no longer come differently: *the advent of nihilism*” (Nietzsche 1968:3). Furthermore, he argued that the heart of all these self-negating values is the question of utility:

All the values by means of which we have tried so far to render the world estimable for ourselves and which then proved inapplicable and therefore devaluated the world—all these values are, psychologically considered, the results of certain perspectives of utility, designed to maintain and increase human constructs of domination—and they have been falsely *projected* into the essence of things. (1968:13–14)

Although Nietzsche is not talking directly about Marx, it is easy to argue that ‘use value’—the form of value that Marx historicizes (1978:168) but still tries to shield, at the semantic level, from the market—would qualify, for Nietzsche, as just another form of self-negating value, not the ‘natural’ domination of the strong over the weak, but the ‘constructed’ domination of use value over free instinctual expression (cf. Bataille 1991:63–77). It is a form of domination that attempts to constrain the constitutive activity of the individual will, falsely claiming that there is something empirically true, objective and valuable about utility *in itself*. The utilitarian will to truth, dedicated, here, to a kind of quantitative maximization and distribution of uses—and surely this is one version of communism—turns out to be self-negating (cf. Nietzsche 1968:351).

The previous chapter cited Hönneth’s (2003) suggestion that Marxism tends toward utilitarianism because Marx places so much emphasis on unified class interests and on the means-end rationality that this entails. Habermas suggests as much in arguing that the ‘purposive rationality’ of the ‘productionist’ paradigm is obsolete, that

communicative rationality provides the real foundation for human sociality and solidarity, and that creative productive activity (*praxis*) derives from the nature of communicative reason. On this view, Marx's productivism bypasses the problem of meaning by relying on a romanticized notion of craftsmanship (echoes of which will be heard again in the final chapter, on practice).⁵⁵ According to Habermas, even the later Marx's labour theory of value tacitly retains a neo-Romantic nostalgia about handicraft activity:

Marx eventually gave up his orientation to the prototype of craftsmanlike *praxis* taken from the past. But he still inconspicuously incorporated the questionable normative content of this notion of *praxis* into the premises of his labor theory of value, making it virtually indiscernible. This explains why the concept of labor as well as its inherently purposive rationality has remained so ambiguous in the Marxist tradition. (*PDM* 1990a:66)

Habermas's general point is that the division of rationality into value rationality and purposive rationality misses the dependence of both of these forms of reason on *communicative rationality*. What is more, Marx's *productivist* focus assumes 'value theory' (and all of its attendant problems) as an element of his concept of *praxis* (65).

Habermas's theory of communicative action owes much to Hannah Arendt, who critiqued Marx for reducing all forms of human activity to labour. Arendt pointed out that, insofar as Marx's concept of use value retains the notion of value, it is already a kind of use 'on the market,' and subject to exchange. In other words, insofar as all uses are socially conditioned, they are uses with a social 'currency,' and already 'exchange values,' even if society has not differentiated or explicitly articulated an expressly

⁵⁵ See Veblen (1964 [1914]; 1973 [1899]) for an argument that, with some debts to Rousseau, combines an agonistic social theory of 'invidious distinctions' with a normative conception of craftsmanship.

‘economic’ sphere. In addition, insofar as the concept of use itself involves a foreshortening of our awareness of the forms of human activity, of the difference between *use* and *meaning*, between “in order to” and “for the sake of” (Arendt 1998:154),⁵⁶ we need to consider the possibility that Marx’s economism leads him to misunderstand the nature of the crisis of modernity. In Nietzsche’s terms, again, making use value into a master category involves a denial of the primordial nature of *willing*. Arendt, by contrast, who finds Nietzsche’s notion of will suspicious, argues that Marx has failed to perceive the existence of qualitatively different kinds of human activity (i.e., labour, work, action, thinking). In any case, if Marx’s use value is already a form of—or on the way to becoming a form of—exchange value, and if, conversely, exchange is just the ultimately irrational form of use generated by the logic of capital—if both already involve a fundamentally instrumentalizing process—then Marx is enough of a utilitarian to be accused of lacking, like all utilitarians, a good answer to the question, ‘what’s the use of use?’ This creates problems for our discussion of science as a vocation, since *use*, or *usefulness* (e.g., ‘why don’t you do something useful with your time instead of asking all these questions?’), instead of providing us with an *immanent* motivation or calling, appears to generate a vicious question-begging circularity that, in addition, reduces vocation once more to a form of social conformity.

Of course, such a view misses the dynamism of Marx’s understanding of history, and his view of use values as just those uses our collective activity has generated, uses

⁵⁶ Allen Wood (2004:104–106) makes similar remarks about ‘in order to’ not to contrast utility with ‘for the sake of,’ but in order to argue that Marx is an Aristotelian.

which continue to be modified (currently still through bourgeois revolution). It is telling that Arendt, in her critique of Marx's notion of *labour*, has nothing to say about his notion of 'revolutionizing practice.'⁵⁷ Even if this concept is inadequately articulated, in Marx, its place in his thought challenges Arendt's central claim that Marx changes the definition of the human from *animal rationale* to *animal laborans* (Arendt 1998:86–87), as well as her claim that the only fundamental distinction for Marx is the one between productive and unproductive labor, and, finally, her claim that Marx was "...hoping all the time that only one more step was needed to eliminate labor and necessity altogether" (87). On Arendt's reading, this leads to the fundamental contradiction in Marx:

The fact remains that in all stages of his work he defines man as an *animal laborans* and then leads him into a society in which this greatest and most human power is no longer necessary. We are left with the rather distressing alternative between productive slavery and unproductive freedom. (1998:105)

Famously, Arendt contended that Marx's communist society would be a society of 'hobbyists' (118n.65). Recall that the previous chapter pointed out that Marx accused Adam Smith of viewing labour purely negatively. The critical remarks against Smith's view of work as sacrifice were made in the *Grundrisse*, which Arendt may or may not have read when she was writing *The Human Condition*. In any case, Arendt accuses Marx of the same drive to eliminate labour, and goes as far in her claim that Marx reduces all action to labour as to suggest that his famous line about what distinguishes architects from bees is an offhand remark that lacks relevance to his labour theory (99n.36).

57 Calling Marxism the 'philosophy of praxis' derives primarily from Italian Marxists, especially Gramsci (1971) and Labriola. See Lobkowitz (1967) for a history of praxis 'from Aristotle to Marx.'

Arendt's critique of Marx has some problems (cf. Walsh 2008:348). For one thing, it depends upon sweeping claims such as the following: "...the question of a separate existence of worldly things, whose durability will survive and withstand the devouring processes of life, does not occur to him at all" (Arendt 1998:108). Extensively engaging with such an assertion would take us too far afield from the current project, but suffice it to say, for now, that it follows from Arendt's refusal (in *The Human Condition*) to discuss the uniqueness of capitalism as an economic system, or to accept the centrality of the 'mode of production' as a category of history. Arendt's analysis of Marx's version of the varieties of *vita activa* is only as good as her recognition of his specific claims about historical means, modes, and relations of production, as well as the specific forms of labouring that develop under conditions of totalizing commodification. Arendt takes Marx's analysis of the logic of capital and of the specifically circular forms of activity (i.e., the 'devouring processes') that accompany it, to be the only form of action Marx can conceive. In this way she reserves *praxis* for her own applications, defining it as 'action' in relation to *poiesis* (i.e., 'work'), and labour.

Whatever the weaknesses or unfairnesses of Arendt's analysis, she is not wrong in detecting insufficiencies in Marx's explanation of human action and social change. Marx's entanglement with value theory continues to draw Marxism towards utilitarianism, even though Allen Wood convincingly argues against describing Marx himself as utilitarian (2004:147ff). The elliptical nature of Marx's references to revolutionizing practice resist systematization, but this has not stopped systematizing

Marxists from engaging, as Arendt puts it, in “absurd scholasticism” (Arendt 1965:61) or, on the other hand, from following in the tradition of the French Revolution and becoming “professional revolutionists” (258–265), a vocation on which Arendt pours considerable scorn. Arendt blames “professional revolutionists” for continuously derailing the truly new element of modern revolutions, the local council, or *soviet*. What is more, Marx’s vulnerability to Nietzsche’s critique of the ‘will to truth’ brings up some serious questions. Can we save our souls by speaking the truth? What relationship is there, in any case, between the scientific vocation and revolutionizing practice? What’s the *value* of sociology? What’s the *use*?

On Arendt’s reading, the crucial flaw in Marx’s theory, in addition to reducing all forms of action to labour, was his conflation of the arrival of political freedom with the end of poverty. Ultimately, though it was Lenin who “when asked to state in one sentence the essence and the aims of the October Revolution, gave the curious and long-forgotten formula: ‘Electrification plus *soviets*’” (65), the final aim of 20th century socialist revolutions became abundance *rather than* freedom, electrification, that is, plus dictatorship by the Communist Party.⁵⁸

This discussion of Arendt, which may have seemed a sudden rabbit-trail after our comparative discussion of Marx and Nietzsche, has highlighted utilitarian tendencies in Marx, tendencies that parallel Nietzsche’s arguments about modern nihilism. These remarks about the *soviets* return us to our central questions about moral autonomy, human

58 According to Žižek’s Lacanian argument, “Marxian Communism, this notion of a society of pure unleashed productivity *outside* the frame of Capital, was a fantasy inherent to capitalism itself” (2000:19).

motivation, and the possibility of an immanent vocation. Arendt claims that the emergence of local councils is the determinate and novel result of modern revolutions, the new thing that was *born*. For Arendt, the possibility of participatory democracy made available by the appearance of local councils is also the best chance for modern human societies to develop a world of non-instrumental human *action* that is intrinsically motivating and sufficiently bounded so as to develop capacities for responding to the *natality* of human action.

We must bracket this discussion of Arendt to return to the sociological mainstream of our discussion. The next chapters develop discussions of Max Weber and Emile Durkheim, who try, in turn, to provide answers to the question of sociology as a vocation that are also sociological claims about morality and responses to what appear to be both existential threats to and opportunities for the meaning and stability of modern social life. I have been suggesting that their projects were complicated by the ambiguous legacy of 19th century social thought. One of the most ambiguous questions, the very so-called ‘social question,’ was the question of *suffering* and its relation to human nature. Indeed, the question of human suffering has been in the background of this discussion of Marx and Nietzsche. Do Weber or Durkheim succeed in foregrounding the question of *suffering*? Arguably not. We turn to Durkheim first.

CHAPTER 3: SACRED VOCATION & ANIMAL LIFE: DURKHEIM'S STRONG PROGRAM

Thus, it seems the vocation of sociology is to open a new way to the science of man. Until now, we stood before these alternatives: either to explain the higher and specific faculties of man by relating them to lower forms of being—reason to sense, mind to matter—which amounted to denying their specificity; or to connect them with some reality above experience that we postulated but whose existence no observation can establish. What placed the mind in that difficulty is that the individual was taken to be the *finis naturae*. It seemed there was nothing beyond him, at least nothing that science might discover. But a new way of explaining man becomes possible as soon as we recognize that above the individual there is society, and that society is a system of active forces—not a nominal being, and not a creation of the mind. To preserve man's distinctive attributes, it is no longer necessary to place them outside experience. Before drawing that extreme conclusion, at any rate, it is best to find out whether that which is in the individual but surpasses him may not come to him from that supra-individual, yet concretely experienced, reality that is society. To be sure, it cannot be said at this moment how far these explanations can be extended and if they can lay every problem to rest. Equally, however, it is impossible to mark in advance a limit beyond which they cannot go. What must be done is to try out the hypothesis and test it against the facts as methodically as possible. This is what I have tried to do. (Durkheim 1995:448)

Society has no justification if it does not bring a little peace to men—peace in their hearts and peace in their mutual intercourse. (Durkheim 1957:16 [1950:55])

In the same way that the natural sciences permit us to manipulate the material with which they deal, so the science of moral facts puts us in a position to order and direct the course of moral life. (Durkheim 1974 [1906]:65)

...all individuals, however humble, have the right to aspire to the superior life of the mind. (Durkheim quoted in Riley 2002:359)

The university's vocation, in the strongest sense of the word, and the scientific specialization of its sociological group, make it not merely a place of research, but an actual model of the reciprocity that is to free society from the dispersive tendencies of economic anomie. If Durkheim saw 'professional groups' as containing the principle of a future ethics, this was by way of importing the vocational ethic of which the professor, the preacher and the judge served as example. The sociological institution was the scholarly society become laboratory and model for the sociability of all. (Rancière 2012:149)

A. SOCIOLOGY AS 'MODEL FOR THE SOCIABILITY OF ALL'

The previous two chapters followed Marx's attempt to establish a 'strong program,' a science of the social that subordinates the moral to the scientifically true. Chapter one argued that Marx focused on exposing hypocrisy via immanent critique: ideals claimed

by bourgeois moralists neither match nor even orient the practices of everyday social life. At the same time, Marx satirizes, even in the scientific *Capital*, making interpretation difficult, although nothing like his ironic and often pseudonymous Danish contemporary, Kierkegaard, who directs his readers to take authorship as part of the text and part of the interpretive task, highlighting subjectivity while entangling truth, text, and author. What does a text mean if the author does not mean it? While Kierkegaard's authorial personae thematize tensions between truth, beauty, and goodness—or aesthetics, ethics, and religion, as in *Either/Or* (1987)—the puzzles of subjectivity, and the unstable standpoints of authorship—a phenomenology of subjectivity, not of (World) Spirit (i.e., against Hegel's 'System')—Marx mostly just brackets authorship, subsuming the good and beautiful to the true, even when crossing literary genres.

Chapter two moved to questions of authorship and vocation that Marx dealt with only at the level of society as a whole. Relations of production under capitalism are relations of alienation. Class morality does not come to terms with *praxis*, with its own creative action, but reifies social structures. The artificial demands of the capitalistic division of labour trap individuals in alienated forms of activity, transforming them into 'crippled monstrosities' unable to explore their 'slumbering powers' or realize the true nature of human production. When we collectively recognize the economic exploitation embedded in prevailing relations of production we realize, at the same time, the collective capacity to revolutionize these relations.

On the 'humanist' reading, Marx saw human activity as *expressive*, not

vocational. According to Fromm, Marx envisioned “...the complete abolition of the lifelong submersion of a man in one occupation. Since the aim of human development is that of the development of the total, universal man, man must be emancipated from the crippling influence of specialization” (Fromm 1966:42). Advocating for revolutionizing practice makes it hard to conflate the scientific vocation with a particular job in the currently existing division of labour. Marx can only be used with difficulty to justify pursuing and holding—as an end in itself (i.e., as a permanent calling)—a tenured university chair in sociology in a neo-liberalizing university. Commitment to science and truth is justified only as a form of strategic political engagement that responds to the needs of the revolutionary class (or perhaps forms its political vanguard). Commitment to the bourgeois *institution* and social class remain ambiguous, for greater loyalty is claimed by organizations with radical intent and active solidarity with the working class. Lukács and Althusser provide classic and disputed examples of academics that committed themselves, at some level, to the authority of the Communist Party, in this regard.

I earlier suggested that Marx’s taciturnity concerning the scholastic vocation and his own social position was not available in the same way to the next generation of European scholars. Insofar as scholars like Durkheim and Weber made individual commitments to sociology *as a profession* and to the university as a bourgeois institution—and were granted some success in this regard—they were compelled to give more explicit answers to questions concerning the vocation, responsibilities, and limitations of institutionalized social science as well as to the question of their own personal vocation.

The justification an author gives for sociology *as a profession*—as an answer to the question ‘How should one live?’—points, although not necessarily without contradiction, toward the author’s sociology of morality. There is a kind of necessary symmetry between sociology as a vocation and the sociology of morality (cf. Friedrichs 1970:289–328). The following chapters describe how Durkheim and Weber made sense of and cases for sociology, and how this was intertwined with their understanding of sociology’s relationship to and knowledge of morality. In this chapter we turn to Durkheim.

Jacques Rancière contends that Durkheim saw practices embodied by scholarly research groups like his own as both *laboratory* and *model* for the morality of future society (2012:149). Not only does Durkheim endorse and defend institutionalized social science, he argues that scientists, in part through specialization, occupy a privileged position from which to ascertain the true meaning and direction of society’s moral ideal. Against Marx’s Goethean critique of specialized vocations, Durkheim asserts that “In a word, we have endeavored to open, as far as regards sociology in France, what Comte would have called the era of specialization” (1973:15). At the same time, of course, in *Division of Labour* Durkheim criticized the current ‘forced division of labour’ (1984). What he criticized, however, was not specialization, but unregulated competition between artificially isolated (egoistic and anomic) individuals (cf. Marx’s notion of ‘free labour’) who were forced to take whatever work was ready-to-hand and would keep them alive.

Durkheim criticized his society, desired extensive and even radical reforms—even if also influenced by elements of conservative thought (Nisbet 1965:23–28)—and

reserved for scientists the authoritative critique of society's failures to live up to its moral ideals. But while permitting exceptions, he described individual deviation from society's ideals not as exceeding those ideals, or as potential moral leadership, but as inferior: "...there is no individual conscience that exactly translates the communal moral conscience, which is not, that is to say, in some degree inadequate. From this point of view, as I have already indicated, each one of us is immoral" (1974:78; cf. Kierkegaard 1987:339–354). Durkheim sides with totality rather than infinity when he uses the normal as a synonym for the moral. His use of suicide rates as a proxy for moral disorder is similarly bound to the idea of societal unity (1961:72). At the same time, Durkheim endorses the freedom of individual conscience (1974:61), distinguishing the egoistic cult of the self from the emergent collective sacred, the cult of the individual. From this standpoint, it would be incorrect to suggest that Durkheim considered sociologists to be candidates for sanctified Comtean priesthood. Nevertheless, a strong sense of the importance and validity of the academic vocation persists in Durkheim's writings.

Still, the new or emergent in society, including emergent moral values, derives not from individual parts, but from the 'new being' constituted by the societal whole. Furthermore, "if there is such a thing as morality, it must necessarily link man to goals that go beyond the circle of individual interests" (Durkheim 1961:65). Society must constrain us before it can enable us. This connects him to the broad tradition in which Marx falls, but while Marx considered the novelties generated within bourgeois society to be products of a coercion that could only be done away with by means of radical political

and social revolution, Durkheim's "principle of ontological novelty" (Callegaro 2012:458) marks every society as producing surplus value and meaning as it actively constitutes itself as a symbolic (and therefore real) whole through collective experiences and representations. But the surplus, in the case of modernity, is not a class of gravediggers for existing class society, but a new moral being that will complete the reformation and regulation of a society that has still not come to terms with its new ideal, the cult of the individual and the sacredness of the person.

Modernity's new moral energy comes as an attribute of the new social reality *sui generis* that exceeds the sum of social parts. The new morality does not have its *origins* in academia, even if scientists turn out to be the best analysts of existing moral realities. Scientists are no more moral than non-scientists (even if Durkheim demanded a lot of himself and his followers). Their scientific efforts may generate analytic authority but not a special *moral* authority (so Rancière goes a bit far). In any case, nowhere does Durkheim suggest that the moral ideals of modern bourgeois society are mere hypocrisy, deserving to be dismantled by scientific critique and replaced with academic life as a model of sociability. Morality *is* real. Even societies in a pathological state have a morality appropriate to them. Thus, on the other hand, the scientific vocation cannot be confined to social critique. Social critique must proceed on a social basis, on the basis, that is, of a scientific acknowledgement and interpretation of underlying socio-moral realities and emergent moral norms. Here is where, in Durkheim's view, Marx fails. Marx fails because he, along with other socialists, confuses analysis with sentiment. Durkheim

makes this argument in his incomplete lectures on socialism.

B. MARXISM AS ‘CRY OF GRIEF’: LABOUR THEORY OF VALUE OR RITUAL THEORY OF PROPERTY

In his lectures on socialism, Durkheim argues that socialism is not scientific. Socialism concerns itself with the future, with remaking society completely, but lacks an empirical object of study. It involves utopian schemas and systems rather than attention to facts.

These utopian systems grow out of the sentiments of the theorists. Facts and observations merely illustrate the governing idea:

The truth is that the facts and observations assembled by theoreticians anxious to document their affirmations are hardly there except to give form to the arguments. The research studies they made were undertaken to establish a doctrine that they had previously conceived, rather than the doctrine being a result of the research. (1959:5)

Durkheim tacitly uses Marx’s⁵⁹ definition of religion as the ‘heart of a heartless world’ against him, suggesting that socialism is “...a cry of grief...uttered by men who feel most deeply our collective *malaise*” (1959:5). *Laissez-faire* economists work from the opposite direction, relying on unexamined sentiments attaching to a particular (abstract) notion of individual autonomy. In both cases *passion* lies at the origin of the system, passions that search for explanations without subjecting the passions themselves to scientific analysis.

If socialism expresses collective distress (1959:6), and forms an *object* rather than a *work* of science, is this expressed distress historically unique? If it is just one more manifestation of an eternal condition (i.e., the poor’s resentment for the rich) then nothing, presumably, can be done about it. If it is unique in history, however, perhaps it

⁵⁹ *La Socialisme* was an incomplete lecture series that Durkheim began in 1895 and abandoned in 1896. The section on Marx, whom, according to Mauss, “he knew well already” (1959:2), was never completed.

may be remedied. Here Durkheim makes an important and characteristic move. While socialism is an unscientific expression of sentiment, it needs to be treated scientifically, not just as a matter for curiosity, but “also, in order to find appropriate remedies” (6). While Durkheim distinguishes science and non-science as reason and passion, this has nothing to do with *neutrality*. Science, like other professions, needs to synthesize *nomos* and *eros*, discipline and attachment. Science, as a product of society, has obligations to society and must be answerable to it. Science needs to be *objective* rather than *subjective*, but it can still make policy recommendations. As a kind of fact, society’s relations are subject to explanation and remedy.

Much depends on the notion that society is a *whole* whose *parts* may be understood in relation to the whole. This image is *not* quite reducible to *organicism*, however. Organic metaphors are just that (cf. Bauman 2005). Indeed, Durkheim claims that sociology’s models of part and whole, of system and function, owe nothing to biology (1974:1–2); certainly Plato’s city, which precedes modern biology, suggests as much with its analogy between justice in the city and justice in an individual. What we have, in the case of society, is *une chose*, a *thing*, the most general of all social facts, a certain kind of underlying unified reality involving a social bond, a degree of solidarity, and collective consciousness.

Durkheim approaches socialism as the *effect* of an underlying ‘social state.’ It needs to be approached in the same way that he approached suicide, marriage, religion, crime, and punishment (1959:7). We need, to begin with, a working definition. He settles

on one that includes all doctrines that would bind or organize the economic functions, connecting them to social direction and consciousness/conscience:

We denote as socialist every doctrine which demands the connection of all economic functions, or of certain among them, which are at the present time diffuse, to the directing and conscious centers of society. (13)

He distinguishes between connection (*rattachement*) and subordination to leave room for forms of socialism (e.g., Marxism, anarchism) that are suspicious of the State, and centralized authority, but also because this fits his claims regarding scientific objectivity (i.e., socialism needs to be a clear object of scientific analysis and treated as a moral current indicator) and his concept of modern political life as a communicative network.

We should distinguish Durkheim's notion of objectivity from Weber's (see the next chapter), since Durkheim thinks that one transcends the merely subjective and gets at a truly scientific 'angle' (*biais*) on objective social facts by going *deeper*. Thus, in *DL*,

we have studied social solidarity through the system of juridical rules...in the search for causes, we have set aside all that might be too much affected by a personal view or by subjective appraisal, so that we might get at certain facts of social structure that lie deep enough to qualify as objects of comprehension and hence, of science. (1984:xlii; cf. Davy 1957:xlix)

Here 'law' is taken as the visible, external symbol of the inward social fact. Instead of bracketing individual values, we 'deepen' our scientific engagement by finding objective (i.e., valid) measures of underlying social realities. 'Value-relevance' is a simpler question for Durkheim than for Weber, for Durkheim felt that he could detect and *also* interpret the basic moral currents of modern society. With his metaphor of surface and depth he suggested that the 'rise' of socialist activism indicated the basic problem to be

addressed, that of economic regulation. As he put it at the end of the unfinished socialism lectures: “The problem must be put this way: to discover through science the moral restraint which can regulate economic life, and by this regulation control selfishness and thus gratify needs” (1959:151). As we shall see, Weber did not have such an optimistic view of the possibilities of rational regulation. For Weber, conflict and contradictory value-positions also exist below the social surface, and in a fundamental way.

Durkheim takes law as a signifier for which the social fact is the signified. As Davy suggests, this moves us from the *ought* to the *normal* (1957:li–lii). By this means, Durkheim transforms the is/ought distinction into the normal/pathological distinction, thus appearing to render the question of morality immanent to society. But, as Davy points out, reading Durkheim as strictly positivistic involves discounting his later accounts of *ideals* “that in the end assume the function of transcendency” (liv). This ‘function of transcendency,’ however, must not involve utopian schemes. While Marx’s immanent critique of bourgeois hypocrisy overlaps with Durkheim’s critique of the ‘forced division of labour,’ Marx’s refusal of bourgeois vocation and his demand for revolution contrast with Durkheim’s embrace of scientific specialization, his reformist agenda, and his basic endorsement of the validity of bourgeois morality.

Durkheim viewed socialism as a ‘cry of grief’ expressing a real and urgent modern collective sentiment, but lacking a scientific analysis. His claims, in this regard, have to do with property rights, where we find one of the important divergences between Marx and Durkheim. For both of them, ultimately, everything belongs to society. As

Durkheim puts it, “property, in its origins, can only be collective” (1957:164). Both Marx and Durkheim mounted serious critiques of modern capitalism, but Durkheim blamed—in spite of his critique of inheritance—the incomplete process of producing an autonomous individual, not private property (in the form of capital). Modern society must move beyond formally liberal individuals, developing a balance of integration and regulation in which, through the work of civic and professional life, individual’s rights are produced and maintained and worshipped as sacred.

Against the labour theory of value and property rights, Durkheim argues that property originates in ritual action, through the production of sacred things that express and represent the life and essence of the group. For Durkheim, property is rooted in the fundamentally “sacred nature of appropriation” (163). A labour theory of value could only be a late product, derived from a desacralization or profanation of property: “By degrees, this sacredness residing in the things themselves passed into the persons: the things ceased to be sacred in themselves” (171). If, originally, society managed to express the sacredness of its own nature in things, and if individuals, then (e.g., in feudal society) belonged to things (e.g., to the land) rather than the reverse, and gained their sacredness from their relation to things, this has been gradually reversed. Durkheim points to the Roman patriarchy, the *pater familias*, and then to the development of moveable (rather than landed) property. Finally, it is the individual that is sacred, and the things associated with the individual gain their sacred character from their owner. What Marx did not recognize is that modern commodity fetishism merely represents a disordered last

resistance to the ‘creative destruction’ of capitalism, which will end, through new forms of (professional) integration and regulation, by making the individual sacred rather than the commodity. Durkheim’s question, then, is how to maintain and complete the development of the cult of the individual by discovering how the sacredness of the individual may be “legitimately communicated to the things” (173) over which ownership is claimed. Here his critiques of contract and inheritance are crucial. A great deal is absent from his analysis of modern social and economic development, of course (cf. Foucault 1995:23). There is no significant discussion, to begin with, of the role of colonialism or gender in both the international and the familial division of labour. There is also no adequate discussion of processes of commodification. Durkheim’s notion of the cult of the individual and his various remarks about cosmopolitanism, which seem naively optimistic regarding the potential of citizenship and the nation-state to transcend rather than generate racism and invidious ethnic difference, are too vaguely elaborated to be of much use. Nor does his distinction between the cult of the self and the cult of the individual give us much means of elaborating an analysis of ongoing processes of commodification. Nevertheless, the broad lineaments of his argument, that the origins of property and, indeed, of all economic value judgements, lie in ritual action, forms a powerful counter to Marx’s secular theory of the relationship between labour and value. To explore Durkheim’s theory of modern morality further, particularly his divergence from Marx’s polemic against bourgeois morality, we turn, here, to his re-reading of Kant, in which he attempts to redeem modern bourgeois morality by grounding it in social

relations, actions, and collective representations. Durkheim's reading of Kant derives, in part, from his ritual theory of property, which generates a different critique of bourgeois abstraction than the one developed by Marx.

C. SOCIOLOGIZING THE CATEGORICAL IMPERATIVE: DURKHEIM'S IDEA OF SOCIAL AUTONOMY

Much of Durkheim's work can be seen as the enthusiastic translation of Kant into sociological terms. Epistemologically, this meant relativizing Kant's categories (Kant 1965) in order to present knowledge as socially produced and socially bounded. In *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (hereafter *EFRL*), Durkheim suggested that inter-societal variation in conceptions of time and space and in basic logical categories implies that "the categories are essentially collective representations" (1995:15). He linked the notion of *causality* to the reproduction rituals of various societies. According to Durkheim "the ritual precept is reinforced by a logical principle that is none other than the intellectual aspect of the ritual one. The authority of both derives from the same source: society" (371). Our confidence in the notion of causality comes from the ritual power and regularity of our festivals of social collective representation. For Durkheim, this meant that the knowledge of *phenomena* was confined, in a particular way, to knowledge of *social* appearances. This position disturbs the epistemological certainty about appearances that Kant had tried to establish through his critical approach. However, it seemed to Durkheim that "a sociological theory of the idea of causality, and the categories more generally, both diverges from the classical doctrines on this question and accords with them" (372). From this perspective, the category of 'cause' is both

relativized (bound to a particular social type and historical moment), and made into an objective reality (a collective product that could not have been produced by individuals out of the ‘regularity’ of their experiences). Durkheim felt he had accomplished a reconciliation between *apriorists* and *empiricists*. He attempted this reconciliation because he was unwilling, under the influence of the positivism of his predecessors Comte and Spencer, to accept Kant’s non-empirical approach to ‘social questions’ like morality and he thought he could synthesize Hume’s is/ought distinction with Kant’s categorical imperative by grounding it in social authority.

Durkheim was influenced by 19th century sociologists like Spencer, but did not follow their tendency to read morality through an utilitarian lens. Instead he follows Adam Smith and Kant, who both reject prudential considerations as the ground of morality. Again Durkheim arrives at a kind of Kantian conclusion, but replaces ‘reason’ with ‘society.’ If morality surpasses prudence or utility, this is because society, the source of morality, is higher than the individual. The Kantian ‘moral law within’ (Kant 1956) becomes the collective conscience and an individual’s experience of it measures their internalization of (or ‘disciplining’ by) society’s aims.

Durkheim rejects utilitarianism in favour of an empirical and historicized notion of morality, “For the fact that morality varies from society to society certainly shows that it is a social product” (1961:86–87). Rather than a product of abstract reason, “the morality of each people is directly related to the social structure of the people practicing it...Each social type has the morality necessary to it, just as each biological type has a

nervous system that enables it to sustain itself” (87). Durkheim also rejected the notion of an original social contract. For Durkheim, basic facts tend against the plausibility of this scenario. Society pre-exists every individual. We are born into society rather than joining it. The language of contracts must be learned before it can be deployed. Social contract theorists like Locke and Rousseau recognized the pre-existence of society, but still formulated Protestant notions (Rosati 2007a; 2007b) in which individuals join or assent to the social contract at an ‘age of assent.’ Durkheim saw modern contracts as an emergent and under-regulated social form needing to be re-integrated and regulated. He criticized inheritance, and called for mandatory forms of charity (e.g., progressive taxation), but stopped short, as we have seen, of a fundamental critique of modern property relations and did not acknowledge the ‘iron cage’ of capitalism recognized by Weber and Marx, with its social incitement to the endless pursuit of profit, an incitement that fits awkwardly within his typology of social disorders (anomie, egoism, etc.).

Rejecting the Protestant approach to contracts, and criticizing Spencer’s understanding of social development, Durkheim argued that “the contract is not sufficient by itself, but is only possible because of the regulation of contracts, which is of social origin” (1984:162). Society makes contract possible, not the other way around. This appears to put Durkheim at the other end of the spectrum from Hobbes. From the first, Durkheim limits individual self-interested activity to a narrow range of physical needs, and since he rejects the notion of an *a priori* social contract he has no need to imagine an initial struggle between individual wills. Originally, “individuals acted only because they

were urged on by one another, except in cases where their behaviour was determined by physical needs” (285). Nevertheless, Durkheim’s view that when unconstrained by social norms and lacking an integrated set of social bonds, we will be driven mad by limitless instinctive drives and subject to infinite and insatiable desire, resembles what Hobbes calls *vanity*, which Rousseau, by contrast, saw as a social product. Society exists, for Durkheim as for Hobbes, to bring peace, and as he puts it, “Society has no justification if it does not bring a little peace to men—peace in their hearts and peace in their mutual intercourse (Durkheim 1957:16). For Durkheim, this peace comes primarily through the internalization of social norms (i.e., through regulation and discipline).

Durkheim’s critique of social contract theories boils down to a critique of unsociological notions of individual autonomy, so his translation of Kant into sociological terms needs a sociological solution to Kant’s assertion that morality cannot exist without autonomy. Observing that “liberty itself is the product of regulation” (Durkheim 1984:320), a premise driving much of Western thought, at least since Plato, Durkheim concludes that only society can provide a liberating regulation. He takes liberty, or autonomy, to be “the subordination of external to social forces” (321). External forces include the ‘natural elements,’ but also the natural and instinctive drives. In Habermas’s Parsons-inflected language, Durkheim translates the Kantian concept of autonomy to mean “a symmetrical relationship between the moral authority of existing social orders and a corresponding self-control anchored in personality systems” (Habermas 1998:67). Rather than action determined directly by a ‘good will’—informed

by a universal practical reason—autonomy, in the double sense of the capacity to regulate both external and internal nature, originates in social forces: “The only power that can serve to moderate individual egoism is that of the group” (Durkheim 1984:337). Freedom appears when individual will conforms with social will: “Institutionalized values must, as Parsons will say, correspond with internalized values” (Habermas 1998:67).

Social forces that simultaneously constrain and vivify produce individual autonomy (Durkheim 1973:231n.4). They do not entail transcending society itself, except when, in moments of collective effervescence, particular actors embody society in the act of surpassing itself. Paradoxically, moral questions retreat during these founding moments of social feeling, which produce and perhaps revolutionize collective “moral harmony” (Durkheim 1995:213). Society transcending itself may also transcend the moral order, producing “superhuman heroism” or “bloody barbarism,” “sublime or savage” (213). One cannot predict what will come of the collective ‘passion’ that Durkheim calls ‘effervescence.’

Every society generates social autonomy, enabling individuals to transcend the limits of their physical bodies in overcoming nature (within and without), but individual autonomy in the specific sense that concerned Kant emerges only in societies with a highly advanced division of labour and a correspondingly low level of shared collective consciousness. In modern society, the corrective for the consequently low degree of integration and regulation has been the rise of the ‘cult’ of the individual and of individual moral autonomy (what Kant called ‘Enlightenment’). For Durkheim, Kant

expresses the notion of individual moral autonomy without understanding its sources.

Durkheim responds to Kant's painstaking logic, his analytic of the categorical imperative as the moral principle par excellence (Kant 1956; 1964), by asserting that, as undeniable as this analytic of intention may be in its articulation of the notion of the 'good will' as the only form of the good that can be praised without qualification, this thinking about intention remains a social product, *a posteriori* rather than *a priori* to its social possibility and desirability. Kant's very pride in the rigour of his thought, Durkheim might suggest, derives from his social setting. Take the examples that Kant (1956) uses as *evidence* of the moral autonomy of the will, but precisely not as *grounds* of the ethical (which must remain free of the empirical) (e.g., keeping a promise; choosing death over betrayal; achieving sexual abstinence in the face of capital penalty): each of Kant's examples provide evidence of an autonomous moral will formed through the power of collective sentiment over individual inclinations. They demonstrate socially supported autonomy, *a priori* only in the sense that they are based in social conditions that pre-date the individual. Kant's solution, writes Durkheim, is "logically possible; but it has not and never will have anything to do with reality" (1961:113).

Of course, this is entirely Kant's point. His 'kingdom of ends' (1956) must necessarily remain hypothetical, ideal, and conceptual. Durkheim wants to reconcile, however, the material and the transcendent realm. He also wants to provide a theory of morality that is distinct from self-interest, but thinks this is possible when we conceptualize the *person* as social and socialized through and through, and individual

personalities as resulting at “...the point of convergence for a certain number of external forces” (Durkheim 1961:11), so that the *collective* good is not a mere construct or the sum of individual self-interested calculations (producing a social contract). From Kant’s perspective, this can only be done at the expense of freedom. From Durkheim’s point of view, only close attendance to facts and to material reality, closer than that of the theorists of self-interest Kant wants to refute, enables a theory of morality not rooted in disguised individual self-interest. The obligatory character of morality is not rooted in the force of an autonomous will reasoning from maxims to categorical imperatives. Rather, “the rules of morality are norms that have been elaborated by society; the obligatory character with which they are marked is nothing but the authority of society, communicating itself to everything that comes from it” (Durkheim 1973:162). Even apparently ‘self-interested’ reason has authority only on the basis of its social foundation.

For Durkheim, the motivating energies and the retrospectively developed social ideals for both morality and vocation emerge from effervescent moments of collective assembly and from the practices that sustain societies as “permanent and organized crowds” (1961:62), locating, forming, and shaping social members from the outside through discipline and from the inside through attachment. Durkheim purported to have discovered a principle of socially immanent processes by which, in modern society, individual autonomy might be successfully generated within a fully developed cult of the individual, “a religion in which man is at once the worshiper and the god” (1973:46).

Again, Durkheim replaces Kant’s notion of the autonomy of reason, of an inner

sense of duty, with the authority of society over its members: “Morals do not look like obligations to us...we can have no sense of duty—unless there exist above us a power which gives them sanction” (1957:73). Against Kant’s view that a moral duty must transcend the laws of nature (understood as a kind of mechanistic determinism), Durkheim argued that “The autonomy an individual can enjoy does not, then, consist in rebelling against nature...To be autonomous means, for the human being, to understand the necessities he has to bow to and accept them with full knowledge of the facts” (91).

Durkheim retains a dualistic conception of humanity, but not one limited to the old passion/reason pairing. Instead, Durkheim opposes ‘individual being’ to ‘social being.’ The individual being is just the physical organism, whose activities and needs are strictly limited to the sphere of physiology. Both passion and reason can be found, and reconciled, within ‘social being.’ Durkheim draws two consequences from this dualistic premise: “In the realm of practice, the consequence of this duality in our nature is the irreducibility of the moral ideal to the utilitarian motive; in the realm of thought, it is the irreducibility of reason to individual experience” (1995:16). Durkheim’s dualism runs orthogonally through the classic reason/passion divide, giving us a fourfold tension between social and individual passions, and between social and individual reason.

In Durkheim, the sentiments and inclinations that Kant had rigorously excised from the *grounds* of morals—and gingerly allowed back in as the *object* or *result* of habituation to the moral law as *reverence* or *respect*—return in *collective* form. Shilling and Mellor point out that “While Durkheim followed Kant in recognizing the need for

individuals to ‘reach beyond’ their natural selves if they were to become moral, however, Durkheim viewed moral rules as *emotionally grounded* products of *society*” (1998:195). We saw this in our discussion of Durkheim’s analysis of socialism. Moral feeling grounds moral law, but as a collective sentiment rather than an individual product. Durkheim provides the macro-counterpoint to Smith’s microanalysis of moral sentiment in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1984). However, what for Smith was still an individual (if intersubjective) phenomenon is for Durkheim a phenomenon that could only arise at the group level and by means of group-level action. The feeling of self-transcendence that Kant attributes to practical reason’s success in determining the will, signals the individual embodiment of the ritually generated collective sentiments that ground moral action.

Even if one follows and accepts Durkheim’s theory of collective sentiments, what makes these sentiments moral? And how, in the event of conflict between different collective sentiments, would we distinguish moral from immoral group-level emotions? In what way could science adjudicate a social and (passionate) dispute over morality? Initially, at least, Durkheim harmonizes science and morality through the concept of *health*. If society as a reality *sui generis* may be treated as an independent whole, then social health and moral well-being are the same thing. Rejecting utilitarian morality at the individual level, he seems to re-instate it at the collective level.⁶⁰ Moral ends are really collective ‘health’ needs. Each society has its balance, its appropriate morality, its

⁶⁰ Kant’s suggestion that the end of promising would be the end of society (1956) can also be read as reinstating utilitarianism at the collective level. Erving Goffman, by contrast, provides a micro-sociology of promising that provides a morality of the ‘interaction order’ (1983) that, while ostensibly based upon Durkheimian premises, may just as well have been linked to Levinas (Raffel 2002).

particular kind of health. Science helps us to comprehend this balance.

D. SOCIAL ENGINEERING, SORT OF: DURKHEIM, EDUCATION, & THE SECULARIZATION OF MORALITY

Science is a moral vocation for Durkheim, as for Kant, but the vocation is not to complete a thought experiment concerning a ‘kingdom of ends’ that transcends present society. Each society has a morality that suits it. To try to transcend this is silly: “The notion that the Romans could have practiced a different morality is, really, an historical absurdity” (Durkheim 1961:87). We saw this earlier in the chapter in our survey of his reading of socialism as a utopian and unscientific expression of social suffering. In his early thesis on Montesquieu he puts it this way:

What is more desirable for a human being than to be sound in mind and body? Only science can tell us what constitutes good mental and physical health. Social science, which classifies the various human societies, cannot fail to describe the normal form of social life in each type of society, for the simple reason that it describes the type itself; whatever pertains to the type is normal, and whatever is normal is healthy. (1960[1893]:7–8)

This perspective persists in later work—although combined with a continued attempt to limit sociology’s prescriptive role, particularly as regards the future (1973:42)—as Durkheim develops his peculiar adaptation of Kantian insight and empiricism. He defends science as a moral force capable of bridging the gap between empirical reality and moral ideals, between *is* and *ought*. In the Introduction to *DL* he writes that

To regulate relationships with our fellow-men there is no need to resort to any means save those that regulate our relationships with things; reflective thinking, methodically applied, suffices in both cases. What reconciles science and morality is the science of morality, for at the same time as it teaches us to respect moral reality it affords us the means of improving it. (1984:xxviii–xxix)

In the lectures on *Moral Education* he continues to insist on the moral uses of science:

In recent times, science has often been accused of amorality. It is not, as people say, by learning how bodies fall or how the stomach digests that we will learn how to behave toward other men... Without mentioning the moral sciences, which can also be understood positively and guide men's actions, we have just shown that even the physical and biological sciences can play an important part in the formation of moral character... Societies are part of nature... therefore, natural science can indeed help us better understand the human realm, and equip us with precise ideas, good intellectual habits which can help us in directing our behavior. (1961:265–266)

Durkheim posits science as a product of modernity that provides ways of reflecting on morality. Reflective thinking comes at its right moment. Kant is placed in historical context. His ideas of moral autonomy are the ideas appropriate to a society that has begun to make the individual sacred. The sovereign individual is, as Nietzsche wrote, the late fruit of human history. Kantian autonomy emerges along with a growing ability to think reflectively: “the more emancipated we are from the senses, and the more capable we are of thinking and acting conceptually, the more we are persons” (Durkheim 1995:275). The duty to keep promises, thus, is not an accidental element of Kantian morality and it needs to be historicized (e.g., from covenant with God to social contract).

At the end of *Professional Ethics and Civic Morals*, at the point where the lecture notes trail off, Durkheim suggests that our moral development in this direction will continue, as the idea of *justice* develops into that of *charity*, and as society comes to “exercise complete dominion over nature, to lay down the law for it and to set this moral equality over physical inequality” (1957:220). Science—as one of those social forces that

allows the social to subdue nature, even nature in us (our sensations)—assists in the development of moral autonomy. Durkheimian moral autonomy, however, is not Kantian to the core, for its origin and sustaining force is social. He is optimistic concerning its continuing development, which he reads as the sublimation of justice into charity: “it is certain that the depth of feeling of human fraternity will go on increasing, and that the best amongst men are capable of working without getting an exact recompense for their pains and services” (220). Charity (altruism) will continue to grow in importance, until it “ceases, as it were, to be optional...and becomes instead a strict obligation” (220).

Durkheim defends sociology from accusations of amorality, but he also tries to establish specific limits. In his analysis of the guild form (what he called the ‘corporation’), he suggests that “The sociologist’s task is not that of the statesman. Accordingly we do not have to set out in detail what that reform [to the corporation] should be. We need only indicate its general principles as they appear to emerge from the facts just stated” (1984:1). Durkheim does not intend this as a statement from an ivory tower. Indeed, he concludes the new preface to *DL* with precisely the opposite assertion, that the laws of the statesman are useless unless they rest on a firm basis in moral life:

No notable innovation of a legal kind can be introduced unless we begin by creating the body needed for the creation of the new law. This is why it is otiose to waste time in working out in too precise detail what that law should be....How much more important it is to set to work immediately on constituting the moral forces which alone can give that law substance and shape! (1984:lvii)

This curious language referring to the creation of a social body ready for new laws infers a complicated relationship between sociology and the social. While it is clear that

Durkheim saw his work as a moral vocation, the limits or justifications of this vocation are murkier. Alexander Riley uses a Weberian typology to suggest two possible models of Durkheimian intellectual vocation, the ascetic and the mystic. On Riley's reading, Durkheim approached his work ascetically, as an instrument of social destiny rather than as its (mystic) 'vessel.' In writing of the team of researchers that Durkheim had assembled by the early teens of the 20th century, Riley writes that

Personal correspondence between the members indicates that the *Annee* itself, and the emphasis on collective work of which it was the clearest manifestation, was seen by Durkheim and by the other members of the religion cluster...as a direct realization of just the kind of modern intellectual space wherein moral and even *sacred* force could be generated. (2002:369)

In other words, Durkheimian sociological research was organized by more than just local solidarity or 'professional ethics.' On Riley's reading, Durkheim and his disciples practiced sociology as a "quasi-monastic activity" (373) in which researchers combined their efforts in a way that exceeded individual or egoistic projects (369). In particular, and as the *Moral Education* lectures describe, Durkheim developed an educational program that he thought could provide the crucial phase of socialization for ushering in the new secular morality that France needed. According to Riley, the influence of Durkheim's project on French society was not negligible:

Durkheim had some success in getting this pedagogical and moral program enacted in the French system, and some disciples would attempt to carry on the banner after his death. So, for example, in 1920 Paul Lapie, who was director of primary education and a former contributor to the *Annee*, instituted a course on sociological morality at the Ecoles Normales Primaires, the national training ground for future teachers of the elementary schools, that was aimed in part specifically at replacing the

religious curriculum on morality. (358)

Although not unopposed—by Durkheim’s contemporary Henri Bergson, for example (Riley 2002:358n.6)—the Durkheimian school’s influence on the French educational system lasted until the 1930s, taking part in the period of broad intellectual political influence that characterized the French Third Republic (1870–1940), what Mukherjee calls “the Republic of professors” (2006:9).⁶¹ We turn, then, to Durkheim’s theory of moral education, which forms a key element of his ‘science of morality’ and leads into his theory of the form of democracy that constitutes a scientific alternative to socialism.

In the *Moral Education* (1961) lectures, Durkheim takes up education and morality together, bound to each other by the project of producing moral citizens. As a scientific question, it is a matter of determining how to produce moral citizens in an entirely rational manner, that is, in Durkheim’s terms, in an entirely secular manner, concerned not with our duties to our gods, but with our duties to each other. While science cannot exhaust reality, Durkheim asserts the right of science to study everything, and claims that it is a mistake to view any aspect of reality as “irrational in its essence” (1961:5). While Weber places ‘values’ in a non-rational realm, Durkheim extends his rationalist principle to morality. For Durkheim the basis of morality is to be found in the needs of society for a healthy [*eudaemonic*] relationship with itself. This principle accommodates considerable variation, as societies have a variety of forms and therefore a variety of appropriate moralities.

⁶¹ Mukherjee sees the Durkheimians as, ironically, naive about social realities, and as failing to think through the problem of evil (2006:34). He quotes Bauman’s (2005:372) explanation that, when Durkheim was writing, there was still reason to trust Society as the promoter of morality (rather than evil).

If morality is a natural phenomenon, and as such accessible to reason, this is not necessarily to say that it can be *taught* in a purely rational way. Here, as elsewhere, Durkheim is a gradualist, not a revolutionary. Secularization of morality is the goal, but how do we accomplish this? At first, Durkheim suggests, “the task was conceived as a purely negative operation. It seemed that to secularize education all that was needed was to take out of it every supernatural element” (8). Implicit, here, is a critique of the Enlightenment notion that morality can be reduced to a matter of the seen and the unseen (this contains an implicit critique of Marx and of revolution). On this view, reason simply ‘shows’ what was previously hidden. Reason, as a secular form of ‘revelation,’ can destroy the illusions of religion and reveal the truth. In this naive view of the secularizing process, “A simple stripping operation was supposed to have the effect of disengaging rational morality from adventitious and parasitical elements that cloaked it and prevented it from realizing itself” (8). However, religion is not “simply overlaid upon moral reality” (8). Instead of being a merely visual ‘screen,’ religious symbols are intertwined with moral reality. According to Durkheim, “these two systems of beliefs and practices have been too inextricably bound together in history...for the separation to be so easily consummated” (8). Without recognizing and addressing this intertwining, education carried out as ‘stripping operation’ will produce, as Adorno and Horkheimer were to argue, “disenchantment but not liberation” (Bernstein 2001:87). In this regard, current French policies on the separation between religion and public life, as in the banning of certain types of religious head coverings from public spaces, show no sign of any

ongoing Durkheimian influence, perhaps because Durkheim had little to say about religious pluralism and perhaps the modern nation-state—and its ‘secular’ sacred—was not quite what Durkheim thought it was.

Durkheim argued that, instead of merely eliminating religious notions as a kind of superfluous excess, we need to find rational substitutes for them (1961:9). In removing the religious element, one must take care to preserve the *dignity* or *sacredness* of the moral idea. Without dignity and respect, moral ideas lack a vehicle and they do not move, either themselves or us. Drawing on his metaphor of social ‘currents,’ Durkheim suggests that rationality without sacredness or dignity is like a dried-up spring. A rational morality lacking prestige and respect risks undermining the confidence and inspiration of the teacher and, subsequently, the teacher’s authority and capacity to teach. To teach the principles of a powerful but secular morality—“to make the child feel their reality without recourse to any mythological intermediary” (11)—religious notions must be replaced with equally prestigious secular notions. Further, rationalized morality “must, through the very fact of secularization, become enriched with new elements” (11). Religious morality kept society in existence, but insofar as it deeply misunderstood the sources of moral energies it produced “mediocre moral ideas” (13).

True collective moral health requires an inspiring vision, an ideal (13). But the only religion possible today, Durkheim argued, is the “religion of humanity” (1973:51). The ongoing division of labour has developed the individual sphere of action so extensively, providing so much space for unique personal development and freedom of

thought that the only remaining object of worship left is the human person itself. Not even rites and prejudices remain:

The communion of spirits can no longer be based on definite rites and prejudices, since rites and prejudices are overcome by the course of events. Consequently, nothing remains which men can love and honor in common if not man himself. That is how man has become a god for man and why he can no longer create other gods without lying to himself. (52)

We should note the indirect reference to Nietzsche, here. Against Nietzsche's notion of an ongoing 'transvaluation of values,' Durkheim posits the emergence of a particular set of modern values around rationality and the cult of the person (who is definitely not the 'Overman'). However, now the problem is to develop and teach reason in a way that does provide some work—if not the 'transvaluation of values'—for new members. For Durkheim, that work should extend reason while simultaneously extending morality and developing new moral content. Durkheim's optimism about rationality's contribution to moral justice is clear: "rationalistic faith reacts on individualistic sentiment and stimulates it. For injustice is unreasonable and absurd, and, consequently, we are the more sensitive to it as we are more sensitive to the rights of reason" (1961:12). Nevertheless, the problem remains of explaining the affective force of reason. Why should it, and its tasks, inspire us? Kant, of course, thought that reason, in the form of an internal moral law, inspired respect all on its own. For Durkheim, however, respect for reason must be rooted in social forces, in energizing experiences of collective effervescence, experiences of unified social relations that live on in the form of permanently orienting idealizations.

Let's take a closer look at Durkheim's *Moral Education* lectures, which analyze the socialization process, ostensibly the system that generates the affective force of reason. In thinking about the building blocks of a secular morality, we note Robert Bellah's helpful characterization of Durkheim's theory of morality as having three basic elements: attachment, discipline, and autonomy (1973:xxxix). According to Bellah, "It is only in connection with the third element, autonomy or self-determination, that the modern secular morality comes fully into view" (xl). Autonomy synthesizes attachment and discipline, in a "perennial dialectic of *nomos* and *eros*" (xxxix). In order to get a clearer understanding of Durkheim's notion of autonomy as the goal of modern secular morality, this dialectic of *nomos* and *eros* may be profitably contrasted with Sigmund Freud's more pessimistic and Nietzschean binary of *eros* and *thanatos*.

Before we turn to a comparison with Freud, however, let us go a little further with Durkheim's theory of socialized autonomy. Morality, for Durkheim, ensures *regularity* in conduct (1961:27). Beyond regularity, which all customary behaviour has, moral rules must originate *outside* the individual person, in law, in God, in a professional association, in science, and so on. We do not feel free to alter it. It is beyond personal preference. That is, beyond simple regularity, morality involves an *authority* able to compel obedience that exceeds strictly utilitarian considerations. Here Durkheim's sociologized Kantianism returns: "One must obey a moral precept out of respect for it and for this reason alone" (30). Regularity and authority combine, for Durkheim, in the "spirit of discipline" (31). This 'spirit,' according to Durkheim, is an end in itself. Limiting our appetites with the

‘spirit of discipline’ sets free our capacity for regularity and work.

Durkheim attempts to present a secular version of morality that, while perfectly rational and immanent, retains the dignity of religious morality. How does the ‘spirit of discipline’ fit with this? First, in presenting a naturalistic account of the need for morality as a constraint to the instincts, Durkheim preserves his rationalistic approach. Of course, Durkheim’s tendency to admire orderliness and regularity as ends in themselves makes him vulnerable to Bauman’s claim (2000a; cf. Levinas 1979) that Durkheim makes morality indistinguishable from custom, thereby erasing the true kernel of moral obligation, the traumatic ‘ethical demand’ of the other that constantly threatens to (and does) interrupt our routinized solutions to the reality of infinite possibility matched with limited capacity (Bauman and Donskis 2013). Nevertheless, Durkheim writes that “Duties are not fulfilled intermittently in a blaze of glory. Genuine obligations are daily ones” (1961:34). Far from being an ‘ethical demand,’ the blaze of glory, the socially *a priori* experience of collective effervescence, is beyond good and evil, while being the fount of moral energies. Here Durkheim’s concept overlaps with Weber’s notion of charisma, which in other ways differs considerably in its view of social energies.

The ‘ethical demand’ Bauman adverts to could only be an *a posteriori* reconstruction of the admittedly traumatic experience of collective effervescence, *a posteriori* in the same sense as the Reason for which Durkheim provides us with a fully sociological account. Individual *and* societal forms and capacities of reason emerge through social and relational practices that generate social and emotional bonds. One

elementary property of this new being, a property internal to its self-relation, is a form of rationality, a confident thought pattern, a *logic*. More than a mere habit of perception, categorical rationality, the possibility of syllogistic and causal thinking, results from social bonds themselves produced by ritual action performed in unison by actors who call themselves into being as social members by virtue of these ritual actions (cf. Rawls 2004). As they call themselves into being, they call into being and produce images of a new reality, society *sui generis* (i.e., Society's first word is 'I am that I am').

Having established a 'spirit of discipline,' as well as attachment to society and its forms (of reason and of identity) through ritual and practical socialization, the modern State's task is to liberate individuality by generating individual autonomy: "Far from tyrannizing over the individual, it is the State that redeems the individual from society" (1957:69). Having established a 'spirit of discipline' through a 'necessary tutelage' (Kant 1996), the individual inspired by society's ideals explores the freedom made possible by the regularity and stability of a well-ordered life in common with others. Indeed, it is the modern task that "each be freed from an unjust and humiliating tutelage, and that, in holding to his fellows and his group, a man should not sacrifice his individuality" (Durkheim 1957:72). Still, Durkheim tries to steer clear of a "mysticism" about the State, which he associates with Hegel (54). In the case of the modern aim of exploring individuality, "whilst this aim is essentially positive, it has nothing transcendental about it for the individual consciousness, for it is an aim that is also essentially human" (69). It is at the same time not a question of an individual taking himself, in an egotistical and self-

interested way, as an absolute. The cult of the individual remains a moral vocation, the basis for a civic morality, a “communion of minds and wills” (69) around a shared ideal, the project of celebrating and exploring human individuality and not a solipsistic egoism.

Proof of the difference between ancient and modern morality lies in the different weight given to types of crime. In Roman society, the most heinous crimes were those against the group or State. As for crimes against the individual, murder and theft being the most relevant, “The proof of the slight moral dignity attached to them is seen in the lack of any severe penalties for their infringement” (111). In modern society, however, “the human person is the object of a sacred respect” (113) and there is an attendant decrease in the rate of homicide. But rates of assault and theft have gone up (for the same period). This shows that the decline in the mystic worship of the state has outpaced the emerging worship of the individual, which still remains too weak to replace it.

Durkheim’s reading of the history of morality, law, and punishment runs along a different track than Nietzsche’s (or Freud’s). The previous chapter claimed that Durkheim had to deal with Nietzsche in a way that Marx did not. Durkheim needed to deal with the problem of his vocation in a more detailed manner because of the kinds of questions that Nietzsche and others asked about human motivation, and the claims they made about instinctual life (e.g., will to power). Durkheim, as opposed to Marx’s Aristotelianism, more explicitly historicizes human nature. Against the notion of a gradual ‘civilizing process,’ but also against Nietzsche’s ‘genealogy’ of morality, Durkheim suggested that the desire for violence is actually socially produced:

...political beliefs, the sentiment of family honour, the sentiment of caste, and religious faith—all these may often in themselves carry the seeds of homicide...they predispose him to violent demonstrations and bloody acts....It has often been held that this uncouthness is a remaining vestige of brutishness, a survival of the tooth-and-claw instincts of animal nature. In reality it is the product of a well-defined moral culture. Animals themselves are not as a rule violent by nature, but only when the conditions of their life make it necessary. (1957:116).

Insensitivity to or pleasure in human suffering arises, for Durkheim, from a particular social world, and not from a universal will to power or death drive (116). While, for Durkheim, instincts only become *infinite* drives when they are not limited by appropriate social controls, for Freud and Nietzsche, the drives are always already infinite. According to Durkheim: “The totality of moral regulations really forms about each person an imaginary wall, at the foot of which a multitude of human passions simply die without being able to go further. For the same reason—that they are contained—it becomes possible to satisfy them” (1961:42). Society is not formed by an utilitarian social contract that limits the fulfilment of the appetites as an entirely regrettable compromise driven by reason of the scarcity of social goods (see Durkheim’s remarks on Bentham, 35–36).⁶²

Durkheim conceded a permanent “dualism of human nature” (1973:149–163) that Marx never did. But he resolved the Nietzschean issues of *ressentiment* and will to power by developing a theory in which the constraint of our instincts may cause pain and increasing inner tension, but (perhaps) without needing to damage them, and with the positive result of creating and unleashing new social energies and new pleasures of peaceful sociability associated with these social energies. These new energies do not

⁶² Durkheim can also be compared to Foucault (1978; 1979), for whom power relations are generative, perhaps infinitely, but not by this criterion justified (cf. Dews 1984; Pearce 2001:156–157n.4).

simply constrain and deform/modify instinctual drives, replacing the *pleasure principle* with a *reality principle*. They bring new energies and new social ideals. These new energies are generated in particular kinds of social situations. See, in this regard, Durkheim's relatively positive reading of 'mass psychology' in his concept of 'collective effervescence.' For this reason, we should not be surprised that Durkheim places more importance on elementary school (and the public system) than on the earliest familial context (e.g., the Oedipal complex) as the crucial period for the development of morality. The family can "evoke and organize those homely sentiments basic to morality" (1961:19), but only in the public school system, when children are capable of intellectual conceptualization yet still extremely suggestible, is it possible to effectively train children to be moral members of modern society. The combination of suggestibility and intellectual capacity makes this the ideal stage for developing morality within children.

Reason, rather than being the 'slave of the passions,' as Hume famously suggested, can be the site and the source of new energies that are distinct from and capable of constraining instinctual energies. Our attachment to moral ideals is not reducible to instinctual drives 'turned inward,' as in Freud's concept of the super-ego, or Nietzsche's depiction of slave morality. Durkheim's view of the relationship between instinctual energies and social forces culminates in his theory of 'secondary groups,' or 'corporations' (also translated as *guilds*). In Durkheim's view, properly regulated social activity generates and *releases* energies. Unsocialized instinct spends itself, without satisfaction, in chaotic activity. In a nod to the destructive aspects of instinctual drives,

Durkheim admits that “we may like a fight” (1957:24). Indeed, the unsocialized individual is unlikely, contra Hobbes, to find his way out of conflict by means of cold reckoning. Instead, he is likely to live a life that is nasty, brutish, and short, not just in Hobbes’s imaginary state of nature, but in reality as well, in certain social circumstances (cf. Turnbull 1972). Our individual reason, left unsocialized, will prove too weak and incapable of regulating itself by logical concepts to recognize the value of a pacifying social contract. Indeed, Durkheim claims that “the more highly and the more profoundly men are socialized...the more those joys [of peace] are prized” (1957:24–25). The real motives for cooperative group activity, then, come from being raised within such an environment. They are what MacIntyre (1984) describes as goods that can only be appreciated from inside a practice (or form of life). We come to prize the rewards of society by living in it, not by living outside of it (in a state of nature). It is only because we have already been socialized into the same body of sentiments, practices, and beliefs, that we take such pleasure in each other’s company. This position meshes well with Durkheim’s assertion that individual personality does not exist outside of the social. Rather, individuality emerges through the development of a particular kind of society, the modern society which has grown to worship the value of the individual. Entering the social does not diminish the individual, or entail a simple exchange of freedom for security. On the contrary, (modern) society *creates* individuals with rights. Indeed, we need to “dispute the postulate that the rights of the individual are inherent, and to admit that the institution of these rights is in fact precisely the task of the State. Then...We can

understand that the functions of the State may expand, without any diminishing of the individual” (Durkheim 1957:57).

The notion that the social State provides things not possible in the ‘state of nature’ is already present in the Hobbesian Leviathan—the image implies the emergence of ‘giant’ capacities—but whereas Hobbes emphasizes the sacrificial restraint of nature, Durkheim’s emphasis on the social creation of new energies suggests that “society thus feeds and enriches the individual nature” (60) at the same time that it disciplines and dominates it. The trick is to balance this so that the individual’s desire is identical with the desire of the state, and thus feels like a light cloak (61; cf. Weber). Durkheim’s later view, expressed in the ‘Dualism of Human Nature’ essay, appears to be more pessimistic on this score than the earlier *Professional Ethics* lectures, but does not explicitly repudiate his earlier position.

According to Durkheim, modern theorists of natural right, from Hobbes and Rousseau to Kant and Spencer, are mistaken in their understanding of the historical growth of group life. Rights are not natural. The state of rights “depends entirely on the state of public opinion” (67). Rights are in a state of evolution, and “progress is always going on” (68). While, indeed, secondary groups (like the Church) have tended “to absorb the personality of their members” (65), “it is the State that redeems the individual from the society” (69). To draw attention back to the earlier part of this section, it is worthwhile to contemplate the deep contrast, here, between Durkheim’s conception of the State as the redemption of individuality, and Freud and Nietzsche’s understanding of the

State as submerging, repressing, or otherwise dissipating instinctual energies. Their differences make Durkheim an advocate of democracy, Nietzsche an advocate of aristocracy, and Freud into a pessimistic stoic.

On the basis of the preceding premise, that the State redeems the individual from society, Durkheim suggests that democracy is the appropriate political form for modern social life, and for the elaboration of the cult of the individual. Durkheim defines democracy not as direct rule by the people, but as a government in which the State, as the organ of social thought, establishes continuous lines of communication with the people, thus allowing the greatest possible degree of *reflection* instead of social control through traditional habits (1957:90–91). Taking a position that resembles the communicative emphasis of his contemporaries, the American pragmatists—although also differing from them in significant ways (cf. Stedman Jones 2004)—Durkheim argues for democracy’s moral superiority: “Because it is a system based on reflection, it allows the citizen to accept the laws of the country with more intelligence and thus less passively. Because there is a constant flow of communication between themselves and the State, the State is for individuals no longer like an exterior force” (1957:91).

Falling back on the standard critique of mass society, however (which the concept of collective effervescence otherwise mutes), Durkheim emphasizes the need for an organic division of labour, and especially the need for secondary professional groups to intercede between the individual and the state, and to insulate the individual from the State. According to Durkheim, “secondary groups are essential if the State is not to

oppress the individual: they are also necessary if the State is to be sufficiently free of the individual” (96). In a state of unchecked populism, “the State then becomes merely an offprint...Its role is no longer that of elaborating new ideas” (98).

We need not spend much time with Durkheim’s theory of democracy, which is relatively undeveloped, although, indeed, he did see it as solving the puzzles around the gaps between the ‘general will’ and government by a State that arose from Rousseau’s revolutionary theories of democracy. For Durkheim, all is well when State power is held in place and limited by the countervailing force of healthy ‘secondary groups.’ Between ‘regional groups’ and ‘professional groups,’ Durkheim sided with ‘professional groups,’ these being, in his view, the more effective intermediary between State and individual:

...the regional districts have not the same importance...the population has become so mobile...The permanent groups, those to which the individual devotes his whole life, those for which he has the strongest attachment, are the professional groups. It therefore seems indeed that it is they which may be called upon to become the basis of our political representation as well as of our social structure in the future. (1957:96–97)

We return, here, to the high hopes which Durkheim had for the vocation of sociology:

The way of life immediately surrounding us is not even the life that is of deepest concern to us...What matters far more to us, according to the functions we have to fulfil, is what goes on at scientific conferences, what is being published, what is being said in the great centres of production..the grouping that is merely regional is rapidly declining. (102–103)

On Durkheim’s view, the ongoing division of labour would lead professional life to become ever more important. Here Durkheim seems, on the one hand, too concerned to decide between regional and professional groups, and on the other hand too optimistic

about the solidarity generated by working life. There is also a misplaced confidence that the professional group model guarantees competence (104). Much of this confidence, it must be supposed, lies in the outcome of the events of the 'Dreyfus Affair.' Durkheim was one of the signatories to the declaration protesting the conviction and punishment of the Jewish French army officer. Here is one of his summary judgements:

If, therefore, in recent times, a certain number of artists, and especially scholars, believed they had to refuse to concur in a judgment whose legality appeared to them suspect, it was not because...they attributed to themselves some sort of special privilege and a sort of eminent right of control over the thing being judged. It is because, being men, they intend to exercise all their human rights and retain before them a matter which is amenable to reason alone....more jealous of that right...because in consequence of their professional practices....they are accustomed by the practice of the scientific method to reserve their judgment as long as they do not feel themselves enlightened, it is natural that they should yield less easily to the sway of the masses and the prestige of authority. (1973:50)

This early successful intervention in political life by a group of 'public' intellectuals presumably fuelled much of Durkheim's optimism about the power of secondary groups to balance levels of regulation, integration, and communication between the State and the individual, thus ensuring, in the long run, the healthy and full development of the modern cult of the individual. This optimism dwindled during the years of the First World War, and would have dwindled still further, no doubt, had Durkheim lived to see Fascism and Nazi anti-Semitism arrive in force. In the wake of the 2nd World War, Erik Erikson, in his searching and now classic psychoanalytic biography *Young Man Luther*, attempted an account of vocation that synthesized historical and psychoanalytic perspectives.

Doubtless reflecting the prevalent concern (cf. Arendt's 1963 'banality of evil' thesis)

about the ‘man in the grey flannel suit,’ Erikson mocked “...the make-believe identities proffered in many occupational and professional schools...streamlined adaptiveness proves brittle in the face of new crises. What academic institutions teach and preach often has little to do with the immediate inner needs and outer prospects of young people” (1958:114). The problem of ‘flexible conformity’ is addressed in chapter five, in the context of the concept of ‘character.’

E. ANIMALS, MORALS, & COLLECTIVE REPRESENTATION: A GOOD ANIMAL?

In the socialized society, no individual is capable of the morality that is a social demand but would be a reality only in a free society. The only social morality that remains would be at last to finish off the bad infinity, the vicious system of compensatory barter. But the individual is left with no more than the morality for which Kantian ethics—which accords affection, not respect, to animals—can muster only disdain: to try to live so that one may believe himself to have been a good animal. (Adorno 1973:299)

The spelling is Gex-Nats’ enaghinlht’i (rabbit-one-clubbed-once; “once” as in number of times). The former village was at Lee’s Corner which is known as Lhulh-Gunlin (where there are lhulh; lhulh were small fish which existed in the stream there). I assume the place “Stone” was a place with many rabbits like many other places and this place at Stone was one of the places remembered as a site where an elderly woman clubbed a rabbit. This is what I was told. The actual clubbing of a rabbit may have been remembered because it is not the Tsilhqot’in way - to club any mammal is offensive to the animal. Although when elders hear the name “Gex-Nats’ enaghinlht’i” mentioned, they laugh. There is a section in the story of Lhindsch’oysh about dealing with a rabbit, but it requires more research because it’s difficult to understand and I haven’t documented how Tsilhqot’in hunted rabbits the respectful way. It seems that the way the rabbit was treated in the story was because the rabbit persisted in continuing its destructive ways. Prepared rabbit skin is not recommended for use on infants and this in itself leads one to think that rabbits are not one of the highly respected mammals. [Linda Smith, personal communication, November 2011]

What does it mean to be a good animal? What does it mean to have good relations not just with other humans, but with all the *others* in this world? What kind of animal is the modern human? Are we a new species? Are modern societies new kinds of living beings? And if “the grouping that is merely regional is rapidly declining” (Durkheim 1957:103),

are modern nations the heart of the present? Or will nations give way before a modern cosmopolis, or a new empire? We have been discussing Durkheim's theory concerning an emerging morality, a morality appropriate to modern social relations. This modernity emerged through violent industrialization and colonization, through the expropriation and destruction of lands and peoples, and to top it all, Durkheim probably wore a beaver hat. But it is not clear that Durkheim really understood what a relationship was. What if our relations with animals and others were treated as real, in themselves, and not just symbolic, not just ways of representing human relations? The passages that head this section are meant to turn our attention to some absences in Durkheim's sociology of morality. What is left out of the formula that society, as a unified set of human relations, 'constrains and enables.' What if there were more relations to account for?

Durkheim develops his notions of democracy, of a tripartite social divided and balanced between State, secondary groups, and individuals, from his basic ideas about society as a reality *sui generis*, a reality whose inner affective unity (as a community of feeling) emerges from collective ritual action. The following sections of this chapter conclude the discussion of Durkheim's sociology of morality by raising some questions about these underlying premises, most richly formulated in his *magnum opus*, *EFRL*.

Around the centenary of *EFRL*, Durkheim's sociology of religion remains foundational to the field, and his approach to sociology has more defenders and advocates than it has had in decades (e.g., Alexander and Smith, eds. 2005; Rawls 2004). This is so even though there is a significant problem with a crucial 'element' of *Elementary Forms*,

Durkheim's claim that totemism is *the* elementary religious form. Indeed, as Robert Alun Jones points out, when *EFRL* was published it was already "at least two years after the existence of totemism itself had been brought into serious question" (2005:290). Jones points out, especially, the confusion of kinship issues with issues of anthropomorphism and zoomorphism (302). Since then there have been numerous influential critiques of Durkheim's theory, including by influential heirs to the Durkheimian legacy like Lévi-Strauss (1963:5) and Evans-Pritchard (1964:viii). Here, however, we begin by pointing to the importance of the North American Indigenous emphasis on "the relations all around—animals, fish, trees, and rocks—as our brothers, sisters, uncles, and grandpas" (LaDuke 1999:2), over the structuralist position that reduces "all the relations" (Lévi-Strauss 1963:215) to structural elements of myths best understood by the neutrally observant European social scientist. Like the 'natural resources' that continue to be claimed by colonizing powers, cultural 'myths' provide the material with which anthropologists produce books and careers.

European anthropology's criticisms of Durkheim aside, then, the following section suggests that Durkheim's approach tends toward a double and related suppression. First, Durkheim's anthropology only goes one way, importing the cultures of non-Europeans as a kind of commodified 'natural resource' for use in European self-examination and cultural production. In Latour's terms (2010), Durkheim's approach lacks anthropological symmetry. In particular, he fails to thematize the process of modern ritual commodification through which European anthropologist colonizers appropriated

indigenous knowledges and practices, using them to produce the manuscripts which Durkheim himself used in developing his own career and privileged social status. In our terms, it lacks *answerability*, even if it makes strides in developing an ‘ethnological imagination’ (Kurasawa 2004) and was a ‘progressive’ and relatively non-ethnocentric position for the time. It still elides non-European acts of social self-interpretation and symbolic representation, subsuming the anthropological material to the European project of ‘enlightened’ collective self-representation (cf. King 2003). Second, and further to the first claim, Durkheim’s theory of totemism participates in a kind of residual speciesism and in, as Wolfe puts it, “repressing the question of non-human subjectivity” (Wolfe 2003:1; cf. Haraway 2003). Durkheim’s notion of totemism, particularly the claim that it operates primarily as collective self-representation, set the sociology of religion on a course of simultaneously Eurocentric and anthropocentric narcissism from which it has seldom wavered. Re-reading this model may help us orient to a sociology of religion that does not translate the animal into the symbol of the social precisely as a way of avoiding, by compartmentalizing, the question of animality (inside a dualism) and that does not focus exclusively on the constitution of social identity while remaining silent about the encounter with difference. Durkheim too easily presumes a collective subjectivity, too easily subsumes otherness as a part of a unified whole, thereby begging his own question with respect to societal self-constitution (cf. Luhmann 1995).

Durkheim’s reading purports to sublimate but also, in fact, suppresses animality, literally incorporating it into the body of the social. In this way, he reproduces

contemporary turn-of-the-century European attitudes towards animals and animality. Indeed, his essay on dualism and human nature states this explicitly: social life limits animal instincts by counterposing collective energies generated through unified ritual action. But is it possible that operations that Durkheim analyzed as totemic naming may indicate something other than societal narcissism? Is it possible that naming practices and apparently symbolic images may exceed collective self-representations and that plants, animals, or other aspects of ‘nature’ may be more than merely ready-to-hand symbolic material? Durkheim’s focus on society *sui generis* skirts discussion of ways that collective symbolic life might explore our relations with nature, animals, each other. In this section we will explore this in the context of his theory of religious life. While Durkheim conceived of humans as *feeling* animals, and included these feelings within and at the foundation of our rationality, particularly through theorizing the human as a kind of herd animal possessed of collective passions, his view of rationality may have tied it too tightly to these collective feelings, suppressing analysis of the ways unsocialized and individual animal feelings, impulses Adorno describes as the drive to consider oneself to be a ‘good animal’ (Adorno 1973:299), may interrupt or persist within our symbolic, collective, moral life.

The Stone Indian Reserve, two miles from the home where I spent much of my childhood, is located in the central interior of British Columbia. It is one of six main Tsilhqot’in First Nations communities. The Stone⁶³ community resides on a spot traditionally called Gex-Nats’enaghinlht’i, which, as Linda Smith explains, can be

63 Sometimes pronounced ‘Stony.’ It is now more officially called Yunesit’in.

translated as “rabbit-one-clubbed-once” (once refers to one blow, not to ‘once upon a time’). Elders respond to this name with provocative ambiguity. On the one hand, in the Tsilhqot’in tradition, clubbing a mammal is considered disrespectful, so the name might be taken to refer to a kind of sacrilegious act. On the other hand, mention of the name Gex-Nats’enaghinlht’i typically generates laughter among Tsilhqot’in elders, which suggests that, at least these days, the more absurd or ironic elements of the story evoked by the name may carry the semantic charge rather than its character as a compact and profound morality tale. What follows marks the polysemy of such traditional place names—I have nothing to say about classifying Tsilhqot’in religio-political life and my discussion avoids as misguided any question of whether we are dealing with ‘animism’ or ‘totemism,’ etc.—and their evocative imagery of human and animal relations with reference to the broad and ironic context of North American colonial history and to ongoing First Nations discussions and declarations concerning colonialism and human kinship with the natural environment. To paraphrase Nietzsche, assuming that truth is a rabbit—what then?⁶⁴ That is, assuming that the symbol is not just a symbol, what might this mean for our understanding of collective representation, for morality, for the boundaries of the social?

EFRL is Durkheim’s last major work, and his *magnum opus*. Published in 1912 (1915 in English), it preceded Freud’s *Totem and Taboo*, whose four essays were first published together in 1913, the fourth essay of which, “The Return of Totemism in

Childhood” contains several references to Durkheim, including one reference to *EFRL*

64 “Assuming that truth is a woman—what then?” (Nietzsche 2006:311).

(Freud 1950:113). *EFRL* analyzes early anthropological research such as Spencer and Gillen's *The Native Tribes of Central Australia* (1899), Tylor's *Religion in Primitive Culture* (1958 [1891]), as well as the direct textual analysis of religious documents in W. Robertson Smith's (1889) *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites* and Frazer's *The Golden Bough* (1963 [1890]). As discussed earlier, *EFRL* develops both a sociology of religion and a social epistemology. In both cases, Durkheim frames his position as a third option. In the case of his theory of knowledge, he presents his sociological view as a synthesis of Kant and Hume, of 'apriorism' and 'empiricism.' In his theory of religion, he rejects, rather than synthesizing, views which he places under the broad categories of 'animism' and 'naturism.' These views of religion treat it as an hallucination, whereas it is, in Durkheim's view, something real, for no social institution can rest on an error.

In defining religion, Durkheim begins by sidelining the supernatural, the mysterious, or Gods. These are common but not essential attributes of religion. He also brackets magic, which often overlaps with religion, but lacks the 'end in itself' (rather than egoistic) qualities possessed by a unified religious community, a church whose members share a common faith. Rites and beliefs are what constitute a religion and produce a unified community. At the same time, rites and beliefs produce fundamental divisions between things, the division between the sacred and the profane, a division more fundamental than that between good and evil or health and illness—or good and bad, pace Nietzsche—since "The energies at play in one are not merely those encountered in the other, but raised to a higher degree; they are different in kind"

(Durkheim 1995:36). The system of religious things exceeds a system of relations in which “there are only differences” (Saussure 1986:118), for we find an independent system of values with a reality *sui generis*; neither is it merely a matter of rank, for

Subordination of one thing to another is not enough to make one sacred and the other not. Slaves are subordinate to their masters, subjects to their king, soldiers to their leaders, lower classes to ruling classes, the miser to his gold, and the power seeker to the power holders...[but] there is nothing in those relations that is religious in a strict sense. (Durkheim 1995:35)

Religion lies beyond mere things on which we place a high value. It is of a different order than the economic. It has a *sui generis* quality. For Durkheim, value depends upon validity (Rose 2009), that is, a differentiated substratum of the sacred and the profane generated by means of collective rites that produce powerful shared emotions and memories on the basis of which our deepest intellectual intuitions (i.e., our capacities of reason) are created. We are not just talking about the elementary forms of religion, but about the bases of human knowledge, the very doors of social perception. This socially situated and relational knowledge avoids full-blown relativism because Durkheim believes himself to be identifying universal *a priori* conditions for any social relation, and the principles of this “placing in relationship...in itself...always a delicate operation that requires precautions and a more or less complex initiation” (1995:38). Rites of initiation, “which are practiced by a great many peoples” (37), are at least quasi-universal, and social life appears to depend upon these rites, to depend upon social members being “born again in a new form” (37).

After establishing this preliminary definition, Durkheim backtracks, arguing

against making animism the original form of religion, as in accounts of the origins of religion as 1) attempts to interpret dreams, 2) cults of the dead, or 3) an anthropomorphic instinct. These accounts reduce religion to illusory hallucinations. Instead of a projective and anthropomorphic hallucination we find, Durkheim claims, almost the opposite: “far from being primitive, anthropomorphism is the mark of a relatively advanced civilization” (64). So we must not be driven by instinct to project our own image onto things, living or non-living. With respect to the form first assumed by deities, “most often, *one would say that the animal form is the fundamental form*” (64). One could more easily posit a zoomorphic instinct than an anthropomorphic one at the origin of religion.

If religion does not originate in a simple projective instinct, neither does it originate, in Durkheim’s view, in ‘naturism,’ that is, as an attempt to interpret or express natural forces and phenomena. Naturism does, however, attribute some legitimacy to experience. That is, religion is not based entirely in hallucinations, as in animism.

Although Durkheim addresses a variety of liberal ‘enlightenment’ theories of religion he does not, in *EFRL*, address the ‘hermeneutics of suspicion’ approaches found in those, like Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud, who contend that religion is more than a kind of benightedness, but in fact a form of *wish-fulfilment*, an imaginary substitute for a real if denied wish. This symptomatic wishing indicates, ultimately, a kind of *sickness* (of the will). While Durkheim comes close to Freud’s idea that modernity necessarily involves high and painful demands upon the instincts, his view of social energies is somewhat closer to Marx, at least in thinking of social forces independently of individual drives. In

the end, as argued earlier, it is a *ritual*, not a *labour* theory of value that we find in Durkheim. For Durkheim, religion is present in all societies precisely because it is coeval with all forms of social membership organized around unified collective belief. Religion is not inherently a sickness or a delusion. It is based upon a well-founded experience, the experience of collective unity and of powerful shared emotions. Religion helps to create, express, and represent a unified collective social being. It does this in part through generating unified images (collective representations) of that social being. In order to do this, according to Durkheim, the human “started out thinking of himself [sic] in the image of beings from which he specifically differed” (65).

Durkheim suggests that habitual contact makes animals involved in the hunting and fishing life of the community into the best candidates to become the collective emblem, something “representable by a design” (235). On his view, the choice derives from the ready-to-hand: “It...seems likely that each group took as its emblem the animal or plant that was the most plentiful in the neighborhood of the place where it usually assembled” (236).⁶⁵ Animals and plants were chosen because of their familiarity to the group and because they could be represented visually. Animals were best suited for this purpose (235). Plants come second, because, in non-agricultural societies, Durkheim reasons, they are of secondary importance. In short, as candidates for totems, “Plants and animals were perfect” (236). On the other hand, “the sun, moon, and stars were too far away and seemed to belong to a different world. Further, since the constellations were not

⁶⁵ Writing originates, on this view, in branding and tattooing, and as an emblem of unity, not of difference. See also de Certeau (1984), who suggests that branding is about domination rather than unity.

differentiated and classified, the starry sky did not present objects different enough from one another to be serviceable in designating all the clans and subclans of a tribe” (235). Here Durkheim implicitly critiques Kant’s notion that something so abstract could serve as confirmation and emblem of moral unity and purpose, as expressed in Kant’s famous claim that ‘starry heavens above me and the moral law within me’ are the two things that naturally arouse awe and respect. These feelings could only be a late and abstract development in a complex society with a complex division of labour.

Durkheim’s discussion leaves out, of course, the possibility, embraced by many indigenous societies—as well as the Jewish and Christian scriptures—that the signifier (the animal or plant) has its own signifiers, that the transferential or mediating object is also a producer of signifiers. We are interacting with the earth, with the rocks, trees, and animals; they may ‘talk back’ (even if our logocentrism tends not to recognize their inscriptions), as Van der Veen emphasizes in an article in *World Archaeology* entitled “The Materiality of Plants: Plant–People Entanglements” (2014). We are not just ‘using’ them in order to talk to ourselves; it is not just about collective unity, or symbolically mediated self-relation, but about ‘revelations’ concerning the relatedness of things. Read, for example, a section of poetry from Peter Morin, a contemporary poet and artist of the Tahltan Nation, whose territory lies in the northwest of British Columbia:

Just know that wherever you are:
You are on your land
You are the names given by the land
Your footsteps are part of our spoken language (2009:33)

Nowhere does Durkheim broach the possibility that naming practices that involve

animals might, indeed, serve as memorializations of particular types of encounters between the human and the non-human. These names may serve as guides not just, or even primarily, to collective self-representation, or to establishing the sacredness of the group, but guides to a relational ontology or a relational epistemology, a way of continuing to encounter, explore, and relate to the nonhuman, to the persistence of otherness within every unity. While Durkheim makes room for the otherness of a ‘whole that is greater than the sum of its parts,’ his whole and part remain anthropocentric in their focus. His ‘cult of the person’ is still too dualistic and ‘spiritual,’ and his ‘social forces’ are still ‘against’ nature. The social subordinates nature, making use of it for social purposes. Horkheimer and Adorno’s (1988) claim that the ‘humanistic’ Enlightenment obsesses over the domination of nature also applies to Durkheim’s theory of religion. Indeed, his conception of the sacred and the profane is entangled, in a way that continues to deserve attention, in a set of binaries that accompany a particular trajectory of Western civilization with respect, for example, and not only for example, to sex and gender differences (e.g., Sydie 1988). As Kristeva puts it with regard to the related separation between the pure and the impure, this bifurcation “displaces (or denies) the difference between the sexes” (1982:82). Without turning aside to discuss this claim more thoroughly, we must simply register the suggestion that while Durkheim identifies processes that generate social unity and/as social binaries, he tends to neglect how, rather than simply generating unity, collective representations in his sense may be constantly deflecting and displacing both internalized and externalized social contradictions (cf.

Razack 2008). Some influential contemporary Durkheimians continue supposing that there is nothing outside binaries (e.g., Alexander and Smith 2003).

Durkheim's explanation of the understanding develops in a slightly different direction, at least at first. It opens up an interesting space, as part of his project of sociologizing Kant, for the notion of kinship. Here the notion of 'kinship' replaces what Kant described as subsumption under a concept:

I begin to *understand* only if it is possible for me to conceive of B in some way that makes it appear to me as not foreign to A but as united with A in some relation of kinship. The great service that religions have rendered to thought is to have constructed a first representation of what the relations of kinship between things might be. (Durkheim 1995:239)

Unfortunately, however, Durkheim does not retain the familial element which would see the totemic animal itself as literally *akin* to the members of the clan, rather than merely symbolizing and facilitating the unity or identity of the clan. When he discusses kinship, later on, it is with regard to establishing the identity of the social, not a general connection or kinship 'between things,' (a possible 'unity in diversity' à la Adorno). For Durkheim, the final answer with respect to rationality is an anthropocentric one: "What was essential was not to let the mind be dominated by what appears to the senses, but instead to teach the mind to dominate it and to join together what the senses put asunder" (239). On this note, let us carry our discussion of totemic naming a little further.

On the one hand, Durkheim tells us not to underestimate the power of the totem: "The totem is not simply a name; it is an emblem, a true coat of arms" (111). Members of the group represented, on Durkheim's view, by the totem, testify to their identification

with the totem by engaging in imitative activities: “Indeed, generally the members of each clan seek to give themselves the outward appearance of their totem” (114). It is not merely an emblem, it is religious. Totems “are used during religious ceremonies and are part of the liturgy” (118). Durkheim concludes, of the totem, that “It is the very archetype of sacred things” (118). However, Durkheim argues, the totemic representation originates in group *feeling*, and is not a faithful representation of the totemic animal, but an expression of this feeling. When a member of a clan represents the totem visually, “he does so simply because he feels the need to represent the idea he has by means of an outward and physical sign, no matter what that sign may be” (126).

Durkheim’s focus on *feeling* underwrites his claim that the basic religious distinction is that between the sacred and the profane. Sacredness is founded on powerful collective emotions. But these powerful emotions, in fact, lie prior to their bifurcation into sacred and profane forms. Indeed, these emotions can go in various directions (1995:213). Durkheim’s insistence on a dualistic model, as if that is all that collective energies produce or involve, cannot eliminate the ambiguity at its source in collective effervescence. It preserves, within the concept of the sacred, a deep-seated ambiguity. In this regard, Massimo Rosati points out a problem with the sacred/profane category: insofar as the profane is considered to be evil, where does ‘everyday life’ go? According to Rosati, “it seems the dichotomy between the sacred and the profane must be extended to a trichotomy...Unfortunately, nothing in Durkheim’s thought suggests that we can see things this way” (2005:72–73). Everyday life has a hard time fitting in the binary.

Durkheim deals with the ambiguity of the sacred by positing two kinds of religious forces, the pure and the impure. These have come to be called, in connection to the *College de Sociologie*, and especially the work of Georges Bataille, the ‘right sacred’ and the ‘left sacred’ (cf. Pearce 2001:218–239). At first Durkheim suggests that there is “...the sharpest possible contrast, up to and including the most radical antagonism” (1995:415) between these two kinds of sacred forces and things. On the one hand, there are the pure objects of the ritual life, on the other hand, the impure objects, dead bodies, women during menstruation, and so on. However, he continues:

the pure and the impure are not two separate genera but two varieties of the same genus that includes all sacred things...not only is there no radical discontinuity between the two opposite forms, but the same object can pass from one to the other without changing its nature. The impure is made from the pure and vice versa. The possibility of such transformations constitutes the ambiguity of the sacred. (Durkheim 1995:415)

According to Durkheim, the kinship between these two forms of the sacred originates in the fact that these objects are merely representations of collective emotional states, “the states of collective euphoria and dysphoria” (417), celebration and mourning. Certainly the concept of the left/right sacred is also an attempt to deal with the problem of suffering and evil. The distinction is ingenious, but questionable. In particular, Durkheim offers no means of empirical verification. Leaving that question aside, let us turn back to our earlier intuition. Bracketing assertions about social unity and collective feeling, what if the ambiguity, the ambivalence of human relations, had less to do with the sacred/profane distinction or with unified collective emotional states (cf. Agamben 1998; 2005) than with the open-endedness of everyday encounters with the other, with permanent gaps in

the ‘sacred canopy’ (Berger 1967) of our social identity? Supposing that truth were a rabbit (that one clubbed once)? What then?

This returns us, it seems to me, to claims about collective sentiments that are organized, in spite of Durkheim’s resistance to the claim, around the notion that society is a kind of organism. Durkheim’s sociology—with respect to both religion and morality—both is and is not a *zoomorphic* theory. On the one hand, he describes the State as taking on more and more functions in a manner analogous to the evolution of organisms, “What a far cry from the instrument of government in a society such as our own to what it was in Rome or in a Red Indian tribe...The social brain, like the human brain, has grown in the course of evolution” (1957:53). Noting, in passing, the problematic quality of his rather simplistic evolutionary imagery depicting processes of social differentiation, which presumes greater collective intelligence in modern societies, I point out that Durkheim argues repeatedly that sociology gains its object *sui generis* from the fact that “society is not a simple collection of individuals, but a being which has its life” (quoted in Callegaro 2012:455). On the other hand, he resisted the notion of a social super-organism, an idea best associated with Kroeber, and now with Robert Sloan Wilson (2002). Again, Durkheim insisted both that the choice of totem is arbitrary and that to conceive of society as an organism is to use a metaphor. He argued that the reality of society coincides with its capacity to produce and sustain collective self-representations, generated and demonstrated in ongoing practices, both those of the everyday and those performed on special ritual occasions. He rejected, however, the notion that these

collective representations could entail the self-expression of the totemic animal itself, or that it could be a kind of dialogue, or a dance, or a ritual precisely *with* the animal, or animality (Agamben 2004), or, to be clear, with whatever the totemic *thing* is. For Durkheim, *sacredness* is the crucial element, and “The sacredness exhibited by the thing is not implicated in the intrinsic properties of the thing. *It is added to them...It is superimposed upon nature*” (1995:230). More needs to be done, it seems to me, to critically interpret the relationship between forms of life and forms of (moral) feeling, whether collective or individual, human or non-human. What I am suggesting is that we push Durkheim, in our interpretation of his work, towards acknowledging the relevance of other ‘forms of life’ to the social.

Durkheim is not without sympathy for our animality. His late essay “The Dualism of Human Nature,” (1914) expresses as much, bordering on a tragic view of modernity. For Durkheim, “society cannot be formed or maintained without our being required to make perpetual and costly sacrifices” (1973:163). Indeed his prophecy is that

...since the role of the social being in our single selves will grow ever more important as history moves ahead, it is wholly improbable that there will ever be an era in which man is required to resist himself to a lesser degree, an era in which he can live a life that is easier and less full of tension. To the contrary, all evidence compels us to expect our effort in the struggle between the two beings within us to increase with the growth of civilization. (163)

I leave the masculine language in on purpose, for there is more than an accidental linkage, it seems to me, between Durkheim’s version of dualism and the various other social binaries (sexual, gendered, species, racial, etc.) that have required internal and

external struggle, domination, and repression. Durkheim seemed to have as little to learn from women as he did from animals, notwithstanding various ‘progressive’ aspects of his approach. When we attempt to think through the link between this pessimistic declaration about internal personal conflict with other more positive claims that Durkheim made about modernity, in particular about the growth of the cult of the individual, these other binaries should be on our minds. In particular, we should keep these binaries—which Durkheim implicitly endorses along with his distinction between the animal and the social—in mind as we assess the place of sentiments, whether collective or individual, in morality. I have been suggesting that Durkheim’s religious sociology, his political sociology, and his moral sociology, all presuppose a formal suppression (which he presents as a sublimation) of animality and of social plurality. But Durkheim’s view of collective feeling is confused at best. Even if there was once a state of unanimity, could this ever be verified? And if there were, how could we be sure it was not, in fact, a form of ‘cruel optimism’ (Berlant 2011)? This is not to say that there is no such thing as shared feelings, or something we might call unanimity, but that a social morality, a political system, a religion, based on social unity are, at best, utopias. His dualism places all moral feelings on the side of the social, not the animal, finally siding with Hobbes against Rousseau and Smith. Even if he gave us the option of judging an entire society to be in a pathological state, as, no doubt, he would have judged Nazi Germany, what are the grounds for such a judgement? If it is simply a view from the outside, from another and antagonistic society, where is the sociology? Where is the science? Much depends, here,

on whether we accept Durkheim's claim that sociology can offer a kind of insight into the moral stuff of the social. Early on in this chapter we discussed Durkheim's critique of socialistic science. Socialism is not scientific, Durkheim claimed, because it has no object. It is a cry of grief, and a set of prescriptions for the future, but it has no object in the present. It does not take presently existing society as its object of investigation. But is it the case that sociology, as Durkheim conceived it, had a unified object, a fully-fledged society, complete with self-referential symbols, to study? Or is it, rather, as Walter Benjamin contended, that the sociologist who wants to understand the present, who turns to face the social, turns to face, as the symbol of collective self-awareness, the Klee painting, "Angelus Novus?" Here is the full text (minus the Scholem epigraph) of Benjamin's famous ninth thesis on the philosophy of history:

A Klee painting named "Angelus Novus" shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. This storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress. (Benjamin 1968:257–258)

Remember the violent history of the present. Remember the rabbit that one clubbed, once, the rabbit of history, perhaps. The object that sociology has to study is a pile of debris; a catastrophe; wreckage upon wreckage. At the beginning of this chapter I cited Rancière's contention that Durkheim saw his own scholarly research practices as a *model*

for the moral society of the future (Rancière 2012:149). I have tried to think through and to query Durkheim's understanding of 1) the 'stuff' of morality, and 2) the vocation of sociologists of morals. In chapter six, we will return to the relationship between emotion and morality, in our discussion of the 'affective turn.' That chapter will argue that 'moral sentiments' do not solve the problem of the sociology of morality. Before we turn to that argument, however, we turn to Durkheim's contemporary, Max Weber, who provides an important argument against equating morality with unified collective sentiment. In turning to Weber, we find someone who went further in acknowledging the extent of social plurality, and consequently attempted to further circumscribe the sociological vocation, moving from what I have called a 'strong' program, to a 'weak' one. Weber's 'weak' approach arises from more boldly facing the ironic outcomes of contemporary processes of rationalization and specialization. Weber concludes that, in the face of the irreducible pluralism of modern life, each person must make their own decision, choose their own vocation, assess their fitness for it, and do this without knowing whether it would be good for society, or moral.

CHAPTER 4: 'BY THE GRACE OF THOSE WHO FOLLOW': (WEBER'S 'WEAK PROGRAM') CHARISMA AS ANSWERABILITY?

On the contrary, I am most emphatically opposed to the view that a realistic "science of ethics," i.e., the analysis of the influence which the ethical evaluations of a group of people have on their other conditions of life and of the influences which the latter, in their turn, exert on the former, can produce an "ethics" which will be able to say anything about what *should* happen. (Weber 1949:13)

I prefer Weber to Marx because he is neither millennial nor apocalyptic. By showing that within 'bourgeois' society there are significant resources for moral responsibility, Weber restores a dialectic missing from Marx's work. (Alexander 1989:3)

...so long as life remains immanent and is interpreted in its own terms, it knows only of an unceasing struggle of these gods with one another...the ultimately possible attitudes toward life are irreconcilable...their struggle can never be brought to a final conclusion. Thus it is necessary to make a decisive choice. (Weber 1958a:152).

A. INTRODUCTION: VALUE PLURALISM AS PERMANENT CONFLICT

If Durkheim thought that sociology was in a position to make positive policy recommendations, Weber wanted to limit sociology (and science [*Wissenschaft*] generally), to clearly presenting the decision-points facing each individual within society. While Durkheim (1957) argued that *justice*, as *charity*, is destined to be the driving ideal of modernity, Weber argued that, instead of emergent and convergent social values, careful analysis of the possible evaluative attitudes one can take reveals insurmountable contradictions in modernity that cannot be resolved rationally. Understanding the various positions, Weber suggests, leads "often with greater probability to the awareness of the issues and reasons which prevent agreement" (1949:14). Weber saw no way of making a 'scientific' assertion about the objective priority or value of *charity* for modern society. Science can only ensure a 'thorough' examination of the evidence, one guided by the ethical imperative to clearly present the distinction between statements of fact and value

judgements (9). As Davydova and Sharrock put it, “Whilst Durkheim ultimately related values to the society (primarily its social structure and the function of integration) apparently establishing an opportunity for scientifically inspired criticism...Weber admitted no *rational* way to settle conflict between rival values” (2003:359–360).

In this chapter I will argue, however, that the method of accountability that Weber embodied belies his claims about the irrational and decisionistic nature of moral meaning. Just as I suggested that the priority of relation exceeds Durkheim’s attempt to provide a literally domesticated model of morality, so Weber performatively contradicts himself in his attempt to present the social bond of charisma in value-neutral terms. His fixation on strength and power as brute force or as a relation of domination seems to have blocked his own nascent insights into other weak but transformative social powers.

I do not really know what Alexander means (1989:3) by claiming that Weber was less millennial or apocalyptic than Marx. Presumably he means that Weber was a realist. Presumably he is referring to Weber’s rhetoric of responsibility, but Weber dreamt of power, and of holy fire. He simply despaired of their arrival. Instead, he feared a long, icy, disenchanted future. In this chapter I will argue that, read somewhat against the grain, Weber provides a ‘weak program’ in the sociology of morality, and that his central concepts contain a redeemable and surprisingly messianic kernel, which both embodies and points us in the direction of our favourite residual moral category, answerability.

Durkheim sociologized Kant. Weber read him through Nietzsche. Durkheim approached collective consciousness as a reality *sui generis* which then had to be

interpreted (in psychologistic ways) as collective sentiments. Weber assumed that we must study the individual as the “sole carrier of meaningful conduct” (Selznick 1992:78) and his use of ‘ideal types’ avoids realist questions about consciousness. As Selznick puts it, “Weber’s own contributions...had little to do with empathy or introspection...” (78).

Durkheim salvages so much from the philosophical *and* the religious tradition by means of his sociologism. Aristotle, Kant, natural law, all sorts of traditional doctrines find themselves redeemed in Durkheim’s work, from the *Division of Labour* to the *Elementary Forms*. On Durkheim’s reading, they were just waiting for those crucial insights: God is society; reason is socially constituted; moral reality is rooted in the needs of the social whole. For Weber, by contrast, neither the forces of history, nor the evolution of human society, nor the unfolding of reason, comes with a moral guarantee. For Durkheim, every society has a morality appropriate to it. For Weber, however, societies are capable of painting themselves into corners from which there is no morally redeeming exit. While Durkheim thought that the energy of collective effervescence was necessarily domesticated into moral structures, as we shall see in our discussion of charisma (and its routinization), Weber was far less optimistic about the capacity of modern social processes to produce a morally enchanted social unity. Modern rationalization unfolds the logic implicit in a particular starting-point. It is not a cab from which we can simply disembark half-way in order to attend a midnight mass at our local church. Weber’s commitment to the scholastic vocation verges on nihilism, but retains, in the midst of a deep pessimism, a sediment of quasi-metaphysical/theological faithfulness reminiscent of

a saying of his contemporary, the Orthodox Athonite monk Staretz Silouan (1866–1938): “Keep your mind in hell, and despair not” (Sophrony 1991:298; quoted as the opening epigraph in Rose 1995). Durkheim, rather naively, thought significant religious differences would disappear as all were assimilated in the emergent religion of humanity and cult of the individual. Weber saw a disenchanted world of iron and steel, both literal and logical, whether encasing or encaging us, in which the logic of capital, and the broader processes of rationalization, produced neither a universal ethic, in Durkheim’s sense, nor a morally clarifying class polarization, in Marx’s sense.

Rather ironically, Weber’s attempt to carefully circumscribe the boundaries of scientific assertions about morality has commonly (and mistakenly) been equated with the most optimistic forms of scientific positivism. As Scott has it, Weber’s methodological position was “buried under its positivist reception” (1995:73). The proximate sources of the confusion have been the ambiguities involved in the Weberian terminology of ‘value-freedom’ and ‘ethical-neutrality.’ In fact, Weber’s pessimistic view of reason directly opposes positivist optimism, which exploits the is/ought gap in order to grant science unlimited authority to engage in social engineering or to relieve scientists of personal political responsibilities. Both uses serve to relax the tension between science and politics. Weber, by contrast, *maximizes* the tension by emphasizing the double obligation posed by the immanent demands of the spheres of both science and politics. Rather than laying claim to a God’s eye view objectivity, Weber attempted, in a context of apparently irreducible pluralism, to set the stage for a fair fight, one in which

professors do not coerce their students politically or otherwise manipulate their impressions of society's basic conflicts. Weber is far from denying the importance of evaluative 'bias.' As Scott explains, the crucial point is "honest recognition of the fact that science gives those values no warrant" (73).

Durkheim easily matched Weber's personal asceticism, indeed, had arguably achieved a more harmonious synthesis of internal and external demands, but he addressed the question of sociological vocation at the disciplinary level rather than at the level of the individual sociologist. His understanding of the social precluded the relevance of individual motives to an overall understanding of social facts and forces. The division of labour had to be understood at the level of society, and vocational recommendations apply at the level of general policies (e.g., in education) even if we experience them as individual internal struggles. For Weber, by contrast, an adequate justification at the level of the discipline itself could not be given (1958a:143). The 'value' of science, whether for individuals or societies, cannot be proven scientifically.

According to Weber, the social sciences developed, historically, to address practical problems. This often amounted to devising a way of evaluating governmental policies. They gradually moved away from direct practical considerations, but without adequately recognizing and formulating the logical distinction between *is* and *ought*. At first a belief in *natural law* hid the is/ought distinction. Later on, with the development of Darwinian theory, the belief in a clear evolutionary principle that could apply to human societies performed the same obscuring role (Weber 1949:51). In the first case, *being* was

identified with the *normatively right*. In the second case, this role fell to *becoming* or the *emergent*; Weber calls the second form “ethical evolutionism” (52). Weber rejects both of these views. Ought can be derived from neither *being* nor *becoming*.

Even if we reject the possibility of social scientists providing absolutely ‘objective’ accounts of culture or cultural ideals, however, social scientists can still analyze the *meaningfulness* of proposed *ends* in light of the historical context and situation, and they can “determine (naturally within the limits of our existing knowledge) the consequences which...the means...will produce in addition to...the proposed end” (53). These insights into the *meaningfulness* of particular *ends* and the *consequences* of particular *means* can be offered to the social actor, who must then make her or his own *choice* about the best course of action in full light of the particular *values* entailed (by the meaningfulness of the end and the consequences of the means) in each course of action. According to Stephen Turner “The important point is that this kind of idealization of...meanings...is interpretive and sociological rather than normative” (Turner 2010:73).

Weber’s frustrating methodological writing, which flirts with his own category of “pedantic ‘ratiocinating’” (1949:176), does not always offer as much insight as one might hope. It is riven by internal tensions, not least because of its polemical tone. However, Weber systematically indicates his flesh and blood involvement in the questions about which he writes: “Every meaningful *value-judgment* about someone else’s *aspirations* must be a criticism from the standpoint of one’s own *Weltanschauung*; it must be a struggle against *another’s* ideals from the standpoint of one’s *own*” (60). In contrast,

Durkheim has more to say about resistances to science than about how scientists will tend to resist each other. In his own scholarly disputes, of which there were many (most famously with Gabriel Tarde), Durkheim's tone tends to be that of incredulity at the failure of others to understand his position. His position is that of the innocent accused.

On this question of guilt and method, broached in chapter two, it is no accident that the second section of Weber's methodological critique of Eduard Meyer [1905] directly links the problem of 'historical causality' and "the question of penal guilt" (168). By Weber's estimation, these two questions share a logical structure since they are both 'anthropocentric,' or concerned with the causality of human 'actions' in concrete situations. Of course criminal law has the additional issue of responsibility, or 'guilt.' This extra issue of 'guilt' is value-relevant, for us, for it hints at Weber's meditation on his own responsibility or guilt as an individual actor. Durkheim confidently parried suggestions concerning the 'amorality' of sociology. Weber, the anxious Protestant, tied himself in methodological knots, recognizing, before Durkheim, the existential crisis which lay on the European horizon.

Weber is concerned, throughout his critique of Meyer, with the question of the historian's method of *selecting* elements of history as significant enough to be studied. In what sense are the letters between Goethe and Frau von Stein of historical interest, he asks? And how is this to be understood in comparison with Marx's *Capital*? Which is more important, historically? For Weber, methodological questions are moral questions, not simply causal ones (i.e., which is historically 'significant?'). They ask about the

properly scientific *agent* as much as they ask about objectively correct procedures or properly scientific *actions*. They ask about ‘subjective’ guilt and innocence, sloppiness and diligence. Weber and Durkheim are both reduced, ultimately, to a ‘morality of method,’ with Weber obsessively attached to his *vocation* as a *value*, and Durkheim to his *vocation* as a matter of *validity* (cf. Rose 2009). Weber does not justify social science as such (does not claim it has social *validity*), but he tries to justify his personal vocation, as we shall see, on the basis of his demonic/daimonic self-sameness. Durkheim, on the other hand, does not address his personal calling, but justifies the *validity* of sociology on the basis of his notion of scientific practice as a social agent of super rational reflection.

Weber fits within what I have been calling a ‘weak program’ because he believes that it is impossible to be “absolutely ‘objective’” (1949:72) about social phenomena. His belief in the impossibility of ‘ethical neutrality’ drives his methodological imperative (*Sollen*) that social scientists not engage in ethically motivated activism in their capacity *as scientists* (52). Indeed, the most influential ‘strong’ methodological positions (whether ‘Marxist’ or ‘communitarian’) tend to derive precisely the opposite conclusion and often from the same sources in the ‘hermeneutics of suspicion’ that formed the basis of Weber’s own argument. Weber, however, subjects himself to analytical suspicion, and turns this self-questioning into his main intellectual and methodological value.

Weber’s attempt to formulate a methodological distinction between facts and values has typically been read somewhat anachronistically as if it was written before Marx’s *Theses on Feuerbach*. I say *somewhat* anachronistically because, although the

Theses were published before Weber's methodological essays (but in 1888, after Marx's death), it is not clear that Weber was familiar with them. He does refer repeatedly to both *Capital* and the *Communist Manifesto* in the methodological essays. In any case, the point is the same: Weber was familiar with what he called the "optimistic syncretism" (57) of empirical knowledge and cultural ideals, and his rejection of this synthesis was a considered one. Weber rejected, as well, the idea that the theory of evolution entailed the *progressive emergence* of a social ethic.

Weber claims that scientists can, without internal contradiction, prescribe or *create* for themselves the boundary between pursuing their own 'will to truth' and enforcing that same pursuit on others. This boundary divides scientific practice and the limits of *education*, of *learning* as *Bildung*: "The fate of an epoch which has eaten of the tree of knowledge is that it must know that we cannot learn the *meaning* of the world from the results of its analysis, be it ever so perfect; it must rather be in a position to create this meaning itself" (57). Lecturers, however, are *teachers*, not *meaning creators*. Meaning creation is a task for each individual, not a scientific activity.

It is not as if scientists have actually succeeded in confining themselves to analysis, without making judgements about meaning: "It is true that in our sciences, personal value-judgments have tended to influence scientific arguments without being explicitly admitted" (54). "But it is a long way" Weber continues, "from this acknowledgement of human frailty to the belief in an 'ethical' science...which would derive its ideals from its subject matter and produce concrete norms by applying general

ethical imperatives” (55). Here is the critical hinge. Can this distinction be achieved? Weber sets it as the goal: “The capacity to distinguish between empirical knowledge and value-judgments, and the fulfillment of the scientific duty to see the factual truth as well as the practical duty to stand up for our own ideals constitute the program to which we wish to adhere with ever increasing firmness” (58). So long as the distinction is made explicit, and everyone is made “sharply aware” (59), then “the practical evaluative attitude can be not only harmless to scientific interests but even directly useful, and indeed mandatory” (59). It is, then, for Weber, not a matter of either absolute objectivity or absolute engagement (60), but of distinguishing between scientific analysis and practical evaluation as far as possible, while engaging in both forms of activity. The whole point, for Weber, is that the scientific field should be a place where “political antagonists can meet...and carry on scientific work” (60).

B. VOCATION AND THE RISE AND FALL OF THE FACT/VALUE DISTINCTION

Weber’s final version of these positions came in the “Science as a Vocation” lecture, delivered after the end of the First World War, and shortly before his death in the 1918–1920 flu pandemic. It is worth going through this lecture in some detail, since it helps to emphasize Weber’s more explicit concern with the individual calling. “Science as a Vocation” begins with a consideration of the “external conditions” required for someone to pursue an academic vocation, posing the following question: “What are the prospects of a graduate student who is resolved to dedicate himself professionally to science in university life?” (1958a:129). Beginning with external, material conditions, Weber

somewhat playfully addresses Marx: “Here we encounter the same condition that is found wherever capitalist enterprise comes into operation: the ‘separation of the worker from his means of production’” (131). First among the scholastic means of production is the *library*. A scientific vocation can only be pursued if one has access to the storehouses of knowledge (today this would include access to online scholarly materials). For a particularly wealthy person, it might be possible to build one’s own library. Still, one will need to gain access to public and private archives and other ‘means of production’ (i.e., equipment for experiments and calculations, access to experts, research assistants, lecture halls, students).

Having access to the means of production, one then needs to be able to accept the tendency for mediocrity to triumph. According to Weber, the “laws of human cooperation” (132) dictate that academic appointments usually go to mediocrities or at least the number two or three candidate instead of the top candidate. Weber appears to be saying something permanently pessimistic, here, about the nature of human institutions. To have a vocation is to accept that only an inner (non-divine, and also non-social) calling could ultimately hold up, as your vocation is likely to be under-recognized by society. His comments appear to reflect both pessimism about the possibility of a merit-based society as well as personal resentments concerning social appointments with which Weber disagreed.

Weber then addresses the problem of the dual demands of teaching and researching. The short discussion clearly sides with research. Teaching is “a personal gift

and by no means coincides with the scientific qualifications of the scholar” (134). He goes on: “I have a deep distrust of courses that draw crowds...Democracy should be used only where it is in place” (133–134). With this focus on research in mind, Weber suggests that the first element of the inner calling (although inseparable from the need to submit to the triumph of mediocrity) is the ability to devote oneself to a *specialization*. This is still a kind of external condition, since it is “conditioned by the facts that science has entered a phase of specialization previously unknown and that this will forever remain the case” (134). This claim about specialization could imply a necessary detachment from revolutionary political struggle. For, whereas Weber’s contemporary Lenin turns, at this juncture, to the tactics and strategies that might advance the cause of proletarian revolution, Weber turns to one’s unique and inner call: “whoever lacks the capacity to put on blinders, so to speak, and to come up to the idea that the fate of his soul depends upon whether or not he makes the correct conjecture at this passage of this manuscript may as well stay away from science” (135). Inner devotion to the task replaces party discipline. This clarifies in what respect Weber is a liberal and in what respect he is not (we are bound illiberally to our vocation).

Beyond enthusiasm, inner discipline, and one’s ability to make a rigorous conjecture, however, there is the need for an *intuition*, and this cannot be forced. Indeed, it may be a dilettante that actually has the intuitive insight (and this is one more reason why one must put up with the triumph of mediocrity). Enthusiasm and work give reason to hope for a breakthrough insight, but these are only necessary, and not sufficient, to the

vocation, and have no direct means of forcing the issue. Neither, on the other hand, can ‘personality’ replace ‘devotion to the task,’ or force the ‘gift of grace.’

In art there is no progress, so an artist does not have to worry about being surpassed. However, even if one has the good fortune of making a scientific discovery, a scientist works towards being surpassed: “it is our common fate and, more, our common goal” (138). This is part of the “thousands of years” (138) long process of intellectualization and disenchantment that our world has been undergoing. It is present already in “the *concept*...a handy means by which one could put the logical screws upon somebody” (141). But while this had inspired the Greeks with hope of discovering the eternal truth, it cannot inspire us in the same way. Instead of inspiring, the concept disenchant. Next came the rational experiment, “a means of reliably controlling experience” (141). To the Renaissance, to da Vinci, “science meant the path to *true art*...to *true nature*” (142). Once again, this was an inspiration. But now: “Who—aside from certain big children who are indeed found in the natural sciences—still believes that the findings...could teach us anything about the *meaning* of the world?” (142). Weber tragically concludes that the one with a vocation for science is, by this very fact, cut off from spiritual fulfilment, for “Redemption from the rationalism and intellectualism of science is the fundamental presupposition of living in union with the divine” (142). Science cannot bring forgiveness. Here, again, Durkheim would have disagreed.

A few notes about Weber’s English language ‘reception’ provide some context for thinking about vocation and value-neutrality in both individual and world-historical

terms. In contrast to his friend Georg Simmel, who received considerable attention, Weber remained largely unknown or ignored in North America, during his lifetime, where sociology was emerging along with American Pragmatism and the Social Gospel movement (Turner and Turner 1990). While a number of Simmel's essays appeared in translation in the early years of the *American Journal of Sociology*, Weber's writings were hardly even reviewed, much less translated or published (cf. Tribe 2006). In 1927 the American economist Frank H. Knight published *General Economic History*, an English translation, based upon students' lecture notes, of the last course (Winter 1919–1920) that Weber taught at Munich University. But the publication, in 1930, of Talcott Parsons' English introduction and translation of Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, followed by Parsons' 'voluntarist' synthesis of Weber and Durkheim, *The Structure of Social Action* (1968 [1937])—in which Weber was presented as pivotal and profound, but too pessimistic—set the initial tone of Weber's reception in English-speaking sociology.

The Parsonsian synthesis, along with Parsons himself, was to become institutionally very powerful in American sociology. At the same time, the events of the Second World War seemed to support Weber's pessimism against Parsons' optimistic synthesis. In appropriating Weber's emphasis on values for use in his theory of system *integration*, Parsons deemphasized the notion of unintended consequences embedded in Weber's ironic linking of the origins of modern capitalism to Calvinist salvation anxiety. The apparent failure of the structural functional synthesis and the reintroduction of

Weber's notion of Western pluralism as riven by fundamental conflicts began to emerge as early as the post-war appearance in 1946 of the Gerth and Mills collection of English translations and the 1949 translations of Weber's methodological writings by Herbert Gans. Both of these collections tended to problematize the synthesis of Durkheim and Weber around voluntarism and values, since they detailed the extent to which Weber saw value pluralism as a problem for contemporary society as well as for contemporary science and its relationship to the political, questions Parsons had bracketed and set aside. This dilemma was more explicitly announced and analyzed in Alvin Gouldner's 1962 article in *Social Problems*, "Anti-Minotaur: The Myth of a Value-Free Sociology."

The resurgence of 'conflict theories' paralleled the rise of Cold War ideology, which had one of its early culminations in Senator McCarthy's Anti-Communist crusade. Social scientific considerations of social integration began increasingly to acknowledge the importance of deep-seated social conflicts. The relatively conservative conflict theories of Lewis Coser (1956)—who argued, following Simmel, that conflict was productive—and Robert Merton (1968 [1949]), who developed the concept of 'latent function,' also served to modify Parsons' approach to the 'problem of order.' Gouldner went further than these Simmel-influenced introductions of conflict, but while he provided an important critique of the sometimes glad-handing Parsonsian synthesis, he did not endorse Weberian methodology against the bad faith of Cold War methodology. Gouldner, along with C. Wright Mills, helped to lead the 1960s American reformulation of sociology as a moral-political vocation. The fact/value distinction, on Gouldner's

reading, had been an American smoke-screen for conservative, apathetic, and morally and politically bankrupt scholarship.

The attack on Parsons spearheaded by Mills and Gouldner was not the only strand of scholarship to criticize scientific claims to neutral objectivity. In an article published in 2003, Davydova and Sharrock outline the ‘Rise and Fall of the Fact/Value Distinction,’ describing three other streams of work critical of the fact/value distinction that emerged in post-war period: 1) The phenomenology/ethnomethodology of Schutz and Garfinkel which emphasized the entanglement of norm following and cognition; 2) Peter Winch’s (1958) Wittgensteinian approach, which “undercut the idea that sociological descriptions were themselves purely empirical, rather than integrally evaluative” (Davydova and Sharrock 2003:358; see Louch 2000 [1966]; Searle 1969); and 3) MacIntyre’s and Charles Taylor’s rejections of the fact/value distinction in favour of teleological notions of human flourishing. Alasdair MacIntyre put the discussion in an historical perspective, arguing that only modern non-functional (i.e., non-Aristotelian/teleological) definitions of the human can separate is and ought. The idea of value-neutrality could only make sense in a society where tradition had been fragmented: “In other words, the ‘no ‘ought’ from ‘is’ principle is valid for a modern self alone” (Davydova and Sharrock 2003:367). MacIntyre’s solution is to move back to the Aristotelian question of ‘the good’ and away from the modern (Kantian) question of ‘right.’ As we shall see in a later chapter, he makes this move largely by means of his conception of ‘practices.’ That is, if Kantians confine themselves to a liberal reading of individual autonomy, in which the basic

principle is that of treating others as ends in themselves, for an Aristotelian, we must assess the value, as an end in itself, of particular social practices.

These critiques provide background to the following discussion of Weber's attempt to formulate the concept of charisma in both a value-relevant and a value-neutral manner. In spite of these critiques of the fact/value distinction, the concept of charisma, taken up by social scientists at about the same time, was largely mobilized in value-neutral terms and treated as a nonmoral, and perhaps even anti-moral, or socially dangerous (e.g., Schiffer 1973) property. An exception was the work of Philip Rieff, which, while originally drafted during this same period (he stopped work on it in 1973), remained unpublished until after his death. I draw on this critical reading of Weber to suggest a modification of the concept of charisma in the direction of my residual but persistent concept of answerability.

C. CHARISMATIC ANSWERABILITY

In what follows, I try to develop an immanent critique of Weber's weak program. In simplest terms, while my own weak program endorses Weber's attempt to keep sociologists from misusing their role as experts, I follow the critiques of 'value-free' social science that perceive layers of moral evaluation in purportedly neutral terminology and description. With respect to charisma, I argue that a fuller sociological account would position charisma as a phenomenon exhibiting a kind of weak moral structure, related to the answerability of the gift relation, to charisma conceived as a societal quality, an interpellating 'gift of grace' that may circulate within a community, and which may take a

variety of forms, each of which 1) activates a kind of ethical self-relation, 2) includes some 'image of redemption,' and 3) can be distinguished from those forms of 'personal magnetism' that 'merely' cause excitement and, as Greenfeld puts it, "the propensity for unreflective imitation" (1985:117; cf. Shils 1965).

Weber tied his notion of authority to the concept of legitimacy, which he defined in terms of power, the state, and the monopoly of the use of force (1958a:78). It is tied, ultimately, to the 'hopes' and the 'fears' (79) of potential followers and disciples, which are mediated by processes of legitimation. Legitimation, however, is addressed only at the level of discourse, not in a dialectic with what Bourdieu calls "the objective structure of the relations...Weber thus reduces the question of legitimacy to one of *representations of legitimacy*" (Bourdieu 1987:126). In attempting to be 'value-neutral,' Weber discounted phenomenological differences between (moral and non-moral) forms—what Bourdieu would call *habitus*—of obedience or followership (Weber 1978:241–242). In trying to demonstrate 'value relevance,' by contrast, he emphasized the importance of talented heroic leaders for the vitality, even the survival, of human societies, and his suspicion of the talents of 'the people.' There is tension, here.

Weber brings the tension between value-freedom and value-relevance to a head by claiming that charisma is defined by "how the individual is actually regarded by those subject to charismatic authority, by his 'followers' or 'disciples,'" (quoted in Strauss 1965:55) but that, in the case of Joseph Smith, founder of Mormonism, he "cannot be classified in this way [as charismatic] with absolute certainty since there is the possibility

that he was a very sophisticated type of swindler” (55). Why is it not possible, according to Weber, for Smith to be a charismatic swindler, so long as his followers accept his performance (cf. Chryssides 2012)? This question demonstrates the ambiguity of Weber’s approach, for he appears to reserve interpretive authority for himself rather than deferring to the followers, whose attachment to their leader is treated as being basically internal and *non-rational* (Weber 1978:245). Leo Strauss (1965:55–56) fastened upon this tension in Weber’s definition and exemplification of charisma and used it as evidence of the impossibility of value-neutrality. Strauss’s challenge to Weber is that ‘appearing to have charisma’ and ‘pretending to have charisma’ are fully compatible. Strauss makes the Goffmanian point (Goffman 1959; cf. also Joosse 2012) that sincerity is irrelevant to the charisma (defined as success) of Joseph Smith’s *performance*. Weber implies, however, that sincerity *is* necessary to charisma: Joseph Smith may have been a charlatan because he may not have believed in his own revelation. On my reading, Weber’s remark about charlatanry shows him to be on the right track, even if *sincerity* is not quite the right concept for the job of exploring charisma. Instead of taking Strauss’s reading of Weber as nihilistic (Strauss 1965:42), I take it that Weber had an incomplete understanding of the *relational* qualities of charisma (cf. Madsen and Snow 1991:5) and its potential to take on democratic, rather than demagogic or patriarchal forms. Weber could not explore the moral potential of a relational charisma because he ignored the role of relational processes in generating social energies (e.g., through childhood socialization; through community practices), deferring instead to formally mystical (i.e., non-sociological)

sources of inspiration (i.e., one's *daimon*), which is to say, by “invoking Nature” (Bourdieu 1987:130) or referring to the inner ‘calling.’ Just as Weber took for granted, rather than investigating or thematizing Nietzsche’s conclusion of a fundamental fragmentation of philosophical standpoints, leaving only a bleak and non-rational decisionism (Factor and Turner 1979), he also assumed a fundamentally non-rational distinction between forms and social sources of authority

On my reading, against the notion of charisma as epitomized by a certain type of heroic leader that dominates followers on the basis of appearing to have extraordinary qualities—a role Weber arguably coveted for himself, although vexedly,⁶⁶ whether in his political aspirations, in his role, along with Marianne, as host of an intellectual ‘salon,’ or in his rigorous and demanding, if not dazzling, lectures—it is possible to pose a sociological ‘ideal type’ of charismatic *relation*, or ‘relational charisma,’ conceived as a uniquely important form of intersubjectivity, entailing an ongoing (artful and reasonable) generation, evocation, and distribution of social obligations. Many of the lineaments of this type of relation may be found in Mauss’s theorization of gift economies (1969; cf. also Derrida 1994; 1995; Joas 2001; O’Neill 1998; Parsons, Fox, and Lidz 1972).

Charisma appears, here, to be just as sociologically conditioned as Weber’s two other

66 The question of intellectual charisma underpins the dissertation and forms a subtext to the following chapters on character, affect, and practice. To what extent are relations of domination necessary or productive in the student-teacher relationship? This is relevant when, as in the opening chapter, we think about questions of *transference* (Lacan 1977) and of [*auto-*] *interpellation*. The role of the ‘master’ is one of the underlying themes of Foucault’s later studies and lectures (1988; 2001; 2005; 2010; 2011). The question of intellectual influence has also been the subject of a number of sociological studies (Bourdieu 1988; Collins 2000, 2002; Lamont 1987). Members of Yale’s ‘strong program’ have begun formulating a cultural model of ‘iconic’ intellectuals (e.g., Foucault) and ‘iconic power’ (Bartmanski 2012; Bartmanski, Alexander, and Giesen 2012), which deserves to be closely analyzed in relation to charisma.

forms of authority. Even if it may also appear as a revolutionary movement (Weber 1978:245), it comes not through outside agitation, an irruption, but as an immanent and moral social development. As such, a ‘charismatic society’ would offer an alternative to the false dualism of libertarian and communitarian debates (cf. Rose 1996) as well as to populist vs. elite debates. That is, charismatic relations may contain a minimal moral content in their structure of call and response, and rather than displacing or replacing ‘traditional’ forms of authority (i.e., ‘law’), they ‘refresh’ and extend social obligations (without being ‘conservative’ or failing towards functionalism).

This, at least, is Philip Rieff’s position (2007). Rieff argues for a phenomenological but also ‘ideal type’ distinction between charismatic inwardness (answerability) and asymmetrical domination (or fascist fusion and permissiveness) as between different kinds of experiences (cf. Rose 1996:13), a distinction that could, in principle, be empirically verified—if not ‘instantiated.’ Here I follow Weber’s notion of the ‘ideal type’ as something that one does not find in its ‘pure’ form—but which cannot be confined to the merely empirical. If the charismatic relation is potentially also an ethical one, it leads, in addition, to an element of metaphysical speculation (cf. Rose 1996:9; Žižek 2008:xi). What is more, charismatic answerability may in principle be traced to specific forms of practice, but here the empirical task would be to distinguish those forms of practice that reproduce social relations of domination (Rose 1996:60) through a legitimating performative magic (cf. Bourdieu 1990a:177–198) or an overwhelming (performative) show of force, from those that contribute to the generation

and circulation of ‘gifts of grace’ in a society whose members democratically generate, recognize, respond to, and share in social pleasures and obligations. Against Bourdieu’s sometime insistence on the exclusively disenchanting role of sociologists in unveiling and then denouncing the ‘hidden injuries of class,’ and according to whom agonistic struggle underlies all social interaction within a field, is it possible that the self-critique generated by the semi-autonomy of the sociological field may also generate forms of non-hegemonic quasi-enchantment, especially around the thematics of *answerability*? One may even discover the possibility of graceful forms of relation that exceed historically asymmetrical forms of domination, extending our capacity to view affairs “from the standpoint of redemption” (Adorno 2005:153). Bourdieu (following Levi-Strauss) seems to miss this element of idealizing enchantment in his reading of Mauss, as Rancière has polemically pointed out (2012). We shall give Bourdieu’s conception of practice a hearing in a later chapter, and we shall see, there, just how ‘minimal’ our claim to a distinction between *moral* and *nonmoral* practices might become.

In the meantime, what help can Rieff’s phenomenology of charisma offer to the project of thinking about answerability? To begin with, Rieff attends to a broader range of uses than those who have followed from Weber’s initial deployment of the term. Rieff argues that charisma is a collectively sustained moral quality, a ‘transliteration’ of sacred interditory authority into social life. Without being reducible to ‘collective effervescence,’ charisma is a collectively produced and sustained *quality* of culture.

While there are problems with Rieff’s view, especially his fixation on authority *as such*,

Rieff uniquely articulates three problems with Weberian and post-Weberian analyses of charisma. First, undue attention has typically been given to the leader-follower relationship, at the expense of the relational and cultural elements of charisma. Second, phenomenologically speaking, charisma cannot be adequately understood as a kind of undifferentiated amoral power embodied equally by figures that enable collective transgression and by those who manage to transform and deepen individual and collective structures of moral self-relation. Following Rieff, one can argue that charisma embodies a type of moral structure, albeit a ‘weak’ one (i.e., a form whose content cannot be extensively specified), such that the ideal or ‘pure’ type of charisma can be minimally distinguished from other individual powers of ‘personal magnetism’ as well as from Durkheim’s concept of ‘collective effervescence.’ Finally, if the moral structure of charisma is accepted, it follows from this that it is incoherent to attempt to examine charisma from a simplistically ‘value-free’ perspective. Extending Rieff’s analysis, I argue that we should move beyond Weber’s conception of an inverse relationship between charisma and democracy (cf. Pfaff 2002).

The modern concept of charisma has been with us for a little over a century.

Derived from Greek terms used in the New Testament (e.g., *charis* and *charismati*, which are usually translated as *grace* and *gift*, respectively),⁶⁷ its modern usage originates with

⁶⁷ The key passage is I Corinthians 12. Chapter 12 is followed by the chapter on ‘love’ (*agape*), the Latin translation of which is *caritas*, a word with links to *charismata* (in other words, the resolution of the gifts of grace back into grace, from the individual reception of grace (*charisma*) to the collective giving of grace (*caritas*). As Paul has it, if one has received a gift without also receiving (being filled with) love, one has nothing, has become a ‘resounding gong.’

Potts’ *History of Charisma* (2009) provides a more extensive discussion of the term and its pre-Christian roots, including the presence of a shining and lovely god named Charis in *The Iliad* and the appearance, in *The Odyssey*, of *charis* as a gift of grace bestowed upon Telemachus by Athene (2009:13).

the 19th century German Protestant theologian and historian Rudolf Sohm (1892; 1895 [1887]). Following New Testament usage, Sohm emphasized the plurality of charisma in the form of multiple gifts given for the spiritual edification and vivification of the individual and the religious community. Its use in sociology begins with Max Weber's modification and elaboration of the concept, in writings produced between 1910 and his death in 1920, as an ideal-type of legitimate authority (in contrast to *traditional* and *rational-legal* authority) vested in an individual leader.

The concept of charisma has been repeatedly revisited by a variety of social and political thinkers, with ambiguous results. The ambiguity of the term is partly due to the fact of its incorporation into the everyday lexicon since the 1960 American Presidential Campaign, when Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., used it to describe John F. Kennedy (Turner 2003:6). Popular usage throughout the latter half of the 20th century has continuously mobilized and constrained its academic deployment (cf. Bendix 1967). It has been adopted by political pundits in the popular media as a crucial adjective for distinguishing a category of political leaders/candidates and in the business and management world where it is used in 'leadership studies.'

In spite of Talcott Parsons' early claim that charisma was already a fully empirical concept (1968 [1937]:668–669), scholars have continually felt the need to re-work the concept in order to effect a full sociological annexation and application (e.g., Friedland 1964; Burke and Brinkerhoff 1981; Riesbrodt 1999; Turner 1993; Smith 2000). Even administrative and management science 'leadership studies' express this need, where

charisma functions as a standard conceptual resource (e.g., Beyer 1999a, 1999b; Bligh and Kohles 2009; Bryman 1993; Conger 1989; Conger and Kanungo 1998; Emrich, Brower, Feldman and Garland 2001; Halpert 1990; Howell and Avolio 1992; Pastor, Meindl and Mayo 2002), but where engagement with the conceptual debates or the historical sources and resources is uneven and reliance on popular usage is heavy.

Rather than arguing that making the concept ‘fully sociological’ involves making it more scientific, I will argue that the richest sociological reading of charisma (at least as it appears in the form of *accounts*), short of an empirical examination of concrete charismatic practices (e.g., Wright and Rawls 2005), involves a careful hermeneutic of the cultural tradition from which the concept has emerged. On my view, the main problem is not that charisma is a residual category, as Stephen Turner has argued (1993; 2003; 2007a)⁶⁸, but that most scholars have failed to take the cultural context of the concept seriously enough. This failure appears most vividly, ironically, in the place one would most expect the cultural context to have been taken seriously, Philip Smith’s (2000) application of the “strong program” (Smith and Alexander 2003) in cultural sociology to the concept of charisma. Using the concept of culture as a ‘relatively autonomous’ sphere, Smith discusses the narrative structures mobilized in the rhetoric of three twentieth century public figures commonly described as charismatic: Adolf Hitler,

68 In order to operationalize charisma, Turner suggests that the charismatic leader is someone capable of transforming risk perceptions amongst followers. This turns charisma into a game theoretical concept, and opens it to empirical testing by cognitive neuroscience. Like, Weber, however, Turner gives no sociological explanation for charisma’s origins, continuing to imply that it is a sociologically inexplicable irruption. Associating it with an open-ended notion of risk, Turner ensures that it remains, as in Weber, a nonmoral concept with a formal non-relation to the law.

Winston Churchill, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Smith argues that charisma needs to be understood in terms of the deployment of symbolic binaries of good and evil. On this reading, attributions of charisma depend upon successful links being made between prospective ‘charismatic’ individuals and culturally predominant salvation narratives. However, Smith avoids any concrete discussion of charisma’s own position as a concept within a narrative structure and context.⁶⁹ He offers no definition of the term, nor any history of its usage, and he makes no distinction between public (or scholarly) ‘attributions’ of charisma and ‘actual’ possession of charisma. Smith is so eager to get to his relative autonomy of culture thesis that he does not bother to discuss the cultural term that he found ready-to-hand and is already hammering away with. He may be taking culture seriously—and Smith is not the first to do this, although the ‘strong program’ tends to under-cite predecessors (e.g., on leadership, see Klapp 1964)—but he does not take charisma seriously as a cultural concept, and he leaves some of the same elements of charisma in obscurity that Weber does. The most striking evidence of Smith’s un-seriousness is his failure—shared with the vast majority of other sociological theorists of charisma—to go *behind* Weber to the cultural sources from which the concept has been derived. As a result, Smith accepts the three key but questionable elements of Weber’s approach mentioned earlier: 1) an exclusive focus on leaders; 2) an assumption that charisma is a non-moral quality; and following from this, 3) an ostensibly value-neutral approach (i.e., the assumption that in making an attribution of charisma the social

69 See Baehr (2008) for a useful discussion of the way that Weber developed his sociology of charisma through a creative transformation of the mid-19th century discussion of Louis Napoleon’s ‘Caesarism.’

scientist is *not* making a moral judgement. How else could the social scientist assess both King and Hitler as charismatic?).

While I am skeptical of a number of elements of Rieff's approach, in mobilizing the 'sacred' and in taking seriously the Judeo-Christian foundation of the concept of charisma, he has initiated a more profound engagement with the question of the cultural and the social than the strong programmers. As a result, his approach, although it deals with collective aspects of the social, evades Smith's claim that such approaches tie charisma too closely to social structure (Smith 2000:102). Under the influence of Freud, Durkheim, and Kierkegaard, Rieff argues that charisma is a kind of *collectively produced and maintained quality of culture* with a fundamentally moral and religious or spiritual character, as the primary means of mediating the relationship between the sacred and the social. Charismatic culture regulates individual self-relation by formulating, producing, and expressing *interdictory energies*. This is best expressed by the Kierkegaardian notion of *inwardness*. This position is directly opposed to Stephen Turner's attempt to link charisma exclusively to risk-taking (conceived without reference to morality or religions) and transgression (of previously accepted limits). According to Turner, charismatic leaders *embolden* their followers; they give them new *permissions* (2007a). Rieff, by contrast, offers a reading of charisma as the moral production of *fresh interdicts*. The question might be, then, whether charisma is about risk and transgression or about faith and guilt. Rieff's approach highlights the fact that studies of charisma have given undue attention to the leader-follower relationship at the expense of the collective and cultural

elements of charisma. Fixating on men coming down from mountains, grasping pulpits, and leading marches misses the ambiguity inherent in everyday public attributions of agency, too easily conflating the *existence* of charisma with its *attribution*, and missing relational elements entirely. Smith is partly correct to point out that charisma should be understood “in a cultural way as the product of symbolic structures” (2000:103), but reductive when he accepts the doxa that it is “a moral bond of duty linking followers to leaders” (103). According to the cultural tradition, one still alive, for instance, in the Christian charismatic church movement, visible and official leadership of a group is but one manifestation of charisma.

Furthermore, formulations that depict charisma as a kind of undifferentiated amoral power seem to lose the phenomena they are trying to describe. We are left with no way of distinguishing between Hitler and Martin Luther King, between a Mafia Godfather—which almost all of us, even those of us involved in organized crime (cf. Chambliss 1978), know primarily through popular culture depictions, in any case. Was Tony Soprano charismatic? Or was it James Gandolfini?—and an effective community organizer, when we accept the notion that charisma is embodied equally by figures that transform perceptions of risk in order to enable collective transgression and by processes that transform and deepen individual and collective structures of moral self-relation or conscience, or what Rose (1996) describes as a process of ‘mourning’ becoming the law. A leader is a leader is a leader. Rieff argues, however, that there is a fundamental difference between authority relations that generate *conformity* and those that generate

inwardness. This could be a way of giving charisma a kind of moral structure, albeit a ‘weak’ one (i.e., a form whose content cannot be extensively specified), such that ‘pure’ charisma can be distinguished from other powers of ‘personal magnetism’ (as well as from Durkheim’s concept of ‘collective effervescence’). As a point of observation, rejecting the moral structure of charisma, it seems, goes hand in hand with a ‘value-free’ perspective (such as Turner attempts, piggy-backing on Weber). Nothing could be more in harmony with capitalistic exchange, nor more in conflict with democratic projects, than to approach charisma as a neutral individual power of domination or fascination. On the view of charisma that Rieff develops, nothing could be more anti-charismatic.

Against the value-free approach to charisma as a kind of amoral social energy originating in and emanating from an individual leader, Rieff conceives of charisma as a quality of culture that emerges and remains embedded in concrete forms of *practice*. While leadership is one aspect of what Rieff calls the ‘charisma of culture,’ charismatic practices take a number of forms, each of which binds members of a group to one another with mutually beneficial effects, while simultaneously limiting, rather than expanding, individual proclivities for transgressive-conformist collective acts (expanding inwardness instead). According to Rieff, charismatic communities, rather than defining themselves against an other, are characterized by democratically universalizing tendencies. This links charisma not with the decisionistic leader-follower model offered by Schmitt’s friend-enemy concept of the political (1996), but with Gillian Rose’s understanding of the political: “...politics does not happen when you act on behalf of your own damaged good,

but when you act, *without guarantees*, for the good of all—this is to take *the risk* of the *universal interest*” (1996:62). The universal, here, is not the pre-established ‘us’ (vs. ‘them’), such as the fraternally enabled transgressive violence of ‘brothers in arms,’ but more like what Rancière has in mind with the notion of the assertion of equality by the ‘part that has no part’ (2007).

In order to develop the already mentioned criticisms of charisma studies (i.e., their leadership fixation; their insistence on the amorality of charisma; their value-freedom; the supposedly inverse relationship with democracy), we will begin with the source, Weber’s own development of the concept of charisma, taking the leader/follower focus first. In *Economy and Society*, Weber defines charismatic leadership as one of the “three pure types of legitimate domination” (1978:216). This form of domination, as opposed to traditional or legal-rational domination, is understood as “resting on devotion to the exceptional sanctity, heroism or exemplary character of an individual person, and of the normative patterns or order revealed or ordained by him” (216). Now it follows from Weber’s methodological individualism that one take the meaning of individual orientations to social action as the starting point. It is not as clear why this would mean that charisma needs to be understood as a type of authority originating in and wielded entirely by individuals, but this is opening Weber’s claim (241).

Weber’s discussion is caught up in the twin binaries of tradition/charisma (i.e., charisma as breaking up a sedimented order) and charisma/bureaucracy (i.e., bureaucracy as rationalizing, routinizing and draining charisma of its energy). It is also shaped by the

emphasis he places on the role of individual actors in political life. But these moves do not necessarily follow from his definition of ‘social action’ as actors mutually oriented with respect to the meaning of action. As a result, we can question Weber’s confinement of charisma to leader/follower relationships without needing to question his methodological individualism. Weber’s own writing hints that this individualistic conception of charismatic authority has real limitations.

In the summer of 1917, while the tide was turning against Germany in the First World War, Weber published a series of articles in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* on the current and future possibilities for German leaders (1978:1381–1469). In these articles Weber maintains a steady critique of ‘arm-chair’ political windbags, incompetent monarchs (i.e., Kaiser Wilhelm II), and self-serving bureaucrats. He argues that the returning soldiers should have a place in German political life (1382–1383), but exhibits considerable pessimism about the possibility that those with a real ‘vocation’ for political life will find their rightful place in a Germany dominated by bureaucrats living ‘off’ instead of ‘for’ politics. Weber does not consistently defend the importance of ‘leadership,’ as opposed to what Habermas would call ‘democratic will-formation,’ however, since Weber blames the rise of bureaucratic power on Bismarck’s methods during the course of his long domination of German political life. That is, if we take Bismarck as one of Weber’s prototypes for charismatic leadership (cf. ‘Caesarism’), what is at stake is less the routinization of charisma than the political infantilization of German society. Weber argued that when Bismarck was finally forced from power in 1890, he

left behind him a nation *without any political sophistication*, far below the level which in this regard it had reached twenty years before [i.e., in 1870]. Above all, he left behind him a nation *without any political will of its own*, accustomed to the idea that the great statesman at the helm would make the necessary political decisions. (1392)

Weber suggests that there was an alternative to the bureaucratic take-over of political life but it was cut off by the charismatic Bismarck's machinations. Bismarck's leadership style produced a Germany, Weber writes, "...unaccustomed to sharing, through its elected representatives, in the determination of its political affairs. Such participation, after all, is the precondition for developing political judgment" (1392). Here Weber makes the same argument that Kant made in his 'What is Enlightenment?' essay (1996), that individual and even democratic autonomy can be developed by practice and participation combined with the restriction of paternalistic or repressive control from the top. Here, as well, lies the possibility that charisma may be generated by collective and participatory forms of social interaction rather than originating in extraordinary individuals who succeed in commanding a following on the basis of their unusual gifts.

Instead of moving past his leader-follower focus, however, Weber reinforces it with two well-known elements of his political sociology. On the one hand, he argues for the inevitability of the bureaucratic take-over of authority. On the other hand, although he advocates giving the vote to the returning soldiers and suggests that the valorization of *honour* and *solidarity* is best done through trade unions, he ascribes 'irrational emotions' to the 'masses' (1978:1459–1460) and emphasizes their vulnerability to demagoguery. This generates a highly ambiguous relevance for charisma, especially with regard to its

origin. On the one hand, Weber accepts that it is through collective struggle (in the trade unions) that the value of honour and solidarity come to be felt and understood. On the other hand, Weber criticizes the masses for their suggestibility. He has a similar ambivalence for political parties (which are, in his view and in that of his student, Robert Michels, inevitably run by a small core group) and for 'interest groups.' For Weber, these associative forms tend to undermine the possibility of effective political life precisely because they lower the possibility that the right sort of leaders will find their way into the decisive political positions.

Weber's entire discussion, however, relies on an implicit but rather convoluted set of metaphors of energy flows and sources, blockages, desires, lacks, and all of this in a 'value-free' mode! Weber claims that "it is not the politically passive 'mass' that produces the leader from its midst, but the political leader recruits his following and wins the mass through 'demagogy.' This is true even under the most democratic form of state" (1457). But should this claim be taken at face value? To begin with, the notion that the 'mass' is simultaneously politically passive and emotionally volatile and suggestible is vulnerable to Weber's own well-known cautionary and critical remarks about the use of organic or collective metaphors of the social (16). In addition, what does Weber mean by "the most democratic form of the state?" Reasonably speaking, he could have meant, at most, the most democratic state 'so far,' but he regularly implies a kind of knowledge of the possible limits of democracy *as such*. He claims that participation in political decision-making is required for developing political judgement, but he vitiates this notion by

suggesting that it is best done *through representation*.

Ultimately, Weber fails to support his claim that charisma originates in the individual and that its origin is *daimonic* and therefore sociologically inexplicable, instead of *demotic* and of social origin. This point should be noted well: while Weber treats the *effects* or *proofs* of charisma sociologically, he positions the *origins* of charisma within the individual (as a kind of self-relation) and then brackets this ‘inner calling’ from sociological analysis. As a result, Weber precludes the possibility that charisma in its pure form could have a fundamentally democratic manifestation or meaning, but he can only do this by giving charisma a miraculous or *daimonic* origin. Weber thus makes the condition of charisma’s appearance coeval with its ‘fall.’ It is only ever as stable as the individual self-relation that is its basis, and this basis is always unstable. Stable, everyday social relations *as such* suck the life from charisma. If Jesus brings the *Holy Spirit*, Paul’s institutional success is *vampiric* (which is why the community must endlessly take communion, like vampires⁷⁰).

Weber’s genius theory of charisma, with its aristocratic elements, likely reflects the influence of Nietzsche and his conception of ‘will-to-power,’ but it also reflects the influence of Rudolf Sohm’s Protestant reading of the *charismata*, which is that the institutionalization of the division of gifts in a *visible* (Catholic) Church meant a submersion of the *spirit* that only ended with Luther. Ironically, however, Weber reads the Reformation’s ‘priesthood of all believers’ as unleashing inner anxieties about salvation

70 In this image we can see the ambiguity of a notion like routinization, and the importance of the metaphors we use for its interpretation (e.g., the debates about how to translate *stahlhartes Gehäuse*, whether as ‘iron cage’ or as ‘steel-hard casing’).

in a way that contributed to the formation of an 'Iron Cage' of capitalist bureaucracy and instrumental rationality. As Martin Riesebrodt argues (1999), Weber follows much of Sohm's reading of charisma. But where Sohm's is a triumphalist, orthodox (Protestant) Christian reading, according to which charisma has been miraculously preserved and is now coming into its own, Weber's reading is pessimistic and fatalistic. Weber's pessimism, however, is arguably a product of his failure to recognize the limitations of his own conception of social science's highest achievement, the possibility of value-free presentations of the *meaning* of particular social actions. Habermas (1984) has argued that this is a consequence of Weber's failure to develop an adequate typology of forms of rationality. The pragmatist Habermas would have us replace the Weberian secularization of the *pneuma* (the spirit of the social) into individual charisma, with communicative rationality. What is proposed, here, as answerability, lies in excess of the communicative.

Weber approaches charisma just as he approaches his other ideal types: "How the quality in question would be ultimately judged from any ethical, aesthetic, or other point of view is naturally entirely indifferent for purposes of definition. What is alone important is how the individual is actually regarded by those subject to charismatic authority, by his 'followers' or 'disciples'" (1978:241–242). As we shall see, Philip Rieff claims that it is only on the condition that one allows the concept of charisma to be distinguished by its bearing a certain amount of moral content, or at least possessing a moral structure, that it is possible to give it an adequate treatment as a coherent category of phenomena. Indeed, as mentioned earlier, Weber himself seems to lean in this direction

with his remark that Joseph Smith may have been a swindler, and with his deep concern with the question of having a true vocation. Rieff asserts that charisma embodies a form of autonomy, a moral quality of *inwardness*, which involves the recognition of and resistance to ‘evil’ within oneself (i.e., Rieff associates this with an aspect of what Freud called the ‘death drive’), and the capacity to assist others who are similarly struggling for self-recognition. This quality of *inwardness* may be subsequently linked to *answerability*, the notion that binds the dissertation as a whole.

D. CHARISMA: RISK OR HOLY TERROR

Taking Philip Rieff as a guide, it would seem that Stephen Turner’s association of charisma with the concept of risk elides an important phenomenological distinction between moral and non-moral *fear*, between risk to one’s body and risk to one’s soul. This is a distinction maintained especially well in the theological tradition, but there is no reason to confine it to a theological context. Rieff describes it as the difference between “the terror in our lives and holy terror” (2007:6). There is a difference that makes a difference between the various fears that we have for our own physical safety and security and what may be called *holy terror*, or “fear of the evil in oneself and in the world” (6). It is what Ivan Illich, following the Christian Scholastics, called “filial fear,” in contrast with “servile fear” (2005:96). It is the fear of being at fault. It is somewhere in the background when we lock up our possessions so as not to tempt someone else rather than to prevent our own material loss. Holy terror is the fear invoked by Jesus when he says “But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better

for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea” (Mt. 18:6; see also Mk. 9:42, Lk. 17:2).⁷¹

Thus, Rieff would accept Turner’s claim (1993:247) that risk may be put prior to interdiction, only if we specify risk as the danger that one’s own powers pose to oneself and to others. Interdiction only follows such a recognition of danger because the risk is internal. For both Rieff and Illich, *fear of the self* (rather than the fear of fear) provides the fundamental basis for submission to charismatic authority, and such a fear can only be a *moral* fear, the product of a credal “charismatic tradition,” what Rieff calls a faith/guilt complex. For this reason, a charismatic leader does not merely enable followers to overcome fear by deeds of power. On the contrary, charisma makes us capable of Holy Terror. By contrast, Turner follows Weber in reading charisma primarily as a *transgressive*. Turner, along with popular culture, takes Hitler’s charismatic status for granted. For Rieff, by contrast, this misses the key distinction between transgression and interdiction. According to Rieff “This is why it is so ambiguous to consider Hitler, for example, as a ‘charismatic.’ He is a figure of the demolition, and what follows—the leader of an anti-credal organization” (Rieff 2007:117–118). According to Rieff, Hitler’s essentially transgressive leadership *relieved* the German people of *filial fear* while affirming collective conformity as obedience through transgression. Rather than what Rieff calls “fresh interdicts,” Hitler destroyed the moral order by means of the cracks in

71 “Filial fear” refers to the child’s fear of the parent, the fear of doing something that will cut him or her off from the parent (and as such, lies at the origin of the Freudian super ego). Nevertheless, because injury to the weak and vulnerable is just what, in the millstone passage, causes the breach between the child and the parent (i.e., the God), this exemplifies filial fear. Filial fear is precisely what is inoperative in situations of child abuse (cf. Young-Bruehl 2012). Its absence is most formally horrifying in religious leaders.

the its foundation (e.g., its anti-Semitic conditions of possibility).

Rieff's posthumously published work, with some important caveats, helps to correct a fundamental elision in Weber's concept of charisma and in his work as a whole. Rather than arguing that charisma is a 'residual category,' as Turner does, Rieff argues that Weber mistakenly made traditional and charismatic authority into polar opposites. Importantly, Rieff opens up the possibility of seeing the *collective* properties of charisma without subsuming it to Durkheim's notion of collective effervescence. While Durkheim's collective effervescence, like Weber's charisma, is a fundamentally amoral category, Rieff defines charisma as an essentially moral force and provides significant criteria for distinguishing it both from other social forces and from various kinds of ecstatic leader-follower relationships.

Like Parsons (1968) and Shils (1975), Rieff draws upon the possibility of a Weber-Durkheim synthesis. Unlike Parsons and Shils he concludes by criticizing both Weber and Durkheim, and avoids a merely functional conclusion. That is, his discussion cannot be reduced to the 'problem of order,' to Parsons' emphasis on 'values,' or to Shils' concept of 'office charisma.' Like Philip Smith's 'strong' cultural sociology reading, Rieff's reading emphasizes the fundamental relationship between charisma and culture. Rieff's reading fundamentally differs from Smith, however, whose reading ultimately *explains away* charisma by means of an oversimplified version of charisma's narrative structure (i.e., as a fully externalized contest between good and evil) (Smith 2000:105). In the end Smith follows Weber, Turner, and the others, in defining charisma as an amoral

quality defined by success in recruiting and retaining obedient followers.

Turner emphasized the aggressive (1993:253) and risk-taking/transforming character of charismatic leaders. Philip Rieff contends, by contrast, that the essential aspect of charismatic authority is that the hero or prophet leads the way in *submitting to the law* and generates through this submission not only a transformation of risk and new promises of success but also *new self-recognition of failure* (i.e., consciousness of sin). While charismatic figures probably do introduce something new, they are not, fundamentally, destructive figures. Rather than overturning the law or the tradition, charismatic figures re-invigorate it; they embody and rejuvenate the law and the charismatic culture that inspires (faith) precisely through the recognition of limits and failure (guilt), what Rieff dubbed the ‘faith/guilt complex.’ To return to our privileged example, if Hitler sanctioned new forms of violence against an innocent victim, Martin Luther King called Americans to a heightened recognition of collective and individual guilt, and not merely in order to feel guilty as an end in itself, but in order to bind oneself to ‘fresh interdicts,’ to higher standards. It was, in Gillian Rose’s terms, a work of mourning, the constitution of an experience in which “we would have to discover and confront our own fascism” (1996:48).

Weber consistently uses Jesus as the prototype of charismatic leadership, but his interpretation of his activities is rather unorthodox. Those convinced by Weber’s “anti-law” presentation of the “It is written...but I say unto you” formula would do well to review the explicit teachings of the Sermon on the Mount (Gospel of Matthew, chapters

5–7). When Weber paraphrases Jesus (1978:1115) he actually *performs* the re-interpretive act that his quotation is meant to exemplify. In other words, the revolutionary act here might well be Weber’s act of re-interpretive reversal (an act of *transgression* but not an act of charisma).⁷² Contrary to Weber’s implication, the form of the phrase appears to have been a common rabbinic form in the time of Jesus, and an illustration of the ‘interpretive imperative’ involved in maintaining or reproducing any tradition whatsoever. In addition, the Sermon on the Mount seems intended (like other rabbinic teaching) to *deepen* the commandments rather than overturn them. In fact, New Testament biblical scholarship suggests that almost all of the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount can be found in the teachings of other contemporary rabbis (Stoutenburg 1996). This corresponds to developments in Old Testament scholarship since Weber’s time as well, as Peter Berger pointed out in 1963, in an article on Israelite prophecy that details the fact that, in contrast to the isolated opposition to social institutions depicted by Weber, Israelite prophets were fully embedded within Israelite religious institutions.

Importantly, Rieff’s model of charisma directly opposes the ‘state of exception’ model of sovereignty according to which the force of law is ultimately not subject to law, and legality operates within an indeterminate grey zone. This model disqualifies the ‘Hitler as Charismatic leader’ argument, and distinguishes a charismatic development from a mere ‘Escape from Freedom’ (Fromm 1941). Charisma must be, for Rieff, a legitimate and moral force. In contrast to Schmittian notions of sovereignty, charisma is the miraculous “exception to the exception” (Honig 2008), the act of voluntarily rejecting

⁷² Rieff uses the term ‘deathwork’ to describe this kind of interpretation of a culture (2006).

an opportunity to exercise raw power in order to submit oneself to a moral order. The charismatic word expresses “fresh interdicts”—rather than merely transgressive or new words of power—that rejuvenate the social covenant. The charismatic or prophetic act renews the tradition, and prophetic fulfilment fulfils the covenant of a people with itself. Disputes about the specific meaning of *fulfilment* are different from disputes about the meaningfulness of the traditional system as such. This ‘exemplary’ aspect, a point overlooked by Turner but not by Weber, points to the possibility of a restored self-relation, something not contained in Turner’s dyad of transformed risk and possibility. Both Weber and Rieff call this, translating charisma literally, the ‘gift of grace.’

Perhaps most importantly, Rieff’s re-reading of charisma transforms the meaning of success. While Weber made charisma equivalent with success, Rieff makes room for forms of success that look much like failure. The “charisma of perception,” argues Rieff, is, in fact, the “recognition of guilt” or failure (2007:38). We must not forget that Jesus’s earthly mission culminates with his crucifixion. The resurrection does not undo the crucifixion, it generates success *through* failure. This is a radical transformation of risk indeed. For Turner, the cycle of success (1993:253) must go on and on. For Rieff’s conception of charisma, by contrast, it is *failure* that goes on and on.⁷³ Against Turner’s distinction of the prophet from the charismatic hero—“The message is ‘follow me’ in the case of the hero, ‘heed my warning’ in the case of the prophet” (Turner 1993:245)—Rieff argues that the heroic and the prophetic form of charisma are closely linked. The hero also gives warnings and the prophet also demands, in a way, followers. In this light,

73 For a novelistic portrayal of this thesis, see Shusaku Endo’s *The Samurai* (1982).

Weber's opposition of charisma to reason, law, and discipline, take on a very different appearance. Instead of being suffocated by reason, law, or discipline, charisma is bound to their institutionalizing processes through its character as the *self-recognition of failure*. Here Rieff introduces a very different opposition, that between cultural movements of transgression and therapy and cultural movements of interdiction and remission, and he argues that Weber's typology of authority should have included the distinction between interdictory and transgressive forms of charismatic authority. According to Rieff, the condition for transgressive charismatic authority is not necessarily 'traditional' authority; it can also emerge from interdictory charismatic authority (2007:76–77). From this viewpoint it follows that charisma, as an interdictory structure, can also be understood as a *moral structure*, which we confine, here, to the possibility that charismatic relations may be understood as forms of answerability (and not simply transgressive or interdictory). Rieff's faith/guilt complex, which institutionally maintains recognition of one's own guilt, differs, here, from Smith's model of culture, which structures the good/evil distinction according to the in-group/out-group binary. Smith's 'salvation narrative' lacks any notion of good and evil as an 'inner' or 'inward' problem. Instead, it is a 'relatively autonomous' narrative that is used functionally for 'othering.'

Dividing transgressive and interdictory forms obviates part of Weber's claim that charisma be approached in a 'value-free' manner. While sociology remains incapable of technically adjudicating between transgressive or interdictory forms of charismatic authority, the conceptual distinction is clear enough and it is certainly possible to develop

empirical research along these lines (cf. Archer 2003). Weber's claims about discipline may serve to clarify this point. According to Rieff, Weber misrepresents discipline when he suggests that it is characterized by neutrality. The problem, here, is that Weber conflates *neutrality* with *objectivity*. Against Weber's methodological writings on scientific objectivity as 'value-freedom,' Rieff suggests that:

We can now see more clearly what is wrong with Weber's conception of objectivity, for objectivity in culture is the truth of resistance—what Kierkegaard called *subjectivity*. Every cultural truth must be a truth of resistance...objectivity of the scholar or scientist is anything but neutral and passive. (2007:177–178)

From remarks on the discipline of sociology, it is a short turn to charisma and discipline. Although charisma is, along with traditional and rational-legal authority, one of Weber's three ideal types of legitimate authority, and as such commands and produces *obedience*, Weber does not explain the extent to which he includes obedience under the category of *discipline*. This leads to problems when Weber claims that "Discipline as such is not hostile to charisma or to status honor" but it is "intrinsically alien to charisma" (1978:1149). Weber makes this statement because he understands discipline as 'impersonal,' and 'unfailingly neutral.' It puts itself at the service of anyone that "claims its service and knows how to promote it" (1149). Still, that does not clarify discipline's relation to obedience, especially with respect to Weber's contrast between rationality and charisma.

Weber views discipline—which must be understood here first in military terms—as essentially, not contingently, neutral (1150). Discipline neutralizes: "For Rome, the

turning point [from honour to discipline] is symbolized by the legend of the execution of the consul's son who, in accordance with the ancient heroic fashion, had slain the opposing commander in individual combat" (1151). Although discipline is not essentially hostile to charisma, it will ultimately come into conflict with it, since charisma (here, in its heroic form, tied to honour) retains the right to irrational acts (i.e., individual heroism). The site of the decisive battle between discipline and charisma is literally the battlefield, and it is in war that discipline demonstrates its ultimate superiority over charisma: 'men of conscience' defeat 'men of honour' (1150).

Rieff sees Weber's distinction between discipline and charisma as a misreading. Weber overlooks the fact that discipline of the sort that he describes is not a pure form of neutral, instrumental rationality, but a *transgressive* form of action. It does not so much institute neutrality—such that even the consul's son is subject to the same rule as anyone else—as license slaughter and rationalize transgression:

To write, as he [Weber] did, that 'the discipline of the army gives birth to all discipline,' is to dismiss the opposing connection between discipline and discipleship. Rationalized transgressiveness becomes the primal form of social action. Man-killing, one of the two supremely transgressive fantasies, becomes enactable; 'culture' thus destroys itself. (Rieff 2007:144)

It is already a mistake to link charisma with warrior's honour, but it is a catastrophic error to take military discipline as the prototype of discipline. According to Rieff, "War is a collective transgressive...transgressive professionals may develop codes of 'honor'...But, despite such codes, warfare as such is culturally subversive, and its discipline transgressive" (143). Military discipline produces "a mere actor, playing his role, not a

creator of resistances with his own truth set against the tempting assaults of experience. Superego and instinct reunite. The perfectly disciplined one will do whatever he is commanded to do. He feels no guilt. He is not immoral” (144). This sort of actor is better called ‘self-alienated’ than ‘disciplined’ (145), which returns us to the question of Weber’s unexplained ambiguity about the relationship between obedience and discipline. While he characterized the follower of a charismatic leader as obedient, this is portrayed as an ultimately irrational bond in comparison with the neutrality and rationality of discipline. There is a remarkable incoherence in this distinction. Rieff introduces the (also ambiguous) notion of inwardness in order to clarify and make explicit the tension between obedience and discipline. The tension here is, in short, the dilemma of civilization: in war murder becomes a commandment. To unquestioningly obey an order to kill, one must avoid inward reflection at all costs. One must become an Eichmann. Rieff locates the essential ambiguity here: “No side can be spiritual victor in a war, it is the most transgressive of all human events and yet one that no large-scale credal organization has been able to renounce when the death-dealing is in defense of its own interdicts” (143). Here Rieff succeeds, by means of the notion of inwardness, in articulating the question of civilization beyond Freud’s dualism of *eros* and *thanatos*. Against Weber, Rieff argues that

in the development of Western culture, the meaning of discipline cannot be separated from its credal animus. The *conformity* of action in mass organization is anti-credal. Deep individuality cannot exist except in relation to the highest authority. No inner discipline can operate without a charismatic institution. (2007:24)

The real meaning of discipline is not rational calculation toward a given end, then, but in the case of ancient Israel, at least, *covenant*. With respect to war, charisma is a *limit* and a constraint, although one which has thus far never been ultimately successful.

Let us not forget that a certain devaluation of ‘everyday’ reality underlies Weber’s conception of charisma, which defines and implicitly praises charisma as ‘extraordinariness.’ In fact, most of Weber’s work is accomplished as soon as he begins by defining the charismatic as the extraordinary, against which background the everyday can only appear (or disappear) as lack. With this starting-point, charisma’s fate is already decided: routinization is inevitable and means either the death or the reversal of charisma. Weber definitionally divides charisma from the everyday at the same moment that he divides it from everyday people. In opposition to this devaluation of the everyday, Rieff argues that in the interdictory form of charismatic authority, the “charisma of perception” (2007:131) institutionalizes charisma without inverting or reversing it (62). Following Edward Shils⁷⁴ and his concept of ‘office charisma,’ Rieff’s model has charisma enriching rather than being inverted by everyday life. For Rieff, charisma can only be effective if it is institutionalized.

Rieff makes the case for the positive effects of charisma’s institutionalization not to argue against Weber’s pessimism about bureaucracy and modernity, for he is as pessimistic as Weber about charisma’s present possibilities, presenting them in a manner similar to Turner’s sometime description of charisma as ubiquitous but trivial in modernity. Rieff’s pessimism differs from Weber’s, however, because of his skepticism

⁷⁴ Rieff’s Master’s Thesis supervisor at the University of Chicago (Zondervan 2005:14).

about the notion of routinization and about Weber's understanding of charisma. For Rieff, modern bureaucratic/therapeutic society institutionalizes a false and transgressive form of charisma. Rieff re-frames contemporary rationality, highlighting not just the 'irrationality of rationality,' but, in a perspective that bears considerable resemblance to Horkheimer and Adorno's "Dialectic of Enlightenment" argument, the transgressive elements of rational-legal (bureaucratic) authority as well. The bureaucratic routinization of (transgressive) collective energies does not drain them out, it institutes them in the form of elaborate transgressive/conformist procedures (discipline without inwardness) that provide society-wide opportunities for de-responsibilized sado-masochistic aggression. According to Rieff, this process operates as surely in liberal therapeutic society as it does in modern totalitarian states.

According to Rieff, modern totalitarian and liberal states share the rule of 'values.' The problem with Weber's typologies of authority and rationality is that the concept of value hides a similarity rather than establishing a distinction. Weber's concept of values is already a form of nihilism, one that transforms a creed into an exchangeable commodity. Justification is turned into legitimation. This suspicion of values is not merely Marx and Aristotle's distinction between *use value* and *exchange value*. For Rieff (as, earlier, for Arendt), *use* (or *function*) is already caught up in a commodification process according to which everything is exchangeable: "'Value' is a word for unlimited exchangeability with other values. Values give no stability. They fluctuate in the values market" (2006:11). Turner's notion of risk fits into this market model.

E. CHARISMA & COLLECTIVE EFFERVESCENCE

Talcott Parsons posited values as *the* stabilizing factor in society. Rieff reverses this position. He argues that values are essentially destabilizing. This position entails the rejection of the Durkheim-Weber synthesis developed by Parsons and also by Edward Shils (cf. Riesebrodt 1999:3). It also involves rejecting the idea that charisma is equivalent to *collective effervescence*. Rieff owes much to Durkheim and is influenced by the syntheses of Weber and Durkheim developed by Parsons and Shils, but his reading of charisma and collective effervescence is fundamentally non-synthetic, if only because he rejects key elements of both Weber's concept of charisma and Durkheim's concept of collective effervescence. The main difference between Rieff's approach and a synthesis of charisma and collective effervescence rests in his persistent assertion that interdictory charismatic authority is a fundamentally moral force. Collective effervescence, by contrast, is, for Durkheim, the emotional-transcendental source of morality, and thus precedes morality. Effervescence, the pre-moral fount of social energies, is ritualized and interpreted later on. It is, in Victor Turner's sense (1969), a *liminal* and transitional space.

Charisma in Rieff's sense, however, differs from collective effervescence precisely in the fact that it produces an individualizing disciplinary structure (not unlike Foucault, here, who is Rieff's 'opposite number') which is not in any simple sense reducible to the functional demands of either a social 'organism' (Durkheim) or a social 'system' (Parsons). The demands of a social 'organism' or 'system' may just as easily be transgressive as interdictory. Here it is important to note that Rieff's emphasis on the

transgressive element in the bureaucratic and on the instability of values is absent in the Parsons-Shils synthesis. According to Rieff, charisma is not merely the necessary collective energy that society generates for itself in order to fulfil its functional requirements. It is an interditory and individualizing form of collective energy. In other words, while interditory charismatic authority may be a form of collective effervescence, not all collective effervescence is charismatic.

In his discussion of charisma, Shils had altered the Weberian metaphor by making charisma into something that was *dispersed* but not *reversed* when it became institutionalized (Shils 1975:133). For Shils, charisma and its routinization are related as a kind of tidal ebbing and flowing. Charisma flows into institutions, gradually weakening as it disperses. This is close to Rieff's view in the important and Durkheimian respect that this version links the everyday and the extraordinary as an organically related dialectical pair (i.e., sacred/profane) that generate and regenerate each other instead of being mere opposites. Weber's 'routinization of charisma,' by contrast, lacks the faith that charisma (as collective energy) may be ritually renewed. Life's meaning, for Weber, emerges through punctuated special revelation. His view of charisma as an original source of energy that is tied to a particular authoritative leader exemplifies his allergy to dialectical concepts which could accommodate more complicated energy flows between people.

According to Rieff's long historical view, charismatic culture displaced a culture of 'earth magic,' driven by societal self-deification (ancient Egypt is his example). What follows and is now displacing charismatic culture, in turn, is a modern

transgressive/therapeutic culture that attempts to produce an individual who can experience remission without guilt. Both the culture of 'earth magic' and the culture of transgression and therapy tend to undo our capacity to recognize our own (moral) limits.

Durkheim understands the sacred in terms of society's collective self-representation and self-valorization, and views collective effervescence as the periodic appearance and self-presentation of the shared emotions necessary to keep society going. This does not satisfy Rieff. The independence of the sacred from the social is not merely a matter of the technical difficulty of representing a large collectivity to itself. As Hunter suggests, Rieff divides the sacred from the social and conceives of *culture* as the means by which the sacred is 'transliterated' into the social:

Occupying the space between the sacred and the social, then, culture provides the texts, literal and otherwise, by which those transliterations are interpreted, understood, and made real to people. In experience, culture exists as the habitus within which human beings come to understand themselves. (Hunter 2006:xix)

The sacred is not merely society's self-worship by means of collective self-representation, and the gap between the social and the sacred is not merely a consequence of the invisibility of the social, the impossibility of a direct presentation of the social to itself and the consequent necessity of a symbolic representation. On the contrary, social orders are the "visible modalities," Rieff argues, of "otherwise invisible sacred orders" (2006:2). In other words, the social order is a kind of *effect* of the sacred order, irreducible to societal "self-worship" except where the social order has become a transgressive order, an order in the midst of dismantling its own inner principles.

A sacred or credal order inaugurates the individual formation of inwardness, not the mere acceptance and internalization of traditional mores, or conformity to the ascendant social order. Thus, for Rieff, in contrast to Durkheim, individuality (as inwardness) is not the late product of differentiation and organic solidarity, but is coeval with the sacred, emerging in fear and trembling as the discovery of one's capacities for good and for evil (2007:21). Rieff's concept of the sacred exceeds Durkheim's notion of morality as a social fact that exists outside and over against the individual. Charismatic institutionalization involves both recognition and renunciation of instinct, an instituted consciousness of and resistance to the 'death drive.' This differs from the depersonalized fusion of Durkheim's collective effervescence, which may with equal ease result in "actions of superhuman heroism or of bloody barbarism" (Durkheim 1965:241).

F. BY THE GRACE OF THOSE WHO FOLLOW: THE POSSIBILITY OF DEMOCRATIC CHARISMA

Rieff did much to re-work charisma as a sociological concept, refusing to treat it as the sociologically inexplicable appearance of extraordinary individuality within the social, a matter of the relationship between leaders and followers, but he remained, like Weber, mistrustful of 'the people,' most obviously in his sweeping rejection of student activism in the 1960s. He placed 'charismatic perception' against 'public opinion,' which he saw as a form of *outwardness* without a corresponding *inwardness*. Charismatic perception, he argued, was available to everyone in charismatic culture. Culture depended "upon the charisma of which all of us, in our ordinariness, are capable" (2007:223).

Taking Rieff's hyper-pessimism about 'therapeutic society' with a grain of salt, it

is still possible to extract from his general model of charisma a conception of democratic charisma, a charisma that would depend upon the everyday miracle of inwardness, not the self-sufficiency of a formally autonomous subject, but the inwardly (and outwardly) answerable actor, institutionalized as awareness of and resistance to ‘murderous’ urges, the recognition of the ambiguity of the *daimonic*, the possibility that the inspiration one obeys may also be the temptation one resists, with help. Such a democratic miracle would oppose the transgressive magic of collective violence. The literature exhibits very little support for a democratic conception of charisma, however. It is well-known that Weber viewed the relationship between democracy and charisma as one of tension bordering on straightforward opposition. Against his fundamentally authoritarian principle of charismatic legitimacy, Weber posed democracy as an ‘anti-authoritarian interpretation.’ But he argued that this anti-authoritarian attitude is coeval with (and by implication subordinate to) the emergence of bureaucratic authority. That is, he equated the transition from followers’ formally passive ‘recognition’ of the leader (i.e., in both traditional and charismatic forms of authority) to their formally active ‘election’ of the leader with the transition to bureaucratic authority. Weber suggests that “The Transformation of Charisma in a Democratic Direction”⁷⁵ is just one of the stages—the most important transitional type being “*plebiscitary leadership*” (1978:267)—“which normally leads into the path of rationality” (269); thus the appearance of democratic tendencies signals the end of ‘genuine charisma’ and the beginning of ‘rational-legal’ bureaucratic authority.

75 This is a section heading applied to *Economy and Society* by the English translators. It is rendered more literally as “The Anti-Authoritarian Reinterpretation of Charisma” (1978:266; 301n.13).

Rieff's reading of charisma makes much of Weber's interpretation appear unnecessary. However, since Weber refuses to countenance the possibility that 'primary' charisma is a collective rather than an individual power, or that it is ultimately interdictory rather than transgressive, he sees participatory democracy as a retrograde retreat from the high peaks reached by inspired leadership. Stephen Turner follows Weber in this direction when he describes charisma as something that becomes "audience relative" (1993:251). Turner's implicit acceptance of the capitalistic operating frame vitiates his own claims about the transformative capacities of the wielders of charisma. This also makes Turner a rather misleading resource in attempts to link charisma to democracy. I have been arguing, with the critique of the leader-follower fixation and of amoral/anti-structure conceptions of charisma, that the 'need in thinking' about charisma is less a matter of making it 'scientifically testable' and more a matter of thinking through its possible relationship to democracy, especially as one examines particular kinds of political practice. Linking charisma to the *demos* moves it in a sociological direction, as a thing that both comes from and returns to the social world (as the gift that we give ourselves, the moral debt that we must hope, collectively, to inherit). Weber's 'value-neutral' approach (1978:241–242) reduces it to an individual form of authority which finds legitimacy in manifestations of *power*. In Weber's view, for charisma to become democratic its original character must be reversed (and thereby lost):

The basically authoritarian principle of charismatic legitimation may be subject to an anti-authoritarian interpretation, for the validity of charismatic authority rests entirely on recognition by the ruled, on 'proof' before their eyes...The personally legitimated charismatic leader becomes

leader by the grace of those who follow him since the latter are formally free to elect and even to depose him. (1978:266–267)

Following Rieff, however, it seems possible that democratic rule “by the grace of those who follow” may be the origin and the fulfilment of charisma rather than its inversion, its arrival in substance rather than its sedimentation into form. On the other hand, it may turn out to be one of those residual categories that keeps the fulfilment of the sociology of morality just out of reach. On this note, the dialectic of moral forms and substances, the next chapter turns to a related example, the recent situation and character debate, to ask whether there are *any* traits that are not relationally and/or situationally generated.

CHAPTER 5: CHARACTER, SITUATION, & MID-20TH CENTURY SOCIAL THEORY: AN ARGUMENT FOR WEAK CHARACTER & TRANSFORMED SITUATIONS

And suddenly, in view of these reflections, Ulrich had to smile and admit to himself that he was, after all, a character, even without having one. (Musil 1997:159)

A. SITUATION VS. CHARACTER: AN ONGOING DEBATE

What does it mean to *possess* personal qualities like charisma? There is an ongoing debate in contemporary moral philosophy about whether character traits exist. On the skeptical side, *situationists* argue against the existence of character traits. Thus Gilbert Harman (1999; 2009) argues that in everyday life we are commonly guilty of what, following Ross and Nisbett (1991), he calls the ‘fundamental attribution error,’ which entails mistakenly explaining someone’s actions in terms of their character rather than by means of the situation in which their action arose. Similarly, in *Lack of Character* (2002), John Doris argues that while there might be something that could be called ‘local traits,’ in the sense of consistently patterned behaviour tied to specific contexts, the evidence for ‘global traits’ is thin, and there are good reasons why ‘local traits’ should be thought of as behavioural regularities but not as traits of character.

The emphasis on situational variations in behaviour is supported with evidence from social psychological research, including Kurt Lewin’s work (Lewin, Lippitt, and White 1939; Lewin 1939, 1943, 1965; cf. Glenn 2006), Solomon Asch’s pioneering studies of opinions and social pressure (1952), Stanley Milgram’s obedience experiments (1963; 1974), Philip Zimbardo’s prison experiment at Stanford (2007), and a variety of more recent experimental studies. Situationists argue that this research undermines the

idea that people actually possess character traits in the sense of durable personal dispositions that persist over time and that manifest themselves consistently across a broad or ‘global’ range of contexts.

When Milgram finds that most people will follow the orders of a man in a white coat and administer what they think to be painful and often suspect to be dangerous or life-threatening electric shocks to a stranger, or when experimental subjects that have been randomly assigned identities as either prisoner or guard quickly begin to exhibit a variety of sadistic or masochistic behaviours, situationists argue that the *situation*, not the character of the individual, needs to be examined (Upton 2009a:104). Change the situation, they contend, and you will change the behaviour.

Defenders of character traits, by contrast, tend to be virtue ethicists (e.g., Athanassoulis 2000; Foot 2001; Hursthouse 1999; Kamtekar 2004; Upton 2009a, 2009b). If situationism emerges from the psychological side of mid-century social psychology, virtue ethics emerges from mid-century moral philosophy, especially the Anglo revival of Aristotelian philosophy initiated by G.E.M. Anscombe (1981 [1958]:26–42) and others. Drawing on Aristotle and the Aristotelian tradition of virtue ethics, virtue ethicists argue that character, once properly defined and understood, plays a significant role, *alongside* situation, in structuring and guiding human behaviour. While they concede some ground in the face of empirical social science, they persist in arguing for the importance of the concept of character for thinking about morality. Thus Candace Upton follows Doris in suggesting that while ‘global’ character traits may be in scarce supply—and this merely

confirms Aristotle's suggestion that true virtue is rare—empirical evidence suggests that “human behavior is highly intra-locally consistent” (Upton 2009b:187). Upton argues, against Doris—who admits to local traits, but does not want to call them ‘character’ traits—that retaining the concept of character is important because of the moral element inherent in all trait attribution. As she puts it, “all relevant and plausible attempts morally to appraise ultimately trace back to trait attribution” (185–186). In other words, even if we make many mistakes when attributing certain character traits to others (or to ourselves), we *necessarily* make character attributions of some kind whenever we try to make moral evaluations of action; so rather than simply turning all of our attention to situation-analysis, we should also fine-tune our notions concerning character traits.

While this debate draws on social science research, it is generally carried on as a philosophical dispute. Situationists typically carry out their arguments within the either/or parameters of ‘p’ or ‘not p,’ producing a discourse that is part analytic philosophy and part positivist empiricism. Either character *or* situation must be the explanation for consistencies in behaviour. It cannot be both. Philosophy's job is to clarify common sense attributions, and to clear up the mistaken beliefs about character upon which they are based, mistaken beliefs that contribute, in a circular fashion, to the misleading confirmation of those beliefs. According to Harman, “ordinary thinking about character traits has deplorable results, leading to massive misunderstanding of other people, promoting unnecessary hostility between individuals and groups, distorting discussions of law and public policy, and preventing the implementation of situational changes that

could have useful results” (1999:330).

The situation or character debate suffers from two main shortcomings. On the one hand, when situationists draw on social psychology, they draw almost exclusively on the psychological branch, ignoring the psychoanalytic and sociological branches, thus perpetuating an unhealthy division already well-diagnosed in the 1970s (House 1977). This psychological focus allows situationists to work at the level of the individual while giving the misleading impression that their explanation (i.e., ‘situation’) is social; it is also the basis for approaching character and situation as competing rather than potentially complementary notions. In addition, while virtue ethicists tend to be more alive to the possibility that situation and character might be complementary, the either/or structure of the debate contributes on both sides to a narrowly *moral* and non-sociological understanding of character, involving often fairly arbitrary distinctions between character and various ‘non-moral’ conceptions of ‘personality’ (cf. White 2005; Hunt and White 2000). This attempt to add precision to the parameters of the discussion simply puts blinders on it, and the failure to preserve the rich polysemy of common usage (of the concept of character) or the breadth of the social science tradition produces artificial logical problems rather than scientific accuracy.

This chapter argues, first, that character and situation can be seen as complementary rather than competing sociological frames (cf. Appiah 2008:33–72). Secondly, the term character should be understood and developed within the full variety of its everyday uses rather than reduced to a narrowly technical application. Finally, against (but by means of)

everyday usage, I point the paradox that in certain contexts we morally approve of ‘weak character,’ understood in the context of acts and practices that constitute emancipatory character reversals. Exemplary, in this regard, are acts of apology and forgiveness.

So what about this polysemy? Dictionaries tell us that character derives from a Greek word meaning ‘stamping-tool,’ and bears the general sense of ‘marking,’ or of being ‘marked.’ Taken as a moral element, character may be something one has or does not have, or that one has a lot of. Thus we can say that someone has ‘a lot’ of character or that they ‘lack’ character, or we talk about ‘strong’ or ‘weak’ character. Or we talk, still in a moral sense, but now more qualitatively than quantitatively, of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ characters, of virtues and vices; we may call someone ‘generous’ or ‘greedy,’ and both are attributions of character. On the other hand, character can be taken, in a non-moral sense, as what marks one’s peculiarity. We refer to the local eccentric as ‘a real character.’

For sociological purposes, it is important to be able to refer to either individual character *or* social character. But the collective usage of the concept of character tends to be left out of the character/situation debate. This corresponds to moral philosophy’s tendency to operate at the level of the individual. The psychoanalytic use of the term character tends to be left out, too. Psychoanalysis and psychiatry took character in the direction of a new set of typological classifications, whether those of ‘anal,’ ‘oral,’ and so on, or those detailed in the various editions of the DSM, offering us an ostensibly non-moral use of the term character, sometimes interchangeable with ‘personality.’

We will turn first to the last two uses of character (social character and

psychoanalytic character) used together by Erich Fromm. We turn from Fromm to Hannah Arendt's approach to social phenomena, then to Erving Goffman's performative understanding of character, then conclude with suggestions that link a concept of 'weak character' with situation via a concept of 'practice.' The chapter derives from the conviction that the debate in moral philosophy could benefit from a deeper engagement with both the social science tradition and with everyday language. Both situationists and virtue ethicists have tended to misunderstand or underestimate the insights available to them from this broader tradition. What follows is an attempt to demonstrate a few of the possible additions to the discussion that can be drawn from a very rich period of twentieth century social theory, from work done during the Second World War and in the two or three decades that followed it.

B. CHARACTER, SOCIAL THEORY, & THE HOLOCAUST

Many sociological discussions and debates from the mid-twentieth century focused on questions of character and personality. Importantly, they were debates about character carried out after Nazism, after Stalinism, and 'after Auschwitz.' These debates provide 1) an *historical* (and *biographical*) perspective lacking in the contemporary philosophical debate—which tends to rely on the one-time only snapshots provided by individual psychology-focused social psychological experimentation—and 2) a variety of *models* of the social and of the relationship between the individual and society.

With respect to models of the social there are, on the one hand, models of character constructed through syntheses of Freud and Marx. On the other hand we find interesting

versions of *situationism*, including Hannah Arendt's political conception of *totalitarian domination* and Erving Goffman's *dramaturgy*. The former are constituted by combining Marxist political economy with a form of depth psychology, and involve a variety of material dialectical or quasi-dialectical patterns applied to the person's relation to self and the relation between individual and society. Examples of this type of approach include Eric Fromm's *Escape from Freedom* (1941), Adorno et al.'s *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950), David Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd* (2000 [1951]) and *Character and Social Structure* (1953) by Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills. Arendt and Goffman, by contrast, eschew depth psychology, preferring to focus on the peculiarities of particular (and historical) social *forms* and associated *practices*, as, for example, in Arendt's analysis of modern revolution, participatory democracy, and totalitarianism (1968), or in Goffman's study of practices of impression management in modern commercial society (1959). Other approaches from that period include Shibutani's interactionist model (1961), and Parsons' attempted synthesis of psychoanalysis and systems theory (1964). This paper focuses on a peculiar version of the situation/character debate that appears when reading Arendt's concept of *totalitarianism* alongside what members of the Frankfurt School called the 'authoritarian personality.' Although the debate carried out in this earlier context does not provide a simple solution to the current debate, it enriches the discussion of both character and situation with its historical scope, its dialectical elements, and the diversity of its conceptual insights.

Mid-twentieth-century social science, (as well as social and political thought

viewed more broadly) makes for both fascinating and frustrating reading. Among other things, rapid expansion and professionalization (in both its bureaucratizing and its scientizing movements) coincided with the appearance of some fundamental conceptual problems. Attempted syntheses, the Parsonsian, for instance, rose and fell, introducing divisions (or differentiations) that have, for the most part, continued to expand. The balkanization of social psychology (between sociological and psychological approaches) exemplifies this process. Rapid development of technical procedures and capacities for dealing with large data sets and populations did nothing to solve these conceptual problems, and it is, in fact, fundamentally implicated in them.

One of the major conceptual problems encountered in the mid-century was what could be called, in contrast to the Hobbesian ‘problem of order,’ the ‘problem of over-conformity.’ While assessments of the value of conformity had been declining for some time, partly in response to Nietzsche’s work of the 1880s, which named and described the ‘last men’ of modern mass society, this tendency developed into a full-blown crisis of faith for the social sciences through the experiences of the two World Wars. This crisis involved the problem of a particularly destructive fusion between society and the individual, the whole and the part. The European experiences of Fascism and Stalinism inverted the classical ‘problem of order,’ rendering it the problem of over-socialization (and how to avoid it), over-conformity, and excessive obedience to authority.

Current exponents of situationism are alive to the problem of conformity, but they tend to miss the ways in which total (and ‘totalitarian’) situations can be read as questions

of ‘social character.’ Most importantly, a ‘total situation’ involves a peculiar reciprocal relationship of the whole and the part, society and individual, social character and individual character that is distinct from the problem of the situation as it is usually framed (even when situation is defined as the ‘cultural equilibrium’). However, it constitutes one possible ‘working through’ of the logic of situational determination.

Before the theories (and realities) of 20th century ‘totalitarian’ phenomena, sociology commonly managed the tense relation of whole and part with a conceptual distinction like that between ‘social control’ and ‘the crowd.’ While ‘social control,’ mobilized by Edward Ross in his 1901 (2009) study of the same name, was theorized as a principle of purposeful order, sometimes a kind of ‘invisible hand,’ sometimes the work of an intellectual and ethical elite, ‘the crowd,’ classically theorized by Gustave Le Bon in 1895 (1960), is a kind of unruly part of the whole, understood primarily as an irrational force only indirectly amenable to social control. Social control was read as the rational response—even if not in the form of an explicit social contract (cf. Durkheim 1984:149–175)—or force of the social in response to its irrational counterpart.

Auschwitz bankrupted the distinction between ‘control’ and ‘crowd’; after the Holocaust, political and social thinkers faced the apparent *fusion* of the supposed rationality or purposefulness of social control with the supposed irrationality or purposeless and destructive energy of the crowd, into an insatiably imperialistic and internally genocidal political form. The following section addresses two ways that social thought during and after the Second World War attempted to address this ‘attack of the

blob’—Pitkin’s (1998) highly analytic summary term for Hannah Arendt’s assessment—and to use, or to defer, the concept of character.

Erich Fromm (1900–1980) and Hannah Arendt (1906–1975) were both born and educated in Germany and were both forced out of Germany after Hitler’s rise to power. Fromm arrived in the United States in 1934, along with other members of the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research. Arendt arrived in New York in 1941. As Jewish thinkers 1) educated in a German scholastic and cultural tradition; then 2) expelled for their Jewishness; then 3) working in an unfamiliar, unprecedented, and ‘uncultured’ form of society, Arendt and Fromm had to come to terms with the impulses of their respective intellectual formations under conditions of deep ambivalence. An interesting version of the tension between character and situation plays out in their different responses to these experiences. Erich Fromm’s mid-war classic, *Escape from Freedom* (1941), developed a *socio-psychological* explanation of the rise of fascism. A decade later, Hannah Arendt countered with her *socio-political* concept of *totalitarianism*.

While Fromm and Arendt agree on the importance of modern Western economic developments, industrialization in particular, they match their attention to economy with very different partners. Fromm partners a Marxian sensitivity to alienated labour and class position with existentialist humanist psychoanalysis. Arendt combines attention to economic structure with analysis of the peculiarities of political form. Their arguments overlap, interlock, and complement, but bear within them opposed views on character.

Fromm’s 1941 *Escape from Freedom* tries to explain the rise of Nazism and to warn

about similar trends in other places, especially the United States. It is driven by the premise that not only individual but also collective or social character traits exist, and that “The concept of social character is a key concept for the understanding of the social process” (1941:278). Fromm takes his notion of character from Freud. As such, it is not to be understood in the sense of “the sum total of behavior patterns” that a single person displays, but in reference to “the dominant drives that motivate behavior” (163). Fromm diverges from Freud on two main points. First, he identifies different fundamental human drives: ‘love’ and ‘work.’ Freud also mentions love and work, but, in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1967 [1920]), these appear as *sublimations* of the cruder and less social underlying drives of *eros* and *thanatos*. Fromm rejected the idea that *thanatos*, the ‘destructive’ ‘death drive,’ was fundamental. For Fromm, love and work are not sublimations, they **are** the underlying drives. We are driven to connect with others, and to engage in creative activity. Secondly, Fromm tries to synthesize Marx and Freud by viewing character structure at the level of the social, especially at the political-economic level of class, and places less importance on individual psychological experiences.⁷⁶ Members of a class have a characteristic set of experiences, and their average character structure forms around that set of experiences.

According to Fromm, we are forced to dynamically adapt our basic drives—to connect with others and to express ourselves creatively—as we collide with social reality. We form our character structure through this process: “human energy is shaped by the

76 Fromm’s concept of character prefigures Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of *habitus* and his psychoanalytic sociology bears considerable resemblance to Bourdieu’s ‘socio-analysis.’

dynamic adaptation of human needs to the particular mode of existence of a given society. Character in its turn determines the thinking, feeling, and acting of individuals” (Fromm 1941:278). Individuals may not even be conscious of this deep and underlying structure. What is more, “He may not even commit any overt...acts...Nevertheless, any close analysis of his behavior, his phantasies, dreams, and gestures, would show the...impulses operating in deeper layers of his personality” (163). Character, in this model, refers to a kind of underlying potential. *The Authoritarian Personality*, the American-focused study partially based upon Fromm’s approach, puts it this way: “personality is mainly a potential; it is a readiness for behavior rather than the behavior itself” (Adorno et al. 1950:7). In *Escape From Freedom*, Fromm is interested in a kind of sado-masochistic or authoritarian character that he believes to have been prevalent in pre-Hitlerian Germany, making it ‘ready’ for Fascism.

Fromm combined Freud’s theories of the dynamics of character with a Marx-inspired sensitivity to class divisions, trying to identify the characteristic opportunities and frustrations experienced by particular sectors of the population, and arguing that the lower middle classes of Europe have a higher drive to destructiveness “proportionate to the amount to which expansiveness of life is curtailed” (1941:183); he claimed that “The root of destructiveness in the lower middle class is easily recognizable as the one which has been assumed in this discussion: the isolation of the individual and the suppression of individual expansiveness” (184–185).

Fromm’s basic thesis combines sensitivity to relations of production with a

psychoanalytic perspective: “The automatization of the individual in modern society has increased the helplessness and insecurity of the average individual. Thus, he is ready to submit to new authorities which offer him security and relief from doubt” (206). With regard to the phenomenon of Nazism, Fromm attempts a dialectical analysis, arguing, against one-sided political or psychological explanations, that “Nazism is a psychological problem, but the psychological factors themselves have to be understood as being molded by socio-economic factors; Nazism is a political problem, but the hold it has over a whole people has to be understood on psychological grounds” (208).

On Fromm’s reading, the sado-masochistic character of the German working-class and lower-middle class remained dormant until the economic, social, and political turmoil that followed the First World War. Although most of the labour movement voted for the Socialist or Communist parties before Hitler’s rise to power, the socialist emphasis on autonomy and solidarity was, according to Fromm, “not what many of these workers really wanted on the basis of their personality structure” (281). According to Fromm, their authoritarian character structure meant that they really wanted an established authority, a strong leader. Their underlying character structure explains why they turned so quickly to Hitler. Here, with one move, Fromm sweeps away the interpretation of social psychology research that grounds much of the previously mentioned moral philosophy debate. In Fromm’s view, which focuses on underlying drives rather than the sum of behaviours, Milgram’s and Zimbardo’s experiments confirm an underlying authoritarian character structure waiting to manifest itself when given the opportunity.

This different interpretation is based upon the two distinctions already mentioned between the psychological-individualism that philosophical situationism relies upon and the more broadly sociological approach dealt with here. Fromm's psycho-sociological approach is 1) based upon an analysis of character at the level of the society, including its history and its class structure, and 2) upon a notion of character as an underlying deep structuring of natural human drives; it is on the one hand an ostensibly neutral, non-moral concept of character (but in fact merely raises the moral evaluation to the level of the social), and on the other hand it incorporates the notion that character can have a *divided* or *conflictual* structure, rather than needing to be unified, and non-contradictory, as is usually argued in the case of character defined as an individual's possession of various virtues. Having a particular psychological character structure does not mean having particular moral virtues, it means the outcome of dynamic adaptation to circumstances, to the sum-total of one's situations and experiences. In this particular context (i.e., Germany after World War I), having character turns out to be a problem.

The problem of the authoritarian personality, of course, is the tendency for this character structure to give rise to fascist regimes. The major American study based upon Fromm's work, *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950), a project led by Theodor Adorno as part of a larger project headed by Max Horkheimer—both fellow members, with Fromm, of the displaced Institute for Social Research, the 'Frankfurt School'—attempted to assess and analyze underlying attitudes. Surveys were carried out through in-depth interviews in order to indirectly get at levels of prejudice among Americans, levels of

Anti-Semitism, in particular. They measured these levels using something called the *f* [fascism]-scale, and analyzed subjects as being high or low, authoritarian or liberal, on the *f*-scale. The point was to get a sense of American society's susceptibility to an authoritarian political structure and also to publicize and to warn against this possibility.⁷⁷

Fromm advocated, along with others from that period, like David Riesman, for a kind of ideal and *autonomous* character structure where the underlying drives to love and work find their outlet in a world that does not generate structural or situational frustrations, and that offers opportunities for individual self-expression and exploration instead. His solution to the authoritarian personality problem is not articulated in specific and practical suggestions, but its over-all tenor is situationist, and it problematizes the notion of character and situation as an either/or scenario.

Theodor Adorno goes further. For him, following Benjamin (1978), the very notion of personality or character, even of identity itself, reflects conditions of social domination, and smells of fatalism. It is not that he agrees with the situationists, who argue that character does not exist. Character exists, but in ambivalent and distorted form, as a result of relations of domination. In *Negative Dialectics* Adorno puts it this way:

But what has been objectified in men, from their reflexes and against their reflexes—their character or their will, the potential organ of their freedom—this undermines freedom too. For it embodies the principle of dominion, to which men progressively submit...Identity, the condition of freedom, is immediately and simultaneously the principle of determinism. There is a

⁷⁷ Critiques of this line of research (e.g., Martin 2001) tend to call it circular and self-confirming, more activist tract than searching social science research. This critique, applicable to Adorno et al. as well as to more recent studies (e.g., Altemeyer 1981; Lakoff 2002), is strong, but does not detract from the importance of this set of arguments for thinking about character and for deflecting the positivist-empiricist approach (whether for or against character-realism) in favour of an interpretive-empiricism.

will insofar as a man objectified himself into a character. Toward himself—whatever that may be—he thus becomes something external, after the model of the outward world of things that is subjected to causality. (1973:216–217)

Adorno spells out the ambiguity of character's relation to freedom, a freedom mediated by relations of domination in which we experience our *character as fate*. An end to such relations of domination might signal, in a certain sense, the end of character as fate. Would it mean the end of character? For the moment, let us turn to Hannah Arendt's attempt to articulate a *political* rather than a *psychological* explanation of Fascism.

Hannah Arendt offers a concerted effort to think a non-psychological explanation for Nazism. Like Fromm, Arendt argues that Germans between the wars experienced unprecedented isolation and loneliness. Among other things, industrialization uprooted workers and eliminated many kinds of skilled work. But while Fromm argues that the division into classes produced a certain character structure in certain classes, Arendt argues that capitalist development had gone beyond Marx's notion of class polarization and had done away with class altogether, leaving an utterly atomized mass of individuals. This atomized mass was vulnerable to totalitarian rule not because of their particular character structure but because of their objective position, their situation, or, better, their *lack* of a situation, their lack of a *world*: lacking a class position, they lacked the possibility of solidarity with others, of membership in a group that offered possibilities for acting together: “modern masses are disintegrated by the fact that they are ‘masses’ in a strict sense of the word....they do not have common interests to bind them together nor any kind of common ‘consent’” (1953a:81). Totalitarianism, then, does not arise as an

‘escape from freedom,’ but as a political system that rushes into a vacuum from which freedom was already gone. To make sense of that claim, we need to discuss Fromm and Arendt’s different conceptions of human sociality and human freedom.

In a 1953 article on social science technique, Arendt claimed that “sociology from its beginnings showed a marked tendency to explain political institutions and historical developments in terms of psychological types” (1953b:304). In Arendt’s view, psychology has ‘invaded’ the social sciences. In any case, both sociology and psychology, Arendt claims, “have their origin in a liberalism that viewed politics...under the dual category of society and individual. Men became mere parts of a society that conditioned or determined the individuals, as the whole determines its parts” (304). Arendt does not buy this view, indeed, she generally viewed dialectical moves of this sort with suspicion.

For Arendt, explaining fascism requires something other than a socio-psychology of character structure. Fascism needs to be explained at the political level, as a novel political form. She called this new political form *totalitarianism*. Totalitarian rule, Arendt suggests, completes the elimination of the space between people where political action can appear. That space is the world created by *work*. For Arendt, the political is not an abstract macro-dialectic between the individual and society. It is something that happens *between people* in concrete situations. Among other developments, the transformation of all forms of activity into *labour*—partly a matter of de-skilling and partly a matter of the increasing impermanence of material products, which are immediately consumed or taken up again in the re-production process—meant the disappearance of the *world* where

this could happen. Industrialization increasingly takes everything up into a production *process* without any longer creating a stable world or situation in which relationships between people can take the form of *political action*. This view undergirds her skepticism about Marxism, discussed briefly at the end of chapter two.

According to Erich Fromm, modern society is a society of individuals, freed from all kinds of traditional coercive relationships. For Fromm, freedom looks like this: “When one has become an individual, one stands alone and faces the world in all its perilous and over-powering aspects” (1941:29). In this moment of freedom, the solitary individual faces the prospect of personal responsibility for herself, of refusing the comfort of being absorbed into the collective. The problem, according to Fromm, is that although modern life has removed the external constraints on individual freedom, the internal constraints, the typical psychological character structures, remain. Afraid of their freedom, Germans were desperate for an external authority that could quiet their internal anxiety.

For Arendt, as we shall see in a moment, the problem of totalitarianism is not inner fear but external *terror*. Against Fromm’s atomistic notion of freedom conceived of as ‘free will,’ that is, the paradoxical notion of having a will that is stronger than oneself, a paradox that Durkheim tried to solve with the notion of ‘social forces’ (and the relation between ‘social forces’ and Arendt’s notion of sociality should be elaborated), Arendt conceives of freedom as the freedom to *begin* something. Arendt offers a model of sociality as companionship, and of freedom as acting together, on the basis of a *principle* (rather than an internal psychological *motive* or drive) and in a way that brings something

new into the world. This is the unique (political) capacity that humans possess. In other words, freedom is not an inner quality or possession of a solitary individual, or something inherent or lacking in their character; it is an outer thing. It has to happen out there, in the world, between people, when we engage in *action*.

According to Arendt each political form has a different kind of *between*, a different *res publica* or 'public thing,' and a different basic *experience* that arises there. So the real question with regard to fascism is not how it matches with a particular psychological character structure, but whether or not it is a new form of political organization. Perhaps, Arendt suggests, totalitarian government is just another version of *tyranny*, or ruling by *fear*. But that seems not to be the case. There is another option. Perhaps totalitarianism is a political form beyond all previous political forms: "we could also say that it has exploded the very alternative on which all definitions of the essence of governments have been based...the alternative between lawful and lawless..." (1953b:306). Totalitarian government is still based upon law, but no longer positive law. Rather, it is based upon laws of History and Nature, laws of historical *movement*. Through the theories of Marx and Darwin, law changed its meaning: "from expressing the framework of stability within which human actions and motions can take place, it became the expression of the motion itself" (310). 'Total terror' (310) is required to translate such a notion of law as the movement of History or Nature into a political reality. As a political form somewhere between the lawfulness of non-tyrannical government and the lawlessness of tyrannical government, totalitarian domination rules through terror, the secret police, the predictably

unpredictable invasion of private spheres. This is done ostensibly to root out covert opposition, but is in fact carried out in the absence of real opposition. In this context, “Guilt and innocence become senseless notions” (310). Totalitarian domination destroys the space between people, who can no longer act together because they can no longer trust each other. Totalitarianism is the formless political form that does away with the political; it is truly the ‘attack of the blob’ (Pitkin 1998)

So what about character? Arendt speculates about character with remarkable reluctance. Character, like the truth of another's heart, can never be known for sure (1968:128). Tacitly rebuking the Frankfurt School theorists of the ‘authoritarian personality,’ Arendt claims that “we do not know the extent of character transformation under a totalitarian regime” (135). We can observe the operation and function of the totalitarian secret police, and understand the operation of *the secret* as a political technique within the shapeless totalitarian political form, but we cannot measure how this fits with “the secret desires and the secret complicities of the masses in our time” (135). As for the ‘authoritarian personality,’ Arendt rejected its relevance to either the Soviet or the Nazi situation. While authority involves restrictions and limits on freedom, totalitarian domination seeks to do away with freedom entirely. In this context, relations of authority, which entail some freedom in the fact that they need to be at least minimally legitimated, no longer make sense. What one has instead is sheer domination.

The ‘planned shapelessness’ (100) of the totalitarian form is based upon a confusion of lines of authority by means of the multiplication of offices. As a result,

instead of a hierarchical chain of command, totalitarian domination “leads to a state of affairs in which every citizen feels himself directly confronted with the will of the Leader” (103). This is precisely the goal of totalitarian domination, “to organize the infinite plurality and differentiation of human beings as if all of humanity were just one individual” (136). Among other things, Arendt implies that viewing the social as a dialectic of individual and society, of part and whole (i.e., Fromm’s logic) is the logic of totalitarianism. In 1950, Arendt argued that

Social scientists, being normal men, will have great difficulties to understand...that [under totalitarian domination] behavior patterns and motives that usually are identified, not with the psychology of some specific nation or class as some specific moment of its history, but with human psychology in general, are abolished or play a quite secondary role. (1950:61)

Totalitarianism does away with psychology as such, as a human thing. Character becomes irrelevant.⁷⁸ Against the sado-masochism of the authoritarian/automaton model, Arendt suggests, with regard to the camps, that “the distinguishing line between persecutor and persecuted, between the murderer and his victim, is constantly blurred” (151). A sado-masochistic character structure, and the depth psychology upon which it is based, is simply unnecessary. Arendt’s ‘character study’ of Eichmann, which elaborated her ‘banality of evil’ thesis, suggested that, rather than possessing any sadistic tendencies, Eichmann *lacked* any real character, just as he lacked the very capacity to *think* (1963).

Some dissatisfaction may linger, concerning Arendt’s claims. After all, doesn’t her explanation, like Fromm’s, rest on a set of assumptions about the basic psychological

⁷⁸ See chapter one on Marx and character.

experiences of Germans, especially what she refers to as the experience of unbearable loneliness? Arendt argues that isolation becomes unbearable loneliness when “all human activities have been transformed into laboring” (1953b:323). This transformation of all activities into labour has presumably been developing since before the Industrial Revolution. Both Fromm and Arendt recognize the importance of industrialization and the increasing division of labour, but while Fromm emphasizes the *appearance of the individual*, Arendt emphasizes the *disappearance of the world* created by work.

Both Fromm and Arendt see humans as fundamentally social, requiring intercourse with each other. They differ, however, on the meaning and valuation of individuality. For Arendt, freedom is *between* people, and in the possibility of beginning something. Personhood appears in this between. For Fromm, freedom is utter individual (existential) self-determination. From Arendt’s viewpoint, Fromm misses the heart of sociality since he accepts the modern understanding of the ‘problem’ of freedom, a problem which arose

when freedom was no longer experienced in acting and in associating with others but in willing and in the intercourse with one’s self, when, briefly, freedom had become free will...from action to will-power, from freedom as a state of being manifest in action to the *liberum arbitrium*, the ideal of freedom ceased to be virtuosity...and became sovereignty. (Arendt 2000:454)

While Fromm considers creative action to be one of the fundamental human drives, he does not emphasize, as Arendt does, that this creative work, which may often be carried out alone, is the (world-creating) *condition* rather than the *consummation* of freedom (conceived by Arendt as *acting together*). According to Arendt, loneliness, the lack of companionship, leaves us with logic alone, an ability to reason from premises but not to

have ‘experiences’ or even to think. Instead of having recourse to a psychological explanation involving a distorted and sado-masochistic self-relation, Arendt’s actor simply lacks the capacity to think or judge. In the realm of totalitarian domination, a kind of strange and inhuman logicalness develops that is incapable of incorporating human experience or practical judgement. In this realm, where no one can trust anyone else,

ice-cold reasoning and the ‘mighty tentacle’ of dialectics...appears like a last support in a world where nobody is reliable and nothing can be relied upon. It is the inner coercion whose only content is the strict avoidance of contradictions that seems to confirm a man’s identity outside all relationships with others. (1953b:326–327)

While this sounds psychological, Arendt would argue that it is not. Rather, it is based on a concrete notion of sociality (not ‘the social’) that operates between people in specific public spheres. A policy of terror without any real threat to fight against destroys the space between people, destroys the difference between the guilty and the innocent, destroys the possibility of companionship, and destroys the capacity of people to think. Under conditions of totalitarian terror one is left, Arendt argues, with logic, but without the capacity to connect this to a world of real experiences, experience (in Arendt’s sense) being impossible under totalitarian terror since real experiences require companions and conversation. In Arendt’s analysis, totalitarian movements provided the political identity that the atomized masses lacked—since they were no longer associated with any class—rather than a psychological identification with authority to which certain personality types were vulnerable. Instead of an escape from freedom in the face of *spiritual anxiety*, it was a response to absolute displacement and *material terror*. Incapable of thinking or

of having experiences, these actors should, in many cases, not even be considered as acting from self-interested motives.

It is important to remember, in all of this, that while Fromm's *Escape From Freedom* was composed and published before the worst events in Nazi Germany had been carried out or, subsequently, discovered by the advancing Allied forces, Arendt had, in much of the writings we have been referring to, access to a considerably more developed history and set of interpretations of both Nazism and Stalinism. This constitutes a serious caveat to direct comparisons of the two explanations. Still, *The Authoritarian Personality*, based partially upon Fromm's psychoanalytic framework, was first published in 1950, around the same time as Arendt's first writings on totalitarianism. The point of this discussion, however, has not been to set up these competing interpretations in order to decide between them, but to demonstrate, with some context, a situation in which character became a subject of debate and a means of thinking about sociality. Among other things, the importance of the concept of character, whether it really exists or not, rests in the way that we can use it, or not, to develop precisely the capacities for thought, reflection and judgement that concerned both Arendt and Fromm. The current debate has largely missed this interesting alternative between a psychological and character-driven reading of fascism that emphasizes individuality and free-will and a political reading that deemphasizes character while emphasizing the peculiarities of political form and defining freedom as acting together. Missing this way of framing the debate, as I have mentioned, means missing macro-questions about social eventfulness.

The next section links analysis of world-historical events with that of everyday situations.

C. PERFORMATIVE CHARACTER: GOFFMAN'S 'WHERE THE ACTION IS'

We turn, now, to an examination of some similarities between Arendt and the work of Erving Goffman. This will lead back to our starting-point, the moral philosophical character/situation debate and its narrow use of social psychology.

It is a little unusual to suggest points of similarity between Hannah Arendt and Erving Goffman. Nevertheless, Arendt and Goffman fall under the broad umbrella of situationism, both deemphasizing *substantive* and *internal* notions of character in favour of action, performance, and the intersubjective realm. While Goffman has been used to support an exclusively situationist position by Gilbert Harman (2009), however, that is a misappropriation. Goffman's concept of a 'moral career,' for instance, rather than providing a conveniently appropriated situationist argument, links situations together in a biographical chain whose continuity is mediated by social reflections on character. Thus a better reading combines Goffman with Arendt, re-establishing the complementarity of situation and character by adding a performative and non-psychological concept of character to Arendt's notion of 'acting together.'

Goffman's dramaturgical model of social interaction, while not a political model, focuses on concrete processes of cooperative interaction, and the underlying assumptions necessary in such contexts. The key text here is a long essay called 'Where the Action Is' (1967). This text supports Candace Upton's claim (2009b:185–186), mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, that the notion of character, as an aspect of moral evaluation

concerning traits, is an extremely persistent element of social interaction.

Against the realism of the psychological social psychology tradition of Ross and Nisbett, Goffman resists the notion that social psychology should operate in a demystifying manner to expose 'real reality.' While he distinguishes sociological analysis from the 'common sense' view of, for example, sincerity and insincerity, he would not formulate this as a 'fundamental attribution error.' For example:

...to say that lay imputations are impulsive and unsound, and that over time and across various situations the individual might not, in fact, maintain the character he currently manifests, is quite true but quite beside the point. I am here not concerned with whether a given individual does or does not possess a specified characteristic, but with how notions about character function in daily life. (Goffman 1967:234–235)

Character has a kind of paradoxical quality, Goffman suggests, for

On the one hand, it refers to what is essential and unchanging about the individual—what is *characteristic* of him. On the other, it refers to attributes that can be generated and destroyed during fateful moments...Thus a paradox. Character is both unchanging and changeable. And yet that is how we conceive of it. (238)

Society needs to read character in this way, says Goffman, in order to ensure that we come to our situations, our interactions, with "some enthusiasm and concern" (238). The concept of *fatefulness* introduces the recognition that certain *situations* necessarily produce consequences for one's reputation, that is, for social assessments of one's *character*. In other words, sometimes character is simply a necessary part of the situation. Goffman brackets any empirical claims about the character structure of certain classes (contra Fromm). He shares this with Arendt. But, in a kind of qualified support for virtue ethicists, Goffman suggests that the question of character will always be in play (as

reputation):

Individuals must come to all their little situations with some enthusiasm and concern, for it is largely through such moments that social life occurs, and if a fresh effort were not put into each of them, society would surely suffer. The possibility of effecting reputation is the spur...And yet...if society is to persist, the same pattern must be sustained from one actual social occasion to the next...Individuals must define themselves in terms of properties already accepted as theirs. (238–239)

An important gap opens between contemporary situationists, who argue for the importance of institutional responses to social problems (Harman 2009:241), and Goffman and Arendt. On my reading, Goffman and Arendt suggest that although institutions are important, just as important is that these institutions leave space for ‘action’ and ‘interaction,’ that is, for the achievement of character in fateful situations and for the appearance of something new, for making a beginning. And beginnings can only ever be institutionalized after the fact of their appearing.

Goffman and Arendt indicate different ways that the possibilities for achieving character (what Arendt calls ‘acts of greatness’) disappear. While Arendt describes a situation in which the space between people completely disappears, Goffman suggests that, while ‘total institutions’ may suppress interactive space, or render it largely invisible (1961), and commercial society may trivialize that space, it cannot disappear altogether (see also Riesman 1952). On the one hand we have Arendt’s notion of totalitarian domination, a shapeless organizational form, a de-institutionalizing institution that replaces the real world with a fiction, leaving no space between people. On the other hand, Goffman describes a commercializing organizational form, which brings

the final mingling of fantasy and action...On the arcade strips of urban settlements and summer resorts, scenes are available for hire where the customer can be the star performer in gambles enlivened by being very slightly consequential. Here a person currently without social connections can insert coins in skill machines to demonstrate to the other machines that he has socially approved qualities of character. These naked little spasms of the self occur at the end of the world, but there at the end is action and character. (1967:269–270)

The point of these last lines of the essay seems to be to say that, even if one trivializes it, even at ‘the end of the world’ (whether in Arendt’s sense or not), action and character are still operating. Indeed, Arendt herself consistently affirms the permanence of the human impulse for freedom through the very human capacity to make new beginnings (1998).

The real gap here, it seems, may be between Arendt’s political and Goffman’s non-political conception of action. Even here, however, it is possible to read Goffman as advancing an implicitly political critique of contemporary Western life, an implicit critique that comes out repeatedly in some of his dense aphoristic statements as well as in the overall tone of texts like *Stigma* (1963) and *Asylums* (1961).

Goffman offers a non-psychological version of character to an Arendtian reading of action and situation. His treatment of character is non-psychological because of its performative emphasis, but also non-moral, because although it returns to the intertwining of character with the virtues, they are conceived here as the prizes (or punishments) awarded for successful (or unsuccessful) performances rather than as straightforwardly moral qualities. At the same time, these virtues would retain some minimal degree of moral charge. If, on the Arendtian conceptual scene, the primary virtues are intellectual ones (i.e., capacities of thought), the primary virtue under

examination in 'Where the Action Is,' is *courage*. Goffman points out that "The hero of character is not likely to be the man on the street" (1967:266). The primary actors that win the reputation for courage are those on the margins of society, those who engage in daring acts of bravery. Bank-robbers, for instance, gain the respect of law-abiding citizens, (and are romanticized in folk music) but at the cost of being hunted down by the agents of 'law and order.' These desperate characters, working on the margins, help to constitute the framework of social discourses on character by providing us with opportunities for 'vicarious fatefulness.' As Goffman puts it, on the edges of society are groups of people who stage a fateful scene, "a scene in which we project our dynamics of character" (267). In this way, "A frame of reference is secured for judging daily acts, without having to pay its penalties" (266). Goffman claims that this kind of "Vicarious experience re-establishes our connection to values concerning character" (268). Those "misguided enough to seek out all types of fatefulness" (266) add flesh and blood to the commercially packaged romantic figure on which the rest of us depend. Their payment, in the form of self-respect, arises from the contrast between

On one side...the safe and silent places...on the other all those activities...requiring the individual to lay himself on the line...It is from this contrast that delinquents, criminals, hustlers, and sportsmen draw their self-respect. Perhaps this is the payment in exchange for the use we make of the ritual of their performance. (268)

Goffman has been read as undermining the distinction between true and false, between the masks we don and the reputations we acquire in particular social situations and the true self that lies behind these masks and these reputations (cf. MacIntyre 1984). He has

also, and perhaps in some ways more correctly, been read as a conservative (cf. Goffman 1974:14), someone who, though recognizing the harsh price those on the margins pay so that those in the centre can re-charge their system of values, sees this as unavoidable. Arendt has faced similar accusations of amorality, as well as conservatism, and from a variety of directions. Regardless of the legitimacy of these accusations, and in certain contexts the labels may be fair enough, Goffman and Arendt together offer a way of thinking about the relation between situation and character that can invigorate current debates. This means, at least, giving more credit to the potential permanence and relevance of ‘character talk’ than situationists are generally willing to countenance.⁷⁹ It is useful, in this context, to think through the connection with courage, especially as it relates to the contrast drawn earlier between Fromm’s notion of existential fear and Arendt’s concept of totalitarian terror. In a very crucial sense, fear and courage are concepts that require us to think about the intertwining of character and situation.

It is important to note Goffman’s observation that in modern society, acts (or performances) of courage are related to social marginalization. Marginalized risk-takers, Goffman suggests, participate in a societal metanarrative about admirable personal qualities. This metanarrative involves a paradox. On the one hand character refers to stable and unchanging attributes. On the other it refers to situational attributions made in fateful moments and subject to profound reversals. This paradox seems to be a permanent feature of social life, and it is as true of courage as of other socially admired qualities.

⁷⁹ Goffman’s performative approach to character, courage, and criminality, based on a Durkheimian notion of the normality of crime, might also be compared to Schmitt’s (1996) political theory, with its *decisionistic* approach to character (i.e., the friend/enemy decision).

When Goffman points out the link between attributions of courage and marginalization, he also indicates something about the fragmentation of character qualities. Against an Aristotelian notion of the ‘unity of the virtues,’ according to which, if one does not possess all of the virtues, one does not really possess any of them, Goffman outlines the situational and performative circulation of character attributions, suggesting the paradoxical and perhaps contradictory quality of character.

Since Hannah Arendt is allergic to paradoxes, she prefers to simply avoid psychology and separate the idea of character from what she refers to as ‘deeds of greatness.’ Like Goffman, she also separates morality from deeds of greatness, thus lending us a model with a similarly restricted (but not entirely absent) role for morality in the sphere of action. Both offer narrations of sociality in which judgements are made about acts performed in the face of the unknown. These narrations also lend us a means of reflecting about courage, freedom, and justice. Goffman suggests that attributions of courage are, as the source of self-respect, the payment made to the marginalized. The implicit question is whether this is just, or whether this signifies the underlying collective cowardice of a society. Goffman avoided open discussions of justice, preferring to focus on other concepts. In one of his most well-known essays, ‘On Face-Work,’ he focuses on the concept of face, suggesting that “Perhaps the main principle of the ritual order is not justice but face, and what any offender receives is not what he deserves but what will sustain for the moment the line to which he has committed himself, and through this the line to which he has committed the interaction” (1967:44).

Goffman tells us that character and action are still present, even in the trivialized activities of commercialized society, even in the nickel slot machines. Extreme situationists argue, however, for the possibility of action without character. Doris quotes Aristotle in order to affirm this possibility: “a tragedy is impossible without action, but there might be one without Character” (Aristotle, in Doris 2002:209n.36). What we have seen from Goffman, however, suggests that as soon as we lay claim to a part in a social narrative, we are committed to demands concerning character, whether anonymous and formal or idiosyncratic and peculiar. We are compelled to reflect on situations, *but by means of the concept of character*. I will return to this discussion of courage and character in the conclusion of the chapter. Before that, I would like to revisit the situationist position as articulated in moral philosophy and in psychological social psychology, especially with respect to a different virtue/vice pair, honesty and deception.

D. SITUATIONISM, SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY, & THE EVERYDAY LANGUAGE OF CHARACTER

At the beginning of this chapter I suggested that moral philosophy has tended to draw on a very narrow range of empirical research. It also exhibits a certain naivete about methodological issues. For instance, moral philosophers tend to accept the idea of a ‘view from nowhere.’ Gilbert Harman suggests that “there is a clear conceptual difference between what people generally think about character and personality and what is actually the case” (2009:237). While he is on solid footing in suggesting that studying ‘folk psychology’ about character and personality is not identical with attempts to study character and personality systematically and scientifically, this is not the difference

between naive common sense and reality. As Goffman says, although the “common sense view has limited analytical utility” (1959:59), this does not mean that the sociological view is privileged in an absolute sense: “The crucial sociological consideration, for this report at least, is merely that impressions fostered in everyday performances are subject to disruption. We will want to know what kind of impression of reality can shatter the fostered impression of reality, and what reality really is can be left to other students” (66). Even if Harman turns out to be one of these “other students,” he would do well to recognize the reasons for Goffman’s caveats.

Harman argues, with respect to violent civil strife between ethnic groups, that we should avoid explanations based upon character: “If we attribute the...violence to ethnic hatred [i.e., character], we may very well doubt that there is anything we can do. If we understand the way the violence arises from the situation, we may see more opportunities to end the conflict” (2009:237). While it is fair enough to suggest the importance of situations, Harman is offering a false dichotomy. The psychoanalytic notions of character I have already discussed (e.g., Adorno et al. 1950, which examined the roots of anti-Semitism and other forms of prejudice) already criticize the notion that some mysterious quasi-biological character is a causal factor explaining prejudice. Character need not be reduced to a naturalistic form. Harman focuses so intently on the ‘fundamental attribution error’ involved in common sense interpretations that he overlooks the fact that socio-psychological studies have routinely made character assessments based upon the assumption that situation and character are fundamentally intertwined. According to these

studies, character structure arises from the interplay of person and situation.

Harman argues that “To the extent that we are interested in improving the lot of mankind it is better to put less emphasis on moral education and on building character and more emphasis on trying to arrange social institutions so that human beings are not placed in situations in which they will act badly” (Harman 2009:241). This sounds practical, but who are ‘we?’ If he refers to academic research and discourse, this is already the case. Contemporary sociologists of all sorts consistently take situationist positions. Situationism is an important aspect of the position of the classical Frankfurt school, differing from Harman in that Harman avoids specific political economy questions by means of the neutral terminology of social institution and situation. Consequently, Adorno’s critique of identity’s connection to social domination goes much further than Harman’s suspicions about character talk. Instead of skirting serious historical and material questions of inequality and domination, critical theory is consistently mindful of them when formulating hypotheses about character structure. Regardless of the validity of the conjectures about deep character potential, their materialist premise holds their speculative and potentially metaphysical nature in check.

Along this line, one problem with the position taken by Harman is the potential paternalism involved in the notion of “arranging social institutions.” On the one hand, this elides critical theory’s recognition of the central question of domination (in the arranging of social institutions). On the other hand, Goffman and Arendt seem to suggest that although institutions are important, it is just as important that institutions leave space

for non-institutionalized action. In this space there should be room, on the one hand, for the kinds of *fateful situations* that Goffman describes, in which character can be won or lost, and on the other hand, for the Arendtian activities of promising, forgiving, and beginning again (Arendt 1998). The attempt to institutionalize or micro-manage this kind of action leads, in Arendt's view, at least, in the direction of totalitarian domination.

Situationists have good reason to suggest that we have a marked tendency to make poor judgements of character based upon the behaviour of others. Harman suggests that "it would be best simply to replace thought and talk about virtuous character traits with thought and talk about virtuous acts and other responses, because ordinary thinking about character traits is such a mess" (2009:241). While the emphasis on *acts* seems reasonable, this is not a merely philosophical rumination; how would this replacement be accomplished and what sort of social policies would it require? Would a social transformation in which ordinary thinking and talking no longer dealt in character and personality require draconian methods of implementation? Might it, perhaps, signal precisely the 'end of the world' (as well as of 'persons') Arendt and Goffman refer to?

I tend to agree with Harman insofar as he argues for the validity of certain suspicions about the concept of character. Certainly, in the political realm, as he suggests, it seems more fruitful to evaluate the candidate's policies than to evaluate the candidate's character. But, then again, arguably the problem is not so much the focus on character as such as it is the exclusion of attention to policy and the presence or absence of transparent and responsive government. Whether or not we call it a matter of character, predictability

of behaviour (i.e., in the form of promise-keeping) is a permanent element of policy debate. If the politician is a liar (or even just acts like one, without having a lying ‘character’), the platform becomes meaningless. The idea of a public sphere in which the arrangement of the situation made it irrelevant whether or not someone was a ‘liar’ or made it impossible to get away with lying might be appealing, but what sorts of (coercive) arrangements might be required to ensure such a predictable and perfectly *transparent* process, especially if one focuses primarily on changing the way we *talk* about the political? Directing the criticism at the content of *talk* about candidate’s character actually (ironically) avoids the more fundamentally situationist question of the set of social arrangements that allow or give rise to particular forms of talk (e.g., Who owns or controls the major communication media? How are campaigns financed?), or that limit substantive democracy and ensure the irrelevance of public debate.

This is no time to get caught up in a base/superstructure debate. So long as we are focused on the level of talk, we know that Habermas has travelled an important distance in elaborating Kant’s categorical imperative with regard to lying, and has established normative reasons why the arrangement of the public sphere might be structured so as to require a predominance of ‘criticizable validity claims.’ This hypothetical realm seems to lessen the relevance of honesty as an internal character trait, but it does nothing to eliminate it as a performative element of public discourse. The case remains that the persistence of social life appears to depend upon a complex interplay of trust and mistrust, reputation and anonymity, deception and revelation, character and action. This

interplay is itself mediated by sophisticated performative scenes and settings. This is the character *of* the political situation. The effect on elections and policies of the voting public's tendency (or not) to make 'fundamental attribution errors' is a complex empirical question.⁸⁰

If we move from the political realm to the scientific realm, this complex interplay exhibits some peculiar elements having to do with what situationism implicitly accepts as the relationship between social science and common sense, between social scientists and the general public. With respect to lying, it is not an accident that the bulk of the psychological experiments upon which the situationist position is based depend upon a calculated deception of the experimental subject, and precisely in order to ensure the 'truth' of the outcome. The lenience with which we view this deception follows from the trust (or mistrust) we have for the integrity of social science generally. But the same sorts of suspicions we might cultivate concerning the relationship between politicians and the public can be cultivated with respect to scientists and the public.⁸¹

Ross and Nisbett's *The Person and the Situation* (1991) is one of the main social psychological resources from which moral philosophical situationism is derived. Ross and Nisbett argue, and Harman and Doris and others follow them, that lay conceptions of

80 For interesting analyses of the power of cultural interpretive frames in political life, see the studies of American elections made by Lakoff (2002, 2004) and Alexander (2010).

81 There is also the possibility that people can become so used to social research that they suspect a situation of being a set-up and therefore ignore it. In this regard, consider this cautionary tale, staple of research methods textbooks:

At the University of Washington in Seattle in 1973, a male student accosted another student on campus and shot him. Students on their way to class did not stop to aid the victim, nor did anyone follow the assailant (who was caught anyway). When the campus reporters asked some students about their lack of concern over the murder, they said they thought it was just a psychology experiment. (Diener and Crandall 1978:87)

character are like lay physics. According to Ross and Nisbett,

the main interactional notion of lay physics—namely, the intuitive force of ‘momentum’—is the utterly mistaken notion that a force applied to an object gives it a store of energy that gradually dissipates. The correct notion (that of inertia) requires that objects at rest remain at rest and that objects in motion remain in motion, unless some other force is applied. (1991:8)

Ross and Nisbett argue that both lay physics and lay social psychology have a certain success in predicting what will happen, but both are based upon fundamentally mistaken underlying principles. In fact, the lay physics notion of ‘momentum’ is analogous to the lay social psychology notion of ‘character’ or ‘disposition.’ The problem with both involves presuming that a certain ‘thing’ exists within the object, whether a ‘store of energy’ or a ‘character structure.’ It is a problem of reification. What distinguishes lay psychology from lay physics, however, is that lay psychology involves a certain circularity, an element of self-fulfilling prophecy:

...the characteristics of actors and those of the situations they face are typically confounded—in ways that contribute to precisely the consistency that we perceive and count on in our social dealings. People often choose the situations to which they are exposed; and people often are chosen for situations on the basis of their manifest or presumed abilities and dispositions. Thus, clerics or criminals rarely face an identical or equivalent set of situational challenges. Rather, they place themselves, and are placed by others, in situations that differ precisely in ways that induce clergy to look, act, feel, and think rather consistently like clergy and that induce criminals to look, act, feel, and think like criminals. (1991:19)

Here Ross and Nisbett suggest that ‘looping effects’⁸² of character attribution tend to

⁸² The term ‘looping effect’ appears in Goffman’s *Asylums*, but is more commonly associated with Ian Hacking’s “The Looping Effects of Human Kinds” (1995). Hacking’s use does not seem to be related to Goffman’s, although their views tend, in general, to be compatible. It is not a term that appears in Ross and Nisbett, who have something rather narrower in mind than Hacking does, something more like labelling theory, from which Hacking distinguishes ‘looping effects’ (1995:369–370). From Hacking’s perspective, it

ensure some success in predicting behaviour, but this success is a self-fulfilling prophecy rather than a legitimate recognition of character qualities. They reserve capacities of genuine recognition and accurate judgement for social scientists like themselves.

Ross and Nisbett's claim about circularity in prediction implies the downplaying of the relevance of introspection (or thinking and judging) to one's character. While they mitigate this implication in a later chapter, here they suggest that recognizing that people sometimes choose situations, or behave consistently out of a felt compulsion to appear consistent, undermines the notion of character. But isn't it often claimed that situation-choice is part of what demonstrates character? Indeed, this is an old conservative saw. It is certainly an essential element of Aristotle's notion of *phronesis*, balanced on the other side by some notion of what is now referred to as 'moral luck' (Williams 1981). The relevance of situation-choice to character need not be read as conservative, nor even as Aristotelian, however, but as a minimal distinction that allows us to recognize the difference between unconscious and habitual action and action about which we can manage, in some non-trivial respect, to give an account (cf. Butler 2005). Part of what one assesses, then, in assessing another's character (or one's own), is the adequacy of the accounts offered for particular actions. John Doris comes close to acknowledging this in his chapter on 'Situation and Responsibility,' with a discussion of narrative integration, motivation and identification, but turns away from it for reasons that are unclear, apart from his assertion that "narrative need not be characterological" (2002:142). Ultimately

seems that Ross and Nisbett have failed to fully recognize the difference between *natural kinds* and *human kinds*. I use 'looping effects' here as a reminder of the complex range of metaphors of circularity (including dialectical ones) used to describe human interaction.

situationists persist (expressing, perhaps, an element of their own character) in insisting that character and situation must be decided between rather than seen as complementary.

E. ON TRUTH & LIE IN THE SOCIAL SCIENTIFIC SENSE

Situationists argue that situation can explain certain persistent gaps between accounts and behaviour. To pick up on my earlier suggestion, however, we need to keep in mind that the situations used as evidence are all experimental situations in which systematic and carefully calculated deception has undermined the minimal conditions for the maintenance of (non-totalitarian) social life. Rather than relate their research to Arendt's claim that part of what characterizes totalitarian domination is the collapse of the distinction between truth and lie, however, Ross and Nisbett make no real attempt to explain the relevance of lying to the experiments they use as evidence for situationism. They merely claim that, at the time that deception was introduced into social psychology experiments "no participant could have suspected" (1991:29) that this was being done. Seen from the vantage point of the present, such experiments can be seen as a new form of manipulative technique, a sort of moral bad luck, that has successfully waylaid groups of participants that may or may not have otherwise exhibited consistent behaviour. Situationist experiments, then, may demonstrate the lack (or the destruction) of character in their subjects, or, as Fromm argues, the revelation of a deep potential, but not necessarily the irrelevance of character. The lesson to be learnt might be that one should not trust scientists to tell the truth and, as a result, that one should not agree to participate in social science experiments. The really fundamental attribution error might be the

failure to recognize that the experimenter is a liar, even if a noble one (cf. Bok 1979).

On an Arendtian view, the subject's capacity for *experience* (from which capacities of judgment can be developed) has been at least temporarily undermined by the experiments themselves, insofar as the structure of the situation itself is designed to cut us off from meaningful companionship. However, on the condition that the debriefing situation gives them an opportunity to meaningfully assess and respond to the experience, one could argue (as, Milgram does in response to critics) that these experiments might increase the capacities of subjects to think about the relationship between situation and character. Whether this leads to a devaluing of the concept of character or a chastened self-understanding that itself exhibits character development (e.g., in humility or in that very modern virtue, reflexivity) may be an open question. In either case, it is still partly *by means of* the concept of character that such an examination can be carried out.

The distinction between 'lay' and 'scientific' approaches to social psychology cannot be made as easily as philosophical and psychological situationists think. I will leave to the side, for the moment, as being in the field of social studies of science, the corresponding distinction between lay and scientific physics. For my purposes it is essential, however, to assert the inadequacy of what Ross and Nisbett conceive as a 'refinement' and a 'limitation' on their situationist perspective, what they call "the subjective nature of situational influence" (1991:xiv). Rather than opening onto a fully interpretive social science model, this concept of 'subjectivity' is deployed as a way of compartmentalizing the role of hermeneutic engagement:

The real source of the difficulty does not lie in the fact that human beings subjectively define the situations they face, nor even in the fact that they do so in variable and unpredictable ways. Rather, the problem lies in their failure to recognize and make adequate inferential *allowance* for this variability and unpredictability. (Ross and Nisbet 1991:82)

They present the subjective meaning attributed to situations as a constraint on social engineering rather than the transcendental-interpretive condition of human relations: “an approach that seeks to make behavior explicable and predictable must take into account the subjective perspective of the actor, not that of the observer or researcher” (163).

Ross and Nisbett’s failure to reflect upon the significance of social science based upon deception relates to another failure. While they acknowledge the interpretive element in everyday experience, and point out the everyday lack of reflexivity about interpretation, they seem to miss Goffman’s point about the need to bring people to interaction with ‘enthusiasm and concern.’ While they do much to substantiate and articulate lay social psychology’s various failures of trait attribution, situationists tend to miss the deep problem of *meaning*, a problem which is, among other things, the world-historical problem of *disenchantment* diagnosed by Weber and referred to by J.M. Bernstein as a kind of tendential nihilism (2001:4–10). Oblivious to this problem, situationists happily pursue a positivist research program made modest by the complicating issues of subjective meaning, but without giving up the notion that, so long as we engage in social science with the right “experimental spirit...our role as social engineers can consistently be a beneficial one” (Ross and Nisbett 1991:246). I view this situation with more ambivalence. Even when one pursues social science ‘modestly,’ one

avoids an important question insofar as the primary metaphor driving social psychology research remains that of ‘getting behind’ common sense self-understandings (i.e., self-deception) by means of (socially engineered) deception. While deception of self and other may be rife in everyday life, Goffman argues that social scientists are not, in fact, well-equipped to eliminate this self-deception. His own stance was to eschew such a project: “he who would combat false consciousness and awaken people to their true interests has much to do, because the sleep is very deep. And I do not intend here to provide a lullaby but merely to sneak in and watch the way the people snore” (1974:14).

The problem, from a Goffmanian perspective, is that the Ross and Nisbett’s research program undermines a basic premise of social life and successful interaction, which is a certain ritual deference to the identity that others project onto a situation insofar as they manage its basic performative requirements. Successful interaction also requires us to follow, with some creative variations that sometimes amount to revolutions, the scripts of everyday (as well as out of the ordinary) life, scripts that require us to take on the challenge of exhibiting character precisely because they are constituted around casts of such characters. They are not static or unchanging, but their basic structure is that of script and character. Resistance to knowledge about social life gained by systematically undermining this basic building block of social life, then, is more understandable. So, too, is the compulsive and ultimately disappointing pursuit of character in commercial society that Goffman describes. Ross and Nisbett recognize resistance to the demystification of habits of attribution (1991:131–134), but explain it as

the result of the pragmatic but biased shorthand we tend to use in assessing others. They imply that while pragmatic resistance to re-thinking character has been a perennial quality of social life, modern social science is uniquely poised, and for the first time in human history, to dismantle this resistance. This view underestimates the complicated historical entanglements of modernity, deception, science, knowledge, and character. First among the issues is the problem of disenchantment. This plays out in an interesting way with regard to deception and social science methods.

Situationists make the important point that we can make better predictions about individual behaviour on the basis of knowing key situation elements than on the basis of purported knowledge about individual character or personality. That is, predictions based upon what the average person does in a particular situation out-perform those based upon studying the personalities of particular individual. This is Fromm's point, in fact: individual experiences and characteristics are most significantly shaped by the experiences they share with those in similar social positions. These experiences tend to be reinforced by attendant cultural interpretations, which make sense of them from within existing social structures. This overlap of situationism with psychoanalytic social psychology is missed because psychological social psychology comes to the social by starting with the individual.

It may only be through dialectical analyses of the 'total situation' that some aspects of situation become visible. While Fromm's analyses can seem even more circular than the situationism just discussed—since the notion of deep character structure as *potential*

makes it easy to prove retrospectively and to revise prospectively in the event of seemingly contradictory developments—his attention to character at the level of the social holds an important semantic charge because his dialectical approach allows him to accommodate seeming contradictions and to avoid losing the phenomenon to a rigidly two-dimensional logic. Even if Fromm's dialectical view of society and individual constitutes a residual category, it still preserves more of the phenomenon than situationism because it does not work on an either/or basis with respect to character (i.e., either it exists or it does not) and it takes seriously the deep effects of relations of asymmetry (domination).

Fromm's dialectical approach views individual character structure as providing a view of social character structure under a microscope. This metaphor, of course, can be recognized as an iteration, in some ways an inversion, of what happens in Plato's Republic, when Socrates looks for insight into the structure of the soul by examining the structure of the city. It is also seen in Hobbes's *Leviathan*, in his depiction of society as a giant man. In the general form of this dialectic, societies of a certain size and structure, a certain division of labour, a certain way of life, require and generate individuals with character traits that fit the experiences and activities that are typical for their society and for their social position within that society. This kind of whole/part form of social thought is vulnerable to its own form of two-dimensionality, as Arendt has pointed out. This tendency is somewhat mitigated by attention to social history and change. Against Arendt's view of the dialectic, Fromm, Riesman, and others argue that a gap has

developed between the demands of the social structure and the peculiarities of the individual personality. This gap provides room for some level of individual autonomy. In this gap appear the kinds of activities that generate, without completely controlling, changes in the social structure.

Famously, Durkheim described this relationship between society and the individual as the source of a fundamental *dualism* in experience, and, indeed, sociological conceptions of individual and social character tend to include an element of internal division and internal conflict or tension, some notion, in fact, of a divided *will*. This is a point of contrast with the philosophical tradition of virtue ethics and with contemporary situationism, which have both consistently maintained the link between character and the moral virtues, which means that it almost always involves the notion of consistency and non-contradiction, if not a strong notion of the unity of the virtues. As a result, for both the philosophical tradition and for situationism, contradiction can generally only mean a *lack* of character. For the social science tradition of Durkheim, Fromm, and others, however, character often, if not always, involves contradiction as an essential internal element. In fact, contradiction may be the primary source of character's power. Almost all of the character typologies produced by the psychoanalytic tradition involve character types constituted by contradiction, conflict, reversal, sublimation, repression, and so on. Actions that seem inconsistent on the surface are deemed consistent as derived from one's deep character structure. This element of characterological psychology/social psychology tends to be overlooked by situationists, who persist in defining dispositional

traits as non-contradictory because they demand that they be ‘evaluatively integrated’ (i.e., conscious rather than unconscious) (e.g., Doris 2002:58).

This tension between the psychoanalytic tradition and both the situationist and the virtue ethics traditions may be the key to character’s continuing relevance. Much depends on accepting or rejecting dialectical (or ‘paradoxical’) constructions of the social. Trying to keep the different perspectives in mind engages a central ambiguity of the concept of character, which is that ‘mark’ of character can be understood as a sign of one’s subordination, a kind of *fate* to which one is bound, or as a sign of freedom and the basis for resisting and persisting in the face of externally constraining circumstance. A situationism that denies the existence of either moral or psychoanalytic character cannot articulate the agency of individual actors in terms that can be incorporated into everyday-colloquial or formal-legal discourse. It also cannot handle the paradoxes of character pointed out by Goffman with respect to social performance and by Fromm, Durkheim, and others, with respect to individual drives and societal demands.

Situationism without some kind of concept of character also has some difficulty in describing or explaining the fact of society’s consistent reproduction of its basic patterns and meanings. Situationists rely, for the most part, on Kurt Lewin’s basic field theory structure, an argument set out with respect to adolescence in 1939, that relies on an overarching notion of culture, and systems of ‘cultural equilibrium.’ While Lewin showed a broad interest in sociology and psychological approaches, as well as in historical questions, however, later situationism withdrew much of its interest in sociology, and

lost, as a consequence, much of Lewin's sense for the dialectic interplay of person and situation, a dialectic found, for instance, in Pierre Bourdieu's work (1977), which features a closely related version of field theory, but also, in the concept of *habitus*, a model of physically incorporated or embodied fields. While the balkanization of social psychology may have been institutionally or professionally useful to a variety of academic projects, it generated an artificial dichotomy and a debate that lacks extra-disciplinary relevance.

F. SITUATIONISM & SOCIOLOGY: A CASE FOR WEAK CHARACTER

Some version of situationism, understood very broadly as the importance of context, environment, socialization, and so on, has long dominated sociology, and for very good reason. Much of sociology's history, in fact, has been characterized by attempts to prove the power of the situation over against common sense intuitions about the underlying principles organizing social life. Thus, against the belief in a meritocracy, sociologists have proven the importance of social networks to success in a variety of fields (e.g., Granovetter 1995 [1974]). Against theories of innate criminality, sociologists have argued for the importance of situational factors such as poverty, peer-group influence, education, and other broad social-environmental factors. Against racism, sociologists have made historical political economy arguments about slavery and colonialism (e.g., Feagin 2000). Labelling theory has argued Merton's point (1968:477) about the 'self-fulfilling prophecy' (e.g., Chambliss 1973). The list could easily become a litany. Some version of situationism is the default position for sociology. When Doris makes the concise claim that "social perception is infused with stereotypes of negligible evidential value"

(2002:93), he makes a point sociologists have been making for at least a century.

At the same time, however, sociology depends upon a variety of notions of character or personality, like the just mentioned concept of *habitus*, which combines, like Fromm's concept of social character, a strong version of situation with a strong version of character. Sociology resists the individual-focused explanation of action in terms of individual character and responsibility that one finds amongst conservative pundits (e.g., Bennett 1993) and puerile leadership studies (e.g., Kilburg 2012) by means of a fully-social and situated concept of character, but it typically does not resist the notion of deep internalization. Philosophical and psychological situationists ignore this fact because they do not engage with sociology. Where they do mention sociological situationism, as in Ross and Nisbett's desultory references to Marx and Weber, they fail to recognize this dialectical element, reducing the relationship between Marx and Weber to the debate over materialism and idealism. This allows them to avoid questions of class and history and to focus on piecemeal (and hypothetical) social engineering projects.

Just as the situationists sidestep the macro-questions of power and domination, so too do they miss some of the key insights provided by Arendt and Goffman regarding forms of activity that cannot be successfully institutionalized (i.e., reduced to a form of technical tinkering). Sociology has had its own headaches in this realm, often framed as the question of structure and agency. One of my purposes in returning to some of the mid-century discussions of character and situation has been the suspicion that, aside from the general processes of institutional differentiation, part of the reason for the invisibility,

to psychologists and to moral philosophers, of sociological approaches to social psychology stems from a failure to successfully explore and compare the different approaches to sociality presented by social thinkers like Fromm, Arendt, and Goffman. I have attempted to present several perspectives that were developed in the mid-century debates and that may help to advance our understanding of the mediation between character and situation. I have already discussed the idea that Goffman offers to Arendt a usable, because performative, concept of character, one compatible with her notion of action. This performative concept of character can be linked, I believe, to depth psychological approaches once these depth psychological approaches are re-worked through an interpretive-hermeneutic lens such as that offered by Paul Ricoeur, Jacques Lacan, and others. My earlier discussions of courage and deception provide two substantive areas in which this interpretive-performative approach might be linked to the psychologically-focused social psychology experimentation attended to by the moral philosophy debate. In response to the ambivalences and ambiguities that attend a performative approach to character focused on substantive questions concerning courage and deception, as well as the 'looping effects' of socially reproduced attribution and misattribution, I think it fruitful to try to develop a notion that seems equally ambivalent, that of 'weak character.'

The contemporary debate about character and situation has something to learn from the mid-century debate about totalitarianism and the authoritarian personality. Fromm's concept of character structure is a rich one, as is Arendt's political concept of

totalitarianism. Both imperfect, they still have something to add to the debate. In general terms they add history, class analysis, and rich models of sociality to a moral philosophy debate lacking in all three. Whatever the scientific merits of depth psychology, it has a potentially permanent importance for public discourse about social action for precisely the reasons that Goffman outlines: social life only thrives if we come to interactions with ‘enthusiasm and concern.’ Goffman’s performative approach helps reconcile an Arendtian account of sociality with the concept of character.

At the same time, situationist arguments against the existence of character need to be taken seriously. Although they suffer from a number of blind spots regarding sociology and everyday discourse, the experimental research findings cannot be summarily discounted. The point of this chapter has not been to reject their findings, but to contextualize them within a broader discourse and context, broaching the possibility of a new and mutual engagement between sociology, psychology, and moral philosophy. To this end, I have discussed performative elements of character, and issues around fear, courage, honesty and deception. These issues suggest the need for greater reflexivity on the part of social scientists, and a renewed grappling with the dialectical notion that critical reflection on character is one of the bases for its formation. For example, in his chapter linking psychological realism to ethics, John Doris (2002:107–127) avoids addressing the paradox that correctly rejecting characterological moral psychology could be read as the development of prudence, that is, as character! He suggests that “narrative need not be character driven” (119–120), but in his speculative example he suggests that

“The recovering alcoholic is better able to stay sober if she cultivates relationships with sober people and stays out of bars, whether or not she undergoes a characterological sea-change” (120). Oddly, he fails to address the character assessment (and the ontological claim) involved in the ‘recovering alcoholic’ label—grammar itself pushes us towards characterological decisions—and the fact that the 12-step program of Alcoholics Anonymous organizes itself around such labels and such ontological claims.

One further, but related shortcoming in the situationist discourse is its failure to deal with the primary psychoanalytic (but also sociological) preoccupation, the subjective experience of being caught in patterns of behaviour from which one cannot seem to extract oneself. Certainly a heightened attention to the importance of situation can illuminate new avenues of egress and provide a welcome respite to cycles of self-condemnation and hopelessness. C. Wright Mills’ *The Sociological Imagination* (1959), with its powerful articulation of the need to bridge the gap between personal troubles and public issues, remains popular in introductory sociology courses for precisely this reason. Nevertheless, even here, concepts like *integrity* or the MacIntyrean ‘unity of a life,’ which emphasize characterological consistency, seem to be the persistent providers of motivating frames of self-reflection. Heightened attention to situation does not appear to banish the subjective importance of character or the desire to reduce experiences of self-contradiction.

Insofar as we retain the concept of character, perhaps we should argue, against common usage but only by means of plunging ourselves imaginatively into it, for the

weakening rather than the strengthening of our characters, especially insofar as character is understood in the psychoanalytic socio-psychological sense as being bound unconsciously by the social formations we have internalized, embody, and reproduce (and whether or not such a thing as the unconscious exists). At the same time, the notion of weak character that I am suggesting accommodates much of the critique of character mounted by situationists, but without either ceding or claiming sovereignty on questions of character to/for philosophers and social scientists. That is, alongside the tendencies of institutionalized academic discourses to disqualify or colonize everyday discourses, and to accumulate and concentrate cultural capital within the university, tendencies which involve the ‘tendential nihilism’ outlined by Bernstein (2001), the concept of weak character is meant to engage everyday discourse in such a way that the social scientist becomes a participant in and not merely an analyst of everyday poetics. Fromm’s depth psychology is a part of this everyday poetics. So is Goffman’s approach to character as performative and paradoxical. Both, ultimately, argue for weak character, Fromm in a normative way, for freedom from an overly obedient conformity, and Goffman, in an analytic fashion, through his emphasis on the performative possibility of character reversals. Foucault articulated a related point in his ‘What is Enlightenment?’ essay (1984 [1978]) when he argued that the task is to ‘think differently.’ Arendt’s formulation is more abrupt. The task is to think, full stop.

In a weak but substantial version of character, we would think of character in that literal sense of ‘marking’ or ‘stamping.’ If we want to think of its relationship to situation,

some concrete examples will help, like the hand-stamp one often receives when going to concerts, the branding of cattle, the tattooing of numbers on concentration camp prisoners, or the thriving tattoo culture of the early 21st century. Such concrete images allow us to think of a range of possible interactive relationships between character, identity, and situation, from the voluntary to the involuntary, from that which we can wash off in a day or two to that which we can perhaps never wash off or live down. We seek out certain attributions, and we resist others, for others and for ourselves.

If we lose either character or situation from our conceptual vocabulary, we may lose the capacity to ‘characterize’ a situation; on the other hand, if we continually over-attribute character qualities, we reify behaviour, and each judgement of someone’s character will close us off to new and potentially contrary experiences. Situationism has the merit of establishing a bulkhead from which to fend off those ascriptions of character that arise from general systems of domination, and from those responsabilizing practices that explain the social arrangement in terms of the inherent or ‘natural’ qualities of members. Adorno, among many others, has articulated the repressive nature of identity under social conditions of inequality and domination. Non-sociological situationism, however, has few resources capable of generating flexibility in moving from the individual to the collective level. As a result, the move from one to the other is abrupt and often rather unreflexive. Doris, for instance, blames the violence of the 20th century on a collective lack of social intelligence, on our ‘blitheness’ in the face of gaps between predicted and actual behavioural consistency (2002:102). For some reason, he neglects to

point out that a collectively typical ‘blithe’ attitude on this score is itself a kind of social character. This neglect is highlighted again a few pages later when he reports claims about cultural differences regarding character attribution: “it is widely argued that non-Westerners such as the Japanese interpret behavior more in terms of situations and less in terms of personal dispositions” (105). Doris concludes by suggesting that “epistemological difficulties caused by over-attribution are associated with ethical difficulties—difficulties that may be ameliorated by decreased reliance on characterological moral psychology” (106). I support the spirit of this suggestion, but the issue is less a matter of ‘decreased reliance’ and more a matter of exchanging a realist approach for an interpretive one that sees character as a concept deeply involved in everyday discursive poetics. When we set about to alter the structure of this discursive poetics, the best self-interpretive frame is not the social engineer one, but a frame in which social scientists are social actors just as socially embedded as anybody else. If we take Fromm, Arendt, and Goffman as our guides, at least part of the time, attention to forms of companionship, teamwork, collective arrangements, and collective action constitute the way forward in our analysis of character. If we recognize some of the social aspects of character that Fromm points out, we will find reasons for suspecting that even if we accept the concept of character, we should see it as ambivalently linked to morality.

At the end of the film *Angels With Dirty Faces*, an American gangster film from 1938, starring James Cagney, Pat O’Brien, and Humphrey Bogart, the gangster Rocky Sullivan, played by James Cagney, is sent to the electric chair. His childhood friend Jerry

Connolly (Pat O'Brien), a priest, accompanies him. Father Connolly has been trying hard to keep the young boys who idolize Rocky from following in his footsteps, so he makes an odd request of Rocky. He asks Rocky to act frightened when he faces the electric chair. If he 'dies yellow,' and it is reported in the newspapers, the boys who idolize him may lose respect for him, and not follow his path. This is Father Connolly's idea.

Rocky refuses. He says he can't stand the thought. Yet, on his way to the chair, he does it. At least, it seems like he does. He drags his feet, he shouts and cries, panicking. Here, in this fateful moment, Rocky shows his true colour, yellow. The boys are crestfallen. Their hero has turned out to be a coward.

The ending leaves it an open question whether Rocky really 'turned yellow.' Father Connolly does not know. We do not know. Yet that is the character Rocky played. In an extra twist, it is his display of 'weak' character that may finally do some good, although, of course, we have to admit that we don't know what effect this disappointment will really have on the boys that looked up to him. This example demonstrates, I think, the way that character persists in social life, in specific instances, and in a variety of keys (Goffman 1974). It appears as part of a narrative in a film that we gather together in public places to watch, to escape into and enjoy, and then to discuss. This reflects the fact that character appears in our everyday interactions and in our fateful ones too, in our movie-going and in our judgements. This is also an excellent illustration of a particular liminal moment with regard to fear, courage, and marginalization.

Character is a part of the way we narrate social interaction. I do not think we will

rid ourselves of it any time soon. If we need to divide things into two kinds, into, in this case, character and situation, it should, perhaps, be in order to set these two things into dialogue. This means that it is not just a matter of fine-tuning philosophical realist notions of character, as Upton and the neo-Aristotelians argue, or of engineering a better social world, as the earnest scientific realists hope, but of participating in discourses on character in such a way as to *enrich* rather than merely to *undermine* or *correct* common-sense understandings of human character and the human condition.

In the previous chapter, a considerable amount of space was spent discussing Weber's concept of charisma in hopes that it might produce a kind of core concept for the sociology of morality. Can charisma be a relational and moral concept? Can sociologists do research to verify the 'charismatic' quality of an entire society? Even if we criticize Weber's fact/value distinction, we must still beware of the 'naturalistic fallacy.' I have proposed the baggy notion of 'answerability' as a way to avoid both the naturalistic fallacy as well as the myth of neutrality, but this chapter, which has explored the complexity of the situation and character debate, adds further complications for anyone hoping to set out on a clear-hearted sociological journey of moral discovery. Situationism can help to undermine particular forms of moral judgement, but it appears to suffer from its own limitations.

One of the ways that we can advance and enrich our understanding of character and situation is to examine how it relates to the mediating notion of *practice*. Indeed, this was Rieff's claim about charisma, that it was not a mysterious and extraordinary character

quality possessed by an individual, but a collectively maintained quality of culture. On my reading, the concept of *practice* might add an additional face to the phenomenon I have attempted to introduce with the term 'weak character.' An effective concept of practice may be the key to linking character and situation (or, in another context, agent and structure) in a complementary relationship. This is the subject of the final chapter. In the next chapter, however, we turn to *affect*, and to the possibility that we might solve the puzzle of how to do the sociology of morality by 'getting in the right mood.'

CHAPTER SIX: THE CARES OF SOCIOLOGY: FUNDAMENTAL MOODS OF SOCIAL SCIENCE?

Among the four existent Natures (trees, beasts, man, and God), the latter two, which alone are endowed with reason, are distinguished in that God is immortal while man is mortal. Now when it comes to these, the good of the one, namely God, is fulfilled by his Nature; but that of the the other, man, is fulfilled by *care* (*cura*): ‘*unius bonum natura perficit, dei scilicet, alterius cura, hominis.*’ (Seneca, *Epistle 124*, quoted in Heidegger 1962:243)

This is the profound secret of innocence, that it is at the same time anxiety. Dreamily the spirit projects its own actuality, but this actuality is nothing, and innocence always sees this nothing outside itself (Kierkegaard 1980:41 [P5; IV 313])

A spectre is haunting Europe—the spectre of Communism. (Marx and Engels 1972:335)

The only thing we have to fear is fear itself—nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance. (Roosevelt, *Presidential Inaugural Address*, 1933)

Anxiety [*Angst*] has an unmistakable relation to *expectation*: it is anxiety *about* something. It has a quality of *indefiniteness and lack of object*. In precise speech we use the word ‘fear’ [*Furcht*] rather than ‘anxiety’ [*Angst*] if it has found an object. (Freud 1959:90–91)

Would you like a quick, sure-fire recipe for handling worry situations—a technique you can start using right away, before you go any further in reading this book? (Carnegie 1948:11)

Anxiety springs from the *future* of resoluteness, while fear springs from the lost Present. (Heidegger 1962:395; H345)

Angst, that supposed ‘existential,’ is the claustrophobia of a systematized society. (Adorno 1973:24)

Can we know the risks we face, now or in the future? No, we cannot; but yes, we must act as if we do. (Douglas and Wildavsky 1982:1)

A. VALUE-FREEDOM & THE “AFFECTIVE TURN”

Can the recent ‘affective turn’ (e.g., Gregg and Seigworth 2010; Clough and Halley, eds. 2007) in scholarship help us to rethink, or to think further, Weber’s claim that science takes place in a context of agonistic pluralism on questions of ‘value-relevance?’ The affective turn, I will argue, can assist us in exploring our earlier discussion of the deep tension embedded within Weber’s ascetic neo-Stoic conception of the scientific vocation, and some of the ways in which the structure of the fact/value distinction, when founded upon a particular version of existentialist authenticity, served as a melancholic solution by deferral of social crises of nationalism, masculinity (cf. Witz and Marshall 2003), and bourgeois identity (in both religious and economic terms). This chapter will attempt to explore this possibility of talking out and ‘working through’ the ‘renounced’ and ‘repressed’ elements (Bologh 1990:xvi) in Weber’s model, especially the socially structured contradictions of ethnic, economic and sexual difference embedded within it.

Specifically, this chapter addresses the role of affect as a sort of methodological consideration. How do you get ‘in the mood’ (cf. Fleck 1979; Rabinow and Stavrianakis 2013:107–109; Silver 2011) to do sociology? It arises out of a simple observation. If you take, from the last quarter of the twentieth century, a certain rather broad strand of mostly French, British and Canadian social science, some of which fits under the label of ‘Studies in Social and Moral Regulation’—social science influenced by cultural Marxism, Foucault, and Foucault-inflected readings of Durkheim—alongside a contemporary strand of American ‘Communitarian’ social science, you find, in the

former, anxiety operating as an independent variable, and described as a characteristic affect of the group being analyzed, in the latter, an implicit claim that the researcher embodies social concern. To complete the triangle (whose pseudo-Oedipal structure will become evident in a moment), at the same time that Communitarian and Moral Regulation studies were developing, a debate was developing around Carol Gilligan's *In A Different Voice* (1982), a book that criticized the existing developmental psychology of Lawrence Kohlberg (1984) and put forward the notion of an 'ethic of care' based on women's experiences and labour. Here the 'ethic of care' was presented as both an empirical finding and, implicitly, as a kind of ideal for feminist social science practice.

These three strands of social science constitute, broadly speaking, immediate precursors to what has been called the 'affective turn.'⁸³ The turn to affect, which Clough locates in the 1990s (2008:1), was motivated in part by mounting claims that contemporary theoretical developments, especially deconstruction, had neglected the body and, along with it, affect and emotion. Against the long-dominant Enlightenment notion of reason as triumphing over the passions, or over what Kant called 'inclination,' the turn to affect—initiated to a significant degree in philosophy by Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987 [1980]) (and the work of their English translator Brian Massumi)—re-reads the philosophical lineage, giving new emphasis to Spinoza and Bergson and to their attempts to formulate reason as a kind of passion, as affective

83 This chapter avoids discussing distinctions between affect, emotion, passion, pathos and so on. For sustained and useful discussions of these distinctions, see Terada (2001) and Clough (2008). I will also not engage the significant question of how to move between affect theory (e.g., Berlant 2011; Cvetkovich 2012; Sedgwick 2003; Stewart 2007) and the sociology of emotions (e.g., Barbalet 2002; Hochschild 1975; 1983; 1995; Turner 2011; Turner and Stets 2005).

action. Following the broad lines of this turn, the three strands of research developed here all involve a critical re-reading of the idea of Enlightenment as the triumph of reason over emotional bias, the triumph that Weber tried to institutionalize along with sociology with his fact/value distinction. Each of these approaches makes affect or emotion (generally the more psychologically inflected term) in some sense inseparable from rationality. Each also tends to use affect, I would argue, as a kind of bridge between binaries of *is* and *ought*, fact and value, theory and practice—a means by which to provide a tacitly normative analysis of human sociality and a foundation for a sociology of morality based in a notion of human flourishing that contains, at the same time, a notion of social scientific flourishing conceived as the cultivation of a particular kind of affect. In short, these affective positions appear as possible solutions to the tragic conflict (social and not just psychological) between reason and the passions experienced and described by Weber. Thus, both communitarianism and the feminist ‘ethic of care’ perspective regularly argue that modern social life and also modern social science exhibit excessive detachment and abstraction, and that this needs to be addressed by recognizing the emotionally and relationally embedded nature of sociality and by helping to strengthen society’s affective-relational structure (i.e., by contributing to healthier or more mature types or levels of social affect or emotion). In contrast to this, but still with a view to the structure of social affect, studies in moral regulation give an implicitly normative endorsement to a mature and courageous overcoming of anxiety, suggesting that contemporary capitalist society is organized by an underlying and immature (class) anxiety. We need the courage to grow

up, to think differently, rather than making scapegoats out of groups and individuals that appear to threaten our social position. The implicit claim, in other words, is that we are still too subject to emotional distortion of reason.

Studies in moral regulation come the closest to carrying forward Weber's own project but, in an interesting way, they advance a more universalizing claim, rather than one confined to the vocation of science. All three approaches suggest that contemporary society suffers from an affective pathology, a collective emotional disorder or arrested development. By extension, they each suggest a task for social science that goes beyond description, interpretation, or understanding. What one approach defines as human flourishing, however (e.g., communitarian concern), another approach may define as pathological (e.g., bourgeois anxiety). The hermeneutics of suspicion can be deployed in several directions across these three perspectives in order to question the motives or affective qualities that characterize the respective projects.

To be sure, affective concepts have always been present in sociological explanation:⁸⁴ *anomie* and *egoism* in Durkheim; *alienation* in Marx; Simmel's notion of the city dweller's *blasé attitude*; above all, Weber's thesis concerning the role in the rise of capitalism of the salvation anxiety unleashed, in general terms, by the fragmentation of Christendom in the course of the Protestant Reformation and, more specifically, by the influence of the Calvinist doctrine of predestination (cf. Riesman et al. 2001:124). All of these classic sociological concepts also indicate affective pathologies of the social, and all

84 See Parsons (1951) on 'affective neutrality.' See also the sociology of emotions tradition associated with Arlie Hochschild (1975; 1983; 1995; Hochschild and Thorne 1997), Jack Katz (1999), and others, as well as the more recent *Emotions Matter* collection (Hunt, Walby, and Spencer, eds. 2011).

have been used, although not necessarily by their originator, to skirt the *fact/value* distinction in order to provide sociologists with a moral *telos*. However, while classical discussions of affect dealt with collective and individual (existential) crisis, especially in terms of religious and economic questions, they largely suppressed or otherwise failed to address the extent to which their understanding of affect was structured by issues of gender, ethnicity, racialization, and even class.⁸⁵ The ideal scholar always turned out to be a bourgeois European male who rises above his petty bourgeois place in history to become an ascetic masculine hero, perhaps by joining the revolution, as Marx counselled, perhaps by simply ‘bearing’ the truth without self-deception, as Weber recommended.

The tensions and contradictions of these three late 20th century perspectives offer an opportunity to re-think the question of sociology as a vocation in light of an eventful century for issues of race, nation, gender, class, religion, sexual difference. This eventfulness envelops the rise of a professional academic class (or ‘cadre’) of sociologists. In light of the bankruptcy⁸⁶ of the European masculine ascetic hero, what does the affective turn offer us in terms of *how* and *why* to be a sociologist? On one view, this broadens the notion of scientific vocation to include a fuller version of human ‘flourishing’ or ‘maturity.’ At the same time, there are important limits to this way of thinking about the affective turn. Insofar as the tensions of society under late capitalism

85 Alienation, like anomie, is only ambiguously a psychological/affective concept. Marx never addresses the affective bases of his own vocation (‘abandon ship!’ a ‘section’ of the bourgeoisie cries.).

86 This bankrupt character continues to get considerable undeserved credit, of course. The claim of bankruptcy is here merely asserted (cf. Bologh 1990). Does this claim need to be defended? See, for support, the Nobel Prize winning work of Elfriede Jelinek.

remain in force, we will be no more able to ‘resolve’ them than others were.⁸⁷ Each of the perspectives that will be discussed seems to advance our thinking about affect and science, but also to run into difficulties in completing their projects theoretically (i.e., ‘residual category’ problems, etc.). The turn to affect does not deliver a synthesis that would finally bridge, without remainder, the gap between is and ought, fact and value, producing a coincidence of the sociology of morality and the morality of sociology. Sociology cannot simply be turned into a method for transforming anxiety into concern, or detachment into care.⁸⁸ The turn to affect delivers, rather, a negative dialectic, a constellation (Adorno 1973:162) of concepts that helps us to think about the affective tensions and contradictions in social life and social science. There is no one affective solvent for these tensions. What we encounter and experience are protensions between utopian hope and pessimistic realism; between the liberating pleasures of detached thought (the much-vaunted ‘life of the mind’) and those of un-theorized everyday involvement; between attachment to emergent practices and nihilistic impulses to do away with the present; between melancholia and the work of mourning.⁸⁹

B. EXISTENTIAL ANXIETY & THE 20TH CENTURY

Weber’s model of science and of the vocation for science is a kind of culmination of 19th century post-Christian thought, one important movement of which was the reconstruction

87 See Lauren Berlant’s edited collection *Compassion: The Culture and Politics of an Emotion* (2004), for a literary critique of George W. Bush’s ‘compassionate conservatism.’ See also *Cruel Optimism*, where Berlant adverts to Ghassan Hage’s distinction between class worry (paranoia) and care (Berlant 2011:14).

88 As Sara Ahmed has argued (2010), to lay the blame for negative affect on those who perform critical analysis, to blame, for instance, the ‘feminist kill joy,’ is to miss the point in the worst way possible.

89 I am so far unconvinced by Lee Edelman’s (2004) attempt to theorize the link between queerness and the death drive, which posits a particular relationship between queer figurations and melancholia.

of science on a secular (and ‘disenchanted’) basis. Weber takes us to an existentialist position after Nietzsche and Kierkegaard: we must look within. We must call ourselves, auto-interpellate. Thus the concept of *anxiety* assumes a central importance for science. We must face our vocation with fear and trembling, not before God, but before our own inner forces and potentiality, before our *daimon*. But if Weber moved us to the post-Christian question of the individual calling, and if, at the same time, he emphasized the importance of *Verstehen*, he failed to move into a truly intersubjective or historicizing understanding of desire, impulse, calling, or will. Weber gives us a deeply searching meditation on what it means to be a German man in the early 20th century, an heir to a tradition of masculine power whose father died, in a symbolic sense, either intestate or without an executor. In other words, the ‘greatness’ (again, cf. Bologh 1990) of Weber’s analysis is deeply limited by his failure to understand modern pluralism as more than a series of violent disagreements between men. His theory of charisma, discussed earlier, assumes but leaves unexamined the gendered elements of his conception. It sociologizes the effects of charisma, but not its origins. His discussion assumes that charisma, the pre-legal source of law, is fundamentally masculine, and that its essential structure is submission to authority. Maternal (i.e., individual and collective ‘archaic prehistory’) charisma as care is undiscussed, but is, implicitly, the ‘traditional’ structure that is overcome (‘it is written but I say unto thee’) by the ‘real’ charismatic-masculine source of social energy. On this reading, the charismatic rebirth, renewal, or conversion (e.g., being ‘born again’) appears to be, implicitly and perhaps also unconsciously, a renunciation of

the archaic-maternal even if it appears consciously and explicitly as a renunciation of the 'dead' patriarchal law. Durkheim's notion of 'collective effervescence,' by contrast, works with a more feminine-inflected model, in which the social body gives birth to itself. His conception of the importance of the organic division of labour, however, suggests that, in modernity, the return of the archaic collective mother would resemble the 'attack of the blob,' such that his rejection of revolution in favour of radical reform is also implicitly an attempt to suppress feminine power. This is one way of interpreting American communitarianism.

Anxiety's conceptual and social significance only grew, after Weber's death. The Weimar Republic, in place from 1919 until 1933, existed in an almost permanent state of political, economic, and cultural crisis until giving way to Hitler's Nazi Party. Should we be surprised, then, that two of the most influential 20th century treatments of anxiety appeared in German-speaking Europe in 1926 and 1927? Martin Heidegger's *Being and Time* was first published in 1927, just one year after the 1926 appearance of Freud's *Inhibitions, Symptoms, and Anxiety*. Like Freud's slim volume, Heidegger's bulky tome made *angst* one of its central concepts. This coincidence was no accident. Nor is it an accident that *anxiety* should be an important topic in the German-speaking world after World War I. Furthermore it is not that odd that Heidegger, the German philosopher of existentialism and ontology, saw in anxiety the means of *disclosure*, the means of grasping the fundamental structure of Being (i.e., being German), while Freud, the Jewish Austrian psychoanalyst, saw in it a sign of the desperate attempt of the ego to achieve

‘civilization’ (i.e., enforce the ‘reality principle’) by means of a kind of *deception* (i.e., by sending an inhibiting danger signal to the id). For Heidegger, *anxiety* signalled, in a manner ominously similar to Carl Schmitt’s theory of the political, the need for decisive commitment. For Freud, it signalled an over-developed super-ego.

Freud interpreted anxiety in terms of the *ego*’s attempt to inhibit the instinctive drives and thereby to avoid punishment (and loss of love). He theorized a developmental sequence of danger situations and trauma situations: 1) the trauma of birth with its over-excitation of the senses; 2) the fear of losing the loved object (i.e., the mother protector); 3) the fear of castration (i.e., by the father); 4) the anticipation of punishment (i.e., enshrinement of the super-ego). Fully-developed anxiety, distinct from fear, which has a definite object, is a kind of free-floating orientation toward the world, an affect generated by trinitarian and largely unconscious interaction between id, ego, and super-ego:

Anxiety is therefore on the one hand an expectation of a trauma, and on the other a repetition of it in a mitigated form...Its connection with expectation belongs to the danger-situation, whereas its indefiniteness and lack of object belong to the traumatic situation of helplessness—the situation which is anticipated in the danger-situation. (Freud 1959:92)

Heidegger follows a similar line in distinguishing anxiety from fear: “fear is a fearing *in the face of* something threatening” (1962:391). For Heidegger, in fear one forgets oneself. In fear one becomes incapable of making a choice between the myriad possibilities for one’s life. Faced with every overwhelming thing in our *environment*, in bewilderment we ‘make present’ whatever is ready to hand, like fleeing from a burning building while holding our bowl of breakfast porridge. In anxiety, by contrast, for Heidegger, the

environment melts away, disappears. The world sinks into insignificance: “Anxiety is anxious in the face of the ‘nothing’ of the world” (393). Anxiety brings one back to “the pure ‘that-it-is’ of one’s ownmost individual thrownness” (394). Anxiety is not authentic Being, but it is its condition of possibility⁹⁰: “it does not as yet have the character of the moment of vision, which temporalizes itself in a resolution. Anxiety merely brings one into the mood for a *possible* resolution. The Present of anxiety holds the moment of vision *at the ready*” (393). For anxiety to develop authentically, towards the resolute, Dasein “must know no fear” (395). In terms of temporality, “Anxiety springs from the *future* of resoluteness, while fear springs from the lost Present” (395).

For Heidegger “anxiety—together with Dasein itself as disclosed in it—provides the phenomenal basis for explicitly grasping Dasein’s primordial totality of Being” (227). This totality of Being, according to Heidegger, is *care* (*sorge*, related to *Besorgen*, translated as ‘concern’). Note, however, that, for Heidegger, the ontological structure of *Dasein*, its Being as *care*, “has nothing to do with ‘tribulation’, ‘melancholy’, or the ‘cares of life’, though ontically one can come across these in every Dasein” (84). *Care* is, for Heidegger, a description of *Dasein* as Being-in-the-World. It is the ontological condition of possibility of having ontic ‘cares of life.’ It is our *thrownness*, our always already being in-the-middle-of-things, *in medias res*, that constitutes our Being as *care*. It is not a care for particular people and things: anxiety (*angst*) discloses, for those who do not turn to ontic distractions, our ‘being towards death,’ our mortality. Freud disagrees.

⁹⁰ “So to despair over something is not yet properly to despair. It is the beginning, or it is as when the physician says of a sickness that it has not yet declared itself” (Kierkegaard 1954:152).

The fundamental question, then, between Freud and Heidegger, is whether *death* or the *drives* (*Trieben*) underwrite *anxiety*. From these opposed understandings of the origin and significance of anxiety Freud and Heidegger derive opposed understandings of *guilt*. For Heidegger, still cribbing from Kierkegaard, authentically facing our anxiety entails facing all the ways in which we have ‘fallen’ into inauthenticity, seeking refuge in particular cares, not facing our more primordial being as care, which exists prior to particular object choices and renders them, in a certain sense, arbitrary. For Freud, guilt should be weakened insofar as it signifies an over-developed and sadistic super-ego. To be sure, both Heidegger and Freud were concerned with Weber’s themes of individual authenticity as stoic masculine acceptance of ‘reality.’

For Heidegger, just as Dasein’s Being as *care* is a kind of a priori condition of particular cares, it is also to be distinguished from other derivative phenomena “such as will, wish, addiction, and urge” (227). According to Heidegger, “Care, as a primordial structural totality, lies ‘before’ [‘vor’] every factual ‘attitude’ and ‘situation’ of Dasein, and it does so existentially *a priori*; this means that it always lies *in* them” (238).

Heidegger goes on, however, to head off a mis-reading:

[...] this phenomenon by no means expresses a priority of the ‘practical’ attitude over the theoretical. When we ascertain something present-at-hand by merely beholding it, this activity has the character of care just as much as does a ‘political action’ or taking a rest and enjoying oneself. ‘Theory’ and ‘practice’ are possibilities of Being for an entity whose Being must be defined as ‘care’ (238).

In other words, both ‘theory’ and ‘practice’ already involve a “relation to entities within-the-world” (238). In sum, “The phenomenon of care in its totality is essentially

something that cannot be torn asunder; so any attempts to trace it back to special acts or drives like willing and wishing or urge and addiction, or to construct it out of these, will be unsuccessful” (238).

For Freud, what is unconscious, or repressed, in everyday life, are the *instincts*, the *drives*, rather than, as in *Being and Time*, the fact of the non-relational end, Being-towards-death. One’s own death is *certain* but *indefinite*, writes Heidegger. This makes the meaning of one’s own life taken-as-a-whole into an indefinite thing. Unlike every present-to-hand project organized within the ‘they’ self, the completion of one’s life as a project is simultaneously its negation, its turn to nothingness. For Freud (and also Nietzsche), to be shaken by the thought or reality of one’s own mortality or death is already to be inauthentic. To be afraid of death is to be afraid of a *nothing*, a shadow. Both Freud and Nietzsche show the influence of the Epicurean position,⁹¹ although diverging from it in the place that they give to the will. Epicurus advocates prudent management of the will, rather than exploring the possibility of bursting old limits (Nietzsche) or binding oneself to truth (Freud). According to Epicurus, “prudence is more precious than philosophy itself” (Epicurus 1964:132b).

According to Freud, anxiety has a ‘worldly’ cause. For Heidegger, however, the *urge*, the *will* that makes Being-ahead-of-oneself (focused on possibility as an instrumental ‘for-the-sake-of’), modifies and makes inauthentic the primordial structure of care. The Heidegger of *Being and Time* contends that drive and will “both turn out to be modifications of care” (1962:254). If *care* is prior to willing [*Triebe*], Freud wrongly

91 “death is nothing to us” (Epicurus 1964:139).

makes *instinct* the fundamental building block of our understanding of the human being.

Care, the *thrownness* of Dasein, rather than *drives*, is the truly *a priori* structure.

Heidegger equates *authenticity* with self-calling, asking, “is it at all necessary to keep raising explicitly the question of *who* does the calling? Is this not answered for Dasein just as unequivocally as the question of to whom the call makes its appeal? *In conscience Dasein calls itself*” (320).

I have set out some differences between Heidegger and Freud on the concept of anxiety in order to give perspective on the still unresolved question of vocational affect that haunts the three movements introduced at the beginning of this chapter. The thesis of this chapter, to reiterate, is that there is no one way of being ethically ‘in the mood’ for sociology. With Weber, Heidegger, and Freud, the question is still more or less the existentialist and masculinist question: How shall we face our fears?⁹² But has the ‘long century’ of existentialism ended since 9/11 and the beginning of the ‘War on Terror?’ Have we lost our nerve? Maybe. Perhaps not quite. Indeed, some strands of social science continue to advocate existentialist authenticity, whether of Weberian, Freudian, or Heideggerian variety, as a methodological starting-point. But perhaps losing one’s nerve is the right thing to do. Perhaps we need to soften up. Perhaps it is our calling.

In any case, it seems that we must take for granted, in a certain sense, that even beyond the existentialist move to ‘judge for yourself,’ a vocation involves, these days, a

92 See May (1977) for an influential mid-century overview of the role of anxiety. This chapter can only assume as background, without focusing on, the extensive history of critical readings—from Karen Horney and Levinas, and the Frankfurt School onward—of Freud and Heidegger on the entanglement of authenticity and maturity with problematic assumptions about gender and sexuality.

refusal of the conventionally constructed vocation. From Dorothy Smith to Louis Althusser to Pierre Bourdieu, sociology since Weber has urged us to rethink what ‘comes naturally.’ That is to say, the call ‘from within’ is not enough. The moral intuitions of our conscience, too, are subject to critique, subject to skeptical inquiry into the ‘symbolic violence’ which appears to discipline our intuitions, impulses, and desires.

One affective model, often implicit within communitarian thought, outlines a kind of dialectic, synthesizing the fundamental positions of care and anxiety to produce concern. On the Heideggerian model developed in *Being and Time*, the fundamental ontological structure of care enters a crisis when we move from a primary identification with the ‘they-self’ (in developmental terms, Mead’s ‘I’ and ‘Me’), to the question of the autonomous self and the call of conscience. Successfully navigating this crisis means moving to particular *concerns* without lapsing into bad faith. One makes, for instance, a traditional practice into one’s own, but now as a conscious and resolute choice. Bellah et al.’s *Habits of the Heart* (1985), for example, actually tries to lead American culture through a crisis of anxiety over the contradiction between ‘individualism’ and community ‘commitment,’ trying to point, like Riesman (2001), to the possibility of social autonomy.

If we take the Freudian position that at the base are *drives*, not *care*, anxiety still plays a critical role in the development of the psyche, whether in ‘normal’ or ‘neurotic’ directions. Here, however, anxiety is the super-ego. The methodological affect tacitly recommended by moral regulationists blends Heideggerian and Freudian positions, and moves toward a critical model of the social, according to which anxiety is simply the

‘claustrophobia’ (Adorno 1973:24) of bourgeois society, the ‘spectre’ haunting Europe. On this view, converting anxiety into solicitous concern is really a reaction formation, a regression into a self-idealizing fantasy. But let us turn to the cases at hand.

C. THE RESPONSIVE COMMUNITY? CONCERN AS SOCIOLOGICAL VOCATION

Research on ‘moral panics’ suggests that anxiety is an emotion that can be studied at the level of the social. It is an *object* of sociological research. On the other hand, in reading American sociology of a communitarian tone, one gets the impression that anxiety is something that rests in the activity of research. Bellah and his co-authors (1985, 1992) seem to be anxious about the future of American society, as do Wolfe (1989), and Robert Putnam, author of the best-selling *Bowling Alone* (2000). Are researchers anxious about their subjects? Are Canadian sociologists less anxious than American sociologists? Does American work arise from a fundamental attitude of ‘concern?’ while Canadian work arises from, for instance, ‘critique?’

The classic text of communitarian sociology is *Habits of the Heart*, published first in 1985 and co-authored by Robert Bellah and several others. This work drew its classical sociological insights from Tocqueville and Durkheim, but it was also influenced by contemporaries in philosophy such as Charles Taylor, Michael Sandel, and Alasdair MacIntyre, who were engaging in a philosophical debate at the same time (MacIntyre 1984). *Habits of the Heart* quickly became a classic, and it continues to be an excellent text for framing the project of communitarian sociology that declared itself formally soon after. In 1990 a journal appeared, *The Responsive Community* (1990–2004), which

included, in its first volume, a platform outlining the ‘rights and responsibilities’ entailed in ‘responsive communitarianism.’ There were 58 signatories to this platform. While most were academics affiliated with American universities, there were also journalists, attorneys, and political figures. Prominent academic signatories included Benjamin Barber, Robert Bellah, Harvey Cox, Jean Bethke Elshtain, Amitai Etzioni, Terry Pinkard, Alice Rossi, Philip Selznick, and Dennis Wrong (Etzioni, ed. 1998:xxxvii–xxxix).⁹³

The Responsive Communitarianism platform tries to strike a path between several binary oppositions (state and market; socialism and capitalism; liberalism and conservatism). Responsive Communitarianism emphasizes participatory democracy, and explicitly rejects, to counter its liberal critics, ‘majoritarianism.’ Pride of place among the institutions of civil society is given to *the family*, along with a qualified but clear affirmation of the nuclear, two-parent family as the ideal, explicitly rejecting the idea that extended families or communities can adequately replace mom and dad.⁹⁴ *Schools* are the second major civil society institution. In the absence of ‘good families,’ schools need to take on ‘character formation and moral education’ as a serious aspect of their role, teaching “*those values Americans share*” (xxix).

For American communitarians, sociologists need to overcome detachment and neutrality and become concerned. They reject the notion of value neutrality (e.g., Etzioni

93 Interestingly, the journal’s Editorial Board included, in 1997, some prominent scholars who did not sign the platform, including Nathan Glazer, Hans Joas, and Charles Taylor (Etzioni 1998:xx).

94 Contemporary communitarians constantly try to differentiate communitarianism from fascism. Liberal critics tend to remain unconvinced. Advocacy of the nuclear family is one of the tender points. Of the dozen women who signed the platform, two signed with the exception of the family section. See Arendt’s claim: “the family man...was also the great criminal of the century...Himmler’s over-all organization relies not on fanatics...it relies entirely upon the normality of jobholders and family men” (Arendt 2000:152).

2001:xiii). “How ought we to live?” is the first sentence of the preface to *Habits of the Heart* (1985:vi). Paraphrasing C. Wright Mills (1959) and his notion of the ‘sociological imagination,’ Bellah et al. declare their goal to be to bring moral questions out of the realm of “private anxiety” and into the realm of public “concern.” In their view “many doubt that we have enough in common to be able mutually to discuss our central aspirations and fears. It is one of our purposes to persuade them that we do” (1985:vi).

On the communitarian reading, social scientists, like everyone else, are inevitably drawn into making value judgments, drawn to “cross the line between sociology and ethics” (Etzioni 2001:xiv). Their task as social scientists is simply to justify these judgments in social scientific terms. One problem with this model, of course, is that it implicitly assumes purity of motive, even if it inserts caveats about fallibility and bias. Where does the hermeneutics of suspicion go? On this score, Habermasian proceduralism does more to ‘neutralize’ moralizing claims of concern.

The central figure of this academic project-cum-social movement was Amitai Etzioni, and the high point for the intellectual influence of sociological communitarianism, in the United States, at least, probably came around 1995, when Etzioni became President of the American Sociological Association. In his Presidential Address he argued that “Only a community that is responsive to the ‘true needs’ of all its members...can minimize the penalties of order and the dangers of autonomy” (1996a:1). Etzioni has a long history of connection with ideas of community. In the 1940s he studied with Martin Buber, who had been involved with and had written on the kibbutz

movement in Israel. References to the kibbutz movement pepper Etzioni's books, from *The Active Society* (1968) to *My Brother's Keeper* (2003).

In *The Monochrome Society*, published in 2001, Etzioni starts this way: "One theme runs through the chapters in this volume: the concern with social virtues and the social foundations on which they rest" (2001:xiii). Near the end of the book he claims that even the language of concern is not enough, going so far as to openly claim, against the advice of "One of my best friends" (221), that he is searching for a "moral voice." In broad terms, Etzioni conceives of communitarianism as a progressive response to the impasses between liberalism and conservatism, "the tension between individual rights and social characterizations of the good" (xiii). Etzioni speaks often of this tension, usually with reference to developing a third way, which he comes to call "responsive communitarianism," beyond liberal and conservative, left and right. Like others of his generation, Etzioni has moved from being what he describes as a "peacenik" (2005:5) to claiming, in his book on the Patriot Act, that

Americans should share the commitment to find a middle course, a third way, between those who are committed to shore up our liberties but who are blind to the needs of public safety, and those who in the name of security never met a right that they were not willing to curtail to give authorities an ever freer hand. (8)

According to Etzioni, America's international military exploits should be guided by the principle of *Security First* (2007), focusing less on projects of "democracy-building" and more on interventions that support basic physical safety for people (1996b).⁹⁵

⁹⁵ Another signatory to the communitarian platform, Jean Bethke Elshtain, has also turned rather martial in the 'post 9/11' world, as in her security-focused *Just War Against Terror: The Burden of American Power in a Violent World* (2003).

Another scholar actively involved in staking out the claims of communitarianism was Philip Selznick (1919–2010), one of Etzioni’s professors at Berkeley when Etzioni was completing his dissertation. One of the 1930s New York Trotskyites (Krygier 2012:15–21), many of whom later shifted to the right (e.g., the husband and wife duo of Irving Kristol and Gertrude Himmelfarb), Selznick earned his PhD from Columbia in 1947, under Robert Merton. He taught at UC Berkeley from 1952 until his retirement in 1984. Turning from Trotsky to Robert Michels, Selznick made a scholarly name for himself through neo-Weberian contributions to the theory of bureaucracy (1943), to organizational theory (1948; 1949), and to leadership studies (1957). He wrote, along with Leonard Broom, an introduction to sociology (1973) that ran through numerous editions and influenced the discipline for decades. Selznick turned to legal sociology in the 1960s and 70s (Selznick 1969; Nonet and Selznick 1978), founding the Center for the Study of Law and Society at the University of California Berkeley in 1961 and co-founding the Jurisprudence and Society Policy Program there in 1978 (Krygier 2012:3).

While Selznick did not move as far or as fast as some of the other young Trotskyites, by the early 1950s he was contributing to the American Cold War effort with projects like *The Organizational Weapon: A Study of Bolshevik Strategy and Tactics* (1952), published for and by the RAND Corporation, an American Cold War think tank formed in 1946 as Project RAND (a portmanteau of ‘research and development’), a project aimed at military research, development, and planning initially linked to the Douglas Aircraft Company (RAND “History and Mission” accessed April 30, 2014

<http://www.rand.org/about/history.html>). In this book, Selznick refers to the communist movement as inherently subversive and, although he calls the House Un-American Activities Committee “rather far removed from scientific objectivity” (1952:15–16), he endorses the use of the testimony and documentation that it collected. According to Selznick, *The Organizational Weapon* “...may be used as an advanced-training manual for anti-communist forces” (16). In short, in the time between entering City College New York in 1936, and taking up a post at UC Berkeley in 1952, a period during which he completed his undergraduate and graduate work, as well as US military service, Selznick shifted from anti-Stalinist Trotskyist to ‘realistic’ analyst of organizations and bureaucracies, an analyst that, influenced by both John Dewey and Reinhold Niebuhr, in his ‘mature’ sociological position came to reject communism in favour of communities.⁹⁶

After his retirement in 1984, Selznick published several summative statements of his sociological position (1992; 2002a; 2008). In his magnum opus, *The Moral Commonwealth* (1992), Selznick laid out what he called ‘liberal communitarianism.’ We can expect the differences between this model and Etzioni’s ‘responsive communitarianism’ to be subtle ones, for Selznick conspired with Etzioni in formulating sociological communitarianism and signed the ‘rights and responsibilities’ platform. In his ASA Presidential Address Etzioni cites *The Moral Commonwealth* as providing concepts directly parallel to his own approach (Etzioni 1996a:1). In 1994 Selznick published an article-length version of his ‘liberal communitarian’ position in the official

⁹⁶ Here is the short version of Selznick’s critique of Marx: “Marx did not face up to the realities of cooperation” (1992:145).

journal of American sociological communitarianism, *The Responsive Community* (see also 2000; 2002b). While Selznick, like Etzioni, seeks to find a *via media* between liberal and conservative extremes, his emphasis on liberalism rather than ‘responsiveness’ may be worth pondering (cf. Barber 1998/1999).

It is also worth noting the heavy emphasis, in *The Moral Commonwealth*, on the American Pragmatic tradition, an emphasis largely absent from Etzioni’s writing, which tends rather to cite Durkheim. Selznick discusses Durkheim, noting his commitment to a science of morality (1992:141), but in setting out the liberal communitarian project he asserts, early on, that “we need to re-affirm the central tenets of American pragmatism” (17). Indeed, he sees communitarianism as the rightful heir to pragmatism.

Turning away from Trotsky (1969), Selznick turned to American Pragmatists John Dewey and George Herbert Mead. In particular, he endorses Dewey’s well-known argument, articulated in *The Quest For Certainty* (1929), in favour of “substituting search for security by practical means for quest of absolute certainty by cognitive means” (Dewey 1929:24 cited in Selznick 1992:16). This move is directly relevant to what I have referred to as ‘methodological affect.’ What mood should a sociologist be in? On Selznick’s reading, the project that began with the Reformation—which Weber still followed, in key ways: the “fateful intellectual strategy...[the]...effort to locate certainty in subjectivity” (1992:16)—has run its course. Rejecting both the classic ‘quest for certainty’ as well as the nihilistic ‘quest for uncertainty’ characteristic of solipsistic late modernity, Selznick turns to pragmatism and to Dewey’s ‘search for security.’

The notion that social science, along with other human activities, should be engaged in a search for security, implies a methodological affect grounded “in the problem-solving experience of human communities” (16), practices developed as a “response to felt needs and difficulties” (99). This reform approach differs from Trotsky’s revolutionary approach, of course, but it also differs from Weber’s ‘demands of the day’ approach, since Weber’s view is that action in modernity begins with a decision between incompatible alternatives involving contradictory worldviews and the ever-present possibility that one will have to make a deal with the devil. While Weber emphasizes the importance of *leaders* and *decision-making*, the pragmatists emphasize *team-work* and *communication* (e.g., Mead 1967). Selznick had his own Michels-inspired leadership analysis, but he focused on organizational qualities rather than decisions. On Selznick’s Deweyan reading, when social science is drawn into the general ambit of human-activity-as-problem-solving, as necessarily transcending the separation of theory and practice as well as means and ends, it also mitigates overwhelming affects, producing researchers who are practically concerned but neither panicky nor focused obsessively on inner certainty or absolute truth. With the Deweyan search for security, we acknowledge the fragility of the mortal human, but respond to this fragility with practical solutions and protections, instead of an overly cognitive (or politically obsessive) ‘quest for certainty,’ or a symbolic ‘denial of death’ (cf. Becker 1973) that is ultimately escapist, impractical, and tends to stagnate around its dogmatic limits instead of continuing to grow and develop.

Against Weber's still transcendental notion of ultimate values, Selznick follows Dewey's resolute (cf. Heidegger) naturalism. Take, for instance, the way that Dewey uses the notion of 'participation,' a heavy-duty concept in Scholastic (i.e., Thomist) theology. Instead of a mystical connection to a transcendental God, Dewey describes participation as occurring "when an organism shares in the ordered relations of its environment...[so as to]...secure the stability necessary to living" (Dewey 1958:15). Sharing or participating in the patterns of the environment generates a "harmonious feeling...[and]...when the participation comes after a phase of disruption and conflict, it bears within itself the germs of a consummation akin to the aesthetic" (15). Dewey's notion of participation appears to avoid the perplexity about vocation that Weber found so troubling, largely because Weber still approached it in terms of the self-relation of the Kantian unified subject. On a pragmatic reading, the question of vocation only becomes relevant in the course of practical problems that are not once-for-all existential absolutes, but problems for which various proximate solutions—each of which may move one in the direction of personal growth, development, and expansion—may be devised.

The fact that Dewey reads vocation in pragmatic and interpersonal terms relates, in general, to his non-existentialist approach to anxiety. For Dewey, the fundamental question is not 'being-towards-death,' but how to be 'fully alive.' To be fully alive is to be caught up in the present, 'involved' in the here and now, preoccupied neither with the past nor the future: "Only when the past ceases to trouble and anticipations of the future are not perturbing is a being wholly united with his environment and therefore fully alive"

(18).⁹⁷ In keeping with his emphasis on participation, the real problem with the ‘quest for certainty,’ for Dewey, is not the issue of denying death or otherwise avoiding thoughts of mortality, but withdrawal from the world.⁹⁸ The communitarian link, here, is that the world that one withdraws from is also the world of human relations and interpersonal cooperation. On this view, the search for security is a practical project for establishing a (community) future full of promise. Security is also a basic condition for scientific practice, a condition that scientific practice directs itself both to maintain and to extend, at least when it understands the limits of its own capacities.

In keeping with *my* established practice, however, I would like to make a note, here, of the literal meaning of ‘security.’ The Latin *se cura* means ‘free from care.’ For Dewey, security of this sort comes through successful adaptation, “For only when an organism shares in the ordered relations of its environment does it secure the stability essential to living” (Dewey 1958:15). Still, security is not detached spectatorship; it is a product of participation, and as Toulmin points out (2002:xiv), any sociological epistemology developed under the influence of Dewey would need to take account of Dewey’s pragmatic critique of both the classical notion of *theoria* as the onlooker’s activity as well as the modern empiricist spectator model (whether spectating on the external or internal world) that Nagel called the ‘view from nowhere’ (1986).

For a couple of reasons, we should not take Dewey’s ‘search for security’ as completely representing Selznick’s liberal communitarian view. First, Selznick takes a

⁹⁷ cf. Benjamin’s ‘Angel of History.’

⁹⁸ The relevant dispute, here, is with Heidegger’s notion of ‘thinking.’

less rosy and optimistic view of human nature. Against Dewey's optimism Selznick poses the 'realism' of Reinhold Niebuhr, and evidence of the "human potential for iniquity" (1992:182) demonstrated by the Holocaust and other horrors.⁹⁹ Second, Selznick lays more emphasis than does Dewey on the importance of concrete primary social relations, especially those of the *family*. Nevertheless, we may look, for instance, to Selznick's response to the Berkeley free speech movement in the mid-1960s as instructive in this regard. In a response to his sociology colleague Nathan Glazer, who had written a broadly negative response to the student demonstrations, Selznick argued that "Something basically good has happened here" (1965:80). Here we return to the general ambit of 'liberal communitarianism.' The Berkeley free speech movement, the anti-Vietnam war movement, should be taken as movements towards *participation*, and not as fundamentally anti-social. Indeed, protest and conflict, within certain parameters, may indeed be what clarifies and establishes the common core of social values, the capacities for cooperation needed by communities. In this context, we may read social movements as attempts to confront the paradoxical traditions of the United States, correctives for the paradoxes of 'individualism' and 'commitment' described by Bellah et al. as having generated "glorious, but terrifying, isolation":

American cultural traditions define personality, achievement, and the

⁹⁹ Krygier calls Selznick a "Hobbesian idealist" (Krygier 2012:10). Although the realism of Robert Michels influenced Selznick to turn from Trotsky, he distanced himself from Michels' pessimistic view of human nature, seeing oligarchy as an outcome that could be avoided with better organizational science: Michels had the idea that leaders try to stay in office and exploit their privileges because it is inherent in human nature to seek power and retain it...This proposition is not really necessary to his argument. He need only have postulated ordinary human desire for security, comfort, and status. These motivations...adequately explain the drift to oligarchy. (Selznick 1992:245)

purpose of human life in ways that leave the individual suspended in glorious, but terrifying, isolation. These are limitations of our culture, of the categories and ways of thinking we have inherited, not limitations of individuals...who inhabit this culture. (Bellah et al. 1985:6)

It is not an accident, I think, that American communitarians tend to deploy the language of 'concern' rather than of 'care.' So what is the difference? One way of thinking about it is that the two terms tend to be coded differently in terms of gender. The attitude of concern preserves a certain paternal distance between subject and object. To be concerned is to be concerned *with* some thing; it is to take something up, to broach the possibility of an attachment. Concern is solicited, it is inaugurated, set in motion, by anxiety. Care, on the other hand, connotes a more primordial bond, a 'being-with.' Care is discursively coded, in general terms, as maternal. Concern, on the other hand, involves a degree of distance that more consistently connotes paternalism. Communitarianism runs on a discursively paternalistic track. The paternalism of concern is aided by the community, and involves a sublimated patriarchy, rewritten in paternal terms. A more intimate marriage of the genders, with the social scientist, a moral philosopher in disguise (Wolfe 1989), appearing as a kinder, gentler patriarch (and occasionally a matriarch). The concept of community provides a pseudo-synthesis of the family and the state, one which 'saves' cultural traditions and makes them 'voluntary,' 'local,' and characterized by 'involvement.' The concept of community saves the possibility of justifying a hierarchical division of labour; it preserves the subject-object split in the notion of concern. The emphasis on voluntarism masks a subversion of the democratic process, a reversion to 'community leaders.'

Communitarians walk a middle path, the path of the kinder and gentler father that allows his children to experiment, to explore, but sets pragmatic limits and boundaries. He is a pluralist, not a radical relativist, and not in Weber's sense of pluralism as a pitched battle between warring gods, but in the tradition of American pragmatism (Selznick 1992:91–116). The warm paternalism of communitarianism strikes a balance, seemingly, between the 'cold monster' of the State and the 'hot monster' of the completely private family. This 'Goldilocks' approach is more passenger than driver of discourse, however, and we would do well not to ride too far on this particular gravy train of connotation. As 'warm' as community may feel, we should not be caught napping. Selznick criticizes Foucault's wild use of metaphor (Selznick 1992:260), but it seems that the question is not whether but which metaphor. Is 'the common' a good place to start?

There are numerous problems with the concept of 'community,' a concept which, in use, often presumes what is dubitable, the existence of a shared social object (i.e., the common). Here we do not focus on the concept, but have simply travelled along with the affective connotations of communitarian discourse. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile to rehearse some extant critiques of community. For Zygmunt Bauman, for example, communitarianism was just the latest iteration of the views of the 'power holders.' When power holders change, "social thought, promptly and obligingly, changes the tune" (2000:75), here moving from neo-imperialism and universalism to territorial retrenchment, distinctiveness, and the preservation of boundaries. According to Bauman,

Community advertises itself as the cozy home amidst a hostile and dangerous city...the promise of freedom from fear...But again, the reality is

all too often the opposite. Given the endemic brittleness of foundations, community can ill afford anything but full and militant dedication to the cause; its self-appointed guardians are day and night on the lookout, searching for real or putative traitors...the craving for coziness of belonging is offered at the price of unfreedom. (76)

Instead of promoting morality, a boundary-obsessed community undermines individual responsibility and encourages double standards, with one set of rules for 'us' and another for 'them' (77). This form of us/them moralization does not support genuine morality. Instead "It replaces the torments of moral responsibility with the certainty of discipline and submission" (77). For Bauman, community cannot remove the uncertainty of our individual moral choices, for "uncertainty is not a temporary nuisance, which can be chased away through learning the rules, or surrendering to expert advice, or just doing what others do. Instead it is a permanent condition of life" (78). Bauman goes further, suggesting that moral selves develop through these experiences of moral uncertainty (78). Still, Bauman closes with a Durkheimian claim (although he would deny this) about the 'intimate connection' between individual autonomy and a fully self-reflective political community, one that seems to bring him right back into line with both Etzioni and Selznick's liberal communitarianism. Bauman is concerned, too!

D. ANXIETY THEORY IN STUDIES IN MORAL REGULATION

American communitarian research presents a concerned researcher focused on providing guidance to a well-intentioned but sometimes confused American people. The case is different with another kind of study often appearing in Canada and Great Britain and associated with concepts like 'moral regulation,' 'moral panic'—a term originating in

Stanley Cohen's work (2011 [1972])—and, later, 'governmentality.' In a critical retrospective discussion, Alan Hunt grouped this work together with some others under the label 'Anxiety Theory' (1999b:509). Here, anxiety primarily appeared as a causal explanation for a particular social phenomenon. Most commonly, anxiety was posited as an independent variable influencing members of the middle-class to engage in a variety of moral regulation projects aimed at poorer, more marginalized groups. Indeed, communitarians are, at times, the object of 'anxiety theory.' In other words, we have, within sociology, the interesting phenomenon of one school implicitly making another school into the object of study. This is significantly different from directly addressing and or debating the other school, which does not appear to have happened in any substantial manner. Indeed, there is a remarkable dearth of cross-referencing between the two research streams. Mutual ignorance is the less likely explanation. The more likely explanation is that both are engaging, at least sometimes, in one of the most effective rhetorical strategies available—probably more effective than the 'straw-man' strategy—that of strategic silence, erasing opponents altogether (cf. preterition).

While anxiety theory can be found outside of moral regulation studies (e.g., prefigured and influenced by Foucault and Foucaultians of the 1960s and 70s), here we will focus on the specific strand of moral regulation studies that Hunt describes. In the introduction to an edited collection appearing in 1994 under that title, Mariana Valverde gives us a general overview:

Moral regulation is a concept developed from the late seventies onward as part of a simultaneous synthesis and critique of Marxist, Durkheimian, and

Foucaultian analyses of bourgeois society. The conventions and routines that often have been regarded as mere cultural expressions of, or covers for, class formation, from unwritten dress codes to national spectacles, are given detailed consideration by scholars analyzing how these codes for everyday living legitimize and naturalize certain ways of being human while marginalizing all other ways...these regulatory processes are consistent with the economic processes of capitalism... (Valverde 1994b:v)

The concept of moral regulation, in other words, served to focus research on the details of cultural practice that the base/superstructure model of vulgar Marxism considered to be relatively secondary and unimportant. Moral regulation studies coalesced in Canada and Great Britain around the work of Philip Corrigan. His book *The Great Arch: English State Formation as Cultural Revolution* (1985), co-authored with Derek Sayer, emphasized the importance of close studies of concrete efforts by the State at organizing and normalizing attitudes and practices, including practices that institutionalize the State itself, as well as the emergence of social science. This work draws both on Durkheim's theory of the State as an organ of moral reflection (1957) and on Foucault's genealogical approach to institutionalizing practices, while remaining classifiably Marxist in basic orientation (cf. Ruonovaara 1997). While teaching in Toronto, in the 1980s, Corrigan influenced the rise of a Canadian school of moral regulation studies. Thus, at the same moment that Amitai Etzioni was launching *The Responsive Community* in the United States, across the border, in Canada, a group of scholars were initiating research projects into the voyeuristic and prying paternalism of social science. One of these scholars was Mariana Valverde. In her book about turn of the century moral regulation in Canada, *The Age of Light Soap and Water*, she made this claim about the origins of social science

research:

...the work of knowing the poor became a great deal more than a means to the end of remedying poverty: it became a science for its own sake—social science, a term that in the late nineteenth century included the present-day fields of sociology and social work...This investigation began with the kitchens, clothes, and cupboards of the poor, but it did not end there: the prying gaze of philanthropy sought to penetrate the innermost selves of the poor, including their sexual desires... (1991:21)

Valverde's edited collection appeared three years after *The Age of Light, Soap, and Water*, in 1994, as a special issue of the *Canadian Journal of Sociology*¹⁰⁰, and would serve as a convenient starting point of comparison with *The Essential Communitarian Reader*, edited by Amitai Etzioni and published in 1998. Here we will briefly address only one example, the respective treatments of the family. *Studies in Moral Regulation* features an article, by Margaret Little, that explores how governmental policies, like the Ontario *Family Benefits Act* "help to stigmatize the poor and encourage all those around them to scrutinize their daily behaviour" (1994:234). In "Manhunts and bingo blabs: the moral regulation of Ontario single mothers" (233–249), Little argues that poor single mothers in Ontario are subjected to a variety of intrusive practices enacted by social workers, public officials, and neighbours, in return for meagre food allowances that are insufficient even to meet the nutritional standards of Canada's Basic Food Guide (237–239). These intrusive practices exhibit both middle-class voyeuristic pleasure, as well as bourgeois class anxiety. On the other side, *The Essential Communitarian Reader* features an article emphasizing the importance of the nuclear family, and the efforts of the 'good mother' in

100 *Making Normal: Social Regulation in Canada* (Brock 2003) is a more recent collection of social and moral regulation studies. Arguably, the struggle against giving moral or ethical legitimacy to the 'normal' continues to gain ground (e.g., Spade 2011; Halberstam 2012; Warner 1999).

a bad neighbourhood (Galston 1998:145–156). Thus, on the one side, intrusive over-regulation is criticized and explained by bourgeois class anxiety. On the other side, anxiety/concern about the erosion of the family as a basic community institution motivates arguments about the importance of traditional social structures. A side-by-side comparison of the two collections reveals discussions of similar issues (the *ECR* also includes numerous chapters by authors critical of communitarianism, including articles by Charles Taylor and Ralf Dahrendorf), but almost none of the same references, and above all, for our purposes, with a different methodological affect.

Perhaps the best way to address the question of ‘methodological affect’ in moral regulation studies is to follow the trajectories of two particular scholars. Mariana Valverde and Alan Hunt both produced historical studies of moral regulation that used anxiety in the way that I have described. But their approach to research, and to anxiety, appear to have altered in the late 1990s, signalling a kind of decline of ‘anxiety theory,’ if perhaps only a temporary one in the light of the post 9/11 ‘War on Terror,’ which seems to turn a particular range of related emotions into a basis for the foreign policy of numerous Western nations. We begin with Valverde, who describes her work, in an article from 1997, as that of an “historian of social, moral and legal regulation” (1997:253).

In Mariana Valverde’s work, a changing deployment of anxiety develops over the course of several texts. From the late 1980s until the late 1990s, Valverde’s work fits fairly well into the category of ‘studies in social and moral regulation.’ Before and after that period, however, her approach changes, at least to anxiety. To begin, *Sex, Power, and*

Pleasure, Valverde's "sex book" (1987:9) was a direct attempt to open a breach between her approach to social investigation and the traditional model of expert scientific concern. This book takes the anxiety of men concerning female independence and autonomy, particularly with respect to sexual pleasures, as one of its main themes. According to Valverde, "what is threatening, and what most men are unable to imagine, is a fulfilled female life that proceeds independently of men" (99). Valverde also addresses the anxieties of middle-class heterosexual feminists, suggesting that "When heterosexual feminists fail to support lesbian initiatives, it is not only through incorrect political ideas. It is also because certain emotional reactions and gut feelings prevent them from thinking clearly. Lesbians by their very presence often make heterosexual women uncomfortable and anxious" (106). Thus, the theme of anxiety is already present in this earlier work, by Valverde, but it is not really a work of 'anxiety theory' or of 'moral regulation.' Valverde calls this book "a critical work that would be helpful to women (and men) who were looking for not sexual cookbooks but for analyses to help them think differently and more clearly about the whole subject" (9). However, it is "not just an intellectual project" (10), nor does it use anxiety as a kind of central hypothesis or as a [quasi]-independent variable. Indeed, in stressing the commonness of anxiety, and the need for pragmatic working-through of practical issues, Valverde sets out a position that she will return to in the late 1990s, in *Diseases of the Will* (1998).

In the meantime, however, Valverde's next book, *The Age of Light, Soap, and Water* (1991) is more clearly classifiable as a study of moral regulation. Valverde

acknowledges the influence of Corrigan and Sayer, but suggests that *The Great Arch* focuses too narrowly on the state, obscuring the regulatory effects of civil society actors and organizations (1991:171n.34). In thinking about the subjectivities of non-state actors and organizations, anxiety provides an excellent ‘residual category.’ Here the anxieties of the late 19th century and early 20th century English Canadian middle-classes serve as a form of explanation for moral regulation projects around things as exotic as ice-cream (and the Italian immigrants selling it). Anxieties provide only a partial explanation. Valverde also attributes much to positive projects of nation-building. Nevertheless, references to anxiety, rooted primarily in initial references to the notion of a ‘moral panic,’ a concept developed in the 1970s, occur at important points in the text, never in the form of an explicit thesis or named as the ‘independent variable,’ but located in key positions, nonetheless. Valverde states, explicitly, the analytical importance of “capitalist social formation” (15) and the impossibility of making ultimate decisions between the influence of race, class, and gender on these ongoing developments. Nevertheless, throughout the book, whose subtitle is *Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885–1925*, Valverde tends to refer projects of moral regulation and ‘reform’ to English middle-class anxieties about social change and about potential status threats.

On the broad question of affect, one of the first major theses of *The Age of Light, Soap, and Water* refers to the power of imagery to affect consciousness. According to Valverde, “metaphors and allegories work differently on people’s consciousnesses than do systematic literary or philosophical texts” (12).¹⁰¹ Systematic texts, writes Valverde,

101 Another detailed attempt to explore the power of popular images and discourses may be found in Paul

have less influence than those that are “short, popular, and are geared to action” (12). Furthermore, popular texts can contain (like a Trojan Horse) complicated subtextual explanations for social developments. Valverde puts it this way: “...the emphasis throughout is on what I call ‘slippages.’ For example, a discourse on single women could easily have a strong and complex subtext on race, or a discourse apparently on race and immigration might slip into moral categories” (13–14). At the conclusion of her preface, Valverde more systematically outlines this thesis of ‘slippages’ in relation to her explanation for “various moral panics” (14):

The presence of constant slippages makes it impossible to determine whether a particular statement or a genre of statements (for instance, about the moral dangers posed to middle-class Canada by British female domestics) was *really* about class or about gender. Moral panics, I conclude, are by definition multidimensional, and the social anxiety associated with them is probably rooted in the unconscious coming together or condensation of different discourses, different fears, in a single image. (14)

Valverde draws on the Freudian notion of condensation, here, which refers to a symbolic return of the repressed, for example, in the way that dreams seem to combine various experiences, to switch between situations, and so on. In a review article from 1992, Valverde reiterated the anxiety thesis, returning to the political economy underlying social situations, suggesting that 19th century social interventionism, the precursor to the welfare state, “masked an anxiety about the production of the social/moral preconditions of capitalist accumulation” (1992:215). Speaking more broadly, Valverde suggested that “from 19th-century liberalism to today’s social democracies, one can detect among the

Gilroy’s *There Ain’t No Black in the Union Jack* (1987), a work that builds on the classic British analysis of ‘moral panic’ by Stuart Hall and others, *Policing the Crisis* (Hall et al. 1978).

ruling classes a profound uneasiness about the ability of the working class to reliably reproduce disciplined young workers, self-sacrificing poor mothers, and all the other identities making up what I call the moral capital of the poor” (215). The philanthropy practiced by the ruling classes is “not moved by compassion but rather by anxiety” (216).

Valverde suggests that bourgeois anxieties, expressed as moral judgements, need to be directly addressed in criticizing capitalism, for “moral/cultural struggles are just as important as class struggle in challenging capitalism” (218). On the basis of this point, Valverde suggests an important limitation of social democratic projects that challenge class relations and economic distribution without challenging predominant bourgeois moral concepts of ‘character.’ As she points out, “Even Marx resorted to bourgeois moral clichés when attempting to separate the honest proletariat from the ‘lumpen’” (219). In this early-90s period, Valverde’s version of the moral regulation approach used ‘anxiety theory’ to go beyond Marx’s general critique of bourgeois hypocrisy.

In an article called “Moral Capital” (1994b), however, Valverde made a number of important statements which, without explicitly criticizing the concept of anxiety, turned to Bourdieu’s ‘neo-Marxist’ concept of ‘capital’ to develop a further critique of middle-class morals, a discussion that included a critique of Foucault and of ‘neo-Durkheimians’ (214). This article presaged a move away from the narrow form of moral regulation studies that provides the best foil for American communitarian concern.

Diseases of the Will (1998), Valverde’s remarkable study of alcoholism, shares with her earlier moral regulation studies and much other Foucaultian work, the (intended)

effect of subtly but steadily holding ‘Victorian’ anxieties up to ridicule, as in the section where Valverde describes the rather comical post-prohibition attempt to eliminate beer parlours (160). At the same time, however, in this book Valverde moderates references to bourgeois anxiety and focuses on particular ‘technologies’ of liberal governance as well as practices that may resist this governance, giving more space to the notion of a common and shared set of anxieties that many people experience in the face of everyday problems. In the face of these anxieties, Valverde returns more explicitly to some of the themes organizing *Sex, Power, and Pleasure*, as this summary statement makes clear:

Of course, the people for whom this book is ultimately written—those who seek to understand and transform themselves by experimenting with ways of understanding and changing the relation between consumption, desire, and freedom—are hardly to be blamed for the absence of a democratic public sphere. It is in all probability the absence of such a sphere...that has in the first place led to the felt need for micro-public spheres encompassing only those affected by a particular condition or injury. And an understanding of history is in this case not directly helpful, given the dearth of historical precedents for democratic and inclusive public spheres. (Valverde 1998:204)

One such micro-public sphere, according to Valverde, is the AA meeting. Indeed, Valverde devotes considerable space to a discussion of the practices of *Alcoholics Anonymous*. Valverde expresses admiration for AA, but only to a point, criticizing their essentialist and ontological (rather than pragmatic) approach to alcoholic identity. Her highest compliment is to say that it is not ‘disciplinary.’ According to Valverde, “The nineteenth century clinical/disciplinary techniques described by Foucault—hierarchical observation, classification, and so forth—are overtly refused. In AA, there is a positive refusal to collect information about anyone but oneself” (124). We have, here, “an ethical

gaze” (124) not a clinical one. She calls AA “one of the most successful challenges to the authority of the medical and psy experts that this century has seen” (123). Valverde concludes *Diseases of the Will* in fairly orthodox Foucaultian manner, with some brief reflections on the possibility of understanding oneself differently, of experimenting on and transforming the self and various relations with the self; in short, the book concludes with a refusal to think the self in terms of *identity*. On the other hand, against a rigorous existentialist demand for self-sufficiency and authenticity, the kind that stares anxiety in the face and overcomes it, the last lines of the book suggest something a little less demanding. Against the paradoxical liberal formulations about individual free will, Valverde suggests, speaking about an imagined better world, that “the citizens of this wholly fictional community are different from us in that, in discussing their hopes for freedom and their fears about compulsion, they do not feel compelled to deploy abstractions such as the free will. And that alone would be a blessing” (205). This rather crypto-Christian hope for heaven, where one is relieved, finally, of the temptation of disobedience to which a free will is always subject, and can relax into the embrace of the divine, retreats, it seems to me, from a hardline Marxist refusal to acknowledge the validity of bourgeois affect or bourgeois morality. Jumping back a few lines, we get another nod to the ‘poetry of the past’ in Valverde’s conclusion that: “The fiction of a public sphere that neither medicalizes our compulsions nor rationalizes our capacity for freedom...may serve to inspire us as we scavenge for useful bits among the ethical and intellectual fragments of our present...serve us better than the alternatives” (205).

In an article published in 2002, Valverde makes a new move in the realm of methodological affect. In “Justice as Irony: A Queer Ethical Experiment,” Valverde grapples with the tension that Weber faced in ‘Science as a Vocation,’ between the undeniable fact of pluralism/relativism and the practical decisions demanded by everyday life. Turning to Nietzsche, just as Weber did, Valverde develops an argument that exhibits less nostalgia and more hope than Weber does. In it, she recommends that scholars and political actors adopt an ironic stance, and a habit of making fun of their own pretensions to the truth. According to Valverde, “A certain ironic self-deprecation enables us to act politically while at the same time admitting that in our post-Nietzschean world, it is not possible to derive ethical and political choices from any absolute political and ethical truths” (2002:86). Here Valverde moves away from the tone of ‘anxiety theory,’ which tends to reserve mockery for the bourgeoisie, those subject to ‘moral panic.’ She does not, however, rule this tactic out:

This ironic stance may well be accompanied by either a parody of the authorities we challenge or an angry tirade against them. But whether we choose postmodern parody or classic jeremiads as our discursive practice in regard to oppressive power, irony is a helpful stance to take in respect to our own position. A lesson that I have drawn from my own history of activism...is that when political movements lose their irony, their sense of humor...then do movements become uncomfortably similar to the powers they seek to challenge. (86)

Here Valverde makes an important move in the tradition of methodological reflection. Suspicious of expertise, she attempts to limit, as Weber did, the range of her influence and the scope of her claims. Here the question, addressed in a law journal, is the question of justice. Experiencing and knowing about injustice, Valverde tells us, does not mean

knowing about or representing justice, for “...none of us can claim to either do or to know justice” (87). When we act, we end, instead, in the realm of law, not the realm of justice.

In the second half of the article, Valverde engages in an extended reflection on the relationship between this irony and the question of gender (and its limits), taking as her starting point Hegel’s claim, in his discussion of Antigone, that womankind is ‘the everlasting irony of the community.’ In working through the gender binary that both sexists and feminists use to read the social (94), Valverde suggests that, if womankind was the irony of the Greek community, it may be that the irony of contemporary life is to be found in “queer attitudes and acts” (95) that continue to activate, for instance, our anxieties about sexuality, attitudes in the face of which those without the ability to recognize the joke of gender are left with “deadpan, fetishistically detailed forensic discourse...[and]...the essential humor of the human belief in the necessity of the gender binary has been lost to human beings themselves” (100). Drag queens, in the end, make other people look silly rather than themselves, and dignity lies in recognizing one’s clown status, rather than in avoiding such recognition (cf. Warner 1999). In this article we see a return to the more pragmatic and multivalent affects dealt with in *Sex, Power, and Pleasure*. ‘Anxiety theory’ is still deployed, but more openly embedded within a plurality of affects, which are also taken on in the writing style.

By 2006, when Valverde publishes *Law and Order: Images, Meanings, Myths*, she has settled into a more ‘balanced’ approach to anxiety. Here is how she frames this book about crime, public sentiments, and popular culture: “‘fear of crime’ needs to be

understood in a larger frame. Fear of crime is a mostly negative emotion that is part of a larger and less negative psychic process, namely people's strong, passionate desire for safety and order" (11). Here Valverde makes some significant concessions, moving away from existentialist-Marxist absolutism and distinguishing between moral panics and legitimate forms of anxiety, transformed into positive terms, here, as the 'strong, passionate desire for safety and order' (which moves her in the direction of Mary Douglas, 2002). We turn, now, to Alan Hunt, whose work contains a similar trajectory.

Alan Hunt has been both a practitioner and a critic of what we have called, following his own usage, 'anxiety theory.' His first big book was *The Sociological Movement in Law* (1978). This was followed by two books on Marx (1979; 1980), and several books on law (Hunt and Fitzpatrick 1987; Hunt 1992; 1993). *Foucault and Law: Towards a Sociology of Law as Governance* (Hunt and Wickham 1994) explicitly marks Hunt's entry into the realm of moral regulation studies, followed by *Governance of the Consuming Passions: A History of Sumptuary Law* (1996), both a study in moral regulation and an example, self-confessed, of "anxiety theory" (1999b).

1999 is the pivotal year, with respect to anxiety. In this year he published his third book-length work of 'moral regulation,' *Governing Morals: A Social History of Moral Regulation*. In this book anxiety plays just the kind of important role in studies in moral regulation that we have been asserting:

This chapter explores the implications of the thesis that an intensification of projects of moral regulation in early nineteenth-century Britain resulted from the interacting social, economic and political anxieties of the propertied classes generated by the dual revolutions, the Industrial

Revolution and the French Revolution. (Hunt 1999a:57)

Interestingly, the chapter referred to in this quote, “Moral Regulation from Above: The Vice Society,” doesn’t actually examine anxiety. It simply assumes it as a causal element. On occasion, moral regulation studies and other Foucaultian work go so far as to suggest that anxiety and the social occupy the same space. In *Governing Morals* Hunt writes that sociology itself emerged out of a kind of anxiety: “At home [Great Britain] a deep foreboding manifested itself in a preoccupation with social conditions that in a very real sense created ‘the social’ as a focus for debate” (1999a:58). In the same year, however, Hunt published an article entitled ‘Anxiety and Social Explanations: Some Anxieties about Anxiety,’ where he critically questions the use of anxiety “as an explanatory device in a wide variety of historical and sociological writing” (1999b:509).¹⁰²

Hunt’s discussion of anxiety problematizes the concept, but does not rule it out altogether. Instead, he suggests “some protocols that should be taken into account when use is made of anxiety theory” (509). These protocols are as follows: 1) “it is necessary to interrogate the form of the causal connection that is posited” (524); 2) “An individual anxiety has no social significance unless it is a shared or social anxiety and, additionally, it results in some discernible action by significant numbers” (510). While Hunt’s discussion articulates an effective critical re-reading of ‘anxiety theory,’ he does not, except implicitly (and this is still important), bring a critical discussion to bear on the

102 Stanley Cohen, introducing the third edition of *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*, criticized the use of the ‘moral panic’ label to mean that an issue has been exaggerated or has received undue attention. According to Cohen, “This labelling derives from a wilful refusal by liberals, radicals and leftists to take public anxieties seriously. Instead they are furthering a politically correct agenda: to downgrade traditional values and moral concerns” (2011:vii).

affective mode of the social researcher. While he confesses to have some ‘anxiety about anxiety,’ he leaves this as a joking example of reflexivity. In fact, reflexivity often appears in this way. It is difficult to avoid causing smiles when one attempts to perform reflexivity, especially in oral presentations (Goffman 1974).

While Hunt succeeds in making “the way we go about handling anxiety as a socio-historical causal factor more self-conscious by problematizing the relation between ‘anxiety’ and ‘cause’” (1999b:524), one should go a step further by problematizing the relation between anxiety and the researcher as well. Hunt has established that anxiety is a residual category: it is a term that circulated in social science (and continues to), posing as explanatory while not being critically interrogated, whether theoretically or empirically. Foucault had suggested (1988) that anxiety is at the very basis of the modern *savoirs*, the social sciences of the disciplinary society. But Hunt does not thematize the issue of anxiety in relation to his own disciplinary activity. Can we sustain something like a Heideggerian distinction between authentic *concern* and inauthentic panic? Moral regulation studies have needed to come to terms with the tensions inherent to using anxiety as a causal explanation while simultaneously (implicitly) denying it as a research motive. What this amounts to (and the later Foucault would seem to support this) is a continuation of the Enlightenment project. But, as Hunt himself suggests, without perhaps realizing the double meaning of his words, “Social anxieties, whether acute or trivial, stimulate enquiry” (524). He is vague about *where* the social anxiety is, although from the context he seems still to be talking about anxieties that are ‘out there’ in the

social objects to be studied (rather than in the subjects doing the studying).

Hunt, like Valverde, comes to the conclusion that the concept of anxiety should not be reserved exclusively for negative uses. Not all anxiety is ‘conservative,’ ‘nostalgic,’ or over-reaction (Hunt 1999b:514). However, Hunt still sees considerable explanatory potential in anxiety theory. His ‘anxieties about anxiety’ pertain to its status as a residual category. It needs, he argues, to be more adequately operationalized, so that the ‘residual’ element can be reduced. He implies that theory needs to come to terms with the *quantity* of anxiety—it needs to be studied in terms of its empirical causation of “discernible action by significant numbers” (510)—in order to realize this potential.

Through the late 1990s, Valverde and Hunt succeeded, to some extent, in doing what Marx did not: a self-interrogation with respect to motivation. Moral regulationist approaches to anxiety tend (especially when bearing elements of Heidegger’s existentialist notion of authenticity) to involve implicit normative claims about ‘mature’ and ‘immature’ forms (e.g., ‘moral panics’) of action and motivation. As Valverde and Hunt moved, in some ways, to bring their own motivations (as researchers and social critics) into question, and to limit their application of anxiety to middle-class morality as the tool of a sweeping ‘hermeneutics of suspicion,’ they render the vocation of sociology more complicated, and they open their own practice to the complexities of contemporary social life. They place new limits on their role as experts capable of locating particular pathological affects in particular groups or classes and normatively dividing sections of the social in affective terms. This reflexivity and moderation of explanation may or may

not be a more 'scientific' approach, but it does move in the direction, it seems to me, of 'answerability.' This is what Valverde seems to have in mind with her turn to irony, and what Hunt has in mind in trying to specify more rigorous and limited uses of the notion of anxiety. This 'answerability' is not quite as evident, I think, in the Communitarians, who have tended to continue to legitimate their 'concerns,' focusing on the mote in the eye of their subject (who requires their expert 'concern') rather than the plank in their own. At the same time, in fairness, communitarians have been open to considerable debate. *The Responsive Community* included, in the course of its 15 years, a wide variety of voices and debates, although mostly about what a community is or is not, not what a communitarian may or may not be.

I have suggested a rather stark contrast between 'moral regulation studies' and 'communitarianism.' There are problems with this contrast, the most obvious one being the fact that there is enough diversity within each research program to justify using a kind of continuum rather than a binary typology. In addition, some of the work does not properly fall under either label. I hope, however, that this looseness of terminology has actually served to enrich my discussion of the place of anxiety in sociological research into morals, for the central thesis is not an empirical one about the actual place of anxiety in particular research projects; rather, the project of this chapter is to perform a structured discussion of the *possible* locations of anxiety in sociological research into morals, and to reflect on this theoretically and methodologically by means of a somewhat opportunistic usage of schools of sociology of morals that are ready-to-hand. We turn now to our third

affective approach, the feminist ‘ethic of care.’

E. THE ETHICS OF CARE

In 1982, very close to the time that studies in Moral Regulation and Communitarianism were receiving their first articulations, Carol Gilligan, a student of the influential developmental psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg, published *In A Different Voice*, a book that criticized the male-centric quality of developmental psychology. According to Gilligan, “as long as the categories by which development is assessed are derived from research on men, divergence from the masculine standard can be seen only as a failure of development. As a result, the thinking of women is often classified with that of children” (1982:69–70). On Kohlberg’s hierarchy theory of moral development, individuals reach the highest stage when they learn to bracket their own situation and to follow a sort of Kantian ‘categorical imperative.’ Kohlberg’s most well-known study assumed that *not* stealing an unaffordable drug needed by a loved one is the highest (most universal and just) form of the moral reasoning. Those research subjects who argued that there is a duty of care to a loved one that trumps societal laws, particularly when a ‘necessary’ crime could conceivably be a ‘victimless’ crime (e.g., the pharmacy being robbed would have insurance), were considered to have fallen short of the highest moral reasoning. Gilligan argued that this level of abstraction both 1) denigrated the practical moral reasoning of caregiving women, and 2) over-valued the morality of abstract universal reasoning.

In A Different Voice was followed, two years later, by *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education* (1984), written by Nel Noddings,¹⁰³ which

103 A 1991 book review by Noddings in *The Responsive Community* provides a rare point of cross

developed a similar critique of abstract moral reasoning. A debate followed the appearance of *Caring* and *In A Different Voice*, in which feminist theorists and others argued about the relationship between justice and care, and about the extent to which these were tied to (socialized or natural) gendered traits. Among other results, this debate 1) rendered the labour of care more visible; 2) challenged the affect-based division of the private and the public spheres; and 3) developed a nuanced analysis of the opportunities and dangers involved in advocating for the particularity of the ethic of care, especially the danger that idealizing women's 'ethic of care' will tend toward recapture by traditional and 'essentialist' gender binaries and the reproduction of asymmetrical outcomes in terms of a gendered division of labour (cf. Baines, et al., eds. 1991; Clement 1998).

The 'ethics of care' debate developed simultaneously—but in a kind of parallel universe, with few cross-references—with the development of communitarianism and studies in moral regulation, thus producing, as mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, a trio of affective approaches all taking positions on the methodological adequacy of various forms of detachment and involvement, abstraction and relation. Within the 'ethics of care' debate, some argued that women's caring was a biologically different and morally superior form of morality. There were critics of this 'gender essentialism' (both feminist and conservative). Some argued that (public) justice must trump, at least in the long run (private) care (bringing us back to the Antigone story). Others criticized the over-valuation or narrow definition of caring as a 'feminine' trait. In "Girls Learn to Care; Girls Policed to Care" (1991), for example, Marge Reitsma-Street argued that reference between communitarians, care scholars, and moral regulationists,

adolescent girls are policed to care in ways that emphasize caring for others, especially boyfriends and other men in the adolescent's life, rather than self-care. Was the 'ethics of care' going to do anything for feminist goals of equality? This was the heart of the debate.

The feminist debate around the 'ethics of care' made a profound contribution to our understanding of affect by drawing attention to care as work. A variety of approaches gradually deployed and deconstructed, for instance, the phrase 'labour of love' (e.g., Finch and Groves, eds. 1983; Luxton 1980). To give a simple example of this linking together of labour, gender, and care, Baines, Evans, and Neysmith introduce their edited collection of essays on *Women's Caring* by defining care as more than an emotional attitude: "Caring refers to the mental, emotional, and physical effort involved in looking after, responding to, and supporting others. In our society, most of this work is done by women in varying forms throughout their lives" (1991:11). Within professional caring, on the other hand, critique is constrained by practical demands of the job, and by some of the idealizing discourses pervading the profession. Such, for instance, is the case with Jean Watson's (1985) *Nursing: The Philosophy and Science of Caring*, an interesting practical manual that draws heavily on the humanistic psychology of Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow, while emphasizing the unity of 'caring for' and caring about.'

Feminist debates about the ethics of care have managed to produce a set of positions that avoid, as Jessica Benjamin puts it, either "a simple reversal that leaves the terms of the sexual polarity intact" or the ultimately self-defeating project of "conquering men's territory for women" (1988:91-92). What's more, the debate prevents the simple

(and ‘uncareful’) valorization of ‘care.’ The task, according to Benjamin, is “to transcend the opposition of the two spheres by formulating a less polarized relationship between them” (92). In Bologh’s (1990) terms, this is the move from love *or* greatness to the possibility of love *and* greatness. With respect to the discipline of sociology, this would imply that ‘careful’ sociology does not simply engage in a process of ‘maternalization’ in response to the paternalism and choice of ‘concern,’ in communitarian approaches (which tend to reproduce Weber’s notion of ‘value-relevance’). Maternal ‘caring’ sociology has its own problems, as the feminist debate, which criticized and clarified the ambiguities of various claims about nature, gender, labour, and care, made clear. As Benjamin points out, maternalized approaches could amount, at the same time, to a kind of desexualization, repressing the play of sexual difference with the binaries of sexual roles and professional duties. It might generate an overly-moralistic form of sociology, sociology as caring work, a self-sacrificing work difficult to take pleasure in. In order to avoid repressing care as *desire*, a kind of *erotics* of sociology would need to be cultivated. In these terms, the search for a ‘caring’ sociology might also bear melancholic undertones,¹⁰⁴ and we do well to be reminded of the discursive circulation of (unconscious) misogyny as well as cautioned against a reaction-formation which idealizes the maternal over against the paternal, missing the chance to work through the ambivalence which is generally present in the face of all parental authority.

The ‘ethics of care’ debate suggests that we can expect ambivalence to persist in

104 To turn briefly to popular culture, what I have in mind, here, are the kinds of issues imagined in films from *Metropolis* (1927) to *The Matrix* (1999) (which literally returns us to the womb). The Mother returns, here, as the *monstre froide*, or ‘cold monster’ of state control.

methodological and theoretical debates. This ambivalence can hardly be seen as an end in itself, as it sometimes seems that Zygmunt Bauman believes, however. Practices of judgement ought lead to a successful traversing and transcending of at least some ambivalent situations. Still, this chapter has argued against a spiritualizing synthesis of affect, moving, say from bourgeois anxiety, to late capitalist death of affect, or to post-capitalist 'social concern.' Such dialectical syntheses reposition the expert in a position of privilege, or, rather, gives a moralizing rationalization for that position of privilege. Whether 'careful,' 'concerned,' or 'anxious,' sociologists would do well to remember Heidegger's ontological notion of care as something that precedes any particular care, including all humanistic forms of care. Careful sociology is not necessarily humanistic. Careful thinking is not directly a caring for other humans. There are limits to the ('disciplinary') problems that a model of 'caring' or 'careful' sociology will solve. We should note, too, the ambivalence of our choices of particular objects of care insofar as these choices purport to solve the problem of anxiety. Anxiety is not just something to be solved, either by weakening the guilt that we feel because of the exaggerated strength of our super-ego, or by engaging in self-sacrificial heroism. Is it really advisable to move from Weber's lonely masculine hero to either the paternalist concerned expert, or to an even more self-sacrificing feminine-maternal sociology-saint (i.e., care as that which negates desire; Lacanian *drive*)? I leave these questions, for now, or at least change their form, in turning to my final chapter, on practices, sometime proposed solution to puzzles of methodological affect.

CHAPTER 7: RIVAL VERSIONS OF PRACTICE: BOURDIEU & MACINTYRE

Like all sea-going ship carpenters, and more especially those belonging to whaling vessels, he was, to a certain off-handed, practical extent, alike experienced in numerous trades and callings collateral to his own; the carpenter's pursuit being the ancient and outbranching trunk of all those numerous handicrafts which more or less have to do with wood as an auxiliary material. But, besides the application to him of the generic remark above, this carpenter of the Pequod was singularly efficient in those thousand nameless mechanical emergencies continually recurring in a large ship, upon a three or four years' voyage, in uncivilized and far-distant seas. For not to speak of his readiness in ordinary duties:—repairing stove boats, sprung spars, reforming the shape of clumsy-bladed oars, inserting bull's eyes in the deck, or new tree-nails in the side planks, and other miscellaneous matters more directly pertaining to his special business; he was moreover unhesitatingly expert in all manner of conflicting aptitudes, both useful and capricious. The one grand stage where he enacted all his various parts so manifold, was his vice-bench...

Thus, this carpenter was prepared at all points, and alike indifferent and without respect in all. Teeth he accounted bits of ivory; heads he deemed but top-blocks; men themselves he lightly held for capstans. But while now upon so wide a field thus variously accomplished, and with such liveliness of expertness in him, too; all this would seem to argue some uncommon vivacity of intelligence. But not precisely so. For nothing was this man more remarkable, than for a certain impersonal stolidity as it were; impersonal, I say; for so it shaded off into the surrounding infinite of things, that it seemed one with the general stolidity discernible in the whole visible world; which while pauselessly active in uncounted modes, still eternally holds its peace, and ignores you, though you dig foundations for cathedrals...He was a pure manipulator...
(Melville 1961 *Moby Dick* Ch. 107, 'The Carpenter,' 441–443)

Going for this particular diminished scale seldom involved me starting on B with the second finger, say, not because I can't move around fast when starting there, but because (as the scale was known as a handful and not an individual note/individual finger affair) I "didn't know" that, for this scale's production, my second finger was used for a B. It was initially learned that way; once learned, just as the finger-character responsibilities on a typewriter are forgotten as conceptually available facts for the touch typist, so which finger played the B in the course of this particular diminished scale was unknown to me (when teaching scale fingerings to students today I must play scales slowly to rediscover best fingers; if you're a decent touch typist try calling out the names of the letters on the second bank of characters *without looking down*).
(Sudnow 2001 *Ways of the Hand*:26–27)

A. BREAKING THE CYCLE? PRACTICES, COLONIALISM, PUBLIC ISSUES

On August 31, 2009, in Toronto, Ontario, 33 year old bike courier Darcy Allen Sheppard died during a traffic altercation with then 43 year old lawyer Michael Bryant, a former member of the Ontario Legislature, and the youngest ever Ontario Attorney General

(serving from 2003–2007). Details are disputed, as one might expect, but video footage shows Sheppard hanging to the side of Bryant’s car as it drives up and onto the sidewalk, where Sheppard is then “dislodged from the car after hitting the side cap of a fire hydrant. The subsequent impact to the right side of his head proved fatal” (Wells 2012). While Bryant was initially charged with criminal negligence causing death and dangerous driving causing death, eight months later these charges were dropped.

These events were the subject of considerable public controversy, and appear entangled in a series of overdetermined social juxtapositions, including the fact that this incident had Bryant, who championed a stunt driving law while he was Attorney General, careening (by some eyewitness reports) down the wrong side of the street and up onto the curb in a sporty Saab convertible. To add more social irony to the scenario, while Sheppard was an Albertan of Métis descent whose difficult childhood included considerable involvement with the bio-politics of the (declining) Canadian welfare state, including long-term foster care, periods of psychiatric institutionalization (Wells 2012), and legal troubles (Timson 2010), Bryant, after his stint as Attorney General, served as the Ontario Minister of Aboriginal Affairs (Oct. 2007–Sept. 2008). Furthermore, Bryant now works at a consulting firm owned by Phil Fontaine, once national chief of the assembly of First Nations (Wells 2012). While Sheppard lies mouldering in the grave, Bryant has partially rehabilitated his reputation, parlaying his experiences into new opportunities to exercise social symbolic powers, presumably for the ‘collective good.’

What frame should we use to interpret and to represent these events, whether to

tell a compelling story or to frame a public debate? Should there be a debate? Perhaps this incident has no social significance, and was just a matter of being ‘at the wrong place at the wrong time.’ In this case, justice was done when the charges against Bryant were dropped, and whether we are approaching the issue from a Weberian focus on ‘meaningful action,’¹⁰⁵ a Durkheimian focus on ‘social facts,’ or from some other angle, the sociological task involves turning our attention to broader issues (to bicycle-automobile collision rates, for instance) or to more *meaningful* interactions.

If there is something to talk about, is it cycling, or driving, or the physical infrastructure that shapes, enables, and constrains these activities? Or do these factors pale in significance behind, for instance, the structural history of colonialism in European-Aboriginal relations (e.g., the residential school experiences of Sheppard’s mother’s generation, or the foster care experiences of his own)? Should we focus on law? On Sheppard and Bryant’s shared experiences with substance abuse? This is what Bryant would like us to do. In 2012 he published an account of the events called *28 Seconds: A True Story of Addiction, Tragedy, and Hope*. In it, he details his struggles with alcoholism, presumably the basis for his ability to recognize Sheppard immediately: “I knew when I saw him that he was an alcohol addict. The first second I saw him” (quoted in Wells 2012). Profiling is ostensibly redeemed, here, by means of the playground logic

105 Weber used cyclists to illustrate the difference, as he saw it, between social and non-social action: Not every type of contact of human beings has a social character; this is rather confined to cases where the actor’s behavior is meaningfully oriented to that of others. For example, a mere collision of two cyclists may be compared to a natural event. On the other hand, their attempt to avoid hitting each other, or whatever insults, blows, or friendly discussion might follow the collision, would constitute “social action.” (1978:23)

that 'it takes one to know one.' Bryant turns this capacity for instant 'recognition' into a symbolic narrative where each character finds a proper social position.

For our purposes, how do we get some traction from the point of view of the sociology of morality? What can we say, sociologically, about morality's involvement in this case? According to Bryant, not much. An article in the Globe and Mail quotes him claiming that "It is not a morality play about bikes versus cars, couriers versus drivers, or about class, privilege and politics" (Timson 2010). As his book-length intervention would have it, however, it *is* a morality play, just not one about society-level issues. Instead, it is a 'personal' story about 'addiction, tragedy, and hope.' Bryant would have us understand this in terms of a narrative structured by his personal affective trajectory and as the gradual development and triumph of *character* over *situation*. Bryant would have us believe that he is a 'better man' for all these experiences. It reminds me of an early experience I had with team sports. During the traditional handshake at the end of a junior high softball game which had ended in a lopsided score, one member of the losing team grinned as he shook each opposing player's hand, repeatedly saying 'If it wasn't for us, you wouldn't have won.' I am tempted to imagine Darcy Sheppard smiling at Michael Bryant, sardonically delivering this Yogi Berra style remark.

Does suffering have a meaning? Does death? What particularly sociological truth can we use to construct a moral meaning from one or the other? If it were possible to do so, would the moral meaning give us a way of identifying particular heroes and villains? Do addiction, tragedy, and hope trace the moral trajectory of the human 'journey?' Or are

we confined to observing ‘moral’ claims-making, documenting institutionalized and emergent debates about good and evil, empirically demonstrating the existence of particular kinds of suffering and dying?

Previous chapters argued that neither affect nor character can provide a magic bullet for the fact/value vampire draining the blood from successive sociologies of morality. On the one hand, I suggested that the dichotomous bad infinity of the situation and character debate might fruitfully give way to a kind of negative dialectic opening onto answerability and reflexivity. In other words, neither character nor situation (alone) can provide an adequate basis for sociologically analyzing this as a moral question. On the other hand, although the question of affect is deeply important to the sociology of morality, we cannot base the sociology of morality upon a particular affective claim (e.g., ‘detached’ observer resistant to ‘moral panics’; ‘concerned’ citizen-scientist). We should be skeptical that a particular affective claim or performance could provide an adequate basis for meaningful sociological analysis. What we have, again, is a negative dialectic, and not a synthesis. To repeat, this was Goffman’s (1959) point about the relationship between ‘sincerity’ and successful performances. The real issues reside in the obligation to perform, the criteria for assessing performances, the social ‘authorization’ of certain actors and their socially cultivated performative capacities, not in their sincerity, not in the ‘real reality’ of the actor. In the case of Sheppard and Bryant, we should be extra skeptical. Indeed, the Goffmanian work of Richard Weisman (2009), would suggest that a talented lawyer like Bryant is both well-trained and effectively authorized to perform an

artful balance of regret and remorse *without admitting legal culpability*.

Against Bryant's autobiographical push in the direction of an individualizing focus on affect and character, then, this chapter explores some ways that notions of *practice*, a concept that has been gaining traction in a number of areas,¹⁰⁶ can provide a sociological path into questions of morality, including events that become flashpoints for emergent public debates on how to live, how to explain 'when bad things happen,' how to locate, recognize, define, and respond to problematic issues (e.g., like urban transportation; intergenerational effects of racialization and marginalization), how to understand micro-interactions between individuals that we might be tempted to understand through journalistic profiling categories (e.g., 'white, recovering-alcoholic, sports-car driving lawyer'; 'under-the-influence Métis bike courier'). This analysis could include, on the one hand, viewing legal practice, car driving, bike riding, journalism, even drunkenness or other forms of drug use, as distinctive and differentiated activities, or 'practices,' and as the sites of the agonistic pursuit of distinction (cf. Bourgois and Schonberg 2007). This agonistic approach sees practices as tacit but artfully enacted struggles for social status and position. It attempts to unveil, and critically reflect upon, hidden social practices tending to reproduce social relations of domination and inequality.

A more optimistic strand of practice theory sees practices as the building block of justice, not of inequality. Thus Richard Sennett's (2008) work on the related concepts of craft and craftsmanship, while acknowledging the ambivalence of craft, or technique, as expressed in the two Greek gods Pandora and Hephaestus (291–294), offers a critically

¹⁰⁶ For a philosophical instance, see Sloterdijk's recent advocacy of practice (2012; 2013).

qualified endorsement of craftsmanship as the means to building an ethical life. According to Sennett, pride in one's work combined with the effort to foresee and to evaluate the possible consequences of one's work, points us in the direction of the good life: "The clubfooted Hephaestus, proud of his work if not of himself, is the most dignified person we can become" (296). On this view, the concept of practice, broadly speaking, may be recruited in order to make sense of moral and ethical gaps in modernity as rooted in the lack of a substantive ethical life, or *Sittlichkeit*. It has been heralded as a way of bridging the fact/value distinction, a way—as Stephen Turner puts it—of "making normative soup out of nonnormative bones" (2002:120–141). Omar Lizardo suggests that practice theory appeals because "it does away with the separation (on conceptual and empirical grounds) between subject and object, observer and observed, action and perception, which has been a durable and pervasive set of dualisms in the history of Western thought and Western social theory" (2007:321; cf. Polanyi 1962). Approaches to practice inspired by Foucault and Heidegger celebrate its potential to release us from the nihilism of modern subjectivity (Dreyfus and Kelly 2011) through "practices of freedom" (Weeks, et al. 2001:186–191) that enable us to "desubjectivize" or otherwise "feel out alternate routes for living" (Berlant 2011:18).

We can use either of these approaches to practices in order to think about the Sheppard and Bryant story and its broader social context. Indeed, some version of practice theory already operates in the popular public debates. Cyclists, for their part, have done a variety of things, including public demonstrations (e.g., 'critical mass')

cycling events), newspaper articles, and online discussions, to generate a discourse of the ‘good cyclist,’ a discourse of *cycling as a practice that is good for the city* (e.g., in terms of traffic congestion, pollution, physical and mental health, social relations, and so on) (Scott 2015).¹⁰⁷ Car advocates, on the other hand, have tended to find ways of depicting cyclists as careless, foolish, dangerous, literal ‘free riders’ on public infrastructure, and as holding irresponsible political views. Most famously, a few months after the charges against Bryant were dropped, and after a Toronto mayoral election campaign in which the car-bike debate played a sometimes prominent role, Canadian media personality and hockey commentator Don Cherry, speaking at then Mayor-elect Rob Ford’s inauguration, claimed sarcastically that the pink suit that he was wearing was “for all the pinkos, out there, who ride bicycles and everythink” (*Momentum Mag*, Dec. 10, 2010).¹⁰⁸ This teasing statement was duly noted in pro-cycling publications like *Momentum Mag*, and some members of the cycling community proudly began wearing shirts that declared them to be, indeed, ‘pinkos.’

The agonistic concept of practice would tend to analyze cycling and driving, couriering and lawyering, drinking and riding/writing as subtle practices of distinction that, either consciously or unconsciously, dialectically shape and express the dispositions of those who enact them, while simultaneously positioning them socially. Pierre Bourdieu, whose theory of practice will be discussed at length in this chapter, would likely posit a difference between Toronto cyclists and drivers in terms of ‘class fractions,’

107 <http://nicholasadamscott.com/research/>

108 <http://momentummag.com/videos/don-cherry-call-cyclists-and-left-wing-media-pinkos/>

and attempt to study their practices accordingly. If we were to attempt to apply a layer of sociological moralizing to this exposé approach to practices, it would need to be at a meta-level based upon, for example, a theory of the struggle for recognition, or perhaps upon a critical class analysis. Bourdieu's moral judgements derive not primarily from his theory of practice, but from his theory of domination.

On the other hand, if we treat practices as inherently moral forms of activity that provide a foil to amoral, or immoral, or degraded forms of activity (being merely instrumental, or, worse, 'half-assed'), we might, following Sennett, attempt to find a way of studying driving, cycling, lawyering, etc., in relation to an idealized vision of *craft*, attempting to assess the degree of craft or artfulness that prevails in certain forms of activities (e.g., perhaps Toronto *does* have a lot of 'bad drivers'). On this view, an urban cyclist might be tempted to suggest that, in spite of the claim that Darcy Allan Sheppard is not a good model of the cyclist of the future (Gee 2010), we can find in urban courier culture some important strategies of resistance to prevailing automobile cultures of movement, resistance strategies that may eventually make room (literally) for more ethical and artful forms of urban movement. With this example in mind, let us broach the theoretical question.

B. FROM THE 'AFFECTIVE TURN' TO THE 'PRACTICE TURN'

The last chapter moved from the character/situation debate to the question of 'sociological affect,' arguing that following the 'affective turn' through some of its sociological iterations reveals a kind of constellation of attempted affective solutions to

the project of constructing a fully reflexive and socially immanent morality. Specifically, the chapter focused on a discussion of anxiety, care, and concern as possible (or perhaps ‘fundamental’) sociological ‘moods.’ I concluded that affective approaches to the sociology of morality do not resolve the central dilemmas involved in bridging the is/ought divide. They still leave us with significant disagreements on what a flourishing affective life for either collectivities or individuals actually is. How can we decide, scientifically, between existentialist emphases on courageous authenticity, communitarian emphases on paternalistic relational concern, and the feminist ethic of care, even with the resources of contemporary developmental social psychology?¹⁰⁹ Nor do these three versions of appropriate sociological affect constitute a happy family of sociological approaches. Quite to the contrary, they seem almost to express an unresolved complex, whether that of Oedipus or Electra, or of some other mythic narrative structure, perhaps yet to be written, perhaps already imagined in some of our contemporary fiction or in the suppressed and fragmented narratives of colonized societies. Even worse, all three approaches remain vulnerable to the Nietzschean critique—with which they sometimes impugn each other—that a disavowed will to power operates in all such affective position-takings (at least taken as normative principles), that nihilistic and sado-masochistic impulses of aggression and cruelty lie beneath all gentle and kind

109 Developmental social and psychological theories, from Piaget, Kohlberg and Fowler to Hönneth and Jessica Benjamin, remain more or less compelling reconstructions. They remain resistible, as sections of the previous chapter attempted to demonstrate. The critiques directed at Hönneth (and, implicitly, at Habermas) by Geuss (2008), Butler (2008), and Lear (2008) articulate some of the complications of sublimating Nietzsche’s *ressentiment* thesis via the concept of *recognition*. Perhaps *ressentiment* is an ineradicable part of scientific practice, and not just of anti-intellectualism (cf. Bourdieu 2003:19).

appearances, and that the sociologist is in fact a cringing Uriah Heep.

Furthermore, in those moments in which the pursuit of scientific knowledge appears most fully to be about the domination of nature, including our own, it remains a disturbingly open question whether the ‘best’ scientific observations come from concerned participants, impartial spectators, or sadomasochists. Still, if we can steer clear of Nietzsche’s one-sided misanthropic obsession with hypocrisy (cf. Shklar 1984), or at least resist being hypocrisy-obsessed in our reading of Nietzsche, such an affective constellation generates new possibilities for reflexive debates on moral questions, both within the discipline of sociology and between sociology and its ‘publics,’ and this offers new resources for forwarding the democratic project (e.g., of ‘unity in diversity’) within conditions of deep societal pluralism while still advancing rigorous scholarly investigation (at least insofar as we can bring ourselves to recognize differentiation within scholarly pursuits as a positive development). This is so even if we cannot be sure of the ‘authenticity’ of these debates, or even whether authenticity should be our ideal, or whether such debates are best characterized (or structured) as discourses involving ‘criticizable validity claims’ (Habermas), as dialogues (Bakhtin, Buber, Rosenzweig, etc.), as agonistic struggles (Mouffe 2000), or as a kind of erotics (cf. Baudrillard 1990). As far as the ‘weak’ program goes, this constellation of affective approaches provides a negative dialectical structure capable of undermining ‘affective authoritarianism’ in social (and other) scientific activity—without necessarily doing anything to affect or undermine the ‘self-overcoming’ forms of everyday scholastic asceticism—while simultaneously

extending capacities for social engagement. Sociology has no fundamental mood.

This chapter attempts to do something similar with the so-called ‘practice turn’ (cf. Schatzki, Knorr Cetina, and von Savigny, eds., 2001), a turn that, like the ‘affective turn,’ can be partly traced to Heidegger (cf. Turner 1994). Indeed, Heidegger’s notion of care, which seemed at times to provide the synthesizing key to our affective constellation, also provides a way into the concept of a practice. Heidegger claims that we are ubiquitously involved in the world, even when we are apparently doing nothing (and doing nothing may itself turn out to be a deeply sophisticated form of involvement).

As Schatzki points out, the turn to practices, which may be found in diverse disciplines, including philosophy, sociology, history, and science and technology studies, has often been motivated by a desire to move past “problematic dualisms” (2001:10) such as subject/object, action/structure, representation/thing, and human/nonhuman. According to Schatzki, who places special emphasis on the broad focus of the *field* of practices,

The ‘practice approach’ can...be demarcated as all analyses that (1) develop an account of practices, either the field of practices or some subdomain thereof (e.g., science), or (2) treat the field of practices as the place to study the nature and transformation of their subject matter. Note that this demarcation makes the notion of a field of practice the linchpin of the practice approach.

A central core, moreover, of practice theorists conceives of practices as embodied, materially mediated arrays of human activity centrally organized around shared practical understanding. (11)

This statement is useful for a couple of reasons. First of all, its tendency towards circularity provides an indication of the high hopes practice theorists have *for the very word* practice. Here scholarly vocabulary reveals a twofold function, both as technical-

conceptual fulcrum and as a ritual invocation of a ‘word of power,’ practice, which has—to quote Adorno on the cultic significance attributed to the word *Being*—“the attraction of the word as of something superior” (1973:65; cf. Williams 2011). Apart from the circularity of the definition-as-spell-casting, Schatzki’s statement points to the importance to practice theory of *embodiment*, *fields*, and *shared practical understanding*, aspects of human activity that have been passed over by approaches ensconced in atomistic individualism or mind/body dualism (in which, for instance, ‘values’ are often analyzed as abstract ideals rather than embodied dispositions or products of concrete activity). Schatzki suggests that the emphasis on *embodiment* may be traced to Foucault’s re-visioning of discourses as practical lines of activity that discipline and fashion bodies in particular ways. Foucault’s notion of a discourse, far from being a Cartesian abstraction, indicates the weaving together of bodies and talk, of writing and reading as moving and shaping embodied writers and readers. Much practice theory focuses on human skills and understanding as ‘embodied know-how’ and on practices as “the common meeting point of mind and activity and of individual activity and society” (Schatzki 2001:12). Pierre Bourdieu, who will be discussed at some length in this chapter, describes the worlds that practices produce, reproduce, and depend upon, the ‘habitus’ and ‘fields,’ the networks of embodied social positions, position-takings, and power relations. Lois McNay suggests that Bourdieu’s approach improves on agent-focused concepts of recognition, experience, and performativity, since “The idea of practice exteriorizes dimensions of embodied existence—for example, emotions—in respect to social relations and thereby avoids the

simplification and naturalization of agency” (2008:195).

In an extension of the emphasis on embodiment and fields, Schatzki points out that practice theory highlights ways in which human activities “interweave with ordered constellations of nonhuman entities” (2001:12). Thinking about embodiment, a quality we share with many non-human ‘things,’ leads us away from anthropocentrism. In the same way, the notion of a field appears, quite naturally, to refer us to the physical spaces and places, the ‘clearings’ or ‘openings,’ as Heidegger might say, in which we act, in which we find our place. Our sociality, as has been noted previously, cannot be restricted to the human, or even to the living. Practice theory promises so much in part because it offers an opening onto previously unrecognized or under-explored spaces and relations.

With respect to morality, practice theory offers a way of constructing morality’s genetic building blocks—as discrete ‘practices’—and bridging the is/ought divide, since it purports to provide insights into how human activity works (or does not work) ‘in practice.’ On the one hand, practice theory appears to provide a neo-functionalist account of human behaviour, under phenomenological cover: a sharpened acuity to *is* (an activity that *is* or *is not* working) generates recommendations for what *ought* to be done. If we figure out what a practice is, how it works, how to distinguish it from other forms of human action, and if we find a way to observe the ‘disrepair’ of a particular practice, or that ‘deskilling’ of labour has negatively effected reported ‘happiness,’ this would support protests against the loss of ‘craft.’ Apart from the utilitarian implication of suggesting that happiness can be measured as a kind of sum, praising practice and mourning its loss

roughly approximates Alasdair MacIntyre's approach.¹¹⁰

On the other hand, if, like Bourdieu, we find that practices to be artful forms of human activity that reproduce social inequalities (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977) behind our backs—while generating meritocratic self-interpretations—this *is* may lend empirical support to a pre-existing *ought* that condemns social inequalities.¹¹¹ Thus, very different notions of practice may be partnered with closely aligned moral-scientific lines of activity. Bourdieu and MacIntyre both understand capitalism as a system that generates injustice and inequality, but are far apart in their analyses of pre-capitalistic forms of activity remaining within modernity and in the significance assigned to practices.

Regardless of what lies 'behind' the concept of a practice, Bourdieu reminds us that the word itself may be a stake in the struggle for symbolic capital within the academic field (or the political field, for that matter). The vocabulary of embodiment and materiality is itself involved in a rhetoric of the real that often accompanies practice theories, a rhetoric itself embedded, we can only suppose, in specifiable material

110 It is difficult to exaggerate how consistently social theorists have assumed a positive correlation between highly skilled craft work and good moral character. From Karl Marx and William Morris to Harry Braverman (1974) and Richard Sennett (Sennett and Cobb 1973; Sennett 1998; 2008), a neo-Aristotelian thread accompanies most critiques of late capitalism's destruction of practice.

111 Here is an extended articulation of Bourdieu's ethical program, including a remark on human nature:

Thus, we must acknowledge that if everything leads us to think that certain fundamental dispositions toward the world, certain fundamental modes of construction of reality (aesthetic, scientific, etc.), of *worldmaking*, constitute universal anthropological possibilities, these potentialities are actualized only in definite conditions and that these conditions, starting with *skholè*, as distance from necessity and urgency...are unevenly distributed across civilizations...or, in a more rigorous language, across positions in social space. These are all very simple but very fundamental things, and it is not superfluous to insist on them...This simple observation leads us to an ethical or political program that is itself very simple: we can escape the alternative of populism and conservatism, two forms of essentialism which tend to consecrate the status quo, only by *working to universalize the conditions of access to universality*. (1998a:137)

practices (based in what Bourdieu calls *skholè*). Just as we cannot solve all the difficulties of developing a fully-fledged sociology of moral life by simply learning how to take the correct or authentic or mature affective position, neither we cannot solve them by confidently intoning the word ‘practice.’ As with the ‘affective turn,’ although the ‘practice turn’ seems to reveal varieties of ‘normativity’ (e.g., as ‘tacit’ rules) operating in hitherto unexplored social registers, it has not produced any unified normative theory of its own apart from the basic endorsement of a research agenda: ‘let us study practices!’ (cf. Schatzki 2001:11). Indeed, Stephen Turner has mounted a sustained attack on the concept of a practice, describing it as a kind of residual category that cannot be legitimately operationalized (1994) and there is surely something to Turner’s critique, although he focuses too narrowly on the ‘tacit,’ and on the supposedly general premise of all practice theory that all ‘practitioners’ have an identical (if ‘tacit’) mental content with regard to the practice, which leads to what Turner calls the ‘problem of transmission.’ What is more, there are now so many extant accounts of practice that this chapter will only be able to discuss a rather small and somewhat arbitrary selection.

The versions of practice theory discussed here, however, suggest that something in play in the concept of practice could help to frame the sociology of morality. To begin with, a focus on practices can supplement our perspective on the central dilemmas of the previous chapters. First, the concept of practice is one way of extending Goffman’s performative end-run around the character-situation standoff. This points onward to the possibility of escaping or synthesizing the structure-agent dichotomy while developing a

kind of genetic building-block of morality (Rawls 1987; 1990) by referring the Hobbesian ‘problem of order’ to the field of practices (Schatzki 2001:14). Second, the concept of practice might help unfold the issue of affect within a context of social interaction that allows us to replace philosophical and psychoanalytic claims about *internal* states with a focus on emotion or affect as generated or embodied in practical enactment.¹¹² In Bourdieu’s terms, this entails collapsing the distinction between the internal and the external by thinking in terms of *dispositions* that are at the same time *position-takings*. This can mean, with Goffman, focusing on situated face-to-face performances; it can mean following Garfinkel’s ethnomethodological approach (1967), or Sacks’ related approach to conversation analysis (1995), which both attend to the sequential and indexical aspects of specific practices (cf. Katz 2012); or it can involve, as in Hochschild’s work (1983), for instance, studying the accounts actors give of experiences in everyday practical action in order to get at ways in which the inhabitants of a late capitalist world engage in *managing* affect.

The remainder of this chapter compares the practice theories of Pierre Bourdieu and Alasdair MacIntyre. Both advance important promises regarding practice’s role as a basic building-block of morality, and offer an opportunity to revisit questions about 1) social science as a vocation; 2) the character or situation debate; and 3) methodological

112 As Seigworth and Gregg put it in their introduction to the *Affect Theory Reader*, Affect arises in the midst of *in-between-ness*: in the capacities to act and be acted upon. Affect is an impingement or extrusion of a momentary or sometimes more sustained state of relation *as well as* the passage...of forces or intensities. That is, affect is found in those intensities that pass body to body (human, nonhuman, part-body, and otherwise), in those resonances that circulate about, between, and sometimes stick to bodies and worlds, *and* in the very passages or variations between these intensities and resonances themselves. (2010:1)

affect. I conclude that the concept of practice does not settle the issue of vocation, of character, or of affect. It does not perfectly synthesize the structure-agent or situation-character dichotomies, nor decisively adjudicate the constellation of affective sociological stances. This is not surprising. Conceptual developments and transitions, Heidegger taught us, both reveal and conceal. To reiterate the idiom of *Negative Dialectics*, “objects do not go into their concepts without leaving a remainder” (Adorno 1973:5). They are also entangled in broader commodification processes—“No theory today escapes the marketplace” (4)—and the paradoxical condition of their success, as Bourdieu himself argues, is a *disavowal* of their participation in the commodity-form. The concept of practice is no exception. Once again, I suggest that we view practice theory as providing an Adornian *constellation*, not a synthesis.

C. TWO RIVAL VERSIONS OF PRACTICE: MACINTYRE & BOURDIEU

The versions of practice theory presented by Pierre Bourdieu and Alasdair MacIntyre are now approaching the status of classics. They appear to be rather different projects. Indeed, it can be argued that the differences are enough to make a comparison of these two projects misleading, at best. Bourdieu and MacIntyre may both use the *word* practice—translation issues aside—but do these two projects really intersect?¹¹³ Indeed, there is a kind of wishful ‘projection’ operating in my attempted comparison—as there is/ought to be in any ‘project.’ To inject a bit more reflexivity, the naivete of my comparative premise is part of the point, for the most naïve questions are the ones that can best

113 The MacIntyre partisan Kelvin Knight posed this question to the first version of this paper, presented at the 2009 conference of the International Society for MacIntyrean Enquiry.

address the ‘elephant in the room,’ the possibility that practice is simply a residual category used to make problems of explanation magically disappear. If MacIntyre and Bourdieu really are talking about completely different things, perhaps practice really is just a term experiencing a popularity bump due to cycles of intellectual fashion combined with certain persistent roadblocks in social science. A somewhat different justification may be found in one of MacIntyre’s own suggestions:

...what may appear at first misleadingly as two rival elucidations of the same concept, between which we have to choose, may be envisaged more usefully as two successive analyses of a concept in process of transformation, between which there is no question of a choice. Both are needed and so is their interrelationship. (1966:93)

I argued for such a position on the situation or character debate, and the same seems likely to hold, here. On my view, MacIntyre and Bourdieu provide two important attempts to forge concepts of practice that connect individual and society, agent and structure, subjectivity and institution. To think about the sociology of morality, I would argue, “Both are needed and so is their interrelationship.”

In *After Virtue* (1984), MacIntyre defined practices as institutionalized forms of complex activity that extend our powers to conceive and to realize excellence in the goods peculiar to humans. Pierre Bourdieu, by contrast, outlined a theory of practice conceived as an object of critique. Rather than focusing, as MacIntyre does, on ‘goods internal’ to practices, Bourdieu describes practices as activities carried out by means of largely unconscious skills embedded in and embodied by socially situated actors. These practices tend to reproduce social inequalities and to perpetuate symbolic violence (i.e.,

legitimations of social inequality that are accepted by the dominated). At best, practices may be embedded in fields which require an ‘interest in disinterest’ because they include a permanent test of universalizability. For Bourdieu, socio-analysis, carried out in a sociological field with such a permanent test of universalizability, may provide a form of critical reflexivity that can neutralize injustice, breaking the spell of legitimation by subjecting it to tests of transparency. Against this pessimistic view of everyday practices, MacIntyre makes *substantial* claims about ‘human flourishing’ based upon Aristotelian-Thomist views rather than Bourdieu’s agonistic presuppositions about human nature.

In short, while Bourdieu carries out a critique of practices, MacIntyre calls for a return to practices. Bourdieu theorizes practices as ubiquitous seen but unnoticed activities (peculiar to humans, with our unique dialectic of conscious-unconscious behaviour) that continuously reproduce relations of social domination. MacIntyre argues, by contrast, that modernity’s main problem is the break-up of practices into fragmented and largely incoherent forms of activity. Without being a straightforward call for a return to the past, an implicit nostalgia pervades MacIntyre’s discussion of pre-modern forms of activity that have been broken up by the processes of modernity. Bourdieu takes a more Foucaultian position, arguing that the ‘dark side’ of the Enlightenment can only be overcome by a break with modernity and with the ‘second nature’ of its assumptions about individual autonomy, moving *beyond* its naïve optimism in order to develop a reflexive project of ‘thinking differently.’ This way of stating the difference exaggerates it, of course. A kind of ‘Neo-Marxian’ synthesis might also be available.

MacIntyre and Bourdieu appear to use rather different models in outlining their respective notions of practice, as well as the forms of scholarly practice that best analyze them. Bourdieu sees the best social critic as an outsider with an axe to grind. For MacIntyre, on the other hand, thinking about the social world is best done within a tradition of thought, and by addressing challenges that emerge within that tradition. Does MacIntyre's notion of 'goods internal' to practices hold up to Bourdieu's critique? Does Bourdieu's 'disenchantment that isn't disenchanting' give satisfaction? Finally, what kind of practice is sociology? Is the vocation of social thought, if there is such a thing, or the 'life of the mind,' one of *resentment* or *care*? Will to power or conversion of the will? On these issues Bourdieu and MacIntyre seem divided.

Bourdieu and MacIntyre share the view that scholarly thought about the social world ought to be a searchingly critical activity. Bourdieu describes sociology as "a supremely difficult craft...that consists in organizing the return of the repressed and in saying out loud to everyone what no one wants to know" (2008:112). MacIntyre, on the other hand, writes that it is both a sociological and moral imperative to "Always ask about any social and cultural order what it needs its inhabitants not to know" (1999:319). They provide critiques aimed not at the surface dysfunctions of a social order that needs a few therapeutic tips, but at the very organizing principles of modern Western society, the invisible logic of reproduction of the prevailing social order, what Bourdieu sometimes calls the 'social unconscious,' and what MacIntyre diagnoses as the underlying unintelligibility of liberal individualism. Both thinkers carry out their critical projects

using deeply sociological conceptions of human life. Both mount formidable critiques of modern contemporary philosophies that conceive of persons abstractly and in isolation.

Beyond the shared critical component of their approaches, concepts of *practice* and *practical rationality* form important but distinct elements of both projects. The differences derive from the different directions taken in mounting their critiques of individualistic thought. Bourdieu began as a philosopher, but moved to sociology, where he adapted classical sociological as well as Freudian and Nietzschean influences, for a variety of quantitative, qualitative, and ethnographic empirical projects. MacIntyre gradually headed in the other direction, writing early and sympathetic works on Marx (1953) and Freud (1958) before settling into extensive philosophical analyses of pre-modern alternatives to liberal individualism (especially those of Aristotle, Augustine, and Aquinas). Bourdieu began in philosophy, with which he became *disillusioned*. MacIntyre underwent a slow *conversion* to the philosophical tradition of Aristotelian-Thomism.

MacIntyre has not carried out a program of substantive-empirical sociological research, although he has supervised (e.g., Barnsley 1972) and influenced this sort of work (e.g., Bellah, et al., 1985; 1992). Further, MacIntyre's critical engagement with sociology has been sparse since *After Virtue* (1984), where he was already moving away from modern sociology in favour of pre-modern social theory, although he still gave sociological pride of place, albeit in a passing manner, not to a pre-modern figure, but to the Scottish Enlightenment figure Adam Ferguson (MacIntyre 1984:195–196). His treatments of sociology there, of Weber and Goffman in particular, were already

somewhat strained. However, his critique of individualism constantly adverts to a fundamentally social and sociological conception of human relationships.

Bourdieu, after beginning his academic career in philosophy, switched to sociology in the mid-1950s, influenced by his experiences in Algeria, where he first went as a part of the French military. After ethnographic studies in Algeria and in his home region of Béarn, in France, he went on, for the better part of five decades, to carry out empirical social research projects—including extensive research into art, aesthetics, and the French education system—aimed at revealing how social inequality was sustained by largely tacit processes of social reproduction. Much of this research was carried out in concert with large teams of scholars. In spite of the differences in their careers, both Bourdieu and MacIntyre maintained academic projects dedicated to social critique, and in particular, to critiques of liberal capitalist modernity.

MacIntyre provides an indicator of their very different perspectives on sociology and the history of social thought with his surprising claim that, rather than being the period of sociological thought's emergence, the unstable socio-political conditions of European early-modernity *removed* sociological thought from its activity, and precisely as a consequence of socio-political conditions (1988:208–211). He posits that the early modern 'possessive individualism' (Macpherson 1962) of Hobbes, Locke, and others, following standard Cartesian moves, *extracted* the social person from earlier Scholastic conceptions of the person as embedded in social networks and roles.

Bourdieu also makes use of Scholastic categories (or at least of Latin terminology

such as *habitus*, *illusio*, and *skholè*), but with critical genealogical intent rather than pre-modern nostalgia.¹¹⁴ He mounts a sweeping critique of philosophical thinking, grounded in the conviction that modern sociology offers insights that are fundamentally absent from classical forms of social thought. Modern sociology recognizes, in particular, the economic and material character of social interaction and, along with this, the labour theory of value.¹¹⁵ Bourdieu bases his critique of philosophical practice on the claim that philosophy (both ancient and modern) systematically erases the material and economic basis of its possibility, presenting itself as a spiritual and free form of activity whose insights into social life are produced by activities of ‘thought thinking itself’ that transcend and render irrelevant the material conditions of their production. Classical social and political thought conceived of persons as embedded in social relations and roles, but failed to recognize its own practical conditions of possibility and tended to rationalize and justify rather than historicize and criticize the socialization processes that generate the differentiated *habitus*¹¹⁶ of a social order of hierarchy and domination.

114 For example, Bourdieu’s use of *Illusio* differs from Heidegger’s doctrine of truth as *aletheia*, or disclosure. For example, the Heideggerian Hubert Dreyfus offers the cultivation of coffee-drinking practice as a way out of contemporary nihilism and into the ‘shining’ or ‘flourishing’ generated by the disclosure of *care* (Dreyfus and Kelly 2011:216–219). Bourdieu would surely view the cultivation of coffee-drinking as an exercise in ‘distinction’ deserving of critical genealogical reflexivity.

115 In Bourdieu’s judgment, as in Marx’s, Aristotle’s failure to understand the condition of possibility for his own ‘freedom’ (i.e., slavery) make his notions of political friendship, *phronesis*, the virtues, and human flourishing, unusable without a radical overhaul. Jeffrey Alexander called Bourdieu “the most impressive living embodiment of a neo-Marxist tradition” (1995:128). Bourdieu’s view of human nature seems a bit more Nietzschean, however. He also emphasizes the ongoing importance of pre-capitalist economic forms (especially in the field of cultural production) that resist ‘bourgeois revolution.’ In addition, Bourdieu’s notion of *capital* sometimes seems less grounded in the labour theory of value than in a Nietzschean *agonistics* of value (Bourdieu 1984:252): not *labour*, but *conflict*. For these reasons, if Bourdieu is a Marxist, he is a revisionist one with a pessimistic focus on reform, not social revolution.

116 Bourgois and Schonberg’s (2007) study of racialized differences of *habitus* (“intimate apartheid”) amongst homeless heroin users traced fractional distinctions to the most marginalized sectors of society.

How do these apparently opposed readings of ‘scholasticism’ connect to their very different conceptions of practice and practical reason? Is MacIntyre guilty of what Bourdieu calls the ‘scholastic fallacy’ by failing to be critically reflexive about his own conditions of possibility and by imputing to himself a freedom of thought which actually depends upon a variety of socially positioned privileges? Does MacIntyre’s own thought constitute engagement in a practice in his sense of the word or in Bourdieu’s? Can modern philosophy (or social science) be a ‘practice’ (in MacIntyre’s sense)?

These questions are rooted in a series of apparent alternatives. First of all, does a negative or critical project need a substantive positive element—something like what MacIntyre means by virtues, by *phronesis*? Would generating this positive element involve a process of internal conversion, or character development, a *turning* of the will? On this question, Bourdieu often appears to be in agreement with Machiavelli, for whom the good life is possible, at least at the level of the social, by the creation of shared and public liberties through regulated conflict between opposed classes, but for whom we ‘remain evil.’ MacIntyre, on the other hand, sees the salvation of the social as involving the conversion of wills and the development of character through the discovery and cultivation of practices which are not merely ‘fields of disinterest,’ as Bourdieu recommends, but practices that contain ‘goods internal’ to them, rewards that are, at the level of the social, non zero-sum, non-exploitative, and aimed at human flourishing. One way of framing this difference is to see it as a judgement about whether the best social critique is driven by the cultivation of *resentment* or of *caritas*.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁷ Bourdieu described his method as both a ‘double break,’ and as a “conversion of the gaze” (2008b:2).

D. BOURDIEU'S THEORY OF PRACTICE

This alternative between *resentment* and *caritas* returns us to the previous chapter's affective thematic and to the affective thematic underpinning justifications *and* critiques of institutionalized social science practices and conditions of possibility (e.g., their private or public sources of funding). But before turning to that binary, let's take a walk through some background material concerning both Bourdieu and MacIntyre.

In 1972, after more than a decade of empirical research in Algeria and France (1961; 2008b; Bourdieu and Passeron 1985 [1966]), Bourdieu published a major theoretical statement. It was translated into English (in 1977) as *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. In *Outline*, Bourdieu attempted to position the 'theory of practice' between 'objectivism' (i.e., the structuralism of Claude Levi-Strauss) and 'subjectivism' (i.e., the Husserl-influenced phenomenology of Schutz and Garfinkel). Objectivism overestimates the extent to which an over-arching structure of social institutions and meanings determines human social action, reducing it to conscious rule-following. Subjectivism overestimates voluntarism by taking the actor's point of view too seriously, limiting its own social scientific efforts to 'constructs of the constructs' (Schutz) or 'accounts of the accounts' (Garfinkel)¹¹⁸ (Bourdieu 1977:21). For Bourdieu, phenomenology and

118 John Levi Martin criticizes Garfinkel's 'account of the account' from a different angle: Garfinkel chose to write in gobbledy-gook, and although I do not begrudge him the enjoyment he so obviously received from this activity, I also see no reason to wade through the results to extract arguments that were made previously and more clearly by others. Finally, rather than indicate to his sociological readers that there was a wide range of inspiring and dissenting traditions from which they could draw (the approach of the current work), Garfinkel instead attempted to put his own formalizations in between his students and the phenomenological tradition, acting more like a cult leader than a scholar. Even did I not find this somewhat disappointing on a human level, it would make little scientific sense to reward such behavior. (Martin 2011:xi, n.3)

ethnomethodology retreated from objectivism when they needed to advance beyond it.

He accepted objectivism's 'first break,' from the naïve self-understanding of social actors, then called for a 'second break':

The critical break with objectivist abstraction ensuing from inquiry into the conditions of possibility, and thereby, into the limits of the objective and objectifying standpoint which grasps practices from the outside, as a *fait accompli*, instead of constructing their generative principle by situating itself within the very movement of their accomplishment. (3)

Having once gotten a good outside view of social life, we need next to reflect on the conditions that made this detached perspective possible. We need a meaningful model of the individual actor, but also a sense of the way social relationships of domination are legitimated, or 'enchanted,' by the 'social alchemy' of practice and its logic.

Bourdieu hoped, by means of a theory of practice, to build a dialectical bridge between objective structures and structured dispositions. Remarkably, Bourdieu offers no clear and explicit definition of a practice. Instead, he defines by means of examples, the first and most important of which is gift-giving. Gift-giving, says the 'objectivist' Lévi-Strauss, is really exchange. All gifts are eventually returned, so while everyday actors hold to the official version that gifts are not exchanges, the objectivist model of gift-giving emphasizes reversibility and reciprocity. The problem for the 'objectivist' account, says Bourdieu, is that the official definition of gift-giving denies this element of reciprocity, so that "even if reversibility is the objective truth of the discrete acts which ordinary experience knows in discrete form and calls gift exchanges, it is not the whole

Mills famously wrote similar things about Garfinkel's sometime supervisor, Parsons (Mills 1959). Such polemical comments may also be seen as strategic moves in the search for distinction.

truth of a practice which could not exist if it were consciously perceived in accordance with the model” (5). The structuralist account of ‘objective reality’ misses the crucial function played by the practical denial of ‘objective reality.’

Above all, an objectivist account of gift-giving lacks a sense of its temporal structure, the need for the counter gift to be “*deferred and different*” (5). Only a gift returned at the right moment will bless the social relationship with an enchanted aura. The temporal character of practices like gift-giving renders the social world less transparent and less predictable than a structural model makes it appear. The temporal character of social life makes *tempo*, or *timing*, essential for the success of the act since it relies so heavily on the collective *misrecognition* of the closing of the circle of exchange. The requirements of *tempo* make practices into forms of strategic virtuosity rather than matters of meticulous rule-following. Rules will never be able to indicate the precise moment to act. Actors successfully navigate social fields by means of practical reason, a ‘feel for the game’ being played, not by conscious rule-following.

We acquire the knowledge of when to act, the skill to engage in social life’s intricately patterned everyday activities, through socialization into particular fields of action, but not as an explicit curriculum (cf. Giroux and Penna 1979); practical reason is inculcated as tacit ‘know-how.’ Its subtleties often cannot be explained by its practitioners,¹¹⁹ and its reasons are usually and, of necessity, mostly unconscious, or at

119 David Sudnow’s (2001) ethnomethodological study of learning to play jazz piano renders an explicit account of this subtle form of conscious/unconscious knowledge. Bourdieu would argue that this ‘account of the account’ accepts the practitioner’s position too uncritically. An adequate socioanalysis of jazz piano playing would need to account for far more than just the ‘ways of the hand,’ including other levels of social positioning and position-taking, class fractions, ‘race relations,’ semi-autonomy of fields, and so forth.

least unreflected upon and undiscussed, except from within the game, where they are discussed earnestly, without a trace of skepticism (i.e., about its tacit presuppositions), like hockey fans learnedly disputing the ‘cleanness’ of a particular body-check and thereby demonstrating their legitimacy as true fans (fandom being its own game, one played in a field directly adjacent to the ‘real’ game). Above all, one needs to distinguish commentaries about particular practices as practices of their own, typically developing with relative autonomy from the field upon which they commentate, although undoubtedly under the influence of a variety of other social determinations.

Social practices, and the reasonings which accompany them, ritually affirm the social order and transform its arbitrary aspects into apparently legitimate relations. In order to affirm the social order, however, certain objective facts must be collectively *misrecognized*. Practical reason, or, the logic of practice, enables the ‘smooth functioning’ of society by means of this collective misrecognition. It is, says Bourdieu, “a logic that is intelligible, coherent, but only up to a certain point (beyond which it would no longer be ‘practical’)” (1998a:132). On this premise, for instance, we could hypothesize that the sociological significance of being (or not) a competent hockey fan in Canadian society remains collectively unrecognized, in spite of widespread public and private discussion of how hockey ought to be played, how it relates to Canada’s ‘identity,’ whether professionals are paid too much, and so on. Bourdieu might ask whether a well-timed display of hockey knowledge (or ignorance), enthusiasm (or distaste) can significantly alter one’s economic or symbolic capital (by, for instance,

leading to a successful job interview or to a prestigious promotion).¹²⁰ On this view, insofar as we *naturalize* rather than critically reflect¹²¹ upon the idea that there is something intrinsically Canadian about knowing how to play, understand, and enjoy hockey, we will tend to collectively misrecognize ways that the practices and practical reason associated with Canadian hockey serve to legitimate existing social, racial, sexual, and gender inequalities and ongoing forms of symbolic (and physical) violence, domination, and exclusion (cf. Cormack and Cosgrave 2013; Keohane 1997; Razack 2008; Thobani 2007).¹²²

Two basic claims about social life underly Bourdieu's theory of practice. First, even disinterested actions turn out to be a species of interested actions (i.e., with an 'interest in disinterest'). Second, beneath the everyday rituals that affirm the justice and necessity of the existing social order, material relations of inequality and domination form society's basic structure. Practice and the logic of practice embody largely unconscious activities of strategic calculation—a game one plays to win—but also of self-limitation (and symbolic violence). Our everyday activities incorporate aggressive strategies impelled by irrepressible desires and divert or deform those same impulses into

120 Lamont's (1992; 2000) comparative studies of French and American values carefully distance her position from Bourdieu's. A Bourdieusian might intuit that Lamont, a Canadian, has never published a book-length study of Canada for reasons related to cultivating distinction. Lamont articulated her own analysis of academic distinction in an article on Derrida (1987), and later in *How Professors Think* (2009).

121 For Agamben (2007), 'profaning' a practice undermines its potential to be a secular 'civil religion.'

122 Equations of hockey with Canadian-ness are ubiquitous but not uncontested. Popular but controversial television commentator Don Cherry constantly tries to build associations between hockey, traditional masculinities, Canadian military activities, and white racial nationalism. Elsewhere, critiques of physical and sexual violence associated with hockey circulate in the form of increased media attention to hazing rituals and concussions, and to the infamous case of sexual predation by hockey coach Graham James. These critiques imply that institutionalized forms of hockey also have the systemic problems we associate with institutionalized forms of education and religion (and their notorious nexus in 'residential schools').

the means of producing a willing subordination to the social order. They are the means by which we ‘willingly’ reproduce and submit to symbolic violence and domination; but to understand them we need a more sophisticated concept of the will:

To understand this particular form of domination one has to move beyond the false choice between constraint through *forces* and consent to *reasons*, between mechanical coercion and voluntary, free, deliberate submission. The effect of symbolic domination...is exerted not in the pure logic of knowing consciousnesses but in the obscurity of the dispositions of habitus. (Bourdieu 2000:170)

There is clearly a tension involved in this depiction of practices. It stems, I think, from Bourdieu’s complex and not entirely coherent concept of the unconscious (and the will) (cf. Alexander 1995). Mixing elements of Freud’s unconscious, Marxian ‘false consciousness,’ Nietzsche’s will to power, and Durkheim’s *conscience collective*, Bourdieu’s notion of the unconscious (which he regularly invokes by pairing it ambiguously in the form ‘conscious or unconscious,’ as if it doesn’t matter which) seems both an over- and an under-socialized concept. On the one hand, we are subject to an unconscious competitive drive. Under cover of giving gifts, for instance, we passively-aggressively pursue strategic economic interests. On the other hand, we all participate, through ‘the obscurity of the dispositions of habitus,’ in maintaining a social unconscious which harbours all of our arbitrarily imposed social inequalities; through our practices we ‘enchant’ unequal social relationships and justify ‘real’ domination by adding a layer of symbolic legitimation. In this way, practices simultaneously express and repress our desires; they embody both *id* and *super-ego*, with *ego* constituting the subject’s achieved critical reflexivity (i.e., real consciousness). On this reading of Bourdieu, according to

which Bourdieu's notion of reflexivity turns out to be a re-articulation of Freud's dictum that 'where id was, there ego shall be,' ego emerges through *socioanalysis*.

What does this mean for the practice of sociology? According to Bourdieu, only a truly sociological practice, made reflexive on account of being armed with the theory of practice, can raise the dynamics of both 'will to power' and 'voluntary servitude' into an analyzable realm. Structuralist or objectivist perspectives can show relations of power and domination, but they cannot show these relations in action. Structuralism has no actor, and so cannot demonstrate how domination works *in practice*, how it reproduces itself through the mostly unconscious logic of practices enacted by individual actors.¹²³ Subjectivism (for Bourdieu this means phenomenology and/or ethnomethodology), on the other hand, gives us an actor, or at least a sense of the actor's experience, or process of experience, especially those gaps between the (structuralist) rules and 'what actually goes on,' but fails to make relations of power and domination visible. Both structuralism and phenomenology fail to perform the task of sociology, which is, for Bourdieu, the activity of making the social unconscious—what society needs not to hear—audible. This includes a suspicious reflexivity about one's own practice as a sociologist and a constant inquiry into 1) the conditions of possibility for one's activity and 2) the social relationships produced (and reproduced) through this activity. This task requires a sociology of sociology. Most obvious, on this point, would be the ways in which, throughout the 20th century, sociologists gradually became reflexive about the

123 Althusser's notion of 'ideology' is influential but inadequate and inferior, in Bourdieu's view, to the notion of *habitus*, about which one may become reflexive. Althusser's ideology is a totality in which one swims, immersed, never breaking the surface upon which reflection would be possible (cf. Rancière 1974).

reproduction of various asymmetrical ‘relations of ruling’ (Smith 1990) within sociology itself. To build and sustain such a critical reflexivity, sociology needs to establish itself as a field where actors have an ‘interest in disinterest.’ Since our human drives cannot be fundamentally altered, *habitus* can only be reflexively reconstructed at the level of the social, in response to a sort of *super-ego* demand. Before getting entangled in the psychoanalytic frame, however, let us turn to MacIntyre’s rather different approach.

E. MACINTYRE ON PRACTICES (AS APPRENTICESHIPS)

For Bourdieu, practices are all those everyday lines of action that serve to create and to reproduce a social order. Only those kinds of sociological practice which have institutionalized, at the level of the field, a permanent test of universalizability and a critically reflexive ‘interest in disinterest,’ can provide an adequate critical analysis of existing social inequalities and the processes which maintain these inequalities. All practices that lack the resources of sociological critical reflexivity tend to contribute to uncritically reproducing and reinforcing existing ‘relations of ruling,’ regardless of the positional movements of individual actors within and between social fields of practical competitive struggle. MacIntyre, by contrast, normatively valorizes ‘practices’ as such; every ‘practice’ is a good one since every practice that really is a practice already contains substantive ‘goods internal.’ For MacIntyre, practices aim at ‘goods of excellence,’ and not merely at ‘goods of efficiency,’ or success. Every practice offers its ‘goods internal’ to whomever learns to embed their activity in the practice, learning to recognize it (implicitly through a process of conversion) as an end in itself. By extension,

every authentic practice provides critical insight into the social world and extends human powers to achieve excellence at the societal level. In other words, practices constitute the genetic building blocks of the ‘good society.’ Here is *After Virtue*’s extended definition:

By a ‘practice’ I am going to mean any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended. Tic-tac-toe is not an example of a practice in this sense, nor is throwing a football with skill; but the game of football is, and so is chess. Bricklaying is not a practice; architecture is. Planting turnips is not a practice; farming is. So are the enquiries of physics, chemistry and biology, and so is the work of a historian, and so are painting and music. (MacIntyre 1984:187)

MacIntyre’s distinction between ‘goods of excellence’ and ‘goods of efficiency’ bears an important resemblance to Weber’s distinction between value rationality and instrumental rationality, but while Weber’s concept of value rationality positions ‘value’ as a kind of arbitrary and decisionistic starting-point to which one applies rationality—understood as a distinct activity governed by logic—in order to organize activity ‘according to principles,’ MacIntyre’s notion of ‘goods internal’ to practices suggests that only involvement in a practice teaches one to recognize the kind of value, the peculiar good, that the practice offers. MacIntyre is not interested in abstract values, but in forms of ‘excellence’ embedded in particular practices.

MacIntyre must still explain the initial involvement in a practice by a ‘faith seeking understanding’ model, but his argument suggests a Thomistic rather than a Kierkegaardian adaptation; in other words, he seeks to deepen the possibilities of

practical rationality rather than to establish its limits. One does not enter into a practice irrationally, as an existentialist or decisionist ‘leap of faith.’ Instead, one commits to a kind of apprenticeship. MacIntyre suggests that “A practice involves standards of excellence and obedience to rules as well as the achievement of goods. To enter into a practice is to accept the authority of those standards and the inadequacy of my own performance as judged by them” (1984:190). Instead of Nietzschean defiance of tradition, MacIntyre argues that binding oneself to a tradition is the only way to learn to recognize and to experience the rewards that it offers.

F. ‘GOODS INTERNAL’ OR THE TEMPO OF DISSIMULATED EXCHANGE

We need to explore a little more, if we can, the difference between this approach and Bourdieu’s more deeply Weberian position. In Bourdieu’s *Outline*, the first and most important example of a practice was gift-giving. With this example Bourdieu wanted to demonstrate the failure of either objectivism or subjectivism to deal adequately with the real social dynamics in place. While objectivist perspectives recognized the socially invisible exchange, and the underlying power relations that phenomenological treatments tended to overlook, they were incapable of reconstructing the view-from-the-inside that makes possible the maintenance of the collective fiction of the gift. A structuralist rule-based approach is too rigid to account for the everyday demands of *tempo*.

The notion of *temporality*—which we take so seriously since Husserl and Heidegger, but which has been important in Western thought at least since Augustine—plays a different role in MacIntyre’s conception of practice. More than timing comes into

play when MacIntyre emphasizes the need to understand a practice ‘from the inside.’ All practices contain rewards specific to meeting the demands of excellence, and these are never reducible to the momentary rewards of success in this or that particular instance. Seeing the rewards of a practice in terms of the short-term external goods that may be achieved means losing a sense of the kinds of goods that are peculiar to a particular kind of practice, whether it is farming, chemistry, football, or playing a musical instrument. Commitment to a particular practice requires more than good *timing*. It also requires long-term commitment to the practice itself and as such, and to the development of the substantial qualities or virtues essential to that practice. These substantive qualities, or virtues, are rooted in the accountability to others that one commits to in committing oneself to a field of activity and to the unity of a kind of life-project. This accountability, this commitment to integrity, stretches across time, not merely the Husserlian ‘protension’ which allows one to make the next move successfully and to secure a temporary victory. If a practice distinguishes itself from other forms of activity, it is because it has managed to at least partially institutionalize forms of mutual accountability that establish a distinction between internal and external goods, a distinction that exists so long as the practice is maintained in good working order.¹²⁴ In the case of gift-giving, MacIntyre would suggest, I think, that practicing the art of gift-giving leads to an inner-transformation or conversion to ‘goods of excellence,’ such as the experience of

124 The exemplars of particular practices are not merely the winners, record-holders, and ‘geniuses,’ but those who embody the ‘spirit’ of their field. Thus Bobby Fischer, Barry Bonds, Pete Rose, and Lance Armstrong have problematic status as heroes of their sports not so much for rule-breaking as for in some way contradicting the ‘spirit’ or the ‘goods internal’ to the game.

generosity (Rancière 2012), that are irreducible to economic transactions.

Bourdieu recognizes the profit in increased solidarity that society can reap from the collectively sustained fiction of gift-giving, but he does not seem to think of these ‘goods of excellence’ as involving a self-transformation so much as he sees them as involving further investment in activities meant to garner symbolic capital. This ‘inner conversion’ would involve a commitment to the *illusio* of a particular practice. Against this Bourdieu poses the sociological ‘double break.’ Sociologically, the conversion moment, if there is one, for Bourdieu, may happen when one *loses faith* in a practice, as he lost faith in philosophy and in the existentialist idea of a ‘total intellectual’ embodied by Jean-Paul Sartre. His ‘conversion’ to sociology from philosophy led, eventually, to a personal reconciliation with his humble provincial origins, origins that he had worked hard to efface in order to succeed in the urbane and snobbish world of the French intellectual elite. Bourdieu’s sociological conversion renders visible hitherto invisible forms of symbolic violence, violence that structures, without being acknowledged, the world of social positions and position-takings. It occurred, Bourdieu writes, during his first post-Algerian research project, *The Bachelor’s Ball* (2008a; 2008b), and entailed the reflective rejection of his socially internalized acceptance of the ‘idiocy of the country.’

Before we simply endorse Bourdieu’s choice of sociology’s ‘double break’ over philosophy’s scholastic *illusio*, however, let us follow MacIntyre’s analysis a little further. In broader temporal terms, for MacIntyre, deepening one’s engagement in a practice implies cultivating one’s relationship to the tradition which formed and sustained it. As

one can see from MacIntyre's critical treatment of the Western philosophical tradition (e.g., 1953; 1958; 1966; 1984; 1988; 1990), this does not mean a necessary subordination to tradition or to history, nor a whiggish reading of history; rather, MacIntyre approaches philosophy's history by attempting to recognize and analyze a variety of elements, including paths taken and not taken, problems solved and unsolved, and, above all, *rival traditions*. The idea that a field may be a field of struggle between rival traditions is close to Bourdieu indeed. Nevertheless, MacIntyre's resistance to the idea that one must simply choose sociology over philosophy needs to be examined.

In his discussion of practice MacIntyre holds on to a substantive concept of virtue as "an acquired human quality the possession and exercise of which tends to enable us to achieve those goods which are internal to practices and the lack of which effectively prevents us from achieving any such 'goods'" (1984:191). Bourdieu's relational or non-substantive approach to social goods ties them to fields of practice, and to an economic or utilitarian interpretation: *investment* in a practice tends to reinforce itself, to increase commitment. Bourdieu endorses the successful institution of a sociological field in which participants have a vested 'interest in disinterest' through an inculcated disposition to have an interest in the universal, but implies that belief in the universal, though 'valuable,' is still a kind of illusion (2000:164–167). The dispositions individuals possess as a result of the fields and practices in which they are involved, are, in a certain sense, neither good nor bad. For Bourdieu, as for Machiavelli, we 'remain evil.'

When Bourdieu moves toward MacIntyre, as in some ways he does, in his later

works, he more explicitly articulates the necessity of constituting fields that demand and sustain critical reflexive practices. But Bourdieu does not approach the question of practices through the idea of virtues as ‘goods internal’ to practices. Rather, the goal is the institutionalization of fields in which practices are “permanently subjected to a test of universalizability” in order that actors are forced into “real universalization strategies” (1998a:144). The virtues he acknowledges—i.e., of “equality, fraternity, and especially disinterestedness and sincerity” (145)—unveil reality and uncover contradictions and hypocrisies. Bourdieu turns again to Machiavelli: “It would be a question of establishing social universes where, as in the Machiavellian ideal republic, agents had an interest in virtue, disinterestedness, and devotion to public service and the common good” (144).

Bourdieu’s universal is both Machiavellian and Kantian.¹²⁵ Acting in the service of the universal is not a consequence of the determination of the will by the solitary activity and development of practical reason in Kant’s sense, however; the universal is made desirable by the state of the field, a social state which makes the pursuit of the universal ‘sociologically realistic.’¹²⁶ MacIntyre, on the other hand, prefers to speak of the *excellences* that are peculiar to specific kinds of practice, and which are not the same as *ends* (1984:274). MacIntyre constructs his concept of practices precisely to combat “the notion of summing goods” (198–199) employed by utilitarian attempts to calculate the social good. Kant’s universal (although this was not his intention) makes such utilitarian

125 It is also indebted to Durkheim’s sociologizing of Kantian epistemology (1995). As Lizardo points out, Durkheim’s *EFRL* and Bourdieu’s *Distinction* (1984) are “sociologizations of Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* and *Critique of Judgment*...respectively” (Lizardo 2007:322).

126 Does this sociologistic reframing of Kant put the categorical imperative back into the realm of prudence (instead of duty)? Durkheim managed to avoid this. Did Bourdieu?

calculations possible. This is why MacIntyre emphasizes the *substantive particularity of practices*, of the virtues, and of the goods of excellence peculiar to them.

MacIntyre resists speaking of practices in terms of “summing goods,” part of his crusade against utilitarianism, on the basis of his distinction between internal goods and external goods. External goods remain a kind of personal possession “such that the more someone has of them, the less there is for other people” (190). Internal goods may be the outcome of a competition (e.g., in sport), but become a kind of commonwealth: “their achievement is a good for the whole community who participate in the practice” (190–191). Bourdieu calls this the “illusion of cultural communism” (1984:227). The contrast is stark. In the realm of art appreciation, for instance, Bourdieu writes,

Those who possess the means of symbolically appropriating cultural goods...like to see symbolic appropriation—the only legitimate sort, in their view—as a kind of mystical participation in a common good of which each person has a share and which every person has entirely, as a paradoxical appropriation, excluding privilege and monopoly, unlike material appropriation, which asserts real exclusivity and therefore exclusion. (227–228)

Bourdieu allows that a cultural field and its peculiar practices may have relative autonomy from other fields, including the economic. But this autonomy amounts to no more than the kind of relative autonomy possessed by various national currencies. All the goods internal to practices are forms of capital and are best understood in these terms. Relative autonomy is merely the gap in which forms of cultural capital may be leveraged within a broader market, a broader struggle for legitimacy, social recognition and power. Insofar as there may exist a form of ‘cultural communism’ within, for instance, an elite

set of art connoisseurs, it exists within a broader context of inequality. Furthermore,

Because the appropriation of cultural products presupposes dispositions and competences which are not distributed universally (though they have the appearance of innateness), these products are subject to exclusive appropriation, material or symbolic, and, functioning as cultural capital (objectified or internalized), they yield a profit in distinction, proportionate to the rarity of the means required to appropriate them, and a profit in legitimacy, the profit par excellence, which consists in the fact of feeling justified in being (what one is), being what it is right to be. (Bourdieu 1984:228)

This twofold profit of *distinction* and *legitimacy* also applies to social science, and Bourdieu points out Durkheim's claim that science works progressively towards a world of cultural communism (577n.4). Once more, until an 'interest in disinterest' reigns in the scientific field, we should expect that all struggles for distinction and for legitimacy within the field will be 'cashed out' by individuals and groups in the form of (disavowed) exclusions and dominations. Note the ambivalence of artists and intellectuals towards popularization: "their relationship to everything concerned with the 'democratization of culture' is marked by a deep ambivalence which may be manifested in a dual discourse on the relations between the institutions of cultural diffusion and the public" (229). How far the value of a work (in producing or consuming) depends upon it falling outside the tastes of the masses (i.e., upon relative distinction) rather than being a true end in itself, in MacIntyre's sense, may be measured in a certain sense by the danger posed by popularity.

A North American example of this ambivalence is not that difficult to find. When the American author Jonathan Franzen was invited to appear on Oprah Winfrey's talk show and to have his novel *The Corrections* (2001) receive the 'Oprah's Book Club'

stamp, his statements in other media venues gave the impression that he thought the Oprah stamp would mean the book would not be read by men. Offended by reports of these statements, Oprah rescinded her offer. The ensuing public debate around these events not unpredictably led to even higher sales of the book. Franzen and Winfrey have since become friends, Franzen presumably having found a way of reconciling his literary pretensions with Oprah Winfrey's daytime television populism, and in 2010 his novel *Freedom* also received the Winfrey stamp.

A related Canadian example is found in the short media tempest around a small Nova Scotia boutique publisher that took its time before making a distribution deal with a larger press in order to handle the volume of sales expected for the 2010 Giller Prize winner, Johanna Skibsrud's *The Sentimentalists* (2009). One possible interpretation would be that either the author or the boutique publisher, or both, had been so caught up in the practice as an end in itself that they had become, as a result, naïve about worldly affairs. On this reading, Franzen in the first case, and Gaspereau Press, in the second, made mis-steps which they then managed to correct in order to achieve both increased popularity *and* the preservation of the 'integrity' of their practice. For Bourdieu, they are caught within the paradoxical structure of the cultural fields of production and consumption. These fields are characterized by a "constant collective repression" (1980:261), which is "neither a real negation of the 'economic' interest which always haunts the most 'disinterested' practices, nor a simple 'dissimulation' of the mercenary aspects of the practice" (262) but a kind of 'disavowal' (*dénégation*). Full mastery of the

practice this paradoxical structure demands involves “an entirely improbable, and in any case rarely achieved, combination of the realism required for minor concessions to ‘economic’ necessities that are disavowed but not denied and of the conviction which excludes them” (262).

Bourdieu generally stops short of making philosophical claims about human nature. Practically speaking, this adds a certain paradoxical quality to his pursuit of sociology as a social science, since it means he must take up the Durkheimian ‘disavowal’ of psychology. As much as he writes in the language of psychoanalysis, and in terms which constantly advert to a notion of human nature, he should be read, I think, as subscribing to an agnostic position on human nature similar to Foucault’s, whom he rarely if ever criticized. Still, if we look back to a passage quoted early on in this chapter, we find Bourdieu making several related claims about universal dispositions and potentials: 1) “everything leads us to think that certain fundamental dispositions toward the world, certain fundamental modes of construction of reality (aesthetic, scientific, etc.), of *worldmaking*, constitute universal anthropological possibilities”; 2) “these potentialities are actualized only in definite conditions...distance from necessity and urgency”; 3) “This simple observation leads us to an ethical or political program that is itself very simple: we can escape the alternative of populism and conservatism...only by *working to universalize the conditions of access to universality*” (all from 1998a:137). Although he does not spell this out, my own reading of this ethical program, as I have been arguing all along, is that it depends upon a minimal notion of *answerability*.

In the end, I contend that a minimal notion of answerability brings Bourdieu and MacIntyre together, even though on the question of human nature they seem opposed. MacIntyre's substantive position on human 'flourishing' contrasts with Bourdieu's emphasis on human drives.¹²⁷ Still, Bourdieu's language of universal potential sneaks in the back door of neo-Aristotelianism, all the same.

G. MACINTYRE & BOURDIEU ON 'SOCIOLOGICAL POSSIBILITY'

Perhaps I have been exaggerating the difference between MacIntyre and Bourdieu. They are at times remarkably close, and I think there remains a real puzzle about their relationship. To demonstrate the difficulty in determining the difference between them, it may be useful to compare their respective views on what is 'sociologically possible.'

Bourdieu's essay 'Is a Disinterested Act Possible?' (1998a) argues that disinterested action is possible when a society is well-constituted. The diagnosis of hypocrisy, such as outlined in the maxims of La Rochefoucauld, only occurs in a society whose constitution around certain principles is beginning to unravel. Thus Bourdieu suggests that when La Rochefoucauld, "being the product of a society of honor...begins to say that aristocratic attitudes are in fact the supreme forms of calculation, calculations of the second degree" (87), this is evidence of a society in crisis, for "In a well-constituted society of honor, La Rochefoucauld's analyses are incorrect; they apply to societies of honor which are already in crisis" (87). MacIntyre says something almost identical about

127 Here the gap between Bourdieu and Marx is at its greatest, and Alexander's claim that Bourdieu was the greatest late 20th century 'neo-Marxist' appears inapt. Alexander's insensitivity to differences between Marx and Bourdieu stems partly from his tendency to portray issues in binary terms. Bourdieu is a Marxist, for Alexander, because he practices a 'materialist' 'sociology of culture' rather than a 'cultural sociology.'

societies of honour. For both, there is a question of the ‘sociological possibility’ of a certain convergence between individual and social character. Bourdieu writes, for example, that “If disinterestedness is sociologically possible, it can be so only through the encounter between habitus predisposed to disinterestedness and the universes in which disinterestedness is rewarded” (Bourdieu 1998a:88). For both, ‘sociological possibility’ means that something is possible for the average person, even that they are predisposed toward that something because of the state of the field. For both MacIntyre and Bourdieu, the society of honour is a thing of the past, historically and sociologically speaking.

Key differences remain, however, in the distinction that MacIntyre makes between ‘goods of excellence’ and ‘goods of effectiveness,’ and in the gap that he claims exists between *institutions* and *practices*. Bourdieu thinks of this gap as a dialectic, just as he uses a relational rather than a substantive conception of virtue. Virtues, for Bourdieu, are relationally defined within a field. In this sense they are ‘internal’ goods. On the other hand, Bourdieu substitutes the “interest in the universal” and the “profit of the universal” (1998a:89) for metaphysical debates about the possibility of virtue. While they agree on a possible convergence between the official version of roles and rules and the internal dispositions of social actors,¹²⁸ MacIntyre wants to preserve the difference between a society which has succeeded in producing conformity to its official values and a society which has provided the institutional support for the development of virtues, the deepening of practices, and for human flourishing.

128 Thus Bourdieu: “When official representations of what man officially is...become habitus, they become the real principle of practices” (1998a:87).

Bourdieu's refusal to establish a substantive notion of virtues leads him to the concept of disinterested action, to the rather existential declaration that "sociology...must choose now more than ever between putting its rational instruments of knowledge at the service of an increasingly rational domination, or rationally analyzing domination and especially the contribution that rational knowledge can make to domination" (1998a:91). Thus he abruptly reintroduces, at the level of the collective actor (i.e., sociology), the kind of existential choice he earlier ruled out of court when he claimed that "Durable virtues cannot be established on a pure decision of conscience, that is, in the Sartrean sense, on something like an oath" (88). Loïc Wacquant, Bourdieu's sometime collaborator, suggested that just such a move from the individual to the collective actor was the decisive factor inclining Bourdieu to accept the 1993 Gold Medal from France's National Centre for Scientific Research, for "Bourdieu would be *the first sociologist to receive that distinction* so that, to overcome his intimate reticence, he could make the medal over from a personal accolade to a collective tribute" (2013:20). This is a good moment to turn to a discussion of intellectual and scholarly practice.

According to Bourdieu, "there are many intellectuals who call the world into question, but there are very few intellectuals who call the intellectual world into question" (2008a:23). He calls this failure to recognize that the intellectual world has its own unique conditions of possibility the 'scholastic fallacy.' In his critique of the objectivist's knowledge of practices, he points to a "fundamental and pernicious alteration which, being a constituent condition of the cognitive operation, is bound to pass unnoticed: in taking up a point of view on the action, withdrawing from it in order to

observe it...he constitutes practical activity as an *object of observation and analysis*” (1977:2). The ‘impartial spectator’ represents practices without inhabiting them, without recognizing the contingent and strategic decision-making operating under the constraint of a thousand different relational forces within the field. The objectivist sees only rules and structures, *being without temporality*. Only the second break reveals the logic of practice, the significance of the observer’s position, and the dialectical relationship between structures and structuring dispositions.

The ‘scholastic’ point of view takes thought’s structure to be a form of pure rationality, rather than, like activity in every other social field, a form of practical reason 1) made possible by the possession of various levels of cultural, social and economic capital and 2) devoted to acquiring the particular forms of *symbolic* capital available in that field. Kant and Descartes stand as two of the most important modern examples of the ‘scholastic fallacy.’ Descartes’ *cogito ergo sum*, and Kant’s *a priori* categories stand as prototypes of the peculiarly modern attempt—a highly instructive failure—to constitute reflexive reason by explicitly attempting to deny the relevance of material conditions. According to Bourdieu, “Scholars who do not know what defines them as scholars from the ‘scholastic point of view’ risk putting into the minds of agents *their* scholastic view or imputing to their object that which belongs to the manner of approaching it, to the mode of knowledge” (130). Scholasticism mistakes ideas for causes, whether in the form of Platonic Ideas or in the form of superimposed structures and rules. Unreflexivity about the conditions of possibility and the underlying strategic purposes of our own intellectual

activity, turns ‘practice into method,’ treating past practices as consciously chosen when, in fact, they were largely unconscious strategies adopted in the context of a particular habitus and associated dispositions, as well as a particular state of the field. In *The Political Ontology of Martin Heidegger* (1991), Bourdieu argues that Heidegger, too, committed the ‘scholastic fallacy’ through his incapability or unwillingness to admit that his philosophical thought was bound up with the state of the field of German scholarship, and the state of German society. Rather than explaining Heidegger’s Nazi period as the result of political naivete, Bourdieu argues for the deep compatibility, at the dispositional level, of Heidegger’s philosophy and Nazi ideology. Bourdieu treats his own scholarly past as if largely guided by partly formulated antipathies and resentments (cf. 2008a:2).

There are two main consequences of misrepresenting social reality through a lack of reflexivity: 1) unreflexive scholarship tends to overlook social inequality and even to develop an inverted view of the sources and content of ‘social problems’ (e.g., ‘blaming the victim’); 2) even where inequality is recognized, as in some forms of objectivism, the real forces and processes sustaining and reproducing that inequality will remain unrecognized and unaddressable. The question naturally follows, what makes for a critically reflexive scholar? As it turns out, Bourdieu’s portrait of the ideal critical scholar is also a self-portrait. Bourdieu points to two main factors:

One’s chances of contributing to the production of truth seem to me to depend on two main factors, which are linked to the position one occupies —the interest one has in knowing and making known the truth (or conversely, in hiding it, from oneself and others), and one’s capacity to produce it. As Bachelard so neatly put it, ‘There is no science but of the hidden.’ The sociologist is better or worse-equipped to study what is

hidden, depending on how well armed he is scientifically—how well he uses the capital of concepts, methods and techniques accumulated by his predecessors, Marx, Durkheim, Weber and many others—and also on how ‘critical’ he is, the extent to which the conscious or unconscious intention that impels him is a *subversive* one, the degree of interest he has in uncovering what is censored and repressed in the social world...these two factors tend to vary in inverse ratios. (Bourdieu 1993:10)

As it turns out, the best scholarship is likely to come from talented outsiders with chips on their shoulders. In his *Sketch for a Self-Analysis* (2008a), Bourdieu describes the sense of being out-of-place that afflicted him from his earliest days in boarding school. While he managed to thrive in the competitive atmosphere, he also felt a profound ambivalence about his position in the academy. This made it impossible to fully identify with his original field of philosophy, or with the dominant figures in the field, like Jean-Paul Sartre, about whom Bourdieu has mostly negative things to say, especially regarding Sartre’s idea of the ‘total intellectual.’ Because of his outsider or ‘cleft’ habitus, and assisted by strains of academic thought which contested the dominant model and which were constituted by scholars, like Georges Canguilhem, who were usually also of “lower class or provincial origin” (10), Bourdieu never completely added the *collusio* to *illusio* which would have led to full “complicity in the collective fantasy” (7). Instead, Bourdieu turned to sociology, which was “ignored and despised” by prestigious philosophy, eventually achieving “a resolute break with the vanity of academic things” (71).

For those more naturally comfortable in the academy, whose dispositions, formed through early socialization experiences, made it easy to accept the titles and entitlements of the university, the possibility of doing useful work depends on the very nature of their

self-deception. According to Bourdieu, although Sartre was fundamentally misinformed or self-deceived (Bourdieu often reverts to Sartre's own terminology of 'bad faith') about the social bases of his scholarly activity, Sartre's sense of a calling to be a 'total intellectual' is not without its usefulness:

...the myth of the intellectual and his universal mission is one of those ruses of historical reason which mean that those intellectuals most susceptible to the profits of universality can be led to contribute to the progress of the universal, in the name of motivations which may have nothing universal about them. (25)

Bourdieu nearly produces a version of the 'private vices, public virtues' slogan, here, which makes one wonder whether Bourdieu is endorsing a 'free market' approach after all. Indeed, a central premise of Bourdieu's critique of the 'field of cultural production' is that art and cultural production belong "...to the class of practices in which the logic of the pre-capitalist economy lives on" (1980:261). Much of Bourdieu's work may be understood as contributing to the bourgeois revolution insofar as he pushes for reflexivity about aspects of practice organized by the "collective disavowal of commercial interests and profits" (261). Bourdieu sides, however, with Hegel's 'cunning of reason' over Smith's 'invisible hand.' In this spirit, whatever benefits the 'myth of the intellectual' may bring, there is no doubt that Bourdieu thinks of the scholar critical by second nature, like Foucault or himself (cf. Bourdieu 2008a:79–82)—one of the intellectuals with whom Bourdieu felt a 'homologous affinity'¹²⁹—as the type more likely to get at the truth of the social world, precisely because of their personal interest in exposing inequality.

129 This term serves Bourdieu as both a definition and an explanation of friendship, giving some indication of just how far he was prepared to go in his project of critical disenchantment.

For Bourdieu, the intellectual virtues are the hard-nosed ones that Nietzsche and Weber praised. Foremost among them is that of honesty. Bourdieu's depiction of honesty, however, is not precisely Nietzschean. It is, rather, the product of a kind of *ressentiment*, the product of a condition of permanent alienation within the university. This is how he put it in 1982, in his inaugural lecture as the chair of sociology at the Collège de France (i.e., as the most powerful sociologist in France):

...sociology, the science of institutions and of the happy or unhappy relationship one may have with institutions, presupposes and produces a distance that is insurmountable and sometimes intolerable, and not only for the institution; it shakes you out of that state of innocence which enables you to fulfil the expectations of the institutions with a sense of satisfaction. (1990a:177)

Once again we are being told that the sociological vocation is not a pure one. It does not bring a comforting relaxation, as Bruno Latour (2010) would like. It is precisely through discovering the gap between social justice and one's 'place' in society that we become good sociologists. If we bracket the overtones of Zen Buddhist detachment, Leonard Cohen's line from his song 'Anthem' expresses this well: 'There is a crack, a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in.'

I have suggested that Bourdieu recommends himself as the model kind of scholar, a brilliant outsider with ample resentment for the establishment and a vested emotional interest in exposing the underlying principles of the social order. Alasdair MacIntyre, on the other hand, holds up Thomas Aquinas as an intellectual exemplar. Instead of 'critical reflexivity,' MacIntyre champions "dialectical and confessional accountability" (1990:201), and argues that it was Aquinas that most successfully combined the dialectics

of Plato and Aristotle with the Christian confessional mode of St. Augustine.

How to distinguish between accountability and reflexivity? It may be useful to remember the difference in practical research between MacIntyre and Bourdieu. While Bourdieu engaged in a variety of empirical research projects involving living human subjects, MacIntyre's empirical objects have always been either texts or the oral arguments of interlocutors encountered directly in the context of discussion and argumentation. Thus it may be that accountability implies, to begin with, accountability to those with whom one engages in argumentation. Since, for MacIntyre, there is no possibility of being neutral (e.g., MacIntyre 1990:117), the best practice is to try to develop arguments in a form that can incorporate the criticisms of other positions.

Bourdieu is more sanguine about objectivism. On the first page of the *Outline*, Bourdieu claims, not that scientific activity fails to be 'neutral,' but that it fails to recognize the practical privileges that make scientific activity possible and that constitute the detached and distanced viewpoint. This inclines the social scientist "...to a hermeneutic representation of practices, leading him to reduce all social relations to communicative relations" (1977:1). For Bourdieu, objectivism produces an excess rather than a lack of neutrality, so the hermeneutical or communicative move that MacIntyre makes in emphasizing accountability as a procedure of argumentation, seems somewhat mistaken.

For Bourdieu, objective universals exist as the consecrated products of social fields, and "The legalization of symbolic capital confers on a perspective an absolute,

universal value, thus releasing it from a relativity which is by definition inherent in every point of view” (1990a:136). The problem, as you will recall, is just that neutrality, while possible, fundamentally misunderstands practice, precisely because it understands it from the outside. We discussed this earlier in the context of *tempo* and *gift*. Bourdieu, then, is rather more optimistic, and even relatively positivistic, in comparison to MacIntyre, at least on the question of objectivity, if not on the question of human nature. What is, for MacIntyre, usually a question of a misunderstanding stemming from a failure to declare a clear allegiance to a particular tradition of thought, to a particular set of presuppositions, and to clearly defined basic vocabulary, is for Bourdieu a question of developing critical reflexivity, less a voyage into the history of ideas to clarify meaning than an empirical inquiry into social positions and fields and a dialectical theory of practice.

MacIntyre’s view of accountability is not reducible to argumentation and communication, however, at least not in his later work. MacIntyre’s best response to Bourdieu on this count has been articulated more recently, in the Paul Carus lectures, published in 1999 as *Dependent Rational Animals*. Here MacIntyre argues that, in addition to the virtues of independent rationality, we need “the virtues of acknowledged dependence...Moreover both sets of virtues are needed in order to actualize the distinctive potentialities that are specific to the human rational animal” (1999:8–9). This ability to acknowledge (or to confess) dependence connects to MacIntyre’s idea that we always engage in or commit to a practice before fully understanding its character or *telos*. We begin to discover the ‘goods internal’ to a practice as we become embedded in the

practice. Engaging in a practice means engaging in a kind of permanent turning, even a conversion. Furthermore, a practice which commits one to dialectical and confessional accountability also commits one to the development of the virtue of care (or *caritas*), both for the practice and for those other creatures and beings in relation to which one has developed the ‘virtues of acknowledged dependence.’ According to MacIntyre, “acknowledgement by oneself of radical defect” is “a necessary condition for one’s reception of the virtues of faith, hope, and charity” (1990:140). There is no such ‘confessional’ element in Bourdieu, who more often exhibits almost a martyr complex. His introduction to the republication of *The Bachelor’s Ball*, for instance, characterizes his “conversion of the gaze” (2008b:2) as rejecting the radical defect in Lévi-Strauss and structuralism rather than in himself, and heroically turning to the “immense and infinitely painstaking work” (3) of empirical observation. This conversion reconciles him to his provincial origins, rejecting the earlier rejection, as it were, and he praises his own dedication to “humble, obscure tasks” (5).

H. RESENTMENT & CARE

Thinking through these two projects—which try to reveal some of what society cannot permit itself to know—returns us to emotional-methodological dilemmas. Which type of scholarship do we choose, the perpetual outsider with a ‘cleft habitus’ and a chip on his shoulder, or the somewhat paternal insider, glowing with *caritas*? Is critical analysis of the social world best approached through resentment or through love? This returns us to our previous chapter, which already criticized the possibility of an ‘affective’ solution to

the problem of sociological vocation. Is it possible that we might reboot the question of methodological affect by pairing it with a concept of practice?

I have noted Bourdieu's discussion of resentment, but it is not as if MacIntyre himself is a scholar entirely unmotivated by resentment. One need only examine various of his discussions of Scottish history and culture. His critique of Hume in *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* involves a nationalistic attack on 'Hume's Anglicizing Subversion' (1988:Chapter XV). But does he go so far as to say, as Bourdieu does, that a long-abiding resentment for the unconscious enjoyment of privilege that characterizes dominant groups is essential for science? No.

Is this difference, as MacIntyre would have it, a difference regarding the nature of the will? We might imagine MacIntyre's model this way: an undeveloped and thwarted will experiences the natural passion or emotion of resentment—as the consequence of a traumatic entry into social life, the natural consequence of our lack of a language to interpret and store experiences—but love, as a social product, represents a conversion or maturation of the will, not merely an evolutionary development, but the emergence of a *telos*, a conscious intention (i.e., in Freud's terms: 'where id was, there ego shall be'). Let us examine the tension in the context of the pursuit of truth. Is the truth something that we can love? Can the truth, in itself, become the object of desire? Or is there always some more fundamental resentment underlying that surface motive, a resentment indicating that the deeper meaning of the will to truth is a will to triumph over an enemy or to distinguish oneself from a rival? Perhaps the new form of Max Weber's question

concerning ‘science as a vocation,’ is whether we are suited or unsuited to science by our particular *daimon*, by what haunts us, by the trauma and humiliation that makes us suited for finding out the (dirty) secrets of the social world, or whether the desire for truth is a kind of *telos* of its own. Are all called, or only some? Who, if anyone, does the truth set free? Is this a question, as it most certainly was for Max Weber, of *grace*? Bourdieu’s term here is *oblat miraculé*, referring to one whose complete commitment to the academic field “gives him a ‘miraculous’ social mobility” (2008a:5, translator’s note). On this note, Margaret Frye’s recent article, ostensibly a critique of rational choice theory (and celebrated at the 2012 ASA meetings, where it won several awards), “Bright Futures in Malawi’s New Dawn: Educational Aspirations as Assertions of Identity” (2012) opens up questions of success and temporality by shifting focus from strategic future-oriented questions to the ‘moral claim’ quality of statements about imagined futures.

My conclusion remains the same as in the last chapter. I will not be able to answer those questions about the fundamental moods of sociology. But to deepen their implications, perhaps we should extend the earlier references to the difference between ‘goods internal’ to practices and ‘fields of disinterest.’ While MacIntyre sees the need for certain substantive definitions of the good, and of liberty as an achievement through restraint (and through a relationship of tutelage),¹³⁰ Bourdieu refers to relational issues. One can feel ‘at home’ in a social world with which one is fully identified and where one is fully accepted, but one can also be subjected to real and to ‘symbolic violence.’ These

130 Rancière (2012) uses the notion of the ‘ignorant master’ to criticize Bourdieu’s approach to inequality in education as a self-fulfilling prophecy. True political transformation begins by asserting *equality*.

are relational questions, suggesting that the good may just mean harmonizing social relations and maximizing liberty. In fact, Bourdieu sometimes seems content with the project of eliminating constraint (as domination). He seems to advocate this with respect to scientific reason, though the reader will quickly note the tension between ‘conflictual cooperation’ and ‘total independence of constraints’:

Once it has repudiated the illusory quest for an ontological foundation...the collective work of critical reflexivity should enable scientific reason to control itself ever more closely, in and through conflictual cooperation and mutual critique, and so to move progressively towards total independence of constraints and contingencies, a kind of *focus imaginarius*, to which the rationalist conviction aspires and by which it is measured. (Bourdieu 2000:121–122)

While MacIntyre works with an Augustinian conception of a will capable of and requiring conversion, Bourdieu’s project of transparency, and critical reflexivity in the context of universalizing intellectual stand-offs, appears as the project of dismantling the material and symbolic violence of meritocratic ideology rather than being internally converted to a disciplinary practice. In what sense, for Bourdieu, could society or the individual be in need of redemptive conversion? Only in a relational, and not a substantive sense referring to a kind of *spiritual* substance. Bourdieu rejected any ‘spiritualization’ of society. Thus, his conception of the *conscience collective* is rather non-Durkheimian, and almost entirely negative (Robbins 2002:314)—he usually calls it the ‘social unconscious,’ actually. Bourdieu associates consciousness with what can be reflexively understood, not with some socio-spiritual substance. Nevertheless, while Bourdieu always saw the sociologist’s task as one of critique, especially self-critique, the

later writings contain an increasing number of remarks like the following: “I would like writers, artists, philosophers and scientists to be able to make their voices heard directly in all the areas of public life in which they are competent...It would be a good thing if the ‘creators’ could fulfil their function of public service and sometimes of public salvation...a higher degree of universalization” (1998b:9).

Reflexivity may be demanded of someone in a particular field, one with a universalistic test (a field not unlike Habermas’s ‘ideal speech situation’). It is not something cultivated by an isolated reasoner, as in the Cartesian-Kantian scholastic fallacy. This scholastic notion of an inward turning is still too Christian for Bourdieu, for whom the really significant determinants of the trajectory of thought are the early experiences of social position and place. For Bourdieu, those with the most highly developed capacity for reflexivity and critical thought—for projects truly subversive to scholasticism—are those, like himself, who had early experiences of marginalization in working-class or lower middle-class contexts, but then went on to academic careers, while remaining deeply ambivalent about and critical of scholastic privilege. Their intellectual virtues of *critical reflexivity*, *humility*, and *honesty* are the consequence of their positions and their position-takings in the social field rather than of a kind of Aristotelian ‘flourishing.’ These three virtues structure Bourdieu’s autobiographical account of the ideal scholar: 1) In general terms Bourdieu defines and endorses critical reflexivity as the ability to “call the intellectual world into question” (2008a:23); 2) his preference for Georges Canguilhem over Sartre and Raymond Aron is framed in terms of

Canguilhem's relative humility (26–30) as opposed to the self-important 'total intellectual'; 3) these two virtues of critique and humility are unified in the virtue of honesty. Here I take Bourdieu's remark about Raymond Aron, that "It was my principle never to lie to him" (34) as a key moment in Bourdieu's presentation of himself as the ideal scholar. Following Marx, Bourdieu would seem to fundamentally reject Aristotle's notion of *phronesis*—at least if it is just that form of practical reason which allows one to cope with one's position as a 'free man' in Greek society—for its un-reflexive basis in a slave society. Some of Bourdieu's comments on friendship are instructive in this regard because of the contrast they form with Aristotle. As mentioned earlier, for Bourdieu, an intellectual friendship is formed by what he calls an 'homologous affinity,' or a 'shared habitus.' Rather than a shared conception of and striving for the good, a friend may just as well be one with shared resentments (and friends with shared resentments of scholastic privilege make better and more scientific critical thinkers).

For Bourdieu, then, the notion of the 'good will' is not a question of an internal conversion, it is a question of the state of the field. One can be largely driven by resentment, and he admitted to being so, but resentment does not necessarily undermine the objectivity of the science. All of this tends to reduce practices to 'goods of effectiveness' rather than 'goods of excellence,' but Bourdieu encourages his readers not to be discouraged at this appearance of things. In *Practical Reason*, Bourdieu quotes La Rochefoucauld's adage that 'hypocrisy is the homage paid by vice to virtue,' suggesting that it is really a matter of perspective: "we can focus on the negative and universally

stigmatized concept of hypocrisy, or in a more realistic manner, on the homage to virtue, universally recognized as a positive concept” (1998a:143).¹³¹

How might MacIntyre respond? Bourdieu seems to side with the reading of practical rationality whose early exemplar is Thucydides, and whose early modern representatives are Machiavelli and Hobbes; it is to argue that there are only goods of efficiency; and it is, for MacIntyre, not a question of being able to refute this tradition outright, but a matter of committing oneself to responding to this tradition from within another tradition, another community, and under conditions of mutual accountability (1990:200–201), a *situation* which MacIntyre has adumbrated in his various discussions of Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, and others. *Accountability* is crucial, for it means, for MacIntyre, a conversation carried out in the context of *shared beliefs* that make possible *shared practices*. The accountability implied involves a contrast between those interactions “in which in one way or another truth is at stake and those governed only by standards of rhetorical effectiveness” (200). Here the contrast between a discursive community and a Bourdieusian *field* appear at first to be rather profound. Indeed, Bourdieu’s tendency toward scientism appears to put him in what MacIntyre calls the ‘Encyclopaedic’ tradition. See, for example, Bourdieu’s distinction between scientific analysis of art and the analysis of either amateurs *or* specialists in art interpretation:

The simple placing which the amateur or specialist [in art interpretation] performs when he undertakes attribution has nothing in common with the genuinely scientific intention of grasping the work’s immanent reason and *raison d’être* by reconstructing the perceived situation, the subjectively

131 Shklar (1984) makes a similar argument about hypocrisy, but Bourdieu’s notion of reflexivity suggests that he sees cruelty and hypocrisy as more deeply intertwined than Shklar does.

experienced problematic, which is nothing other than the space of the positions and self-positionings constituting the field and within which the artistic intention of the artist in question has defined itself, generally by opposition. (Bourdieu 1984:52)

Indeed, if we take this claim to be scientific, such a placement moves Bourdieu back toward neo-Marxism. On this reading, his concepts of field and ‘cleft habitus’ are attempts to solve some of Marx’s problems concerning the special insights of the scientist, and they provide a commentary on the motive behind Marx’s use of the dictum *Dixi et salvavi animam meam* (‘I have spoken and saved my soul’) (Marx 1972:398).

I. GIVING AN ACCOUNT OF ONESELF: UNIVERSITIES AS SITES OF EXEMPLARY CONFLICT

To bring Bourdieu and MacIntyre into conversation on the question of the fundamental moods of thought, it helps to ask whether Bourdieu does indeed fit within what MacIntyre calls the ‘Encyclopaedic’ tradition, or within what MacIntyre considers to be Nietzschean genealogy. At stake, here, is the extent to which Bourdieu’s own practice successfully undermines the social and self-deception generated by practices, more generally (as Bourdieu defines them). While an ‘encyclopaedist’ tries to bracket their own biases, the genealogist necessarily includes themselves, but in a complicated way. In the last chapters of *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, MacIntyre tightens the strings of his critique of genealogy, arguing that proponents of Nietzschean genealogy are led by their critique of the unified subject to attempt to elude the question of answerability.¹³² If the notion of a unified subject is the founding myth of Western metaphysics, the genealogist must refuse even the late existentialist project of authenticity, of constructing

¹³² Nietzsche accuses the ‘slave moralist’ of nihilism, but equivocates over the nature of his own nihilism.

the 'unity of a life.' According to MacIntyre, "the genealogist faces grave difficulties in constructing a narrative of his or her past which would allow any acknowledgement in that past of a failure, let alone a guilty failure, which is also the failure of the same still-present self" (1990:213). MacIntyre argues this first in the case of Paul de Man and the revelation that, during 1940 and 1941, he had published articles "consonant with and supportive of Nazi and anti-Semitic ideology" (211). The scandal, if there was one, was not just that de Man had a Nazi past, but that he had kept silent about it. His defenders—here MacIntyre mentions disciples Christopher Norris and Geoffrey Hartman—argued that de Man's later writings amounted to an implicit confession and critique of his earlier Nazi sympathizing. MacIntyre argues that "post-Nietzschean genealogy" contains an internal tension. There is no need to vindicate de Man, because there is no unified subject. There is nothing to confess, since the post-war de Man is no longer the same person, and has no commitment to the 'unity of a life,' since such a unity is always an illusion, in any case. MacIntyre then turns to Foucault, arguing that Foucault also resists accountability. As Foucault famously wrote, "I am no doubt not the only one who writes in order to have no face. Do not ask who I am and do not ask me to remain the same: leave it to our bureaucrats and our police to see that our papers are in order. At least spare us their morality when we write" (1972:17).

Habermas speaks of the same set of writers as MacIntyre under the label "The radical critique of reason." According to Habermas "these discourses can and want to give no account of their own position" (1990a:336). Like MacIntyre, Habermas argues

that this has significant effects on the institutionalized practices of the university, for “such discourses unsettle the institutionalized standards of fallibilism” (337).

Bourdieu emphasizes his distance from ‘total intellectuals,’ like Jean-Paul Sartre, with their unreflexive meritocratic and self-congratulatory account of their own place on the academic and public stage. Bourdieu’s own *Sketch for a Self-Analysis*, however, contains not a single word of self-critique. Indeed, he goes from strength to strength, elaborating an autobiography that might as well be his own *Ecce Homo*, answering Nietzsche’s questions: his amazement at his own wisdom, his cleverness, his good books, his destiny (Nietzsche 2006). Bourdieu claims that, in his critical and reflexive sociology “...all the propositions that this science enunciates can and must be applied to the subject who practises this science” (1990:177). He diverges, however, from the critical sociology of the Frankfurt School, at least that of Adorno, in attributing “critical distance” to the “objectifying” process of science (177). Bourdieu’s approach contains a residually positivistic emphasis on ‘objectifying,’ as opposed to Adorno’s ‘priority of the object,’ which criticizes the reification of the concept more emphatically. Bourdieu’s logic of the ‘cleft habitus’ works perfectly, it turns out, as a justification for his occupation of the most prestigious and powerful chair of sociology in France. He argues that the corrupt and unconscious practices by which social inequality is reproduced can only be displaced by a new hegemony. This turns out to be his own scholarship. Here the ‘sketch for a self-analysis’ teeters toward a just-so story.

According to MacIntyre, however, seeing practices as necessarily driven to

hegemony has an ironic result: the radical Nietzschean who dominates a field finds herself occupying the 'chair' of power, and reproducing the institutional 'relations of ruling.' There are background reasons for this. According to MacIntyre, "what forced fundamentally dissident thinkers, such as Foucault, into the conformism of the university was in fact the absence of any independent forums for debate" (1990:221). In the absence of these fora, university communities need to aim to fit the following description:

...universities are places where conceptions of and standards of rational justification are elaborated, put to work in the detailed practices of enquiry, and themselves rationally evaluated, so that only from the university can the wider society learn how to conduct its own debates, practical or theoretical, in a rationally defensible way. (1990:222)

This position is only defensible, however, "when and insofar as the university is a place where rival and antagonistic views of rational justification...are afforded the opportunity both to develop their own enquiries, in practice and in the articulation of the theory of that practice, and to conduct their intellectual and moral warfare" (222). Here MacIntyre turns to Durkheim's position, that the academy should stand as society's model.

How are we to adjudicate, here? According to the trajectory of this dissertation, we are aiming at a position somewhere between Bourdieu's endorsement of agonism and hegemony, and MacIntyre's more nostalgic notion of pluralistic debate. Let's return to the illustration used at the beginning of this chapter, the death of a cyclist in Toronto. Does practice theory, whether Bourdieu's or MacIntyre's, help us to understand this situation?

J. BREAKING THE CYCLE?: PRACTICAL ACCOUNTS OF PRACTICES

A quick and dirty (to use computer programmer jargon, another interesting practice)

Bourdieu-style analysis of Darcy Allen Sheppard's death would look to define the relevant practices and fields of practice (e.g., politics, media, driving, cycling, couriers, drinking). Bourdieu would make assessments of cultural, economic, social, and symbolic capital. Skeptical of those who would make too easy claims about the virtues of cycling as an end in itself, Bourdieu would likely deploy this claim, cited earlier, to disrupt the simplistic narrative of cyclist good/driver bad:

Those who possess the means of symbolically appropriating cultural goods...like to see symbolic appropriation—the only legitimate sort, in their view—as a kind of mystical participation in a common good of which each person has a share and which every person has entirely, as a paradoxical appropriation, excluding privilege and monopoly, unlike material appropriation, which asserts real exclusivity and therefore exclusion. (1984:227–228)

In this case, Bourdieu would target those denizens of downtown Toronto for whom (certain styles of) cycling are available because of their physical and social location, because of their *habitus*, and for whom it is an activity that may be symbolically displayed to appreciative audiences (e.g., friends, acquaintances at hipster coffee shops, bike cooperatives, etc.), in short, those he tended to call 'dominated fractions of the dominant class,' those with a high level of cultural capital and lower levels of economic capital (e.g., artists and academics, the notorious 'creative class'). The Greater Toronto Area (GTA), as recent political controversies have illustrated, is divided in complex ways, ways that would be described, by a related approach, as 'intersectional' (cf. Hill Collins 2000). For this reason, activities like cycling and driving are, for one thing, highly differentiated in economic, racial, cultural, and social terms. A highly commodified

object, the bicycle is also a symbol that may be deployed in a variety of inclusive and exclusive ways and used as a signal and an object of both solidarity and distinction. Anti-SUV sentiments expressed by ‘environmentally conscious’ cyclists could be critically read, by a critical follower of Bourdieu, as the recoded return, for example, of repressed racism, or of repressed fat-phobia, which could be focused, for awhile, and ironically, on now ex-mayor Rob Ford, widely vilified by some, partly on the basis of his ‘shady’ (in reputation and in skin-colour) associates, but partly also by using his physical appearance, fitness, and driving habits as signs of his moral turpitude.

Bourdieu would doubtless be even more critical of the Bryant narrative and performance. The law is symbolically available to all. But in reality? And narrative? How is it the case that Bryant, on the basis of a claimed commonality (problem drinking), can publish a book that frames his drinking as ‘a true story of addiction, tragedy, and hope’ (2012), in which Sheppard becomes a character, a foil, a necessary ‘other,’ in Bryant’s own sketch of a self socio-analysis? In short, practices remain, for the most part, means of reproducing social inequalities, regardless of the high ideals that ostensibly guide them. Practices must be embedded in fields with an institutionalized ‘interest in disinterest’ if they are to do something else.

How about MacIntyre? Seemingly more optimistic about practices as such, he is no less concerned than Bourdieu with a practice’s institutional conditions of possibility. One simple question, of course, might be: how do these two feel about bike lanes? With respect to the city, MacIntyre would probably focus, it seems to me, on the public debates

(or lack thereof) rather than on the practices themselves. What are the conditions under which rival and antagonistic views can develop and express their positions, whether about cycling, or driving, or drinking, or due legal process, or the various legacies of colonization? It may be the case that MacIntyre and Bourdieu are interested in precisely the same processes of commodification and colonization which appear to make law, cycling, driving, drinking, and journalism into agonistic sites of distinction rather than practices characterized by ‘goods internal’ to them.

There is no space, here, to engage with the already massive sociological literature on traffic (e.g., Conley and McLaren, eds. 2009), space (e.g., Lefebvre 1991), and mobility (e.g., Urry 2007), but a short extension of my commentary on cycling is in order. All I can do, here, is to pedal quickly through a couple of attempts to engage ongoing conflicts between cars, pedestrians, and cyclists. First, Phil Jones writes, in “Performing the City: A Body and a Bicycle Take on Birmingham, UK” (2005), that, in England, “Cycling, ‘sustainable’ but marginalized, sits between the two predominant means of moving around cities—by motorized vehicle and on foot as a pedestrian” (816). ‘Sustainable’ but marginal, the cyclist is officially legitimated in ways that skateboarding, for instance, is not, for “Whereas the skater is easily identified as a capitalistically disruptive figure, the cyclist can, by dint of simply getting back on to the road, conceal their unruly behaviour behind a facade of sustainable transport respectability” (821). Cycling happens ‘in between’ and across a variety of partly-structured spaces, almost none of which have been constructed with a view to cyclists as the primary users or

rights-holders. Jones ‘performs’ an autoethnography of being a commuting cyclist in Birmingham, affecting and being affected by his performance. His article highlights the tension between physically structured spaces, the sediment of urban histories, the experiences of traversing these spaces, and the now ubiquitous moral ideal, posing as a natural imperative, of sustainability. For the moment, cycling rolls in the gap. On the one hand, the bicycle is “a privileged mode of transport, in part because of its having been loaded with labels such as ‘sustainable’ and ‘healthy’” (827) but also because it can go places that are inaccessible to both cars and pedestrians. On the other hand, since the state of physical infrastructure and practices of mobility makes cycling dangerous, it is only accessible to those able, based on personal abilities, comfort levels, and personal independence, to engage in it. Jones writes that things would be different “...if I had family commitments. I would know that if my limits were transgressed—crushed beneath the wheels of a bus, for example—my being affected would spread out beyond the limits of my own body, to those that I love. That I would consider unacceptable” (827). Jones elucidates, here, the tension between individual enjoyment of his “politely deviant status” (828) and structural realities that keep sustainability, whether in transportation or elsewhere, out of reach.

Jones points out the affective tension between his own enjoyment and broader social realities. Nicholas Scott, an emerging Canadian scholar of cycling and sustainability, whose expressed goal in his article on the rise of automobile dominance in Ottawa, Canada’s capital, is a “critical politics of mobility” (2013:398), tends, in his

analysis, to fold individual pleasures of mobility into the broad structural realities of inequality and the limits of a capitalist modernity organized around facilitating commodity flows. Scott mediates this structural perspective with a ‘critical’ concept of neighbourhood. He turns away from the “ideological functions” (399) of ‘neighbourhood effects’ approaches that tend to confine their focus to poor slums and to responsabilize the ‘local community,’ to the concept of ‘neighbourhoods of mobility,’ described as “constellations of social and technical elements that systematically facilitate particular ways of being mobile in the city” (399). When we perceive neighbourhoods in terms of the forms of mobility that they constrain and enable, the interactions and experiences that they support or prevent, we can begin to see how spaces produce different kinds of ‘actants’ (to use Latourian terminology), and different ways of being together that exceed current regimes of mobility. What we need, Scott argues, are ways of “reassembling the city” such that our forms of mobility can open to “other possible ways of living together” (403). Scott concludes with the normative claim that “Given the sustained temporal manner in which automobility has dominated city space, the city needs to open neighborhoods of mobility onto a ‘radical outside,’ onto the point at which, according to the current model, chaos ensues” (407). Where Jones cautiously turns back, suggesting that family responsibilities mean that only some can (or should) engage the risky margins of the current regimes of mobility, Scott attempts to gesture emphatically towards the future, urging us to break open the currently constraining structures.

These two articles reframe questions of urban mobility in ways that can sharpen our

thoughts on practice. Jones suggests that practices, while being enjoyable for their own sake—and not merely exercises in distinction—may only be available to some. Only some can cycle in the city. Only some are equipped, psychologically and physically, for the affective challenges, pleasures, and pains, of cycling in the automobile city. The thrill of careening down a steep paved street, swerving potholes, would appear to exceed any merely comparative calculus, any invidious social distinction. Perhaps these distinctions come before, in the preparations one makes for an adventure. Perhaps they come after, in recounting reckless rides in order to gain a reputation for daring. But in the ride itself? This reminder of the affective bodily experiences available through particularly embodied practices suggests something substantive, a ‘good internal’ to the practice, and at the same time, a certain liberating excess. But this liberating excess can hardly become an ethical practice around which the good of an entire society is built, can it? Practices reproduce as often as they repair the splits between individual experiences and social effects, private and public vices and benefits. You only live once (YOLO), was the cry, a few years ago, of populist teen existentialism, a slogan it is tempting to call puerile, but for the awkward reflexivity about distinction that a reading of Bourdieu can engender. Whatever ‘radical outside’ one turns toward, the turning remains a kind of relational position-taking, a potentially political act of solidarity, or an individually distinguishing act. The concept of practice turns us back toward our residual category, answerability.

CODA: QUESTIONING ANSWERABILITY

Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD under Eli. And the word of the LORD was rare in those days; there was no frequent vision.

At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim, so that he could not see, was lying down in his own place; the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down within the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was. Then the LORD called, "Samuel! Samuel!" and he said, "Here I am!" and ran to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call; lie down again." So he went and lay down. And the LORD called again, "Samuel!" and Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call, my son; lie down again." Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him. And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli perceived that the LORD was calling the boy. Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, LORD, for thy servant hears.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

And the LORD came and stood forth, calling as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for thy servant hears." Then the LORD said to Samuel, "Behold, I am about to do a thing in Israel, at which the two ears of every one that hears it will tingle. On that day I will fulfil against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. And I tell him that I am about to punish his house for ever, for the iniquity which he knew, because his sons were blaspheming God, and he did not restrain them. Therefore I swear to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be expiated by sacrifice or offering for ever."

Samuel lay until morning; then he opened the doors of the house of the LORD. And Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli. But Eli called Samuel and said, "Samuel, my son." And he said, "Here I am." And Eli said, "What was it that he told you? Do not hide it from me. May God do so to you and more also, if you hide anything from me of all that he told you." So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. And he said, "It is the LORD; let him do what seems good to him."

And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was established as a prophet of the LORD. And the LORD appeared again at Shiloh, for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel at Shiloh by the word of the LORD. (1 Samuel 3)

Vocation is, of course, a kind of interpellation. And a kind of interpolation. Sometimes, when I rap my knuckles on my work table, I have an impulse (usually resisted) to check to see if someone is at the door. Is that a self-calling or a neurosis? The rich and layered story of Eli and Samuel reaffirms the residual qualities of the notion of answerability and the ambiguity of transferential relations. Was Samuel a prophet? Or an interloper set on displacing the sons of Eli? Did Eli endorse his own downfall? Who or what calls the

sociologist, who sometimes claims to ‘speak truth to power,’ like an Old Testament prophet, and sometimes claims to be providing ‘just the facts?’ The often uneven rhythms of call and response haunt sociological practice.

Just as much or as little as *The Structure of Social Action*, this was an “empirical work.” Indeed, if Parsons said it, so can I: this dissertation “...was an empirical study in the analysis of social thought. The writings treated are as truly documents as are manorial court rolls of the Middle Ages” (Parsons 1968:vii). Unfortunately for me, I suppose, I have also proven the truth of Parsons’ claim that “It is possible to have scattered and unintegrated bits of knowledge, and to assent to the ‘truth’ of further scattered bits as they are called to one’s attention. This type of knowledge does not, however, constitute ‘science’” (16). It must be obvious, by now, that my goal has not exactly been Parsons’ goal of “the carving out from residual categories of definite positively defined concepts and their verification in empirical investigation” (18).

The first two chapters of the dissertation dealt with Marx’s ‘strong’ program in the sociology of morality. I argued that Marx subordinates morality to political economy, to relations of production and social class divisions. Class-based morality lacks *content* and renders *formal* and class-based judgements. Science can overcome this partiality, subordinating the *good* to the *true*. Marx judges bourgeois morality to be hypocrisy. Furthermore, Marx rejected classical moral philosophy in favour of *revolutionizing practice*. Marx advocated attention to the social history of creative production over the abstract dialectics of recognition or the bourgeois moral *imagination* of the ‘impartial

spectator.’ This redirection derives from the influence of Rousseau’s notion of *pity* as an instinctive response to visible suffering, not something based in the imagination. For Marx, bourgeois morality suppresses pity.

Marx prizes intellectual virtues over moral ones. He views the public statement of the truth to be both a political act and an organizational call for revolution in the relations of production. Intellectual virtue becomes his de facto vocation in the absence of an explicitly self-justifying discourse. Chapter two discussed the tenability of this absence and the ambiguity of Marx’s position. Nietzsche’s critique of the will to truth suggests that Marx’s scientific approach conceals a deformation of the will, isolating the root of social evils within a particular ‘class.’ And ‘speaking truth to power,’ sometimes makes the best contribution to the commodification of ‘truth’ and to bourgeois rather than proletarian revolution.

Chapter three presented Durkheim’s approach to morality, which explicitly defended sociology as a profession and positioned sociology as able to *interpret* but not to *generate* morality. In modern morality, Durkheim pointed to nationalism and the cult of the individual mediated through forms of nationalism. He emphasized the growing obligation to *charity*, and an increasingly dualistic and divided self. I argued that Durkheim’s notion of collective representation as societal self-representation is inadequate, and suggested the importance of exploring approaches that push sociality beyond the bounds of human to human relations.

Durkheim’s dualism conceives of moral relations in terms of the tension between

individual physical impulses and societal demands. His notion of conscience remains tied to the idea of a collectivity that is identical with itself in substance and meaning, and to the idea that sociologists can definitively interpret this meaning. On this point, however, Durkheim's sociology of morality is only as good as his own understanding of the relationship between the social and the political.

Chapter four criticized Weber's notion of value-free but value-relevant sociology through a discussion of his concept of charisma. While a version of the 'value-neutral'/'value-relevant' distinction remains useful, Weber's attempt to deal with charisma as a non-moral concept misses a phenomenological distinction between democratic and non-democratic forms of authority. Using the work of Philip Rieff, I explored the possibility of thinking of charisma as an ambiguous but socially-conditioned form of moral relation.

Chapter Five turned to the 'situation' vs. 'character' debate carried out primarily in philosophy and social psychology. I argued that character and situation can be seen as complementary rather than competing, and that we should understand character as a sort of persistent residual category, a player in every script, scripts which take on, as Goffman suggests (1959), promissory qualities (i.e., *minima moralia*). In the contexts of acts and practices that amount to emancipatory reversals, we may give a positive moral evaluation to 'weak' character. The chapter closed with more references to answerability, this time as constituting a non-synthetic link in a negative dialectic between situation and character.

Chapter Six discussed the 'affective turn.' Does sociology have a fundamental

mood? To explore this question, I discussed three strands of social science research 1) American communitarianism; 2) studies in Moral Regulation; and 3) the Feminist ‘ethic of care’ approach. Each makes some fundamental assumptions about ‘mood.’ Communitarians try to adopt an attitude of ‘concern.’ Moral Regulation studies, by contrast, have used ‘anxiety,’ and even ‘moral panic’ to explain the actions of their research subjects while implying that they, the researchers, are resolute and clear-eyed. They emphasize the importance of not projecting anxieties about social changes onto socially marginalized groups and individuals. Finally, the ‘ethic of care’ approach advocates an ethic based on (women’s) experiences of connection, relation, and care. The ‘ethic of care’ is presented as an empirical finding and a methodological ideal for feminist social science practice. I concluded the chapter by arguing that none of these approaches adequately resolves all the problems of doing sociology morally, but they provide a constellation that helps to make visible the aporetic quality of the sociology of morality. Once again, I argue that answerability constitutes a minimal criterion that can performatively structure a ‘weak’ program in the sociology of morality. Answerability, in this sense, complicates the notion of fundamental moods. It is a form without a specific affective content.

The last chapter addressed the ‘practice turn,’ taking on Bourdieu’s theory of practice, which he used as a tool in the hermeneutics of suspicion, unveiling the contributions of forms of practice to the reproduction of social inequalities. I contrasted Bourdieu with MacIntyre’s use of practice to critique instrumental action and to develop

a notion of human flourishing. Both approaches make significant claims regarding the role of practice as a basic building-block of morality. They also offer an opportunity to revisit questions concerning sociology as a vocation. I concluded, once again, that issues of vocation and morality remain open. Like the discussion of methodological affect, varieties of practice theory provide a constellation and a vision that opens up avenues of experience, expression, and reflexivity without supplying definitive moral interpretations of social life.

In *Explaining the Normative*, Stephen Turner critiques the notion of a (non-sociological) normativity that could permanently exceed our capacity to simply describe human activity. Using the imagery of David and Goliath, he writes that “Claims about ‘normativity’ seem to imply that this project can never be completed, that the project of desupernaturalization will always be defeated by the small stone of normativity” (2010:3). In this dissertation, by contrast, I have argued that our incapacity to ‘redeem’ the meaning of morality rationalistically speaks less to its *a priori* (extra-social) nature than to historical experiences that suggest that, instead of David defeating Goliath, morality goes on losing, persists as the loser. Benjamin famously interprets this failure as a messianic calling: “There is a secret agreement between past generations and the present one. Our coming was expected on earth. Like every generation that preceded us, we have been endowed with a *weak* Messianic power, a power to which the past has a claim” (Benjamin 1968:254). There are worse definitions of answerability.

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