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Elbert Liang April 9, 2017

The Relational Individual: On John Dewey, Martha Nussbaum, and Iris Young

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Abstract

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This thesis aims to engage with John Dewey's call for a new individualism: (1) what this new individualism might look like; (2) what purpose it would serve; and (3) how this new individualism informs new notions of freedom. It traces the progression of the idea of a new relational individualism from Dewey's work through Martha Nussbaum's "Capabilities Approach" in *Frontiers of Justice,* to its culmination in Iris Young's *Justice and the Politics of Difference.* This paper argues that while Nussbaum is working on the same problems as Dewey, it is not until Iris Young's conception of the individual in *Justice and the Politics of Difference* that the idea of a fully relational individual is realized. With a fully relational individualism, society can move past the dualism of individual and society to return the pragmatic method of experimentation to social affairs, and once again make social progress. Additionally, Young's notions of oppression, injustice for the relational individual, give us new guidelines for ensuring democratic legitimacy.

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Table of Contents

Introduction

The American Project, the achievement of freedom, has always been an experiment of individualism. The United States was founded on a revolution that rejected traditional systems of government and stubbornly asserted individual rights. The United States was to be a new system of governance and a new kind of nation. Bound together by the ideals of freedom and liberty rather than a shared culture or history, the United States was to be a democratic refuge for anybody who shared the American values. With vast expanses of untouched land, and far from the developed Western world at the time, the United States promised a new life, and the freedom to pursue happiness.

The United States, however, could not remain the same forever. Technological developments coupled with a boom in population necessitated the emergence of new systems of governance and association. Gone were the days of an individual standing at the Western frontier. The advancements in transportation quickly shrank the distance between any two destinations, and the unexplored areas of the United States dwindled down until they were none. Where there were once thirteen colonies, there were eventually fifty states. Although a federal government was conceived to oversee the entirety of the United States, a series of checks and balances, as well as state governments, promised to prevent the corruption of power and preserve a measure of independence. Democratic mechanisms were meant to keep the government accountable to the people. The government, a necessary evil, facilitated social welfare and ensured a certain standard of living. By maintaining objective rationality, the government could allow for private subjectivity to flourish—so long as it did not impede on any other individual's rights. From the administration of the public was carved private spaces of subjective individuality, in which individuals could do as they pleased.

Perhaps because of the way in which the United States was founded, however, there has always remained in American culture a healthy skepticism of social regulation. From the very beginning, there was a fight over how much governance was appropriate. As the government was the agent of society at large, the debate came to be understood as the degree to which individuals saw themselves as independent, and what was owed in turn to society. To a self-interested individual, the more government administration increased, the less freedom there was left. The more there were for others, the less there was for the individual. Individual freedom stopped where society started.

As welfare came to be understood in economic terms, the fight became overwhelmingly over distribution of resources. As the government was assumed to be objective and fair, the concern was less over the processes that were determining individuals' respective lots in life, and more over how much was enough for those that needed help. As society became increasingly unequal, however, some scrutiny was brought towards the beliefs and assumptions the system was built upon. Are the mechanisms of distribution truly fair? Does an individual's freedom truly end where society starts? Whatever the answer to these questions, it is clear that it will turn on the question of what the individual is, properly understood. It is therefore to this question of individualism that I aim to respond.

I begin in the first chapter by engaging with John Dewey, an American philosopher who called for a new individualism in the early 20th century. Dewey says that American society is fraught with dualisms and metaphysical blockage preventing true democracy. If the blockage is to be cleared, and true democracy restored, the conflict between the individual and society must be solved without compromising democratic freedom; we must move beyond the understanding of individuals as necessarily opposed to society. While Dewey does not propose his own

individualism, he believes that only the application of the pragmatic method of experimentation holds hope for combining seemingly incompatible concepts of an individual and society. The problem of solving the dualism of individual/society, finding a new individualism, and applying the pragmatic method of experimentation to social affairs are all one and the same.

I then move on in the second chapter to draw on Martha Nussbaum's "Capabilities Approach." Nussbaum, another American philosopher writing in the late 20th and early 21st century, is concerned with resolving the symptoms of a society wracked with oppression and inequality. Towards that end she begins implicitly tinkering with our notion of the "individual" in order to reframe the question of what "justice" ultimately entails. I argue that Nussbaum, however, in an attempt to reverse the trajectory of an increasingly unequal society, inadvertently falls back upon the very dualisms that led to the unjust social order that she criticizes.

Ultimately, in the third and last chapter, I argue that Iris Young, an American political theorist and feminist writing in the late 20th century and early 21st century, provides a new individualism in her book *Justice and the Politics of Difference* that satisfies all of Dewey's criteria. I argue that Young, although using different terminology than Dewey, engages directly with the same problem with which he is concerned: the dualisms and metaphysical blockage preventing democracy; Young, by acknowledging the new networks of association that we in the modern era find ourselves in, posits a new relational individualism that allows her to bypass the dualisms and metaphysical concepts blocking social progress. Having done so, Young has given us a way to restore the pragmatic method of experimentation to social affairs without compromising ideals of freedom, which is to say the possibility of the realization of the American Project.

Chapter 1: Dewey's Pragmatic Project

1. Introduction

John Dewey, (1859-1952), an American philosopher writing primarily in the late 19th century and early 20th century, was writing at a time of incredible upheaval and change. The United States, still a relatively new country, had burst onto the world scene. As a nation endowed with a wealth of natural resources, the Industrial Revolution and the results of two world wars propelled the United States to its status as a global superpower within its first two hundred years of existence. Often credited for the United States' quick ascension to power was the unique individualism belonging to American culture, something President Herbert Hoover coined during the Great Depression as "rugged individualism." The rugged individualist was fiercely independent, did not need government handouts, and was the embodiment of an "up-by-the-bootstraps" philosophy. The technological advancement of the United States, however, was perhaps too quick. With the rise of impersonal corporations and bureaucracies, there was concern that the idealized "rugged individualism" was no longer applicable, nor relevant. Dewey, as one of the primary figures associated with the philosophy of pragmatism, was one such individual. Towards that end, Dewey was convinced that the same scientific method of experimentation that was so successful in technological endeavors should be applied to social affairs too. Dewey provides perhaps the fullest of the pragmatic method of experimentation in his book *Experience and Nature*—a book which therefore will serve as our starting point.

In *Experience and Nature*, Dewey is often accused of having created a metaphysics of change[1]. Dewey, however, describes his project as not creating his own metaphysics, but of

[1] Metaphysics here refers to the branch of philosophy dealing with abstract, certain, and unchanging concepts outside of objective experience.

giving an account of the "generic traits of experience": an understanding of the way in which humans interact with the world. To be doing metaphysics, is to be committing a pragmatic sin[2]. In the pragmatic tradition, Dewey wants to purge philosophical inquiry and institutions of things like ideals and metaphysics, as he sees such certainty as a barrier to progress and change. Instead, Dewey advocates for something like an experimental method, by which we can find the empirically correct response to social ills.

For Dewey, the standard of success is not in achieving any particular end, but in the achievement of any end that is in fact desired. Through the scientific method we can understand and wrest nature under our control, to create new possibilities and progress—for any end we desire. In *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, Dewey says that we have already made tremendous progress with regards to science, but not with regards to philosophy. Philosophy, still dwelling in an outdated vocabulary, engaging in specialized inquires that have long been irrelevant to the nature of modern experience, needs an overhaul to become relevant again. Philosophy needs to take up the mantle to be the criticism of criticisms, to create culture itself, and revitalize society—something that can only happen once the pragmatic method that has been so successful in the technological sector is applied to social endeavors. We have been so busy innovating and making technological progress that we have not only forgotten who we are as individuals, but forgotten our places in society as well. We assume that we act consistently, but we adopt different personas in the public than we do in the private. We have not stopped to realize that we have created an entirely new world of economic structures in which the "rugged individualism" of the past is neither applicable nor relevant. If we are to make social progress and answer

[2] Pragmatism here refers to a school of thought asserting that practical consequences should determine claims of truth or value.

questions of political organization, we must create a new individualism to restore a sense of identity. What Dewey is calling for is the discovery of social "ends" at a time when people are obsessed with technological "means."

In this chapter, engaging with Dewey's call for a "Reconstruction in Philosophy," I aim to show the lack of a consistent individualism in modern society, how this lack of a consistent individualism actively prevents social progress, and what must be done if we are to restore the pragmatic method of experimentation to social affairs; if we are to work past the dualisms of individual/society and subjectivity/objectivity to restore the pragmatic method of experimentation, we must be willing to abandon previous models and arrive at a more relational account of the individual. Only then can philosophy be "reconstructed" and the American Project be realized.

I begin by drawing on *Experience and Nature* (1925) to show what, for Dewey, the scientific method is—what it does and the purpose that it serves. I then move into discussion of *The Public and Its Problems* (1927) to show Dewey's understanding of the relationship between an individual and any given society, specifically drawing attention to his account of how the individual informs society and vice versa. At this point, I argue that Dewey is already leaning towards a model of the individual as fundamentally relational, but does not want to fully commit. Dewey finds that the individual in modern society is split between a public realm of life in which they behave selfishly, and a private realm of life in which they behave altruistically; the individual is furthermore fragmented in the public realm insofar as they can only affect change if they submerge themselves in corporate structures. I use *Individualism Old and New* (1930), and *Freedom and Culture* (1939), to show that although Dewey wants to collapse the dualism of individual/society, he is reluctant to provide an explicit answer for fear of compromising ideals

of freedom. Finally I argue that the tension between the individual and society at large can only be resolved through Dewey's pragmatic method of experimentation, with the conclusion that if the dualism is not solved soon, that grave social inequities will continue to be exacerbated with every subsequent generation.

2. Experimentation and Nature

In chapter IV of *Experience and Nature*, "Nature, Means and Knowledge," following a discussion of "consummatory experiences" in the previous chapter, Dewey discusses the means by which we can attain these consummatory experiences. The consummatory experience, for Dewey, is a non-instrumentally valuable experience that arises when problems are overcome—essentially when we have reached an "end" that we are attempting to achieve. Dewey wants to avoid the language of "means" and "ends" as traditionally understood because the dualism is incompatible with his understanding of both experience and nature. Although the language of means and ends may be a useful heuristic in our interacting with the world, Dewey wants to move beyond that terminology. Giving something the designation of "means" implies that it is good only insofar as it fulfills a specific "end" and vice versa. He therefore emphasizes "ends-in-view," which are not fixed ends, but anticipated ends that we aim to achieve at a particular time. By turning away from the language of "means" and "ends," and rather towards "ends-in-view," Dewey hopes to move away from metaphysical idealism, and closer towards the open-ended scientific method. Metaphysics is not useful, says Dewey, because it constrains thinking, and prevents experimentation; only through experimentation can human intelligence and agency direct the course of nature and experience.

The sciences were born, says Dewey, when objects acquired "intellectual significance," meaning that things became "more significantly what [they made] possible than what [they]

immediately [were]" ("Experience" 105). As humans began to understand objects not as a function of their immediate qualities, but more significantly as what they could bring about, humans began to understand the series of generic relationships that govern the world. When an object acquires intellectual significance, it acquires context such that a fire is not just something that burns, but something that can be used as a tool to produce heat, to cook. The acquired relational context allows for a more holistic understanding of the "means" and "ends" that surround objects, and subsequently enables humans to sort things into a spatial and temporal system representing the world. This system of "intellectual signification" and scientific organization contrasts with the Greek conception of nature, in which the significance of an object is found not in its ability to produce results, but rather in some universal form that defines the object. The "intrinsic qualities of figures [dominate] their instrumental significance in inquiry," and so the objects of inquiry are not mathematical or mechanical relationships, but rather the true "essences" of objects ("Experience" 105). Accordingly, the "sciences" of the Greeks was more concerned with classification and logical necessity, rather than the production of physical results.

Physical science, as contrasting with metaphysics, is different in that it "does not sent up another rival realm of antithetical existence, [but rather] reveals the state or order upon which the occurrence of immediate and final qualities depends" ("Experience" 110). Thus, it allows for the useful manipulation of objects around us to "secure and avoid immediate objects" ("Experience" 114). Objects are categorized into a system of mechanistic relations, which, properly understood, allows for mastery of nature. It is this distinct importance that gives the scientific method its authority. For Dewey, truth is definitively not metaphysical, but rather the understanding of "processes of change so directed that they achieve an intended consummation" ("Experience" 128). It is preserving the integrity of experience and understanding of the mechanical relations of

the world, such that the desire consequences can be achieved—and not divining the "essences" of things—that defines the proper object of inquiry.

Metaphysics, however, is tempting. Humans, says Dewey, are intrinsically inclined towards stability, of a mental and physical character, of experience. The problem is, however, that individuals and nature are inherently contingent and ever-changing—in Dewey's words, "precarious and perilous" ("Experience" 44). The contingency of nature, however, is not something to be bemoaned, neither is it something to be denied; it is the same character of instability that terrifies us that gives us the possibility of change and improvement. Human intelligence directs us in our efforts to achieve this stability. Dewey warns, however, that "too commonly… the result of the search is converted into a metaphysics which denies or conceals from acknowledgement the very characters of existence which initiated it, and which give significance to its conclusion" ("Experience" 55). It is important that in our search for stability, we do not fall into the trap of metaphysics.

This temptation of metaphysics is just as alluring when considering individuals, and in Chapter VI of *Experience and Nature*, "Nature, Mind, and the Subject," Dewey once again explicitly disavows indulging in outdated methods of inquiry. Dewey begins by presenting the role of the individual in society, first according to the Greeks, and then according to himself. Dewey says that for the Greeks, individuals were conceived to be imperfect physical manifestations of the perfect ideal—the category, or "essence" or the species. This is in contrast with the individualistic notion of the human that Dewey wants to present. For Dewey, the individual, or the emergence of subjectivity, is an individual mind embedded in social relations within nature ("Experience" 162). The mind is not something that is separate from nature, and the mind is not separate from the social relations within which it is found.

Dewey makes sure to harp on this last point as he draws the distinction between "individuals with mind" and "individual mind," the former implying that the individual exists with an independent mind separate from society, and the latter reflecting the understanding that the individual is inherently social, and as such, subject to the weight and trajectory of traditions. The latter understanding, according to Dewey, is more accurate because although reality may be "objective," it is experienced by a subjective self. The subjective self carries with it histories, traditions, and dialectics that were determined before it even came into existence. Individuals are not entirely free to believe any idea that they want. It is with this that Dewey warns against falling into subjectivism as we are always subjective "with respect to" or "towards" an objective plane of external existence. Subjectivism isolates the self in idealism, thereby isolating the self from nature—the conditions allowing for meaningful experience are obstructed.

3. The Individual and Society

Crucial to Dewey's project of "Reconstruction in Philosophy," is the application of the pragmatic method of experimentation with regard to social affairs. One cannot understand the individual apart from social affairs. Dewey says that the state emerges "from the objective fact that human acts have consequences upon others, that some of these consequences are perceived, and that their perception leads to subsequent efforts to control action and avoid others" ("Public" 46). From the very beginning, the goal of political organization has been a pragmatic regulation of human behavior. In order to arrive at a better account of how we might be able to pragmatically regulate human behavior, however, we must first look at the individual as the basic building block of society, as "singular persons are the foci of action, mental and moral, as well as overt" ("Public" 81). The task of "Reconstruction in Philosophy," then falls to the restoration of a coherent individualism.

3.1 The Self-Interested Individual

Dewey begins by giving an account of how the emergence of the state divided the individual into different, inconsistent spheres of life: the "public," and the "private." In *The Public and its Problems,* Dewey says that the state emerges when "indirect consequences are recognized and there is an effort to regulate them," and that "[w]hatever is a barrier to the spread of consequences of associated behavior by that very fact operates to set up political boundaries" ("Public" 46, 63). The state emerges not when individuals are directly interacting with each other, but when individuals enter into networks of association on such a scale that it is impossible for them to contract with every individual that their actions impact. The state subsequently emerges to regulate behavior that cannot be agreed to either because of prohibitive costs or conflicts of interest—the state exists to regulate market failure. The "public," then, becomes the arena in which we need regulation of consequences from others' behavior, and the "private," that in which regulation is unnecessary.

Dewey's argument closely parallels that of neoclassical economists. If the place of the state is to regulate consequences stemming from the behavior of individuals too far from each other to contract or otherwise make agreements, then three underlying assumptions appear: (1) that humans, trying to maximize utility, are fundamentally self-interested; (2) the existence of something like a market will regulate behavior between individuals in close proximity, and therefore; (3) the state exists to regulate negative externalities between people that are either too far away to contract or that do not care about the consequences of their actions on other people. Most critically, this means that there are rules and regulations for behaving in the public realm that do not apply in that of the private, meaning the individual is assumed to be selfish in the public, but not in the private.

3.2 Opposition against Community

This is overwhelmingly negative for Dewey—if the individual is not acting in a consistent capacity in all spheres of life, then the individual may as well have been lost; the dualism of individual/society forces an unsustainable conflict between the individual and society at large. Dewey first acknowledges that the model of the self-interested individual has undeniably produced great advances for society: "[while] [e]ach person [sought] the betterment of [their] own lot… [that] could only be attained by industry…" ("Public" 90). In turn, "[t]he new conditions involved a release of human potentialities previously dormant… It would be short-sighted to limit the release of power to opportunities to procure wealth and enjoy its fruits… initiative inventiveness, foresight, and planning were also stimulated and confirmed. This manifestation of new powers… was formulated as the discovery of the individual" ("Public" 95). A self-interested individualism, combined with the right industrial conditions, undeniably increased standards of living; never could the efforts of an individual achieve higher levels of production.

Despite these great leaps forward for "individualism," however, Dewey says that the model of the self-interested individual was not without its costs. The impact was "liberating with respect to single persons," but "unsettling to the community" ("Public" 94). The cost of the emphasis on the individual, was the loss of concern for others as individuals became submerged in "extensive and invisible bonds… 'great impersonal concerns, organizations,' which now pervasively affect the thinking, willing and doing of everybody, and which… ushered in [a] 'new era of human relationships'" ("Public" 99). Modern society brought about great advancements technologically, but as individuals fell into the roles necessary to achieve greater production,

their sense of community was lost. Where there were once bonds of familiarity, there are now artificial relationships constructed for the sake of efficiency.

3.3 Ideological Effects

This is especially concerning, because the globalized society not only forces individuals to act in a certain way, but also functions to actively indoctrinate individuals as well. Because of "the increase of easy and rapid intercommunication," individuals come to understand themselves in certain roles, and easily become set in habits which "economize intellectual as well as muscular energy" ("Public" 73). As time goes on, individuals become more and more set in the understanding that if they only act selfishly, and maximize individual utility, society will appropriate their efforts such that they benefit society at large; set in these habits, individuals become resistant to change. The understanding that the individual is selfish serves to at the same time pacify the public, and to make them apathetic to the direction of society at large.

Ironically, perhaps the greatest consequence of building a political system on the dualism of individual/society is that the understanding of individuals as necessarily opposed to society at large prevents the proper functioning of democratic decisionmaking mechanisms. Dewey says that the very "…forces which have brought about the form of democratic government, general suffrage, executives and legislators chosen by majority vote, have also brought about conditions which halt the social and humane ideals that demand the utilization of government as the genuine instrumentality of an inclusive and fraternally associated public" ("Public" 100). Individuals, only concerned with self-benefit, allocate the responsibility of public administration to public officials. The public officials, however, themselves the embodiment of the individual/society dualism, are then forced to choose between either a self-interested or collectivist ideal; if public officials are not held accountable, they are presented with an opportunity ripe for exploitation.

Dualisms are dangerous not only because the impose limits on the "intellectual significance" of objects, preventing meaningful progress and experimentation, but also because they create irresolvable conflict, resulting in the necessity of a tragic choice. As it is, the United States survives on a very delicate balancing act between a selfish and altruistic individualism, and if the scale were ever to tip too far in the other direction, democracy would cease to exist.

3.4 The Altruistic Individual

It is with this in mind that Dewey examines the flip side of the coin, and traces out the consequences of the belief in a fully altruistic individualism, one in which communitarian concerns in every case outweigh the consideration of the individual. Although the "liberation of the individual," the understanding of the individual as fully selfish, leads individuals to withdraw from democratic initiatives, neither can Dewey accept the full submergence of the individual into society. Using the state as a metaphysical focal point to unify society is out of the question, both because it leads to an aggregation of power incredibly susceptible to corruption, and "conceptual domination," in which individuals are marginalized as far as they are different from the universalized state ("Public" 65). With the metaphysical presupposition of the state representing the embodiment or essence of a culture or people, and with the assumption of the state as having divine authority, those who fall out of the parameters of what the state is slated to metaphorically represent are excluded.

With the refusal to advocate for a complete submergence of the individual, and the understanding that society has already evolved beyond the point where small community relationships are possible, Dewey arrives at a temporary stopping point. For Dewey, "[t]he line of demarcation between actions left to private initiatives and management and those regulated by the state have to be discovered experimentally" ("Public" 75). None of the current options are

satisfactory, so if we are to restore the pragmatic method of experimentation to social affairs, and to close the dualism of the natural sciences/social sciences, we must keep looking.

4. Individualism and Corporatization

Dewey, looking for an individualism to restore the movement of democratic mechanisms without compromising ideals of freedom, returns to the new network of relations that individuals in the modern era find themselves in. In *Individualism Old and New*, Dewey provides an exposition of the economic, social, and political arena in which individuals in the modern era find themselves, explaining that while Americans may still understand themselves as "rugged individualists" of a bygone era, the economic structures that now dominate modern life have penetrated even the most personal aspects of identity. If we are to solve the problem of individualism, we must first acknowledge that the world is no longer the same one that the current, existing models of individualism were developed in. As such, and true to the pragmatic method, Dewey returns to empirical observation to provide an account of the new network of relations that individuals find themselves in.

4.1 Money Culture

Dewey begins by providing an account of the new age in which we live, saying that "[a]nthropologically speaking, we are living in a money culture" ("Individualism" 5). Whether we like it or not, immersed in a capitalist system, we live in a society in which everything is graded and understood in economic terms; money is the ultimate quantifier. While some may still believe we hold spiritual or religious values, Dewey says that our society has shifted such that "[w]orth is measured by ability to hold one's own or to get ahead in a competitive pecuniary race" ("Individualism" 6). Regardless of the beliefs that one may hold, it is clear that capitalist values have pervaded every aspect of our understanding of ourselves and our relations to others.

Americans, however, have still not come to terms with the shift in economic, social, and political landscape. Dewey says that "[i]t is evident that rapid industrialization of our civilization took us unaware… we glorify the past, and legalize and idealize the *status quo*… ("Individualism" 9). While the nature of social organization has changed, our conceptions of the relationship between individuals and society still has not. While we may understand ourselves as pioneers and leaders, as having constructed a society with the ideals of liberty and equality, the fact is that such a society does not exist. We have created a society "…divided into two classes, the working group and the business (including professional)… with the chief ambition of parents in the former class that their children should climb into the latter" ("Individualism" 5). While "opportunity" may remain a comforting thought, it is clear that the nation is divided into "upper" and "lower" class citizens.

Individuals in the modern scene, therefore "…vibrate between a past that is intellectually too empty to give stability, and a present that is too diversely crowded and chaotic to afford balance or direction to ideas and emotion" ("Individualism" 27). Individuals, holding outdated beliefs created in irrelevant contexts, drift aimlessly with no direction. As such, the direction of society has become uncoupled from democratic control. "[O]ur essential Americanism" says Dewey, "directs our politics only spasmodically" ("Individualism" 9). Instead, individuals in the modern age live in a society governed by complete economic determinism ("Individualism" 6). Therefore the task of reconstructing the individual, of creating a coherent individualism, ultimately boils down to the understanding of the modern economic structures in which we live. Until a new individualism is created, intelligent direction of society is impossible.

4.2 Corporatization

In Chapter 3 of *Individualism Old and New*, "The United States Incorporated," Dewey introduces the notion of "corporatization," a modern day phenomena in which individuals cannot find meaning or exert influence except in the context of corporations; the individual as an autonomous unit no longer exists. For Dewey, this phenomena is beyond socialism, and beyond collectivism, because it is neither entirely political nor an abstract ideal; rather, corporatization is the description of the reality of American life being colonized by economic interests, an empirical account of the behavior of individuals in everyday life.

Dewey begins by saying that while at one point it may have been "fashionable… to sum up the phenomena of our social life under the title of 'individualism'… associations, tightly or loosely organized more and more define the opportunities, the choices and the actions of individuals" ("Individualism" 18). Dewey attributes this to the "influence business corporations exercise in determining present industrial and economic activities," something that has "steadily [been moving] the United States… from an earlier pioneer individualism to a condition of dominant corporateness," one in which "[s]ize is our current measure of greatness" ("Individualism" 18-19). As the result of shifting economic conditions, individuals became irreversibly dispersed into corporate structures, which dominate the economic, social, and political scene of the modern era. Given that we are living in a "money culture," the more profit that these corporations are able to produce, the greater they grow, and the greater corporations grow, the more power and influence they acquire. The power and ability to shape society, in turn allows them to exert influence on almost every aspect of living in modern society and to create conditions under which corporatization thrives, and the corporations further are able to gain more

power and influence. Without a new individualism containing values that might be able to keep the growth of corporations in check, the "money culture," continues to grow unchallenged.

4.3 The Business Mind

Hand in hand with the domination of society by corporations, is the emergence of what Dewey calls "the business mind" ("Individualism" 21). The business mind, the individuals at the top of the corporate ladder, those most versed in the corporate world, "in their collective capacity, determine the tone of society at large as well as the government of industrial society, and have more political influence than the government itself" ("Individualism" 21). If individuals voluntarily submit themselves to these corporate structures, for fear of an "[insecurity] [that] cuts deeper and more widely than bare unemployment," then they voluntarily submit themselves to the authority of others in a hierarchy of administration "Individualism" (28). It then naturally follows, not only that the individuals within the corporation lose a sense of authentic self-agency, but also that relinquished agency is then aggregated and appropriated by those at the top of the ladder—the "business minds." The emergence of corporations is directly correlated to a loss of self-direction, the aggregation of power at the top of hierarchical chains, and the corruption of democratic ideals.

The extent of the phenomena has progressed so far, however, that individuals must necessary connect themselves to a corporation, to engage in these networks of association that characterize the new age. Beyond the fact that we live in a "money culture," and economic necessity entails submitting oneself to corporate structures, but individuals, despite thinking of themselves as "captains of their own soul," can no longer accept the consequences of charting their own course ("Individualism" 28). The domination of society by corporate structures is not just a fact of economic observation, the domination is so complete that individuals have now

entered into new understandings of their roles in society. To leave them, says Dewey, is to suffer an "[i]nsecurity [that] cuts deeper and more widely than bare unemployment" ("Individualism" 28). The corporate structure has become something that individuals enter into not because of economic necessity, but rather because there is no longer any other context in which individuals understand themselves.

4.4 New Associations

It is with this in mind that Dewey reminds us that his description of corporateness "[was] not given in order to be either deplored or approved…only to call out the picture of the decline of an individualistic philosophy of life, and the formation of a collectivist scheme of interdependence…" ("Individualism" 24). Dewey, mindful that modern society has changed, and that we can no longer return to our "individualism" of the past, provides that final reminder that we are now, whether we like it or not, in an incredibly complicated and intricate network of associations, and it is clear that we must move away from a "largely mechanical and quantitative system of socialization… [i]f the chaos and the mechanism are to generate a mind and soul, an integrated personality" ("Individualism" 24). The new individualism must be intelligent, intentional, and have authentic self-agency. If the pragmatic method of experimentation is to be applied to social affairs, we must look at the new networks of relation that individuals exist in and tend to them such that rather than letting society mindlessly run its course, we can achieve "guided process of change."

5. Individualism Old and New

Dewey, having provided an account of the new network of relations in which we find ourselves, and a description of the degree to which individualism has been lost, begins to point us in the direction of what a new individualism might look like. Dewey struggles, however, with

the question of how such an individualism might emerge given the constraints of culture. In fact, in the modern age, individuals seem trapped in an endless and circular metaphysical debate about the proper role of the individual in society. While it is clear that any new individualism must allow for the ideals of freedom, the ultimate principle to which liberal societies appeal, Dewey stops short for fear of both giving a prescription for which society is not ready, and of compromising ideals of freedom. It is with this in mind that Dewey points us back towards experimentation, the application of the pragmatic method to social affairs, as the only possibility of redemption for the individual; only once we are scientific in our direction of culture, can the individual be reconstructed and the American ideals of freedom finally be realized.

5.1 Individualism Old

In Chapter VI of *Experience and Nature*, "Nature, Mind and the Subject," Dewey enters into a discussion of the two models of the individual that society is currently working with, how neither model is entirely correct, and hints at the limited self-agency that individuals have within the constraints of culture. Dewey begins by tracing the current "rugged individualism" back through its slow emergence from more collectivist cultures, noting that the new individualism emerged only when it became advantageous for society to encourage deviation.

According to Greek reflection, says Dewey, what was "individual" was not found in the particular human, but rather in a perfect "species immutable in time and having form… a real entity, a metaphysical or existential whole including and characterizing all particulars" ("Experience" 162-163). As such, "[m]ankind as a species [was] more truly an individual than was this or that [hu]man" ("Experience" 162). This is in contrast with modern cultures, says Dewey, which hold the strength of the individual to be its deviation, its particularity, and its difference from that of the whole. The shift in mindset happened, says Dewey, when particularity

and deviation became useful, when society changed such that the particularity of each individual human being could be harnessed for productive purposes ("Experience" 167). No longer was the priority to enforce uniformity for the purposes of social stability, but rather to encourage individualistic mind and variation for the purposes of "generating greater social security and fullness of life" ("Experience" 167). Dewey notes, however, that social heterogeneity alone does not generate socially desirable consequences, it is a heterogeneous population in conjunction with a social organization that allow for its strength to be utilized that is key; the individual and society must work together in tandem.

It is with this that Dewey reminds us that despite the exaltation of "the individual," in modern society, the individual is never a solitary unit, but a product of the culture and community of which the individual was reared. In a highly individualist culture, we may assume that there is "no problem involved in breaking loose from the weight of tradition and custom, of initiating observations and reflections, forming designs and plans, undertaking experiments on the basis of hypothesis, diverging form accepted doctrines and traditions," but that is simply not the case ("Experience" 169). The individual, from the moment they are born, is thrust into a cultural trajectory over which they have no control. In turn, one might rebut that "it is only error that the mind needs to cut loose from, and that it can do this by direct appeal to nature, by applying pure observation and reflection to objects," but this idea, says Dewey, is "pure fiction" ("Experience" 170). The culture of an individual is not just the context in which an individual understand themselves, but is the very substrate from which the individual is formed; it is impossible to escape.

5.2 Individual/Society

We then arrive at the two different perspectives regarding the "individualistic" individuals that exist in modern society: the classical understanding that individuals in modern life are the "revolt of undisciplined barbarians," and the modern understanding that the individuals in modern life are instead "emancipation[s] [from society], [and] the achieving of voluntary maturity… [as] every human being is an end in [them]selves" ("Experience" 168). While the former understanding of the individual normatively asserts that social organization is prior to the individual, the latter asserts that it is the individual that is prior to social organization. And while the terminology used in advancing both positions has changed, it is very clear that the fight over which position is correct still remains. Whether we are talking about socialism or capitalism, a Democratic or Republican philosophy, individual rights or group rights, the fight always ultimately boils down to that of the proper relationship between individuals and society at large.

Given, however, that for Dewey there exists some type of continuum between individuals and society, neither stance is entirely correct. While the "individual" and "society" both are both common units of measurement, they cannot entirely be abstracted away from each other. The individual does not exist without society, and society does not exist without the individual. While both terms hold ontological significance, however, the debate cannot be resolved. Given also that individuals are not free to change their beliefs at will, and that culture moves slowly and according to social conditions, it is difficult to imagine how we might arrive at a new individualism. It is this question that Dewey aims to tackle in his book *Freedom and Culture*.

5.3 Freedom and Culture

How, then, can we control the direction of culture? Dewey, in his book, *Freedom and Culture,* names the scientific method as that which would enable us to arrive at the intelligent direction of culture and create a new individualism; if society is to apply the pragmatic method of experimentation to social affairs, however, we must first move past the dualism of subjective/objective inquiry. Dewey begins by challenging the notion of freedom and its importance to societies in the democratic tradition. Traditional notions of freedom, built on outdated models of the individual, are unattainable. The search for freedom then, depends on the discovery of a new individualism first. Dewey emphasizes the role that culture has on politics, saying that while we may believe that the subjectivity of culture is separate from the objective rationality of the state, such a dualism impedes the pragmatic method of experimentation. Whatever this new freedom might look like then, it is clear that it will turn on moving past the subjective/objective dualism, which necessitates liberation from metaphysics as an operating principle. Only then might we be able to find that which is more primary than freedom itself—the notion of the individual.

Dewey starts the first chapter of *Freedom and Culture*, "The Problem of Freedom," by disputing traditional notions of freedom, all of which he sees as based on inaccurate models of the individual. Dewey identifies three traditional formulations of freedom and shows them all to turn on some type of dualism that does not hold up in practice. Dewey says that while according to the democratic tradition the "attainment of freedom [seems to be] the goal of political history," historically, freedom has been identified with being an individual, being in a state, and being rational ("Freedom" 24). In the American tradition, however, "the idea of freedom has been connected with the idea of individuality, of *the* individual," perhaps because the American nation

was founded on a rebellion from distant monarchical control ("Freedom" 24). This is problematic for Dewey, because the individual never exists as fully independent, As Dewey reminds us, "individuality demands association… otherwise it is formless and void in power" ("Freedom" 166). The assumption that individuals can fully be autonomous is dependent upon the dualism of individual/society. If individuals understand freedom to ultimately be the exertion of self-interest, while the responsibility of regulating social welfare is allocated to the state, as far as individuals have their choices constrained at all in the interests of social welfare, the individual understands their freedom as being limited. As long as a conflict exists between the individual and state, freedom is not achievable. Neither, then, can Dewey accept the notion of freedom as being achieved when an individual is entirely submerged in a state. To hold submergence in a state to be positive freedom, as the actualization of human potential, is to commit to the same dualism that makes freedom as being an individual unviable. In an ideal totalitarian state, the individual cannot exist. As long as the individuals of which state are composed exist, and there is any sort of deviation from the "universal state," there can be no freedom.

It is the notion of freedom as being rational, however, that Dewey is particularly concerned with. If freedom is identified with being fully rational, then by definition it is the denial of subjectivity that allows us to be free. While this dualism may make sense metaphysically, like other dualisms, it does not hold up in practice. The "culture" that Dewey is referring to here, is that of "the relations that exist between persons, outside of political institutions, relations of industry, of communication, of science, art and religion, [that] affect daily associations, and thereby deeply affect the attitudes and habits expressed in government and rules of law…" ("Freedom" 6). If we understand subjectivity to be culture, and objectivity to

be that of rational government administration, Dewey is commenting that in fact the two interact more than one might think. Dewey is making the point that our lawmakers and public officials cannot be assumed to have objective rationality; just as human nature is directed by culture, so then is politics. In turn then, we cannot assume that our laws have some sort of objective rational strength, as "[t]he inquisition of public opinion overwhelms in practice the freedom asserted by the laws in theory" ("Freedom" 6). Just because we have "freedom" according to the laws does not mean that we have that freedom in actuality; culture is still a determining factor. To ignore culture then, and to let it drift as economic and mechanical forces dictate, is to allow economic and mechanical forces to control the direction of society. As such, "[w]e are now forced to see," says Dewey, "that positive conditions, forming the prevailing state of culture, are required" ("Freedom" 7). No longer can we allow for society to drift as economic and mechanical forces may dictate, we must close the subjectivity and objectivity dualism. Only then can we achieve intelligent control of culture to allow for a new individualism to be discovered and accepted.

Now that it is clear that we must attain intelligent control of culture to direct society, how might we be able to apply the pragmatic method of experimentation to culture towards that end? The key once again comes from closing the subjectivity/objectivity dualism. The dualism of subjectivity/objectivity is concerning not only because it prevents us from achieving direction of society, but also because it prevents the proper application of the scientific method. The dualism, with the assumption that "science" is objective, while "social affairs" are subjective, forces "science" and "social affairs" to be fundamentally incompatible. "Science," however, is not and never has been objective since the Enlightenment. As science understood post-Enlightenment is subjective, it necessitates subjective interpretation as a driving force. To control society, we must

control culture, and to control culture, we must move past the subjectivity/objectivity dualism to apply the pragmatic method of experimentation to social affairs.

5.4 Individualism New

What, then, would this application of the pragmatic method of experimentation to social affairs look like? How can culture be directed? And how can culture be directed without compromising ideals of freedom? In many ways, it seems as if freedom is impossible in a pluralistic culture. Beyond the fact that society is built on the contradiction of individual/society, there is simply no way to resolve competing claims of an inherently subjective nature. As long as there is any divergence from a universal body, and no objective standard against which claims can be measured, then disagreements cannot be resolved; one claim will have to win out over another. It is for this reason that for Dewey directs us not towards a normative end, but towards a method that will allow us to better understand the relationships between individuals and thus achieve any end in social organization that we want—a method that will allow for the construction of a new individualism to collapse the individual/society dualism, and for the organic direction of politics; Dewey names not a direction, but shows us how we might direct.

In Chapter V of *Experience and Nature*, "Nature, Communication and Meaning," Dewey provides an account of why "[o]f all affairs, communication is the most wonderful," giving an implicit account of the pragmatic method of experimentation as the only method capable of collapsing dualisms and finding new ways forward. In communication, says Dewey, meanings are abstracted from events to "pass from the plane of external pushing and pulling to that of revealing themselves to [humans]" ("Experience" 133). Language solidifies the substance of experience such that humans are able to describe and relate the experience of phenomena in nature. Once meanings are established, then "all natural events are subject to reconsideration and

revision; they are re-adapted to meet the requirements of revision… [and] subject to ideal experimentation: their meanings may be infinitely combined and re-arranged in imagination…" ("Experience" 132). Language is a process of continuous scaffolding—meanings are extracted from experience and then can be experimented with, at which point more meanings may be built on top of the original. Language itself is an experimentation with ideals, an attempt to find ways of communication that most adequately describe experience of provide the most ideal consequences; science runs parallel to the development of language.

The key, however, is the open-endedness of the process, in the ability not only to amend existing definitions to "meet the requirements of revision," but that ability to return to experience and nature to abstract new vocabularies, new meanings, and new understandings that might better suit our purposes. The method of experimentation, then, derives its power from empirical observation, from its ability to produce actionable results, something that metaphysics cannot give us. If our current understandings of "individual" and "society" respectively are incompatible, then we must return to empirical observation, and nature and experience to look for new definitions of "individual" and "society" that are. While Dewey may not know what freedom on a social level might look like, the measure of freedom as far as the pragmatic method goes is found from turning away from metaphysics as an operating principle—something that allows for the revision of understandings as needed. When we devote ourselves to metaphysical, unchanging ideals, the pragmatic method of experimentation is impossible.

It is with this that in Chapter 5 of *Experience and Nature*, "Towards a New Individualism," that Dewey explicitly names individualism as not something given, but something re-workable, and something specifically to be found in the new networks of association that individuals in the modern age find themselves. Dewey says to arrive at a new

individualism, we must understand that society is "…but the relation of individuals to one another in this form and… [the fact that] all relations are interactions, not fixed molds" ("Experience" 42). It is the pragmatic method of experimentation that will allows us to come to a more holistic understanding of the individual and its network of relations, so that we might be able arrive at a new conception of the individual, which will ultimately allow for the achievement of guided processes of change in social affairs.

6. Conclusion

It is clear that the current individualism is inadequate for achieving ideals of freedom. Whether by allocating decisionmaking to public officials, or by dissipating authentic self-agency into corporate structures to be appropriated by those at the top of the hierarchical chain, the modern individualism disconnects the individual from democratic decisionmaking procedures. Before we can gain control of society, however, we must gain control of culture—something that can only be done through the application of the pragmatic method of experimentation to social affairs. Otherwise, society is controlled by economic and mechanical forces, and our culture is held hostage by metaphysical dualisms. Only then can we develop a new individualism that can reintegrate the individual and society so that they are not necessarily at odds with one another.

The pragmatic method of experimentation is so powerful because it allows for us to at the same time achieve direction over society, but without compromising ideals of freedom. Because the pragmatic method of experimentation is precisely that—only a method—it does not posit normative ends that are necessarily opposed to that of others. The pragmatic method is so powerful because it is more concerned with allowing for the achievement of *any* end, rather than a particular one. Even if two ends are at odds, given continued experimentation, there is always the potential to find some sort of compromise at a higher position of knowledge. The pragmatic

method derives its power from its contingent and responsive nature; it is not bound to a goal that may at any time become outdated and irrelevant. The pragmatic method allows for social progress.

Dewey has shown the need for a new individualism, and the method by which we might arrive at one. Dewey, however, does not give us an explicit answer. Given that he has shown that a change in culture cannot happen unless the right idea encounters the right social conditions, however, it seems wise that Dewey leaves us to discover the answer on our own. Neither would it be consistent for Dewey, as an individual more concerned with method than product, to explicitly make a normative claim for what the "new individualism" might be. In the end, the significance in Dewey's project ultimately comes from his demonstration that the dualism of individual/society creates unsustainable conflict, and that the subjective/objective split hampers progress.

While Dewey's main project seemed to have been the diagnosis of a problem, Dewey, however, does not leave us with no guidance. Dewey, through an explication of where the modern individualism falls short, has in fact provided us with a series of conditions that the new individualism must satisfy. Whatever form the new individualism might take, it is clear that it must entail a fundamental redefining of the "individual" and "society" such that the dualism between individual and society can be collapsed; it must collapse the dualism of "subjectivity" and "objectivity" such that progress can be made; and it must come with the recognition of the new networks of association characteristic of the new social, economic, and political age. Dewey has not given us an explicit solution, but has given us the problem, and all the components that we need to find the answer on our own.

In the years following, a number of philosophers, faced with a world wracked by inequality and injustice, have taken up the mantle of Dewey's challenge to find a new individualism. While not all of them have engaged explicitly with Dewey's philosophy, it is clear they are working on the same problems. It is furthermore clear that a solution may only be found once the metaphysical dualism of individual/society and subjectivity/objectivity are worked past. Whatever shape the successful inquiry might take then, it is crucial that it continues to remain pragmatic in nature. It is with this that I turn to the evaluation of contemporary theories of justice, which I argue are the modern day continuations of Dewey's project. I start with perhaps the most famous of the 21st century, Martha Nussbaum's "Capability Approach."

Chapter 2: The Capabilities Approach

1. Introduction

Martha Nussbaum (1947-Present), writing in the late 20th century, and early 21st century, is one of the most prominent American philosophers engaging with on-going questions of justice. Her development of the "Capabilities Approach," developed in conjunction with Nobel Prize winning economist Amartya Sen, was conceived in the 1980s as an alternative approach to welfare economics and as an extension of Rawlsian principles of justice. Nussbaum's "Capabilities Approach" rests on two main principles: (1) the assumption that "that the freedom to achieve well-being is of primary moral importance," and (2) that "that freedom to achieve well-being is to be understood in terms of people's capabilities" (Robeyns 2011). These two core assumptions are intended as an amendment to the classical social contract theory, filling in gaps of justice that otherwise have not been addressed. Nussbaum's book *Frontiers of Justice*, published in 2007, lays out the core tenants of her philosophy. In *Frontiers of Justice,* Nussbaum provides a compelling account of the deficiencies of modern social-contract based theories of justice and advances her own position in response, suggesting her "Capabilities Approach" as an alternative.

In many ways it seems as if Martha Nussbaum's *Capabilities Theories* plugs in right where Dewey's philosophy leaves off. In fact, it even seems as if Nussbaum's philosophy takes on a kind of pragmatic character. Nussbaum begins the Introduction of *Frontiers of Justice,* saying that theories of justice should be "abstract… have a generality and theoretic power that enables them to reach beyond the political conflicts of their time… [while remaining] responsive to the world and its most urgent problems… open to changes in their formulations and even in their structures in response to a new problem or to an old one that has been culpably ignored"

(Nussbaum 1). She makes a case for breaching the traditionally upheld divide of "public" and "private" life, citing the distinction as a barrier to inquiry, and one that is especially damaging with regards to gender justice. There can be no private sphere "immune from justice" (Nussbaum 1). In this regard, Nussbaum seems to have taken up the mantle of Dewey's challenge, engaging with both Dewey's diagnosis of a lost individualism, and with regards to current insufficient theories of justice; Nussbaum's aversion to dualisms perhaps indicates an attempt to restore philosophy's role in driving social progress.

For Nussbaum, the answer is to come from a change in theoretical structure—the evaluation of which depends largely on the model of individualism that each theory utilizes. While theory may seem to have little tractability with regards to effecting long-needed changes, practice inevitably flows from how we as individual understand our place in society and what we believe society owes its individuals. Nussbaum's philosophy revolves once again around this question of the individual vs. society. She even goes so far as to say that we need "new way[s] of thinking about who the citizen is and a new analysis of the purpose of social cooperation" (Nussbaum 2). Nussbaum says that the current paradigm of justice, supposing a self-interested individual, is mutual advantage-centric. However, this has yielded undesirable results—namely inequality. Society needs to move instead towards a paradigm of justice centered on "care": a theory she later dubs the "Capabilities Approach." In some ways, however, it seems as if Nussbaum, through discussion, elaboration, and continuation of existing theories of justice, inadvertently perpetuates some of the very dualisms she is attempting to subvert.

As Nussbaum singles out the social contract theory, specifically as developed by John Rawls, as the most powerful and extensive theory of justice to date, I begin by giving a general overview of social contract theory—what it is and how it is supposed to work. I then move on to

evaluate it strengths and weaknesses, giving an account of the good and bad results that it has produced. I show that although the social contract theory may be the most powerful theory of justice we have so far, it still fundamentally relies on the selfish/altruistic dualism—a dualism shown in the previous chapter to have empirically bad results. I show that although Nussbaum aims to amend the weak points of Rawls' theory by extending its reach to individuals that are neither free, equal, nor independent, that her project ultimately represents the perpetuation of an outdated paradigm still based on the selfish/altruistic dualism. She additionally, in engaging with Rawls' social contract theory, inadvertently falls victim to another dualism—that of procedure and outcome, which inevitably leads to the unsavory choice of either domination or complicity in matters of injustice. Ultimately I argue that while Nussbaum improves Rawls' social contract theory, she is still working with a theory based on a number of different dualisms, and therefore has no choice but to once again split the individual back into private/public and subjective/objective spheres of life. I conclude that the selfish/altruistic dualism has led society to suffer from greater inequality than ever before, and that if we are to solve these issues of domination and oppression to arrive at a consistent notion of justice, we must leave behind metaphysical debates and arrive at a new individualism that does not rely on dualisms of previous inquiries.

2. The Social Contract Tradition and Rawls

It is important to start from John Rawls' philosophy, as Nussbaum describes her project as an extension of Rawlsian principles. Rawls, writing mostly in the 20th century, is perhaps best known for his book *A Theory of Justice*: a book regarded by many, including Nussbaum, to be the strongest version of the social contract theory to date. As Nussbaum's philosophy is based off

of Rawls', and Rawls' theory of justice is distinctly in the social contract theory, it is important to first give a brief description of what the social contract theory is.

According to Nussbaum, the social contract theory, as a theory of political organization and justice, supposes that individuals previously existed in a "state of nature" in which they were "free, equal, and independent," and then subsequently contracted rules for relations that ultimately proved advantages for all parties involved. The theory therefore makes two signal contributions (Nussbaum 10-11):

1. "Human interests themselves… are well served by political society, a society in which all surrender power before law and duly constituted authority"
2. "If we divest human beings of the artificial advantages some of them hold in all actual societies… they will agree to a contract of a certain specific sort"

Rawls draws on these two principles as he develops his own "Circumstances of Justice," circumstances under which making a social contract makes sense. Rawls' "Circumstances of Justice," are divided into two categories: objective and subjective, the former describing objective conditions that make the contract "possible and necessary," and the latter describing conditions that make the contract subjectively attractive (Nussbaum 27). The state, and thus the public, emerges from a selfish and objective need to facilitate consequences. It is then the identification of the public with objectivity that allows for individuals to thrive in their private subjectivity. From the very beginning, the social contract theory is dependent upon the objective/subjective, public/private dualism.

2.1 The Autonomous Individual

Besides the dependence on the objective/subjective, public/private split, however, the theory is perhaps even more problematic because it assumes that individuals are "free, equal, and independent," assumptions that Nussbaum identifies as myth (Nussbaum 28). Although each of those assumptions is problematic in their own way, the assumption that is perhaps is most immediately apparent as harmful is the assumption of rough equality. Rawls makes the case that individuals that enter into a social contract must be of "rough equality" for the reason of mutual advantage—those individuals that are demonstrably more powerful than others would have no reason to contract with individuals of lesser standing. In the case of a severe imbalance of power, the more powerful individuals would merely dominate or oppress those of less power. Clearly, however, not all humans are of equal ability, and this assumption itself leads to domination.

Rawls does not say that individuals are equal, but of "rough equality," a distinction that makes all the difference; while rough equality may not have been an issue when societies were first starting to emerge, in an incredibly precise age of accounting and property rights, small differences stack up over time. Rawls begins by stating that clearly, not all humans are of equal ability. He bases his assumption of rough equality, however, off of a point developed initially by Hobbes—no matter how large the difference in ability, even the weakest human, through planning or enlisting the aid of others, should have no problem in killing or at least severely harming whoever may be the strongest human. In the human species, the difference of ability is not so large that no human is a threat. While this may have been true in a state of nature, we run into more problems when we think of a post-state-of-nature society. As the state has emerged to regulate behavior and to ensure property rights, to ensure the right for humans to pursue individual conceptions of happiness without impeding on the rights of others, severe harm is no

longer a worry. The concern is no longer, for the most part, for life, but rather for the gathering of resources. If we throw out the idea of allocating equal resources to every individual based on equal human dignity, a socialist system, we are left with the "fair" idea of allocating resources based on individual effort, or value added to society. This system, and the assumption of this allocation of resources as fair is undeniably a core tenant of capitalist democratic systems.

The problem is, however, that individuals are not "equal." Perhaps when the consideration was ability to do harm to others, individuals could be considered more or less equal, but when the consideration is ability to accumulate resources based on skill, intelligence, or some other measure of ability, the differences, considered on the margin, become immense. What is important is not that individuals are "roughly equal," as to the extent that individuals are equal there is no net difference, but the extent to which individuals are different. Even a small difference in ability, if taken to be the ability to earn money, compounded over time, becomes great. Individual differences in ability become clear, and aggregate not only over life times, but over multiple life times as well. Someone with "capital," has the ability to quickly make money just by virtue of having capital.

2.2 The Self-Interested Individual

By some accounts, however, therein actually lies the strength of a capitalist system built on social contract assumptions. While Rawls cleanly divides human behavior into selfish/altruistic functioning, and then identifies human nature, at least in public, with the former, it is this recognition of human beings as selfish that makes the theory so powerful. Rawls' theory binds itself to each individual insofar as they behave selfishly—something that is true of individuals in the public more often than not. The capitalist system, recognizing that individuals are fundamentally selfish, then harnesses that selfish drive to the benefit of society at large.

The social contract theory, based on the idea of mutual advantage, is inextricably intertwined with the idea of property rights in existing capitalist systems, and thus has many advantages. While in a state of nature the self-interest of an individual would have necessarily been opposed to that of others, the state, in its regulation of a market with strong property rights, theoretically functions in a way that an individual can only be acting in their own self-interest while satisfying the interests of others. The capitalist system, having created a "cash nexus" that allows individuals to quantify strength of desires and then make efficient exchanges accordingly, is able to theoretically maximize utility in every voluntary transaction that takes place. If both parties did not benefit from the transaction, the transaction would not take place. The capitalist system furthermore maximizes utility on a market level as well. It is impossible to know what someone else on the other side of the world wants, but if you advertise a product and it is paid for, then someone's desires are necessarily being satisfied, whether you were initially aware of the desire of not. If one does not make any sales, and therefore no profit, then it is an indication that you are providing a service or good that no one wants, and will have to go out of business. Through trial and error, the market is slowly maximizing utility in society, making sure that individuals' desires are being satisfied. The selfish motivation that drives an individual to seek profit forces the individual at the same time to be necessarily considering the satisfaction of others' desires.

In that way, it seems as if we have actually solved the problem of the selfish/altruistic dualism—at least as far as self-interest is opposed to the interest of society at large. If our economic and social system is designed in such a way that the interest of an individual is to act in the interest of others, then we have solved the individual/society dualism as well. Pragmatically, if the results are good, then perhaps humans are just fundamentally selfish

creatures, and there is nothing left to say. Perhaps the assumption of individuals as fundamentally and for the most part selfish is as close to a picture of the true individual as we can get. We know, however that this is not the whole story. While with the caveat that self-interest depends on preference it seems as if all behavior is necessarily self-interested, this is simply not true. If an individual behaves altruistically in private contexts, then they are either irrational, or have preferences for altruistic behavior, in which case they are still behaving in their own "self-interest." Even if an individual's altruistic behavior in private contexts is explained by their preferences for altruism, then "self-interest' in the public looks different than "self-interest" in the private. While the social contract capitalist system may to some degree harness the selfishness of an individual for the benefit of society at large, it depends on the private/public dualism—a dualism that Dewey has shown to have disastrous consequences.

Empirically, we see that the results of a system based on the dualisms present in social contract theory have been less than desirable; as a whole, society is become less, rather than more, stable. The modern day individualism, understood as primarily selfish, has led to a world racked with massive inequalities—not only in almost every country, but between respective countries as well. Besides the moral and ethical issues with such an allocation of resources, such a distribution is empirically bad for society as a whole. Societies with disproportionately unequal distribution of resources have higher rates of crime, mortality, happiness, for everyone—not just those on the bottom rung.

2.3 Veil of Ignorance

It is perhaps with this in mind, that Rawls adds perhaps the most famous mechanism of his theory of justice, the "Veil of Ignorance." Rawls' theory adheres to the social contract doctrine as far as it posits a fundamentally self-interested individual, but then simulates morality

through the Veil, a though experiment in which individuals agree to the social contract without information of where they may fall post contract. Individuals, wiped clean of social identity, are forced to create fair principles out of self-interest. Rawls still believes that the individual is fundamentally self-interested, but also that individuals should be more concerned with others. For this reason, the veil acts as a mechanism to subjugate human nature and simulate morality.

It is for this reason that Rawls' social contract is unique, says Nussbaum, and perhaps the strongest of its kind. Rawls' social contract fundamentally holds a dual allegiance to (Nussbaum 12):

1. The classical social contract doctrine
2. The core ideas of Kant's moral philosophy[3]

While the social contract, with its assumption of a purely self-interested individual coupled with the subjective/objectivity dualism would have allowed for society to be directed purely by economic forces, Rawls' allegiance to Kant's moral philosophy serves to temper that selfish drive, and perhaps arrive at a more balanced model of the individual. As the Veil is to work against the fundamentally selfish individual, however, Nussbaum notes that it is a "source of profound tension."

3. The Capabilities Approach

Nussbaum is still dissatisfied for the reason that Rawls' social contract theory leaves intact the dualisms of selfish/altruistic, public/private, and subjectivity/objectivity. Nussbaum, living in a world that perhaps more symptomatic of inequality than any other time in modern history, begins to hone in on the dualisms that she believes are holding back progress. Nussbaum

[3] Kant's moral philosophy points to rationality as the supreme moral principle. All rational beings, by virtue of being rational, are bound to respect the inherent dignity of other rational beings.

makes great progress in this regard, but because she does not completely break from the dualisms that she criticizes, she inevitably falls victim to perpetuating the dualisms that Dewey diagnoses.

3.1 The Metaphysical Trap

Nussbaum begins by amending Rawls' "Circumstances of Justice," which she sees as harmful in many ways because of its metaphysical assumption of a normal range of functioning. Nussbaum is speaking specifically here of Rawls' assumption of individuals existing in a state of nature as "free, equal, and independent" before they enter into a social contract. These assumptions are problematic, says Nussbaum, because they create a universal normalization of ability and then exclude anyone who does not fit within the narrow scope of whatever kind of human functioning is deemed "free, equal, and independent." It is with this in mind that Nussbaum turns towards the language of capabilities.

Nussbaum's language of capabilities comes with the recognition of human functioning as on a spectrum. It is not a specific normative range that individuals fall in then, but a demonstrated capacity for living a life that is considered to be uniquely human. Human rights and justice are achieved when individuals are able to live a life that allows them to develop these capabilities and flourish. Nussbaum's criticism is especially potent given the current state of affairs in the modern age. As previously discussed, not only does the assumption of a "normal" range of functioning exclude and marginalize segments of our population that do not fall within those parameters, but it also leads to devastating inequalities as well.

3.2 The Altruistic Assumption

As an extension of the Rawlsian philosophy, Nussbaum pushes her own "Capabilities Approach," intended to make more explicit the duties that individuals in society owe each other without resorting to metaphysical norms of ability. Moving beyond the simulation of morality

granted by Rawls' Veil of Ignorance, Nussbaum wants to tease out the difference between two questions that she said up until now have been conflated: (1) "By whom are society's basic principles designed?" and (2) "For whom are society's basic principles designed?" (Nussbaum 16). Whereas in Rawls' theory, the only reason that individuals would enter into a social contract is mutual advantage, equating the designers of the contract with those that the principles of the contract are designed for, in Nussbaum's version, individuals owe every human the right to flourish according to the designated capabilities simply by virtue of an individual's existence as a human. There are no normative requirements of rationality, equality, strength, or otherwise.

In order to flesh out her "Capabilities Approach," then, Nussbaum moves to provide an account of what, to her, a uniquely human life consists of; required in creating the list of capabilities she considers fundamental to a human life is an implied model of the individual. The way by which she generates and protects her list of capabilities, however, is by resorting to a strong version of inherent human dignity derived from Kantian principles. In doing so, she builds into the social contract model a stronger understanding of humans as inherently altruistic, and mutually respectful. Like any theory, the performance of her philosophy will be dependent upon the assumptions that it makes and the models that it uses. Core to her philosophy, and the pillar on which her principles of justice rest, is the assumption that humans are fundamentally altruistic and mutually respectful. Just as Rawls' social contract theory and the subsequent social systems developed from it work off of the assumption of an inherently selfish human, Nussbaum's capability theory can only gain traction in society if we assume that individuals (1) have inherent worth, and (2) care about the inherent worth of others—two assumptions that do not always prove to be true.

Nussbaum is hoping to break down the selfish/altruistic dualism—a dualism that generally leads individuals toward indifference towards the plight of others. In doing so by continuing to engage with Rawls' social contract, however, she in many ways inadvertently perpetuates the dualism that she must move past. Rather than rethinking the relationship between an individual and society, she continues to work with an outdated model. In trying to tip the scale of the selfish/altruistic individual further back towards altruism, she perpetuates the understanding that individuals act selfishly in some contexts and altruistically in others; the scale remains intact. And while the public/private dualism remains, she cannot make the progress that she seeks.

3.3 Procedure and Outcome

In building her "Capabilities Theory," Nussbaum additionally inadvertently falls victim to yet another dualism—that of a procedure vs. outcome-oriented approach, and one that additionally leads her to find problems in practical application. Rawls designs his philosophy as one that is procedurally-oriented, meaning that in his mind, if the procedures that lead to a decision are fair, that any subsequent results are fair as well. The focus is not on what happens, but that all parties agree beforehand to a set of principles that allow for further decisions to take place—principles that outline the conduct of society and the rules by which individuals are allowed to live. Rawls does this for a number of reasons, most markedly perhaps that a procedure-oriented approach allows for the avoidance of intuitionism and its subsequent problems: difficulty in balancing competing ends (Nussbaum 83). The procedures are something that can be agreed to and made clear before-hand, before any subjective disagreements or biases come into play. If one grants debate about what should or should not be achieved, what

individuals should or should not prioritize, then one may never achieve a conclusive answer. It is far easier, as procedural advocates would say, to agree on the rules of the game.

On the flip side, Nussbaum designates her philosophy as "outcome-oriented," meaning that for her, the importance is not on how we get somewhere, but what the ultimate results are. Means are only good insofar as they fulfill an end (Nussbaum 82). Nussbaum is very clear that although this method relies more heavily on intuition, it is more effective for its treatment of individuals as *human* beings, with human needs and desires, and more effective to getting to our goals. If the trade-off is between a more stable and final procedure, and a more fluid and interpretive theory allowing for selection of ends, Nussbaum would pick the latter every time. In this way, Nussbaum is very pragmatic: the selection of ends is necessary for a consistent gauge of progress, but the "murky and indefinite" nature of the theory allows for criticism and reevaluation (Nussbaum 84). With a solid and unchanging theory, you lose the ability to respond to an ever-changing world. All in all, says Nussbaum, if you want to know what a human needs to be happy and to retain a sense of dignity, just look—and act accordingly[4]. With this in mind, Nussbaum suggests a list of ten capabilities, of which she says that there are "no trade offs [or] balancing" (Nussbaum 85). Every human being must be allowed to reach a basic threshold level of these capabilities, or it would be the case that a human rights violation is happening.

Dualism aside, it seems as if Nussbaum's theory is stronger than Rawls' by almost every measure; Nussbaum provides a more wholesome account of our obligations to others in society and opens up her philosophy to pragmatic criticism. Nussbaum, having built her philosophy off

[4] It is important to note, that Nussbaum gives credit where credit is due. Nussbaum says that as far as social contract theories go, Rawls' is exceptional in that it is so front-laden (Nussbaum 83). In other words, Rawls has so many mechanisms packed into his procedure to simulate morality, that it would be unfair to portray his theory as deficient to the fullest extent. Nussbaum remains steadfast, however, that Rawls' theory is still inadequate, and that she would rather have her own outcome-oriented philosophy if given the choice.

of Rawls', also acknowledges the power of the social contract tradition, and the strength of the assumption of a selfish individual. Maybe individuals just act selfish in some contexts, and altruistic in others—or maybe individuals at one time acted more selfishly, but given the abundance of resources in the modern world, individuals have the potential to act more altruistically. The problem, however, is that not only are resources not distributed such that every individual is comfortable enough to act altruistically, but that empirically, even when individuals have more than enough, it is not always the case that they become benevolent. Empirically, we also see that it is often the case that those with the least behave the most altruistically (Miller, Kahle, & Hastings 2015).

Rawls' criticism of an outcome-oriented theory, however, is more troubling than may have initially been thought. Despite Nussbaum acknowledging both selfish and altruistic behavior, the emphasis on altruistic behavior, and therefore an outcome-oriented approach is dependent on the assumption that every human wants the same outcome. If the core pillar on which her philosophy rests is the assumption that humans have a very intuitive idea of human dignity, her philosophy is in jeopardy as soon as that assumption is not taken as indisputable. Nussbaum says that her philosophy is pluralistic and allows for a variety of ends, but any and every end that can be accepted depends on the assumption that individuals have that intuitive idea of human dignity. Certainly, however, it is clear that the idea of human dignity is not, or at least has not always been intuitive. Not only have humans held beliefs quite to the contrary in cases where individuals are taken to be important only insofar as they are part of and serve the ends of a nation, it is also not immediately clear that many non-Western cultures have the same "intuitive" idea of human dignity that Nussbaum has. It is difficult to imagine how any of these

cultures, either currently in existence or that will be, would respond to Nussbaum's persuasive arguments.

Nussbaum's approach is certainly a useful model for understanding the obligations we owe to individuals in progressive liberal western societies, but it may be lesser so in convincing those who do not hold the same values—those that most often, at least by Western standards, are guilty of human rights abuses. It may be useful for those situations in which violent revolution or corruption has caused the government to take on a different character than that envisioned and agreed to by the people, but Nussbaum's philosophy seems to have less strength in cultures that do not necessarily understand have the same model of individualism as Nussbaum does; it is not difficult to imagine disagreement with Nussbaum's understanding of what individuals need and desire. The choice in such situations then becomes either to impose our value system on another culture, which is to engage in domination and oppression, or to let what we view as human rights abuses continue; the choice is between paternalism and complicity.

4. A Split Individualism

The conflict of interests produced by a theory dependent on intuition for balancing competing ends seems problematic. If every individual has an inherent dignity, without any further guidance in evaluating conflicting claims to justice, it comes to pass that Nussbaum's philosophy ultimately forces a choice. Without any concrete quantitative measure or procedures that determine "fairness," then the choice of one option over another when both parties have legitimate claims to "flourishing" will necessarily entail the submission of one individual to another—domination. Whether due to an imbalance of power, or an arbitrary decision, the domination of one individual over another can hardly be seen as an act of justice.

4.1 Conflict of Interests

Nussbaum provides many examples of such a conflict of interests, and responds either by admitting defeat, or by purposefully splitting the individual such that they can at the same time hold conflicting beliefs. Nussbaum uses the first such tactic when she describes the conflict of interests between different animals. She says that when the flourishing of a tiger and its inherent need to hunt to be healthy conflicts with the right of the prey to live a full and fulfilled life, we run into problems (Nussbaum 370). Perhaps pragmatically, she suggests that we should attempt to find resolutions to the conflict. In this case, perhaps by feeding the tiger through non-violently acquired meat and then providing alternative enrichment to fulfill the need of the tiger to exercise its abilities in hunting. It is less clear what would happen if we cannot find a solution. As far as the killing of a mosquito goes, Nussbaum admits that although intuitively it seems like something of "minimal harm," it is an action clearly unethical under the Capabilities Approach (Nussbaum 363). She notes that this seems problematic, but ultimately says that it is not an issue or priority in the grand scheme of things.

4.2 Domination and Oppression

Perhaps more problematic, is when we deal with humans with conflicting claims to justice. It is easy to see how we would run into problems with animals; it is very clear what the needs and desire of animals are, and presumably they have no ability to compromise. When dealing with humans with rational ability, however, the resolution becomes more difficult. With the possibility of compromise, either one party is dominated, or a compromise is forced. It may be argued that people are compromising every day and that therefore compromise is an inevitability of human life. The difference, however, is that with a procedurally-oriented account of justice, we have clear guidelines by which we can resolve disputes. Even if the end result is

not completely to one party's satisfaction, the concern is not with the outcome, but with the fairness of the procedure; as long as the guidelines are followed, justice is done. When the justice is found in the outcome, however, and two parties have different subjective interpretations of what "justice" that necessarily conflict, one party will inevitably emerge having had their rights violated.

4.3 Determined Dualisms

In response to human conflict, Nussbaum has no other choice but to have her theory return to the dualisms of subjectivity/objectivity, private/public, and selfishness/altruism, and once again split the individual. In the very first chapter of *Frontiers of Justice*, she uses the American Amish to introduce an example of someone who can at one time fundamentally oppose a principle, and yet allow others to engage in the very action they oppose. She says that the American Amish, as a matter of religious conviction, abstain from voting. According to Nussbaum, the Amish would feel "deeply violated" should it be mandatory, but "appear happy" that citizens have the right to vote (Nussbaum 79). The Amish allegedly are able to objectively understand the importance of the right to vote, but subjectively are opposed to it as a matter of religious principle. As long as the Amish are left intact in their private subjectivity, there is no issue.

Nussbaum's claim is not unrealistic. It is true that many politicians advocate for policies that go against their own religious principles. In fact, this seems exactly what Nussbaum is referring to; she says that her theory is "explicitly introduced for political purposes only, and without any grounding in metaphysical ideas of the sort that divide people along lines of culture and religion" (Nussbaum 79). The problem, however, is that while it may be true that many politicians ignore their religious principles in their capacity as public officials, it is also true that

many politicians are voted into office solely as a matter of religious principle, and then subsequently openly advance policies based on those same religious principles. As Dewey points out, the subjective/objective dualism does not hold up in practice. To hold the belief that culture does not influence politics is to turn a blind eye to the forces driving society, and therefore to essentially relinquish control of its direction. In many ways, we seem to have ended up back where we started.

5. Conclusion

As Dewey notes in *Individualism Old and New,* a core part of the capitalist system, is that money has taken on a value beyond mere convenience; it inherently carries with it assumptions of worth and moral desert. Individuals in society with more capital are allowed to live better lives. They have better education, better healthcare, more consumption goods—we truly believe that those with more money deserve better. So as time progresses, the very assumptions of humans as fundamentally free, equal, and independent, carried over into a post-social contract society are assumptions that are causing individuals to no longer be free, equal, and independent. The rich become richer and the poor become poorer.

If society is churning out and aggravating inequalities on a metaphysical and empirical level, then domination seems to be inevitable—at least on the same terms on which the social contract tradition, and our society, is built. As our unchecked social system spins more and more wildly out of control, the need for a new individualism based on current social conditions is greater than ever. At the core of the conflict is the dualism of individual/society. While we want to move away from the assumption of a selfish individualism, it is not immediately clear that the assumption of altruism would be any more helpful. If the former results in empirical domination, it seems as if the latter results in many ways in metaphysical domination.

As the social contract traditions becomes increasingly cemented into the American culture, we more than ever need to remember the pragmatic refusal to declare allegiance to metaphysical ideals or to acknowledge dualisms. Both Rawls and Nussbaum make great advances with regard to Dewey's project. While Rawls introduces his Veil of Ignorance, perhaps in acknowledgment of new economic conditions that necessitate the re-evaluation of the way we identify with each other, Nussbaum does important work on attempting to break down the dualisms that she sees as obstructing justice. While both of them stay loyal to the social contract tradition, however, a tradition founded on and dependent upon dualisms, they cannot make the progress that they want.

If it is not decidedly clear that this line of reasoning will be productive, perhaps it is time that we return to Dewey's project for society, and question the very premises on which any theory of justice lies—its conception of individualism. It is with this that I turn to a different line of inquiry altogether, one that seeks to break with previous paradigms of justice. In Iris Young's *Justice and the Politics of Difference,* Young examines modern social contexts to provide a new, more relational account of the individual. By using her notion of "social groups," and abandoning metaphysics, Young, although never explicitly engaging with Dewey's philosophy, is finally able to create a new individualism relevant to modern contexts, and therefore provide a solution to Dewey's pragmatic dilemma.

Chapter 3: The Relational Individual

1. Introduction

Iris Marion Young (1949-2006), a political theorist and feminist philosopher writing primarily in the late 20th century and early 21st century, engages directly with the issues of social difference and inequality concerning Dewey and Nussbaum. While Dewey writes about the loss of individualism in modern society, and Nussbaum works to alter the theoretical structure of justice to better address human needs, Young wants to reframe the question of justice altogether. In her book, *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (1990), Young introduces the idea of "social groups," the idea that individuals first and foremost are composed of their relationships to others, rather than the other way around. By abandoning the idea of individuals as ontologically prior to social organization, and thus creating a conception of individuals as fundamentally relational, Young is able to create a new individualism that neither depends upon nor perpetuates existing dualisms—one that provides a new starting point for questions of political organization and governance.

Young, like Nussbaum, seems in many ways to be carrying the mantle of the pragmatic project conceived by Dewey. Although the current paradigm of justice is concerned with distribution, says Young, distributional issues represent only half of the picture, and are in fact a symptom of a greater problem: the lack of a consistent individualism. Whereas at one time the greatest and most pressing social concern was disrupting a model of society in which power was consolidated in a sovereign ruler, contemporary problems are much more subtle. The development of complex social structures means that a model of the individual constructed to combat despotic rule is no longer relevant nor applicable. In modern contexts, the individual is neither the altruistic community member, nor the self-interested revolutionary, and in order to

diagnose systemic issues non-attributable to a single individual, we must find a model of the individual that does not depend on this distinction.

It is with this in mind, that Young uses her idea of "social groups" to begin to collapse, one by one, dualisms that are holding our society hostage. If humans are fundamentally relational, then any relationships that do not allow for authentic and unoppressed interaction are fundamentally unjust. By addressing two major existing dualisms in society—individual/society and subjectivity/objectivity—and showing how they both are oppressive, Young shows that the task of reconstructing the individual is essential for justice, and that her conception of justice, in turn, is essential for social progress. The task of constructing a new individualism, of solving matters of social justice, and of allowing for social progress, then, are all one and the same. Young's project is the ultimate pragmatic project—one that seeks to restore the role of philosophy in cultural criticism, to absolve society of metaphysical blockage in dualisms, and to see the establishment of a method that will allow for any desired ends to be achieved.

In the first section I introduce Young's idea of social groups and oppression, exploring what the individual, and therefore injustice, looks like to Young. In the second section, I address the dualism of individual and society, and how the lack of a whole individualism allows for the appropriation of power for the benefit of the few. I continue on to argue that Young's diagnosis of the split between objectivity and subjectivity directly engages with Dewey's call for the revitalization of philosophy with regards to social affairs. Finally, I argue that what Young's "social groups" allows for is not just a better understanding of individuals with respect to society, but the application of the pragmatic method of experimentation to politics; her vision of "city life" allows for deviation and democratic control, which correspond to "hypothesis-making" and "experimentation" respectively. Ultimately, Young's project represents not just a new

individualism, nor just an answer to Dewey, but the culmination of the American project altogether.

2. Individualism and Injustice

2.1 Social Groups

At the heart of her philosophy, and crucial to her understanding of injustice, is Young's notion of "social groups," of which she says individuals are composed. Young defines social groups as a "collective of persons differentiated form at least one other group by cultural forms, practices, or way of life," meaning that social groups have inherently to do with identification and heterogeneity (Young 43). So long as there is no difference, there can be no social groups, as individuals would be indistinguishable from one another. Important to note is that for Young, "social groups" are characteristic of "throwness," meaning that from the moment an individual is born, he or she finds themselves as part of any number of "social groups." "Social groups" are not something that are chosen, and are something that are necessarily related to an individual's identity.

Young contrasts this with the "aggregate" and "association" methods of classification, both of which she calls "methodologically individualist" insofar as they assume the blank entity of an individual beforehand, and then attach on characteristics that identify them as members of certain groups or associations" (Young 43). In the aggregate and "association methods of classification, individuals are classified according to superficial markers and practices respectively, traits that are for the most part objective and external to an individual's identity. Whereas in an "aggregate" methodology individuals may be classified by hair of skin color, and in an "association" method of classification individuals may be classified by shared traditions or practices, in a "social group" method of classification, individuals are classified by

"identification with a certain social status, the common history that social status produces, and self-identification that identifies the group as a group" (Young 44). Individuals are classified not by external or superficial characteristics, but rather by the social implications of the traits that mark them out as "different" with regards to other groups.

The social group method of classification therefore constructs a different type of individualism—one that considers humans as fluid, dynamic, and subjective—one that may immediately be difficult to pin down. The social group method of classification considers individuals as "a product of social processes, not their origin," there is no "self" prior to social relations (Young 44). For Young then, the existence of social mechanisms that oppress individuals based on their membership in certain social groups is injustice. When one is not just differentiated, but oppressed based on difference, is when injustice takes place. The suppression of a social group is not just an unfair policy, but an attack on the self and identity of another.

2.2 Injustice

It is with this in mind that Young develops further her notion of "oppression," and the various forms that it can take. Young declines to give an explicit and essential definition of "oppression," but moves immediately to distance herself from the traditional conception of injustice as having to do with "'sovereignty,' a dyadic relation of ruler and subject, and instead [to] analyze the exercise of power as the effect of often liberal and 'humane' practices…" (Young 41). Young notes that, in contrast with traditional notions of oppression, her usage of the term denotes "systemic constraints" perpetuated "not because of tyrannical power… but because of the everyday practices of a well-intentioned liberal society" (Young 41). The cause is "unquestioned norms, habits, and symbols, in the assumptions underlying institutional rules and the collective consequences of following those rules" (Young 41). Injustice, for Young, is found

not in explicit forms of domination or abuse, but rather in social organization itself. Young's notion of injustice has to do with her understanding of the individual as being found in and constructed by its relation to others. Injustice occurs when those relationships are corrupted; the corrosion of social relationships is the corrosion of individuals themselves.

In Chapter 2 of *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, "The Five Faces of Oppression," Young identifies five different types of oppression which she says, in addition to acting as barriers in society to opportunity and success, function to indoctrinate individuals belonging to minority social groups with the understanding that they are lesser-than or less-deserving than individuals in the dominant group (Young 48-63):

1. Exploitation
2. Marginalization
3. Powerlessness
4. Cultural Imperialism
5. Violence

According to Young, the presence of any of the five types of oppression with relation to a social group indicates a disadvantaged population, and the presence of multiple types of oppression indicates not compounding levels of severity, but rather different ways in which individuals in groups are oppressed. Because the formal procedures of the law may not be as concerned with these implicit types of injustice, it may be tempting to write them off as relatively innocuous. For the reason that these implicit types of justice are difficult to detect and usually written off as relatively innocuous, however, they are especially damaging. Just as the wealth can be accumulated on the margin over time, so can social capital and opportunity. If, through these implicit beliefs, we are creating an world structurally functioning to keep members of certain

groups down, individuals will inevitably begin to understand themselves as lesser-than or less-deserving. Implicit and explicit beliefs, perhaps subjective and objective respectively, cannot be separated.

In introducing her idea of "social groups" and "oppression," then, Young, is directly engaging with Dewey's dualism of subjectivity/objectivity, and providing us with the ability to move past the dualism. By presenting an account of the individual that is entirely relational, Young grounds our discussion in actual human behavior and the consequences that it produces on other individuals, rather than a number of assumptions based on the possibility of separating human beliefs from actions. Young's relational individual therefore allows us to find and diagnose the injustice that takes place not in the rules, regulations, and laws that govern the behavior of everyday individuals, but rather a more pervasive and potent underlying system of unquestioned beliefs and assumptions that subtly influence society. As Dewey points out, culture can oftentimes override the force of law. What Young is really doing then, by introducing this new individual, is applying the pragmatic method of experimentation to social affairs. No longer is the concern with laws that "in theory," provide equality. Young wants to look not at the objects of social relations, not at the individuals themselves, but at the intellectual significance of the individual in a network of relations. Young wants to look at the *actual* effects that the laws we put in place have on individuals—because what is important is not what society says *should* happen, but what actually does.

Young's relational individual, then, is allowing us to diagnose and combat injustices that were impossible to see as long as individuals were posited as independent and extant prior to "social groups." If the "rugged individualist" is unbound by social forces and relationships to others, then the responsibility for the lot of any individual's life falls solely on the individual; the

social processes that create the structures that individuals live out their daily lives in remain unexamined. It is for this reason that Young addresses what she calls the "depoliticization" of the public—something symptomatic of the dualisms of individual/society and subjectivity/objectivity, both of which function to respectively rob individuals of the ability and desire to affect change.

3. The Welfare Capitalist State: Individuals and Society

In Chapter 3 of *Justice and the Politics of Difference, "*Insurgency and Welfare Politics," Young, having a new conception of the individual allowing her to diagnose injustice accordingly, moves into an explicit account of the ill effects of the subjectivity/objectivity dualism in modern society. Young begins by acknowledging that the current system of political organization, welfare capitalism, has left us in many ways better off than ever before. Social regulation of economic forces allowed us to create more material goods, and to therefore arrive at a higher standard of living than could have ever been achieved otherwise. The strength of the welfare capitalist system, however, comes from the harnessing of individual self-interest for the benefit of society at large. The welfare capitalist system exists by maintaining a delicate balance between the private and the public, between individual freedom and social regulation—something that can only take place so long as the government continues to work for the interests of its private citizens. Young says, however, that this is no longer happening. Because of (1) the assumptions of a welfare capitalist society, and (2) the bureaucratic domination of public life, the individual has become disconnected from democratic decisionmaking processes (70), and the public has been "depoliticized." Young's argument here, then, sounds similar to that of Dewey's. In this section I argue that Young, despite never explicitly saying so, engages directly with Dewey's concern about the dispersal of the individual into larger, impersonal, structures of

organization, and the subsequent loss of the direction over society. Instead of naming the issue of "corporatization," however, Young uses the terminology of "bureaucratization," something perhaps more suited to political developments since Dewey's time.

3.1 Welfare Capitalism

Young takes as her starting point, then, the normative assumptions of a "welfare capitalist" state, the system of government to which she says the United States subscribes, and that which Dewey describes in *The Public and Its Problems*. While in other societies the state may have some divine or cultural origin, the welfare capitalist state as Young understands it, comes from the emergence of a public, from the pragmatic need to regulate consequences. Accordingly, says Young, welfare capitalism serves as the social context in which discussions of justice and normative policy take place. Welfare capitalism, and therefore the current paradigm of justice, says Young, embodies three main principles and normative assumptions (Young 67):

1. That economic activity should be socially or collectively regulated for the purposes of maximizing the collective welfare
2. That citizens have a right to have some basic needs met by society, and that where private mechanisms fail the state has an obligation to institute policies directed at meeting those needs
3. That formal equality and impersonal procedures best constitute justice

The welfare capitalist state exists purely for pragmatic reasons: to create circumstances under which the individual might thrive, and to meet a basic level of needs when private mechanisms fail. To that end, it follows that the state should remain as limited as possible while still being able to achieve its goals. The welfare capitalist state is overwhelmingly concerned with negative freedom, understood as the absence of interference with the subjective desires of individuals.

Only when individuals encroach on the rights of others are actions taken. True freedom, then, is found in private subjectivity.

3.2 Interest Group Pluralism

As such, says Young, the welfare capitalist society has created what she calls the "client-consumer paradigm of justice, in which society makes no distinction between claims of self-interest and claims of justice—the emergence of the self-interested individual. In her description of the emergence of the "client-consumer paradigm of justice, Young engages directly with Dewey's diagnosis of society as having been separated into a professional and working class, with the "business minds" at the top. Young ultimately extends Dewey's argument, however, showing that not only has the separation been maintained, but that historical conditions have all but codified it into regulation.

Young begins by giving an account of the dire historical conditions that led to the institutionalization of class conflict and the loss of normative agency for the general public, echoing Dewey's arguments of "corporatization" and the creation of the "business mind." In the 1930s, says Young, the New Deal Era, capitalist forces were at their worst. Faced with an economic system hurtling out of control, a deal was struck. Workers "forfeit[ted] demands to restructure production, to control the goals and direction of enterprises or the whole economy, or to have community control over administration of services" in return for improved "material life and security of production" (Young 70). Rather than reevaluating the unchecked capitalist processes of change that led to an economic system overwhelmingly exploiting workers, workers fought over the distribution of resources itself; everyone agreed that economic growth was a good thing, workers just wanted a bigger slice of the pie. The result was that normative agency was left to government and businesses, those assumed to have the most knowledge necessary to

realize goals that would benefit everyone. Labor unions implicitly agreed to limit discussion to distributive issues and benefits, and state regulation reinforced the agreement (Young 71). As individuals lost the right to normative agency, capitalist assumptions and regulatory agencies increasingly encroached upon the lives of individuals, bringing about a new age. Individuals no longer held democratic decisionmaking power. Individuals were instead clients-consumers, ready to receive the goods of a society now fully run by a few solitary "business-minded" individuals at the top.

Client-consuming citizens, disconnected from decisionmaking structures, began to understand themselves as having to organize into "interest groups" to effect change. Interest group pluralism, however, is ineffective as a system of justice for two main reasons: (1) because of the inequality of resources different interest groups start with, and (2) because of the lack of any public forum for deliberation (Young 72). As individuals are segregated into interest groups aligned with different desires, public policy dispute becomes only a competition among claims of self-interest, and "winning" depends not upon the "justness" of any claim, but on the resources available.

In her description of the client consumer paradigm of justice, Young echoes Dewey's arguments in *The Public and Its Problems* as well. Just as Dewey says that the emergence of different norms of behavior in the public and in the private creates an inconsistent and incoherent individual, Young notes that in the welfare capitalist society, as individuals can only become heard on the condition of alignment with some "interest," the concept of a coherent "self" is lost. Individuals become disconnected insofar as they cannot make any claims to represent themselves as a whole, and self-interest itself becomes incoherent (Young 73). In the face of a disillusioned and disconnected public, normative decisionmaking ability becomes allocated to a few select

individuals at the top of society, normative decisionmaking is obscured from the general public, and new forms of domination arise. Metaphysical idealisms, congealed into reality, depoliticize the public and block social progress.

3.3 The Bureaucracy

As the phenomena of "corporatization," became coded into regulation, the systemic counterpart to the client-consumer distributive paradigm of justice, "bureaucratization," emerged. If "corporatization" was the domination of the public sphere by corporate interests, "bureaucratization" was its governmental check. The bureaucracy, as the form of social organization that carries out ends pre-determined by interests," however, is dangerous for the same reason that corporatization is. When individuals are submerged into large, impersonal networks of association with claims to objectivity, they lose the ability to direct society. Young notes that the bureaucracy, through the expulsion of subjective desires, was supposed to eliminate the possibility of domination by other individuals. Instead, however, the effort to "[extend] the object of technical or instrumental reason beyond the natural world to coordinate human action and interaction" has led to new forms of oppression and injustice (Young 76). The bureaucracy, as the physical manifestation of the misidentification of the scientific method with objective reason, disconnects individuals from normative reasoning, as and such actively impedes social progress.

In bureaucratic systems of organization, individuals have no say over the ends to which they become the means. As the bureaucracy is "a system of that defines and organizes social projects as the object of technical control," bureaucracies necessarily disconnect normative reasoning and execution (Young 76). The role of the individual within bureaucracies is not to question or deliberate, but rather only to carry out the tasks that they are delegated as quickly and

as effectively as possible. The results is that individuals are immersed in large, impersonal networks of relation—something very similar to Dewey's "corporatization." As such, individuals begin to understand themselves in a public context, over which they have no control over their actions, and a private sense, over which they are authentic and complete individuals—an understanding that distances individuals from civic responsibility. Although it may be a widely held belief that economic activity should be socially or collectively regulated to maximize welfare, the belief of the separation between individuals and society at large essentially relegates the task of dictating normative ideals to only those who serve to do so in an official capacity—and effectively strips the capability of individuals in the general public from effecting change. The bureaucracy, initially designed to eliminate the domination of individuals at the hands of others, has instead left us subservient to pre-determined metaphysical ideals, unable to participate in any kind of meaningful direction of society.

The depoliticization of the public arena, dependent on the dualisms of individual/society, subjectivity/objectivity, and means/ends, is troubling because it necessarily stalls and prevents social progress. Individuals that are disadvantaged have no effective recourse against a public that is appropriated for the benefit of those in power. Because the divide between normative agency and executive action has become so large, the unconscious beliefs and assumptions affecting the practices of individuals are especially critical—without authentic and clear lines of communication, the reparation of the rift between means and ends, the normative biases and cultural norms of the few in power inevitably cascade through the rest of society. This monopoly of power and social capital is bad for the same reason that monopolies in business and technology are bad—they clog the mechanisms for free exchange of ideas, stall the imagination

and invention, and prevent meaningful progress of any kind. The dualism between normative agency and bureaucratic execution threatens the core tenets of a free and just democracy.

3.4 Insurgency Politics

It is for this reason that Young draws attention to what she calls "insurgency politics," a tactic that has been utilized in the past to disrupt the status quo and break static pockets of power to effect change. Although effective, however, insurgency politics ultimately constitutes only a temporary salve, a tactic that pushes back when bureaucratic neutralization pushes too far; insurgency politics continues to work with the same dualism that it is attempting to combat.

First, Young identifies several core contradictions that the welfare capitalist state is built upon—contradictions that must not be "contained" if the state is to continue to be democratic (Young 81). The most central of contradictions is the contradiction between the state (i.e. society at large) and the individual. She says that it is interesting that the "welfare capitalist system relies on government programs to foster private accumulation and maintain high levels of consumption," and yet "these state functions require massive state funding... Commitment to maximum levels of private accumulation clashes with the needs of the welfare state" (Young 81). Even further, "there is contradiction involved in bringing increasing areas of everyday life under rationalized and directed human control, and at the same time keeping such control depoliticized" (Young 81). The state makes claims to keep regulation to matters of public interest irresolvable by individuals on their own, and yet steadily increases its purview into matters of private, or at the very least voluntary, association. As it is, society, suffering from depoliticization, is transforming such that normative decisions are no longer subject to general deliberation. The decisionmaking process, obscured by the proliferation of bureaucratic structures, becomes an exclusive privilege, reserved for those at the "top" of the social ladder. As

the social arena is dominated by those sensitive to the social norms, symbols, and cues of "respectable society," (i.e. those that have been socialized as such), the rift between the "upper" and "lower" tiers of society opens wider and wider, creating a no-man's land of social immobility in between.

The regular functioning of the welfare capitalist state, however, necessitates regulation—where at one point it may have been feasible for individuals to live in community-based society built on familial bonds, the very emergence of the state was an indication of the necessity for a central governing authority to administrate and oversee general rule of law. The ill effects of a capitalist state are well-acknowledged—quantification of individual worth, exploitation of laborers—but the rebuttal is equally well-known: while the welfare capitalist system may not be perfect, there is no other known alternative, no better option for organization of society. Between a socialist state and capitalist welfare state, the capitalist welfare state wins every time—at least as far as history is concerned.

Critics of alternative forms of organization may be correct that the welfare capitalist system is the best system so far known of, but the welfare capitalist system fundamentally relies on the precarious balance between the public and the private. When there is a depoliticized gap between individual interests and public regulation, and interest-group pluralism is not effective, the only practical alternative we are left with is what Young calls "insurgency politics." Young, citing Michael Walzer, calls insurgency "the demand that bureaucratic services make possible, instead of replacing, local decisionmaking… [Insurgency] seeks to make the 'helpfulness' of the welfare bureaucracy into the starting point of a new politics of resistance and self-determination" (qtd. in Young 81). Insurgency, however, is "particularistic and oriented to specific issues, rather than global," meaning that insurgency movements are characteristically temporary, meant as a

disruption to power, and nothing more (Young 82). It is for that reason that insurgency movements are superior to "interest group pluralism." Insurgency movements do not posit metaphysical ideals and stall progress. An insurgent movement, if successful, should shift the dominant narrative, and be reintegrated into bureaucratic structure. Insurgency tactics can be divided into three major categories (Young 84-6):

1. Those that challenge decisionmaking structures and the right of the powerful to exert their will
2. Those organizing autonomous services
3. Movements of cultural identity

Examples include movements with more explicit policy-related goals, like the anti-nuclear movement, or more cultural ones, like the counter-culture movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s (Young 83, 87). Insurgency allows individuals to temporarily redirect society without becoming a part of the bureaucratic system.

As the strength of the welfare capitalist society seems to rely on that central tension between individual profit and social welfare, individuals, through "insurgency tactics," are able to push back and maintain a more sustainable balance. Insurgency politics, however, while effective, does not constitute a permanent solution. At its core, "insurgency politics" still maintains the dualism between selfish interest and social welfare. Insurgency politics leaves intact many mechanisms perpetuating oppression and domination, and only pushes back when the oppression reaches a critical extreme. In order to find a more permanent solution, we must go back and reframe the proper relationship between individuals and society at large. A more permanent solution must not push back to recreate balance, but stitch back together the rift

between the public and the individual so that governing agency can be restored to democratic control.

4. Subjectivity and Objectivity: Politics and Science

As another lens to explore the blocking point of social progress, Young, in Chapter 7 of *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, "The Ideal of Impartiality," engages directly with Dewey's diagnosis of the subjectivity/objectivity dualism to explore fully the results of a belief in the impartiality of the public. Just as Dewey says a belief in the separability of culture and politics leads to a loss of direction of society, for Young, the belief that reason and feeling can be distinguished from one another leads directly to the inability to make social progress. As long as we believe in the legitimacy of "fairness" in legal and governing authority, society is beyond democratic control.

4.1 The Myth of Impartiality

The paradigm of an impartial civic public, says Young, is exemplified by Rousseau's political philosophy (Young 108). For Rousseau, the impartial civic public is the expression of the general will. Constructed from the universal and impartial authority of reason, the general will could therefore occupy a higher vantage point than that of selfish individual desire, and make claims to "the greater good." Therein lies the authority and legitimacy of a greater governing body—in the expulsion of individual consideration, we can be sure that we have created a society that is "just" and "fair." As far as the construction of a civil society is concerned, universal reason is good, and particular desire is bad; the tragedy of the human condition is in the conflict between collectivity and individuality (Young 109). Young, however, troubles this notion of social dichotomy.

The public does not have to be universal and impartial, says Young, and in fact it never has been (Young 109). The separation between individual desire and public reason is not only naïve, however, but actively constructs a civic public that actively excludes individuals belonging to minority groups. Here Young extends Dewey's diagnosis by echoing Nussbaum's argument in *Frontiers of Justice* about the injustice of conflating the questions of "By whom are society's general principles designed?" and "For whom are society's principle's designed?" (Nussbaum 16). Young says that for Rousseau, "the sovereign people embodie[d] the universal point of view of the collective interest" (Young 109). Only by leaving behind their particular interests to enter into the rational realm of normative reason, could individuals participate in the "general will as a citizen." The public realm then, was to be "unified and homogenous," not only rational, but pure. Anything that deviating from the norms of the "sovereign people," then, was excluded.

The separation of desire and reason, then, functions to at once exclude anyone who does not belong to the normative majority, and to at the same time blind society from coming to this understanding. The myth of impartiality, says Young, functions to (Young 112):

1. Supports the idea of the neutral state, reinforcing the distributive paradigm of justice
2. Legitimates bureaucratic authority and hierarchical decisionmaking processes, defusing calls for democratic decisionmaking
3. Reinforces oppression by hypostatizing the point of view of privileged groups into a universal position

The myth of impartiality serves to disconnect individuals ideologically from the democratic decisionmaking process. If the bureaucratic state practically removes decisionmaking ability

from the branches of executive action, and the myth of impartiality distances individuals from that same decisionmaking process ideologically, society drifts from democratic control.

4.2 Resource Distribution

Extending the consequences of the myth of impartiality beyond ideology into practice, serves only to add a whole new dimension to the injustice perpetrated. On a practical level, the inability of individuals to affect meaningful change stems directly from an unequal distribution of resources. If there are significant differences of access to power, resources, and publicity, says Young, then decisionmaking processes that are impartial in the sense of allowing equal opportunity to press individual interests will inevitably favor those already on top. If power and resources are transferred from generation to generation, then the capital remains pooled, and the cycle continues. This would be a problem, says Young, except that as far as the paradigm of distribution is concerned—as long as decisionmakers are striving for impartiality—democracy is unnecessary (Young 115). There is neither any reason for civic participation, nor for anyone to make an explicit issue the just organization of decisionmaking power.

Properly understood, impartiality makes civic participation extraneous and unnecessary, and any attempts to affect meaningful change by anyone other than those belonging to an exclusive and elite group amount to little more than well-meaning gestures. With the welfare capitalist understanding of the individual as fundamentally selfish, there is no reason to expect things to change. The aggregation of power in a concentrated circle of individuals has allowed for the general appropriation of resources for the benefit of a select few; issues of inequity are exacerbated with every passing generation. At some point along the road, the direction of the state was unhitched from the public it was supposed to serve, and democracy, crippled by dualisms, became little more than an ideal.

4.3 The Myth of Merit

It may appear surprising that given the unbalanced appropriation of resources for select segments of the population, that there is as little civil unrest as there is. Closely related to the "myth of impartiality," is Young's idea of the "myth of merit"—an ideological abstraction that promotes the illusion of intact and objectively constructed pathways of social mobility. As long as individuals in society believe that the amount of privilege they are afforded in life is a direct result of their own ability or inability to contribute something of value to society, the responsibility is solely with the individual, and no one can be considered "oppressed." Ironically, while welfare capitalist societies may understand themselves as fundamentally meritocratic, the "meritocracy," can never be fully realized.

In Chapter 7 of *Justice and the Politics of Difference, "*Affirmative Action and the Myth of Merit," given the assumption of a society with a relatively scarce amount of positions of power and prestige, Young draws into the question the possibility of the distribution of these positions based on "individual technical competence [and] impartial measures of such competence" (Young 193). The question is less whether such a distribution is just—although that is still a question—but rather whether such a distribution is even possible.

Young specifically calls into question culturally neutral methods of ranking. Beyond positions distributed based on more subjective measures of performance (e.g. interaction-based jobs that "necessitate" knowledge of cultural norms), even jobs in which performance appears to be more quantitatively measured can be culturally biased. The standardized test, says Young, the great pillar of a meritocratic society, seems to "…inevitably reflect value choices and cultural meanings" (Young 209). Not only do standardized tests rank individuals on qualities of questionable relevance to an individual's ability to do a job, the ability of the tests to even

accurately reflect an individual's ability to perform to a certain level is debatable. The "standardized test" is considered to be largely objective and value-neutral, but only when you forget that somewhere very far away, in a small room, someone (or a few "someones") are constructing these tests as they see fit. At the end of the massive thriving culture of individuals and institutions promoting and utilizing standardized tests, is a very small circle of people making choices with regards to not only the qualities that they deem important, but the metrics by which they consider appropriate to test for them.

Again, when we hold an unshakeable faith rooted in the notion of "objectivity" and "value-neutral" standards of measurement, when we refuse to "re-politicize" and question the norms that we take for granted, those that best adhere to and display qualities closely aligning with the "norms" are those that inevitably rise the highest in society, have access to the concentrated and exclusive corridors of power, and in turn have the ability to, and unconsciously continue to perpetuate existing biases. The belief in culturally neutral standards of merit, which is to say the belief in the dualism—and the possibility of—the complete separation of human reality into "objective" and "subjective" spheres, ultimately results in the elimination of the potential for progress.

4.4 Social Groups: Us vs. Them

Before a more thorough discussion of what Young's "Reconstruction in Philosophy" might look like, it is important to identify one last consequence of the subjectivity/objectivity split, and trace this de-politicization of the civic public back to its root cause. Although the contributing factors are myriad, and the results even more complex, Young says that this fundamental split in individualism, between a selfish and altruistic individual, between the

private life and the public life, between subjective and objective planes of life, all ultimately boil down to a "logic of identity"—or what Dewey might call the danger of metaphysics.

Young, in giving a description of the origin of the "logic of identity," engages directly with Dewey's warnings about humans and their tendency to be attracted to metaphysics and stability. According to Young, the "logic of identity" was a direct result of the Enlightenment pivot towards reason and impartiality. As a public realm was constructed, supposedly universal and impartial, difference and particularity were forced into the private realm. As logic became the dominant mode of discourse, the tendency to reduce complicated phenomena to a single operating principle or category gained momentum as well. Entities were conceptualized by "substance" rather than "process or relation," as processes and relations were more difficult to quantify (Young 98). By distilling objects of knowledge into "substances," humans were able to satisfy their desire for stability, "to bring everything under control, to eliminate uncertainty and unpredictability… [and] to eliminate otherness" (Young 99). The problem, however, and something that Dewey warns us of, is that things in actuality are not pure substance, and true knowledge comes not from attempting to divine the essences of objects of knowledge themselves, but from the understanding of a process of relations such that an object acquires intellectual significance.

The result of this inquiry when applied to logic, however, was clear. Diverse and stratified phenomena became shunted into simplistic categories of "dichotomous hierarchical oppositions: essence/accident, good/bad, [and] normal/deviant." Reality "congeal[ed] into the binary opposition *a*/not-a" (Young 99). The result was that the cost of preservation of one's identity, of one's perception and understanding of the world, was the rejection of all perceived as "other": the beginning of "us vs. them."

5. The Relational Individual

5.1 Heterogeneity and Partial Discourse

In turn, Young suggests that we should seek to shift the paradigm of justice to embody heterogeneity and partial discourse rather than impartiality. This paradigm of a heterogeneous public serves two important functions, says Young. It implies that (1) no persons, actions, or aspect of a person's life should be forced into privacy, and (2) no social institutions or practices should be excluded a priori from being a proper subject for public discussion and expression (Young 120). The practice of a heterogeneous public would serve to collapse the dualisms of subjectivity/objectivity, private/public, normative reason/execution, and thus mark the beginning of the application of the scientific method with regard to social affairs; Young is calling for the pragmatic method of experimentation.

The understanding of justice as applying to individuals in their particularity, rather than as a presupposed independent ontological entity, helps to paint a more accurate picture of the individual, which in turn help us to inform public policy. Young here is making the ultimate pragmatic argument. Young does not appeal to any ideological preconception of the individual, separating individual actors into public and private spheres, into subjective and objective modes of operation, but rather wants to provide an account of individuals as would be most effective for addressing contemporary social ills. Young says that "if normative reason is dialogic," then "just norms are most likely to arise from the real interaction of people with different points of view who are drawn out of themselves by being forced to confront and listen to others" (Young 120). The point of a heterogeneous public is not to advance some ideological position or to promote the "moral" first principles of inclusion and diversity, but rather to provide an account of the individual that will promote useful, empirical results. It is not that a heterogeneous public would

be more moral—although it may well be—the point is that a heterogeneous public is empirically better for making social progress, whatever that progress may look like.

In that way, Young's vision of the heterogeneous public is the ultimate promotion of science and experimentation with regards to philosophy, cultural criticism, and normative reason. Although it may be tempting to think of science as purely objective, the point of science is not objectivity in itself, but rather to be able to arrive at a fuller account of a procedural series of events—something that allows us to employ the proper means to arrive at the ends that are desired. It just so happens that "objectivity" as commonly understood is most useful towards that endeavor, at least with mechanistic matters. Science, however is not and never has been objective, as at the end of every experiment is an individual with their own biases and opinions—something that must be present in order for a hypothesis to be formed. Science cannot be purely logical, as science understood post-Enlightenment, is inductive. The denial of that fact and the desire to impose objective normative order, especially on issues that are primarily social, is to actively impede progress with regards to what philosophy should serve to do.

5.2 Social Groups and Politics

It is with this in mind, that Young's proposal of the understanding of individuals as relational, as understood through social groups, constitutes the most pragmatic and accurate account of human beings to date. If you want to look at questions of political organization, says Young, it only makes sense to start from the most fundamental political truth—exactly the fact that humans are political animals.

Although there can be cases made for and against individuals as primarily selfish or altruistic, there can be no refutation of the fact that individuals are attracted to others and inevitably enter into voluntary associations with each other. The fact that human beings seek and

crave human interaction is as much sociological as it is scientific; there is definitive evidence that the deprivation of social interaction leads directly to physical deterioration of the human brain (Smith 2006). Young's understanding of the individual as such then allows for us to create new criteria for judging the merits of different systems of political organization and a solid cross-cultural foundation for which principles of responsible and ethical government might be constructed. Human rights are no longer fully subjective criteria arrived at by "deep, free-standing moral reflection," but rather principles that embody both subjective and objective elements. As well as being subject to normative criticism, there are concrete empirical elements by which we might be able to judge whether results are "just" or "unjust"—the extent to which the association between different individuals is still voluntary and free of "oppression."

Young's approach of understanding individuals as relational first is superior not because it is morally superior in a free-standing sense, but rather because it allows us a critical lens by which we can better identify and address issues of social injustice. It is not that the welfare capitalist state did not care about modern issues of social injustice, but that the welfare capitalist state did not believe that modern issues of social injustice existed. By reuniting the false dichotomy of subjectivity and objectivity in the name of justice, Young allows for society to make use of all the information that was previously unavailable or unseen. Young's approach leaves no issue untouched and depoliticized, and ultimately allows for individuals to regain control of democratic decisionmaking processes.

5.3 The Ideal of City-Life

Thus Young, having arrived at the same problem as Dewey of a fragmented individual across different and conflicting spheres of life, and concerned with metaphysical ideals, plugs in

her vision of "city life," a model of living celebratory of differences and without "norms of exclusion," and a more holistic reworking of society to strive towards[5] (Young 226).

Young builds her ideal of the "city life" off of the ideal of "community," which she says is perhaps the most intuitive, but imperfect, alternative to welfare capitalist society. The ideal of community, backed by many prominent political philosophers, proposes a model of tight-knit association in which individuals are united by shared familial bonds, experiences, and living. The relationships between individuals are governed by the responsibility accorded by individual familiarity. Individuals live and associate together not because they have to, but because they all have something in common—whether culture, identity, or way of life. According to Young, however, while community living may practically afford a certain sense of autonomy in government and way of life, it does so at the cost of resorting still to a logic of identity, necessarily resulting in norms of exclusion. While individuals in a community may be able to exhibit more direct and local control over affairs in daily life, they do so at the cost of perpetuating, and in many ways exacerbating, subservience to metaphysical norms of identity. It is with this in mind that Young posits her model of "city life," a pragmatic model of living at the core of which lies a definitive plan for "reconstruction in philosophy," the possibility of once again enabling social progress, and ultimately a new individualism.

Young's ideal of city life crucially returns to her conception of individuals as composed of "social groups," something fluid, dynamic, and relational. As such, "city life," says Young, represents an "openness to unassimilated otherness," as is present—at least ideally—in diverse and urban major cities (Young 226). City life represents the dismantling of metaphysical barriers

[5] It is important to note that Young acknowledges that life in cities today is not by any means ideal (Young 241). Her ideal of city life is therefore not meant to condone the reality of injustice in urban areas, but rather to serve an unrealized ideal towards which society should strive.

to progress, especially as they relate and lead to identity, an affirmation of heterogeneity, and a celebration of difference. Young's city life, founded on the virtues of:

1. Social difference without exclusion
2. Variety
3. Eroticism
4. Publicity

—allows for individuals to interact in an authentic way, clear of metaphysical obstruction. While the first three virtues collapse various dualisms to allow for the application of the pragmatic method of experimentation to social affairs, the last virtue represents the bridging of the gap between private and public spheres of life, the mediation of the dualism of individual and society, and ultimately the restoration of democratic ideals in social organization.

Young first begins by dismantling the logic of identity, an issue stemming from the separation of human affairs into an objective and subjective realm. As mentioned above, logic, when applied to issues of social affairs, produces norms of exclusion; in order for there to be a pure substance, all "otherness" must be expelled (if not A, then not-A). From the starting place of variety, the understanding of social difference without exclusion, and in fact the attraction of individuals to difference, city life enables the application of the pragmatic method of experimentation to social affairs. Putting aside the first two virtues—social difference without exclusion, and variety—for a moment, eroticism, translated into perhaps more scientific terminology, is merely the curiosity for the unknown. Now given that there is social difference without exclusion (the abolition of a restrictive and narrow-minded mode of binary thinking), and the recognition of the value of variety (the abolition of a hierarchical system of ranking),

then the attraction to difference is the driving force for us to better understand—although in this case others, rather than mechanical processes.

With this approach, diversity and interaction does not in any way muddy the waters of identity, but rather allow us to arrive at higher positions of knowledge and certainty. If we are all in relation to one another, the experiencing of different values and perspectives only allows us to better understand how we are situated with respect to others. Interaction with those who are different in this case seems to function as observation and gathering of information does in "scientific" and experimental endeavors, and allows us to better achieve whatever ends society may decide upon. The only condition is that we must not allow oppression in any form to propagate, something that suppresses particularity and difference, and the condition upon which experimentation is dependent. Without difference or deviation, "hypothesis making" is impossible, and experimentation grinds to a halt. It just so happens that given higher positions of knowledge and understanding of how social processes work, we are then better able to tend to the delicate networks of association in society to ensure that oppression is not being inadvertently perpetrated. Social justice and progress go hand in hand.

Young then moves on to deconstruct the dualism between the public and the private—specifically addressing the dispersal of authentic human agency and direction among corporate and bureaucratic structures; while there is separation between the means and ends, normative decisionmaking and execution, social groups are subject to domination and oppression. As such, "city life" entails the reintegration of public and private life, something that happens not only on the theoretical level, but on the practical one as well. Young identifies three aspects of distribution that contribute to domination and oppression (Young 242):

1. Centralized corporate and bureaucratic domination of cities

2. Decisionmaking structures in municipalities and their hidden mechanisms of redistribution
3. Process of segregation and exclusion, both within cities and between cities and suburbs

Each of these aspects of distribution embodies a dualism that centers on the separation between public and private spheres of life. When the normative decisionmaking process becomes detached from the public it is supposed to serve, individuals not only grow apathetic to anything outside of their immediate private concerns, but lose the ability to affect change altogether: a surefire formula for oppression.

In order to bring democratic control back to the general population, Young encourages civic participation, something that happens when we reintegrate the "private" daily life with "public" arena. This is made easy, and even necessary, in Young's model of city life, where the geographical area in which individuals live is the same in which they work and interact with others in public. City life at its core is the "being together of strangers… all bound together in a single polity" (Young 237-8). As theory and practice go hand in hand, individuals begin to understand themselves as not individual entities, not in fundamental opposition to others, but as part of others, and always in relationships with others; if we do not lose track of fact of life, and focus on maintaining authentic and non-oppressive relationships, then the new individualism will wash through all aspects of life and allow for democracy to flourish.

If the bridging of the subjective and objective realms allows for the emergence of different perspective and ideas, something necessary for "hypothesis making," the bridging of the public and private realms allows for those ideas settled on after deliberation to actually be realized—the carrying out of the actual experiment.

5.4 Social Groups and Pragmatism

Young's pragmatic denunciation of metaphysical ideals—her scientific refusal to allow for metaphysical certainty—is especially important given the new starting point of political discussion. Not only are metaphysical ideals contrary to scientific principles of fallibility and progress, in the case that individuals are first and foremost attracted to voluntary associations, the endorsement of metaphysical ideals allows for individuals to self-segregate based on cultural or identity-related ideals. It is for this reason that Young's use of social groups in constructing her account of the individual is especially important.

Young creates an account of the individual without resorting to metaphysical or ontological certainty, instead building off of the fundamental truth of individuals as "political," but only insofar as it is useful and empirically verifiable. As noted earlier, Young describes the individual as composed of "social groups"; a marker of affiliation comes into being as far as someone identifies and can be identified by another group, as having a particular identity. Social groups are relational because they do not exist insofar as there is not an opposing group. if all individuals in a population identity with a particular marker of identity, the homogeneity of the population makes it impossible for the social group to ever become a concept with any substance of effect. If there is only one demographic of people, individuals inevitably understand themselves as just "the people" says Young. Labels only appear after when there is something different to be labelled.

Young says further that identity as far as social groups is undeniable. People are born into different markers of social identity, whether color of skin, language, culture, or otherwise, that mark them out as different. These markers of social identity have the character of "throwness," insofar as one finds oneself as a member of the group, which one experiences as always already

having been (46). Group identity is not something that someone chooses, but rather something that marks an individual as far as they identify in any particular way. This is not to say, however, that one cannot enter and exit social groups, and not that one's social group affiliation cannot change. This only means that while groups may come into being, they are never founded. If one enters or exits a social group, in some significant way, some aspect of their identity must have necessarily changed.

Most crucially, however, and seemingly paradoxically, Young say that the "individual," is no longer ontologically prior to its social affiliations. Without the "social groups," there is no blank, independent, neatly compartmentalized and previously existing self. The self, then, ceases to have kind of real metaphysical weight. The self becomes blurry, fluid, and ever changing—the self, as a construct of identity, cannot ever definitively be pinned down.

5.5 The Dissolution of the Individual

At first, this seems very problematic; what Young seems to have done is to have completely absolved the concept of an individual altogether. Her social groups construct an individual, but her social groups "are fictions… group differentiation [is] multiple, cross-cutting, fluid, and shifting… Individual persons, as constituted partly by their group affinities and relations, cannot be unified, themselves are heterogeneous and not necessarily coherent (Young 47-8). Not only is this an uncomfortable conviction to hold, but it seems openly inviting to human rights abuses.

Young's approach, however, stemming from the understanding of individuals as first and foremost political animals, is one of pragmatic necessity. If one understands that individuals are naturally attracted to each other and will associate based on markers of self-identification, then as long as there is any sort of diversity, it necessarily follows that individuals will self-segregate

into different pockets of association. There is still no problem, however, except that as soon as an ideal becomes one of metaphysical certainty, one that adheres to principles of the logic of identity, then the affirmation of one group is necessary the opposition of another. As far as "objective certainty" is concerned, if something is not A, then it must be "not-A." As far as there is an "A" that is identifiable at all, there immediately arises a categorization that allows for us to identify what "not-A" is. This is also still fine, except that then this logic of identity is one that creates a logic of opposition. When the groups are allowed to solidify into something beyond a marker of identity, when they become metaphysically exclusive groups, and the continued existence of one group is dependent on the identification of something "other," then very real conflicts and every real efforts to "purify" identity begin to surface.

It is for this reason that Young says that "groups are not real as substances, but [only] as social relations" (Young 44). Social groups are not, and must not ever become impermeable and exclusive, for individuals must never be attracted into pockets of identity that are solid and unchanging. Furthermore, if only for the sake of pragmatic accuracy, despite the desire of individuals to believe themselves to be consistent, logical, and just plain understandable, empirically, that belief just does not hold true. However much we may want to think that we understand ourselves, it does not appear clear that we either do, or will ever. Nobody, not even with regards to one's self, can consistently predict what action any human being will take with one hundred percent accuracy. Even if we think we know our own preferences, empirical tests have shown that oftentimes our actions contradict our conscious beliefs (Houghton 7). It is therefore vital for Young that her social groups never become strong enough there is an "essence" that defines membership (Young 47). Young's social groups serve the useful function

of naming group identities that exert influence over the world we live in, but not affirming those group identities so much to the point of engendering conflict.

On its own, the solidification of metaphysical exclusions into reality is problem enough, but it is one that is only complicated by the post-Enlightenment corporatized habit of categorizing items into hierarchical relationships. When the focus is shifted away from maintaining non-oppressive relationships, individuals start to sink into pockets of associations aligning with different ideals. As far as individuals demonstrate the ability to perform according to certain metrics, they are promoted up the chain of command—or at the very least, in an informal association, propped up as a role model or leader in any given community. With the devotion to metaphysical convictions, we self-segregate, and then subsequently self-organize such that we can understand ourselves within the dualism of better vs. worse, a dualism that is harmful because it forces an oppressive relationship. If equal is not an option, then someone, by necessity, has to come out the winner, and someone the loser.

The drive to quantify has been useful for the better understanding of mechanical relations, but does not make nearly as much sense when looking at the relationships between individuals. When we allow metaphysical exclusions to manifest in reality, not only are individuals categorized into hierarchies within social groups, but the social groups themselves enter into relationships of better or worse as well. At the end of the day, the belief in a metaphysical certainty is the belief and solidification of an irrefutable—and oftentimes arbitrary—normative assertion. In a pluralistic society, with a variety of belief systems and opinions, the stronger any metaphysical ideals seep into our practices and everyday lives, the stronger the conflict between different groups becomes. Because there is no compromise with

metaphysics, to do metaphysics, is to inevitably perpetuate systems of oppression and domination.

6. Conclusion

Finally, in Young's *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, seems to be an answer for Dewey. In having disavowed metaphysics altogether, erased the notion of an ontologically independent individual, having closed the dualism of subjectivity/objectivity, of individual/society, and of the public/private, Young seems to have finally realized the application of the pragmatic method of experimentation to social affairs.

The significance of Young's project, however, is beyond that of answering Dewey's call for "Reconstruction in Philosophy." What Young has done, by giving us a new notion of the individual, is given us an individualism by which we can once again gain democratic control of society, and a vision of what authentic freedom might look like. Whereas previously democracy had been held hostage by metaphysical ideals and dualisms bleeding into practice, Young, by providing her new individualism, reframes social issues in a way that allows for actual deliberation and application of the pragmatic method of experimentation.

What Young has done is shown us the way by which we can reintegrate distributive and social justice to unclog the democratic machine. If we can move past the subjectivity/objectivity dualism to embrace deviation, difference, and particularity, we will be able to come to understand different perspectives, to be able to make new hypotheses. If we can move past the bureaucratic domination of the public, then we will be reintegrate normative reasoning and execution to be able to pursue new ends. Young makes no claim to a final destination for society, but rather diagnoses a problem and creates an action plan concerned not with leading society

towards any sort of normative ideal, but a vision in which individuals would be able to utilize the means necessary to reach any desired end—the American project.

By troubling our notion of dichotomy as opposition, Young has once again opened the forum up for meaningful discussion, and the possibility of social progress. If we can bring society to arrive at Young's vision of city life, then Dewey's goal of the application of the pragmatic method of experimentation to social affairs will follow as well. Young's vision of city life may be one that is still far from realization, but Young, at the very least, has given us a clear path forward.

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