Weber's Social Space of Reasons

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There is a curiously Nietzschean vein in Philip Gorski's call to remoralize social sciences by way of Aristotle – 'curious' because Gorski chides Max Weber for irrationalist Nietzschean tendencies; 'Nietzschean,' in echoes of *Beyond Good & Evil* in his demand to go beyond the fact/value distinction, and in the dialogue he suggests between social sciences and moral philosophy. Rather than measuring society against universal standards of justice, liberty, or equality, Gorski asks whether it offers opportunities for human flourishing. This aligns him with growing strands in moral philosophy that, spurred by Anscombe's 'Modern Moral Philosophy,' draw on classical Greek notions of eudaimonia, signifying a well-being that embodies maximum development of human potentialities: a good society allows fulfilment of one's telos.¹ Gorski favours an ethically-naturalist neo-Aristotelian version: social sciences could identify 'biologically-grounded capabilities' empirically and assess whether society fosters them.

Echoing Dewey's pragmatist model of evaluating moral imperatives by effects on society, he argues that we can establish whether promoting one form of flourishing to excess has unacceptable consequences, prompting a rather Nietzschean 'transvaluation of all values.'² This, Gorski suggests, transcends Weber's strict separation of fact and value: not only should we take an evaluative (not purely descriptive) standpoint towards society, but we will also revise values in light of new facts.

Gorski's eudaimonistic turn and his revision of the fact/value distinction are, I believe, fundamentally correct. Nevertheless, I think his naturalism meets certain difficulties. First, recent re-

search by Henrich, Heine, and Norenzayan implies that very few characteristics may be truly ingrained in human nature.³ Too much behavioural-scientific evidence, they argue, is derived from members of industrialized capitalist societies; subjects from a wider range of societies show radical differences. If (as Durkheim too suggests) our minds are more plastic, our natures more pliable, and our world-views more shaped by society than ideas of 'human nature' suggest, ethical naturalism's claims are undermined.⁴ Second, even if humans truly shared the same biological capabilities, this by no means justifies their moral significance. Consider Nietzsche's claim (repugnant to our sensibilities) that 'slavery belongs to the essence of a culture,' i.e. the elevation of art above all else requires a small elite sustained by the oppression of others.⁵ Demonstrating the *fact* of such widespread suffering is not in itself enough to prove it morally *bad*: Nietzsche might respond that slaves are unimportant in themselves, only valuable as a means for culture, the *summum bonum*.

Elsewhere (particularly in discussing Durkheim), Gorski seems to hint at a less naturalistic approach that locates ethical norms within society. This, I suggest, generates moral claims with real normative weight – precisely because it seeks no external foundation for such claims. But it is Weber, whom alone Gorski excepts from the list of eudaimonistic founders of social sciences, who provides the best model here. Weber's practical writings describe norms in terms of the ethos appropriate to particular locations in society: by treating norms as motivated actions grounded in social locations, he simultaneously recognizes the distinct quality of morality and puts it at the heart of society. The ontological implications of his

¹ Anscombe, G.E.M. 'Modern Moral Philosophy,' in *Philosophy*, Vol. 33, No. 124 (Jan., 1958), pp. 1–19; MacIntyre, Alasdair, *After Virtue: A study in moral theory* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2007).

² Dewey, John, *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, (New York: Henry Holt, 1920); Nietzsche, Friedrich, 'The Anti-Christ' in *Twilight of the Idols/The Anti-Christ*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990), p.132.

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³ Henrich, J., Heine, S. & A. Norenzayan (2010) 'The Weirdest People in the World?' in *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 2010 Jun;33(2–3): 61–83.

⁴ Durkheim, Émile, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, trans. Karen E. Fields, (New York: Free Press, 1995), pp.433–48.

⁵ Nietzsche, Friedrich, 'On the Greek State,' in *On the Genealogy of Morality*, trans. C. Diethe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p.178.

interpretative sociology, I will argue, particularly suit it for eudaimonistic ethics.

In making this argument, I shall confine myself to three tasks. First, by reconsidering Weber's insistence on a fact/value distinction, I shall highlight problems faced in applying moral standards to society. Second, by identifying the sort of moral demands Weber thought *were* binding, I shall suggest that eudaimonism finesses these problems by grounding its demands in social reality. Finally, I shall argue, this suggests a distinct moral ontology: moral claims exist within what has, in different contexts, been called 'the space of reasons' – and that space (from the perspective of interpretive sociology) exists socially.⁶ By treating moral values as entities that exist only within the social space of reasons, we do not lapse into relativism – rather, it becomes all the more possible to use them in evaluation of the society that generates them.

Fact & Value Revisited

Weber's insistence on separating fact and value, Gorski suggests, ultimately obliges him to treat the choice of values as irrational: social scientists have no empirical grounds for criticizing others' values. This, I think, oversimplifies Weber's position: he was willing to express definite moralizing judgments, and he did so in the classical language of virtue ethics. To explain this, we must examine his reasons for distinguishing fact and value as different *kinds* of question: it was the nature of this difference that led to his scepticism about ultimate values.

Weber's insistence on separating fact and value partly stemmed from his rejection of certain excesses of the Historical School, whom he saw as too quick to sanction social arrangements or policies by historical argument alone.⁷ The dangers of eliding this distinction too far are illustrated by certain passages in Marx and Durkheim: refusing to treat moral claims as distinct in kind from descriptive ones, they leave little scope for separate ethical evaluation of social actions.

Because Marx's ontology denies the very existence of ethical standards above society, he had no use for any distinction of fact and value. He rejected as 'utopian' the attempt to criticize contemporary society on universal moral grounds, pouring scorn on socialist calls for a more 'fair' distribution of wealth.⁸

His criticism of capitalism instead identifies structural instabilities in the system – its problems are technical, not moral. Consequently, the 'rightness' of actions is reduced to a crude means-ends question of whether they advance the revolution that resolves these problems: within that limit, anything goes, as shown by Marx's defence of the Communards' execution of hostages.⁹ Similarly, Trotsky tied himself in knots trying to reject 'bourgeois' morality, justify his own suppression of the 1921 Kronstadt revolt, and condemn Stalin's purges – all in the name of means and ends.¹⁰

Durkheim's description of morality as the 'bread without which society cannot live,' directly collapses the fact-value distinction by treating anything systemically necessary as morally desirable.¹¹ Once again, this leaves little scope for morally-critical reflection. For example, as a source of organic solidarity, the division of labor is a 'moral' phenomenon.¹² But this immediate moral valorization through necessity means Durkheim has to deny that a 'normal' division of labor could have any negative effects. He commits Flew's 'no true Scotsman' fallacy: if the division of labor produces bad effects, it has obviously fallen into a pathological form, because no *true* division of labor could have evil consequences alongside its positive ones.¹³ Conflating value and fact, then, leaves Durkheim with an all-or-nothing moral theory: he has no room to accept that necessary or even morally good actions may also have negative consequences.

Though History march to the drumbeat of an implacable logic, it is not thereby *right* that it do so: for Weber, the socio-historical necessity of an action does not make it unconditionally good. Following his Neo-Kantian contemporaries, Weber understood absolute morality as a question of contentless logical form: values must be *valid*, i.e. valorized by logical coherence.¹⁴ Even if particular conditions or actions were proven necessary for life to continue, this would not make them good without

⁶ Sellars, Wilfred, 'Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind,' in *Minnesota Studies in the Philosophy of Science*, vol. I, H. Feigl & M. Scriven (eds.), Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1956: 253–329; McDowell, John, *Mind, Value, & Reality* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1998)

⁷ Kim, Kyoung Man, 'Max Weber's Axiological Critique of the Methodology of the Human Sciences: The Methodenstreit and Ideal Types' in *Korean Journal of Sociology*, June 2008, Vol.42, No.4: 99–111.

⁸ Marx, Karl, 'The Communist Manifesto,' in *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, ed. D. McLellan, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 2nd edn. p.261, p.268; 'Critique of the Gotha Program' in *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, p.612.

⁹ Karl Marx, 'The Civil War in France' in *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, pp.584–603.

¹⁰ Trotsky, Leon, *Their Morals & Ours: the Class Foundations of Moral Practice* (Atlanta: Pathfinder Press, 1973).

¹¹ Durkheim, Émile, *The Division of Labour in Society*, trans. W.D. Halls, (New York: The Free Press, 1997), p.13.

¹² Durkheim, *Division of Labour*, p.3.

¹³ Flew describes this fallacy thus: 'Imagine Hamish McDonald, a Scotsman, sitting down with his Glasgow Morning Herald and seeing an article about how the "Brighton Sex Maniac Strikes Again." Hamish is shocked and declares that "no Scotsman would do such a thing." The next day he sits down to read his Glasgow Morning Herald again; and, this time, finds an article about an Aberdeen man whose brutal actions make the Brighton sex maniac seem almost gentlemanly. This fact shows that Hamish was wrong in his opinion but is he going to admit this? Not likely. This time he says, "no *true* Scotsman would do such a thing." Flew, Antony (1975), *Thinking About Thinking: Do I Sincerely Want to Be Right?*, (London: Collins Fontana, 1975)

¹⁴ For a wonderfully clear pathway into the complexities of Neo-Kantianism, see Crowell, Steven Galt, *Husserl, Heidegger, and the Space of Meaning: Paths toward Transcendental Phenomenology*, (Evanston IL: Northwestern University Press, 2001).

distinct arguments for the moral significance of life itself. The implications are clear in Weber's political ethics. A politician guided by an ethic of responsibility must acknowledge both that bad may flow from good actions – and that it may be necessary to use bad actions to bring good effects.¹⁵ The evil involved is negated neither by its necessity nor its good end: the question of its moral value is separate from its factual necessity. Weber is thus highly sensitive to moral ambiguity.

Insofar as he treated moral goodness as a matter of formal validity, Weber was hardly irrationalist. However, precisely the purity of this rationality leaves a *hiatus irrationalis* between morality and reality. A formalistic, fact-free morality cannot (by definition) identify the concrete circumstances of its own application; like mathematical proofs, moral claims may be formally valid, but that does not mean we should care about them. Failing to bridge this chasm pushed Weber into the arms of Nietzsche. He remained Neo-Kantian in accepting certain values as objectively good, evaluated by formal validity independent of facts. He was Nietzschean in asking why we should care about the good at all.

Virtue and the Good Life

Too stark a fact/value distinction leaves morality too distant from society to criticise; elide the distinction too much, and we lose critical distance, and risk deifying the real. Yet despite his awareness of the dilemma, Weber made definite pronouncements regarding specific values required of particular people in society. His grounds for doing so point to a way out of the impasse: such values are embedded in a particular social context. Obviously, this risks unjustifiably treating society itself as *summum bonum*; in the following section, I shall suggest a resolution to this difficulty. First, we must isolate Weber's strategy for justifying the moral demands he does make, to serve a basis for broader moral judgements.

Whilst Gorski's account of classical morality stresses flourishing or eudaimonia, Weber's moral injunctions draw on a different side of such ethics: the idea of *areté*, 'excellence' or 'virtue.' This is embodied in his preoccupation with the *Beruf* – the vocation, calling, or profession, a worldly activity colored with ethical concerns. Though he first identifies it as merely an explanatory factor connecting Protestantism and capitalism, his political writings (which constitute Weber's Second *Critique*, illustrating the place of sociological reasoning in practical ethics) deploy the concept normatively to describe the proper performance of various roles in modern states. Thus, the duties of bureaucrats are different from those of a politician: 'the official's honor' is to obey orders exactly,

to act *sine ira ac studio* – but these very qualities would be disastrous in a political leader, where the ability to take a stand and to answer for one's decisions is vital.¹⁶ Indeed, in *Politik als Beruf*, Weber's description of the ethic expected of those who live for politics is more than a little reminiscent of Aristotle's *phronesis* (practical judgement). Differentiating a *Verantwortungsethik* ('ethic of responsibility') from a *Gesinnungsethik* ('ethic of principled conviction'), Weber insists that a good politician is guided by more than pure moral beliefs: 'responsibility' entails both attention to consequences and, perhaps, the courage to accept the need to do evil in order to achieve good – without thereby negating the evil.¹⁷ Weber even expresses the fact/value distinction in virtue-ethical terms: it is a matter of the 'intellectual integrity' of professors not to exploit their position by deceitfully cloaking moral opinions in the regal garb of scientific inquiry.¹⁸ Scholars and bureaucrats should draw a bright line between facts and values, not because there is (factually) some qualitative difference between them, but because it is their *Beruf* so to do. Weber blurs the line further, for the same person may be under other ethical imperatives in different circumstances: when the professor goes to a political meeting, it is 'one's damned duty' to express one's moral concerns.¹⁹

For Weber, then, the virtues one ought to exhibit are defined by one's objective position in society. How political leaders or bureaucrats *should* behave is wrapped up in the definition of what a political leader or bureaucrat *is*; there is no external standard of 'good.' Weber's account illustrates one way social scientists could approach questions of ethics: explaining what is required of those in particular positions in society is a factual question – but one that yields value-laden answers. Weber grounds the very goodness of forms of the 'good life' in their empirical description.

Individual and Society

There is an obvious problem in identifying the good with socially-defined roles. The bureaucrat's duty to act *sine ira ac studio* is 'good' within a particular social context – but it does not follow that that social context is itself good. Weber, of course, saw this: whilst he clearly adumbrated specific duties, he retained his Nietzschean scepticism towards the ultimate value of society as a whole. The problem, then, is how to justify society's demands. This is possible, I suggest, if we treat society and individual as part of a complex of mutual

¹⁵ Weber, Max, 'The Profession & Vocation of Politics' in Weber, Max, *Political Writings*, trans. R. Speirs, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) p.360.

¹⁶ Weber, Max, 'Parliament and Government in Germany under a New Political Order,' in *Political Writings*, pp.160-1.

¹⁷ Weber, 'Profession & Vocation of Politics,' p.359-60.

¹⁸ Weber, Max, 'Science as a Vocation,' in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, H.H. Gerth & C. Wright Mills, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958), p.145.

¹⁹ Weber, 'Science as a Vocation,' p.145.

justification. To explain this, I shall first argue that the natural individual stands in just as much need of justification as society. The problem can be resolved if we treat morality as a particular kind of claim that applies only within society, to conscious humans, not universally or in nature. Because his interpretive sociology examines reasons and values, Weber's paradigm is suited to explaining society through a moral lens; though Weber himself does not take this step, his approach can unite concepts of virtue and flourishing, and so permits a factual yet moralized critique.

Classical liberalism's greatest strength is at the same time its most serious weakness: it is founded on the rejection of a priori claims to authority over individuals. The state of nature arguments of Hobbes, Locke, and others start by assuming there is no authority or rank by nature. By extension, individuals are not ready-committed to any particular value and so cannot be obliged to obey in the name of, say, religion or the common good. This negative claim shifts the burden of proof on to liberalism's opponents: their claims are not accepted until good reason has been given.

However, this strategy meets problems of its own, as Hobbes at least frankly admitted. Though any individual in his state of nature has an unlimited right to anything needed for survival, this right overlaps with the same right in others; indeed, should it seem necessary to kill others for survival, the individual has a right to this too.²⁰ To avoid Hobbes's grim conclusions, other liberals have tried to justify individual rights in terms of some other good. Locke, for example, gives us rights insofar as we are the creations of an 'infinitely wise maker.'²¹ Mill argues that individual liberty is justified because of its utility, but this allows it to be curbed for the same reason: he concedes that 'despotism is legitimate mode of government in dealing with barbarians.'²² The dilemma of liberal individualism, then, is that it either leaves the individual without moral protection, or it tries to justify it in terms of a transcendent standard that itself remains ungrounded.

The problem is one of moral foundationalism, or the search for some basic moral fact that justifies everything else. As John McDowell puts it, 'what has happened to modernity is rather that it has fallen into a temptation... to wish for a foundation for ethics of a sort that it never occurred to Aristotle to supply it with.'²³ Classical liberalism looks for this in the individual; Gorski's ethical naturalism points to biologically-grounded needs. In contrast, McDowell suggests Aristotelian ethics appeals, not to our 'first' (broadly-biological) nature, but to our 'second' nature, instilled in us by moral

education in society. Rousseau, liberalism's rogue stepchild, draws further consequences. Arguing that the transition from nature to society changes our unprotected 'natural' liberty into 'civil' and 'moral' liberty and creates property out of mere natural possession, he implies that it is only in civil society that these things are *morally* valorized. Nature is amoral: nothing can be naturally good or bad. In contrast, moral norms belong to what McDowell, following Sellars, calls the 'space of reasons': though inapplicable to brute natural forces, they are thoroughly real for thinking, conscious humans. It is within this space of reasons that our claim on eudaimonia applies.

As we have seen, Weber was willing to explain the ethos required of those in specified social locations, but refrained from attempting ultimate justification of society or morality as a whole. Yet his own interpretive sociology provides a way out of the impasse. He treats society as such a space of reasons in the world, distinguishing the social from the natural by action stemming from a motive or reason in the mind of the actor. Society operates through reasons, in that it demands certain virtues and values of members in particular locations. The demands of *areté* thus *assume* a particular kind of entity capable of responding – a being of 'second nature,' that flourishes enough to be held responsible for its actions. Individual flourishing is valorized because it is necessary for *areté*. Conversely, it is social action – consciously motivated not automated, and made possible by socialization – that truly counts as flourishing. Society's demands have moral weight because society is the locus of eudaimonia. Though Weber gives short shrift to the claims of eudaimonia, the fact that he expresses society's needs in terms of values that should orient action presupposes a degree of flourishing. From a Weberian perspective, society is a moral space of reasons: it is the ethical substance, wherein alone moral norms are possible in a complex formed by the mutual justification of virtue and flourishing.²⁴

Consequently, ethical critique of society need not rely on some primally-moral foundation, such as human nature; as a space of reasons, society is already valorizes particular forms of flourishing. If it inhibits such well-being, the demands it makes of its members are invalid. This points to reinterpreting both the Marxian concept of reification and Durkheim's anomie with an ethical twist. Lukács's original account of reification was amoral: individuals under capitalism saw society as a distinct entity governed by a set of unalterable laws; this produces contradictions that generate revolutionary self-consciousness in the proletariat.²⁵ More recently, Habermas gives a distinctly moralizing interpretation: reification is seen when a value-oriented communicative lifeworld is reified when taken over by impersonal systemic imperatives, so

²⁰ Hobbes, Thomas, *Leviathan*, ed. C.B. MacPherson (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985), Bk.I, Ch.xiv, pp.189-90.

²¹ Locke, John, 'Second Treatise of Government,' in Locke, John, *Two Treatises of Government*, ed. P. Laslett, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), Ch.2, p.271.

²² Mill, John Stuart, *On Liberty*, (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1978), p.10.

²³ McDowell, *Mind, Value, & Reality*, p.195.

²⁴ The Hegelian inflection here is deliberate.

²⁵ Lukács, Georg, *History & Class Consciousness*, trans. R Livingstone, (London: Merlin, 1971); Westerman, Richard, 'The Reification of Consciousness: Husserl's Phenomenology in Lukács's Identical Subject-Object' in *New German Critique* 111, Vol. 37, No. 3, Fall 2010: 97–130.

limiting the scope for the free discourse.²⁶ Habermas explicitly rejects using any idea of the good life as the basis of moral critique: instead, such reification generates social problems by distorting more ‘natural’ bonds, or (in earlier formulations) contradicts a transcendental model of open speech.²⁷ Nevertheless, Habermas’s position is tacitly parasitic on specific ideas of eudaimonia: if the nature of society or formal speech acts are not themselves to be reified against individuals, they must assume that it is good for humans to be involved in them as thinking, discursive beings. From this perspective, the problem is that reification turns parts of the social world into a realm of first nature: where motivated conscious activity is replaced by automated procedures, reification extinguishes the space of reasons entirely and is thus antithetical to human well-being.

Anomie presents a different problem. For Durkheim, anomie refers to a failure of moral regulation: anomic suicide, for example, may be seen after dramatic changes in circumstances, when people are thrown into disarray by a sudden deterioration or improvement in their situation.²⁸ Durkheim treats this as a social pathology, but (I have argued) this alone does not make it morally bad. Instead, the moral problem lies in a contradiction between the second nature that society fosters in individuals and the social world they are expected to join. For example, let us assume (as Carol Gilligan suggests) that the upbringing of boys and girls differs to a degree that produces different types of personality and self-concept, and the type fostered in males is given greater opportunity for flourishing.²⁹ The problem here is twofold. First, women are subject to demands for virtue unrewarded by opportunities for well-being in society at large. In addition, unequal socialization develops a second nature in the disadvantaged group that cannot find full expression and value in the society that generates it. Anomie is morally injurious precisely when it is social processes that instil in us the capabilities that are then denied expression – not because these capabilities are ‘natural.’

Toward a “Space of Reasons”

In short: the idea of eudaimonia has greater moral weight if considered as part of a socially-existing space of reasons, rather than as grounded on natural tendencies of humans. Therefore, although I agree with Philip Gorski’s call to use this concept as the basis of moralized social critique that goes

beyond the fact/value distinction, I am not persuaded that ethical naturalism is able to justify the moral desirability of such flourishing. If indeed what is natural is good *tout court*, then the latter adds nothing to the former and is superfluous; if not, then we must separately explain what qualifies as ‘good.’

The problem, I have suggested, can be resolved through a Weberian theoretical paradigm that describes society as a ‘space of reasons,’ and so outlines moral duties in terms of the ethos that should motivate those acting in specified social locations. Though Weber’s own Neo-Kantianism left him unable to anchor the good in the real world, his description of humans as thinking, motivated beings emphasizes that aspect of us that is more than a brute animal, which McDowell identifies as the ‘second nature’ at the heart of Aristotelian ethics. The flourishing of individuals is therefore thoroughly entwined with the existence of a social space of reasons in a complex of mutual moral valorization. Social demands of virtue are addressed to beings with the ability to fulfil them and are justified to the extent that society nurtures the capabilities of its members. Conversely, individual well-being is morally significant only in society, not by nature, because it helps preserve the space in which we are all able to flourish. Eudaimonia and areté thus rely on one another for validity; indeed, phronesis too is presupposed in this socio-moral ontology, though constraints of space prohibit full consideration of this element of Aristotelian ethics. To flourish, to live the good life, therefore *necessarily* means to live in society: to call *anything* ‘good’ in any sense whatsoever is to make a claim within the space of reasons.

This perspective, I argued, allows the reinterpretation of the classical concepts of reification and anomie. In each case, the moral problem is the detachment of society’s demands from the well-being of its members: reification annihilates moral flourishing by the objectification of social action, whilst anomie indicates that a failure to fit individuals for full and successful membership of society. Indeed, whenever demands made of a sector of society are not balanced with corresponding opportunities for development, the moral complex of society breaks down. If these demands in fact benefit a separate group in society, such that the well-being of the dominant group is at the expense of the subalterns, this is exploitation. This might even be said to meet Weber’s formalistic Neo-Kantian standards: there is an error in the logic of mutual valorization of eudaimonia and areté.

I want to suggest that empirical social sciences might use the idea of eudaimonia (whether predicated on ethical naturalism or not) in two directions, by investigating what versions of the good life are possible in a particular form of social organization as a whole. On the one hand, we might ask not just (as Gorski rightly proposes) whether promoting particular versions of the good life causes unacceptable harm to others, but also whether it is possible to lessen the damage whilst

²⁶ Habermas, Jürgen, *Theory of Communicative Action*, trans. T. McCarthy, 2 vols, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984 & 1987).

²⁷ Habermas, Jürgen, ‘Wahrheitstheorien’ in H. Fahrenbach (ed.), *Wirklichkeit und Reflexion*. (Pfullingen: Neske, 1971). 211–265.

²⁸ Durkheim, Émile, *Suicide: A Study in Sociology*, trans. J.A. Spaulding & G. Simpson (New York: Free Press, 1951), p.252.

²⁹ Gilligan, Carol, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory & Women’s Development*, (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).

leaving the basic structures of society intact. Weber, for example, laments the ill effects of formal rationalization, but does not therefore propose its reversal. In contrast, Marx finds capitalism so inherently problematic that amelioration is not enough: society must be entirely restructured. Regardless of one's moral opinion of such effects, it is an empirical question whether they can be resolved without major social change.

But empirical analysis of limits to society's ability to foster forms of flourishing need not only be critical: we might also be able to identify latent and unrealized possibilities for flourishing within it. Perhaps certain moral demands are no longer required, or individuals might now be offered scope to develop new capabilities. Durkheim suggests this in describ-

ing the decline of the *conscience collective* and the rise of modern individuality in societies that are now able to integrate far greater diversity than hitherto.³⁰ Where other critiques tell us what is wrong with society, eudaimonistic critique can also tell us what could be right with it. It is, then, utopian in Adorno's sense: it reveals definite possibilities of the good within the real. Perhaps such revelation can be the first step to their realization.

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³⁰ Durkheim, *Division of Labour*, pp.101–23.