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The Logic of the Larder and Ideal Theory

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THE LOGIC OF THE LARDER AND IDEAL THEORY

by

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B.A., University of Minnesota, 2012

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Faculty of the Graduate School of the
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This thesis entitled:
The Logic of the Larder and Ideal Theory
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The final copy of this thesis has been examined by the signatories, and we
Find that both the content and the form meet acceptable presentation standards
Of scholarly work in the above mentioned discipline.

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The Logic of the Larder and Ideal Theory

Thesis directed by Professor Alastair Norcross

The Logic of the Larder is a long-lived argument which maintains, at least on a charitable rendition, that conscientious meat-eating is the ideal dietary choice, assuming that the lives of the animals slaughtered for consumption are valuable, and that those animals would not have lived unless brought into existence by humans for consumption. By examining the criticisms of the methodology of ideal theory in normative political philosophy articulated by oppositional theorists, I argue for the relevance of these criticisms to the Logic of the Larder, and to the practice of animal ethics more broadly.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the billions of animals killed for human consumption throughout the world each year, and to the countless animals whose lives have been taken from them for trivial human ends throughout history; every day, every hour, at this very minute, the hierarchy of human supremacy is being constructed by human hands, with the bodies of other animals as the rungs of the ladder. Until their voices are heard and listened to with open ears and open hearts, I will not rest.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In 1975, Peter Singer set fire to a public debate about the plight of non-human animals with his book *Animal Liberation*. In the first chapter of this work, Singer argues that humans systematically marginalize and exploit other animals on the grounds that they lack morally salient traits, such as rationality or the ability to reason, which are typically said to make humans morally considerable. They do not, however, hold this same position with regard to humans who lack these capacities. To recognize these capacities as morally relevant only insofar as doing so allows humans to disregard the interests of non-human animals is what Singer calls 'speciesism,' which he categorizes as a prejudice or discriminatory attitude comparable to sexism or racism.¹ For any attribute that only humans have, Singer contends, some humans lack. For instance, Singer points to infants or humans with severe mental defects as examples of humans who cannot reason. Of those attributes which all humans possess, such as sentience, most animals possess them as well. As such, Singer argues not only that non-human animals have moral worth, but that their interests are deserving of equal consideration to human interests.²

Following the publication of Singer's book, the discourse of animal ethics continued to expand and has gained an impressive intellectual credibility in contemporary moral philosophy. It is a testament to the strength of this discourse that it is nowadays difficult to find ethical arguments against vegetarian or vegan diets which enjoy much notoriety or

1 Singer did not invent the term 'speciesism,' although he is famous for popularizing the word. It was first articulated by a British psychologist named Richard Ryder in a pamphlet on the use of non-human animals in the early 1970s. For more, see: Ryder 2010

2 Singer 1975: 1-26

longevity. One notable exception, however, is the Logic of the Larder, which has a long history and has been defended by a number of notable theorists.³ In the 19th century, British philosopher Leslie Stephen wrote:

Of all the arguments for vegetarianism, none is so weak as the argument from humanity. The pig has a stronger interest than anyone in the demand for bacon. If all the world were Jewish, there would be no pigs at all.⁴

This argument by Stephen is one which is nowadays familiar to most theorists working in animal ethics. The argument was named by philosopher Henry Salt, who referred to it as “the Logic of the Larder” because, he said, the argument “implies that the real lover of animals is he whose larder is fullest of them.”⁵ The argument is commonly used to defend animal husbandry and is directed against vegetarian and vegan diets. For example, Richard Hare explicitly defends the Logic of the Larder in his work “Why I Am Only a Demi-Vegetarian.” Hare justifies his consumption of humanely raised animals on the grounds that a short and happy life is more valuable for animals than no life at all.⁶ The Logic of the Larder not only attempts to justify animal husbandry, but even claims that animal husbandry can be morally superior to vegetarianism or veganism not on the grounds of the moral superiority of humans above non-human animals, but on the grounds that meat consumption is in the interests of animals themselves.

According to the Logic of the Larder, the raising and killing of animals for their meat is

3 Frey 1983, Appleby 1999: 72, Blackorby & Donaldson 1992, Posner 2004, Scruton 2004, Cowen 2006

4 Stephen 1896: 236

5 Salt 1914: 188

6 Hare 1993

morally ideal, provided that certain conditions obtain:

1. Those lives are pleasant enough to be valuable.
2. The animals in question would not have existed unless brought into existence by humans for consumption.

Philosophers have offered a number of content-based responses to the Logic of the Larder. Peter Singer, for instance, has examined whether or not the Logic of the Larder is acceptable within a utilitarian framework and what the implications of that acceptance would be,⁷ and Steve Sapontzis has debated which animals in particular can be said to benefit from animal agriculture, if those animals do not yet exist.⁸ The issues discussed in this thesis, however, will arise primarily at the level of philosophical methodology, under the explicit assumption that non-human animals are entitled to at least some moral consideration.

My topic in this thesis is the methodological criticisms of ideal theory offered by oppositional theorists in political philosophy, and the role that these criticisms should play in discussions about the aims and methods of animal ethics, specifically with regard to the Logic of the Larder. In what follows, I will explore and attempt to motivate these aforementioned methodological concerns, as they have arisen in the context of social and political theory. I will then argue that these methodological concerns are applicable to the Logic of the Larder, and that an appreciation of these methodological concerns is imperative in order for philosophers in the domain of animal ethics to do work which is action-guiding, and to develop methods which do

7 Singer 2011: 105

8 Sapontzis 1988: 41

not covertly sustain speciesism.

Philosophers often disagree about which methods should be used in doing philosophy. In fact, the debate about philosophical methodology is as controversial an issue as nearly any other in philosophy. Issues regarding the methods that philosophers should use in developing and seeking answers to philosophical questions are enmeshed in the larger debate of 'metaphilosophy,' or the philosophical study of the aims, methods, and nature of philosophy itself.⁹ Metaphilosophical views are difficult to assess, in part, because many philosophers do not argue for any metaphilosophical view, nor do they make whatever metaphilosophical views they hold explicit. Rather, the metaphilosophical views of theorists are often implicit foundational assumptions in their work. As philosopher Christopher Daly notes, this phenomenon is not especially surprising because philosophers are generally eager to grapple with first-order philosophical problems: what counts as knowledge, what things exist, what should be done in this or that situation, and so on.¹⁰ Thus, second-order philosophical problems about the nature and methods of philosophy are often left unexamined. Nonetheless, questions about the aims and methods of philosophy are important because our views in this area bear significantly on how we deal with first order philosophical problems.

Feminist philosophers and philosophers of race, hereafter 'oppositional theorists,' have long expressed concerns that contemporary Western philosophy suffers from a host of metaphilosophical issues, among which a notable theme is a lack of attention paid to the social domain which not only prevents philosophy from being as useful for our projects as we would like for it to be, but can also serve to make philosophy an agent in sustaining oppression.

⁹ Examples of metaphilosophies include naturalism and conceptual analysis, which in turn are umbrella terms that cover a number of different metaphilosophical views.

¹⁰ Daly 2010: 12

Although philosophical scholarship by oppositional theorists is not uniform in either methods used or in conclusions reached, a conspicuous mark of the work in these areas of philosophy is a recognition that philosophy is made in a social world which is largely unjust, and in which various moral voices have been systematically marginalized or silenced. Insofar as philosophy mirrors these injustices of the social world, oppositional theorists recognize philosophy as both naturalizing and perpetuating those injustices, and thereby seek to remedy this moral ailment within philosophy.

Since the advent of oppositional domains of philosophy as recognized sub-fields, if they can be so called, it has been the hope of many that mainstream philosophy can integrate and benefit from the methodological insights and critiques offered by these sub-disciplines. Although philosophical work in these areas appears to remain largely marginalized, oppositional theorists have had some notoriety in mainstream philosophical discourse with regard to social and political theory. In particular, a common complaint among these philosophers which has enjoyed at least some consideration (though generally followed by dismissal) in normative political philosophy is that much of analytic philosophy too readily disregards the context of theorizing, namely the real-world social and political circumstances which underlie and bear on the questions about which philosophers do and do not ask, the methods which philosophers endorse, and the implications that philosophical theories have for our social lives.¹¹

Oppositional theorists have criticized the methods of social and political philosophy by arguing that the methodology of ideal theory is a paradigm of Anglophone theories of justice which often ignores the relevant complexity of moral life and can illicitly support the

¹¹ I borrow this summary of feminist philosophers' primary complaints from Sally Haslanger (Haslanger 2013: 1)

continuation of various forms of injustice, including white and male supremacy. The methods of non-ideal theory, they claim, are necessary for addressing and dismantling the injustices of the actual world. Despite its notoriety, the notion of ideal theory is somewhat unclear, although it is often used loosely to refer to theories which involve a high level of abstraction and are constructed with idealizing assumptions which portray social reality as much better and simpler than it actually is. The best known example of ideal theory is the work of John Rawls, entitled *A Theory of Justice*, in which Rawls attempts to determine the principles of justice that would regulate the distribution of scarce resources in a perfectly just society by means of a variant of social contract.

Rawls's theory proposes the principles of justice which must be followed by any society in distributing benefits and burdens, if the coercive authority of a political system is to be deemed justifiable in the eyes of those subject to it. These principles should provide citizens, who are conceived of as free and equal, with reasons to abide by society's rules beyond mere coercion itself. In order to determine these principles, Rawls relies on a method which he calls 'reflective equilibrium,' which involves determining a set of practical principles which cohere with the considered judgments¹² that are mutually held between rational deliberators, and which are appropriately motivating, such that humans would feel disposed to comply with them.¹³ An appeal to the principles of justice articulated by Rawls is thus meant to determine whether or not the distribution of resources within a society is morally appropriate. In this sense, Rawls's conception of justice is concerned with practicality. According to Rawls, his theory of justice

12 These are, briefly put, judgments arrived at through a process of weighing possible implications of one judgment over another. Mutually held considered judgments are arrived at through a transparent process when a group problem-solves collectively by carefully exploring a set of judgments, weighing them against alternative judgments, and seeking consensus as to which judgment they should communally adopt.

13 Rawls 1971: 20

should not only establish what distributive justice is as an ideal, but further, this ideal should serve as a tool by means of which reality can be appraised from the viewpoint of perfect distributive justice (or, at least, the best distribution that can be hoped for).

Although Rawls is neither the inventor nor the only defender of the methods of ideal theory, his work is arguably the best known and most criticized, and so I will focus centrally on his approach to theorizing about justice in examining the methods of ideal theory.¹⁴ A nice summary of the philosophical methods which characterize *A Theory of Justice*, is given by Alison Jaggar in her piece “L'Imagination au Pouvoir: Comparing John Rawls's Method of Ideal Theory with Iris Marion Young's Method of Critical Theory,” and so my summary of the methods of ideal theory will follow hers.¹⁵ As Jaggar notes, Rawls's ideal theory does not merely offer certain political ideals, as normative political philosophy is apt to do, but is ideal in certain methodological respects:

Firstly, Rawls's methodological approach in *A Theory of Justice* is ideal in the sense that his arguments arise from a situation of hypothetical reasoning. The 'original position' features centrally in Rawls's social contract account of justice: it is a position in which a party of free, equal, rational, and self-interested agents are concerned with making a choice about which principles they will live under. In this fictitious situation, Rawls imagines that parties of agents meet behind the 'veil of ignorance,' which deprives them of all knowledge about their respective positions in society. The original position is intended to ensure a fair and impartial point of view from which to reason about fundamental principles of justice, establishing, as Rawls puts it, “an

14 The methods of the ideal theory can be traced back to the beginnings of Western philosophy. In the *Republic*, for instance, Plato presents a comprehensive ideal theory of justice for the state. Further, insofar as Plato believed that the state is simply man writ-large, he hoped that a determination of what justice would look like for the state would illuminate what the ideally just individual would look like (see Plato 1968).

15 Jaggar 2009: 60-61

Archimedean point for judging the basic structure of society.”¹⁶ Rawls's original position thus provides an ideal standard of reasoning against which real world reasoning might be measured.

Secondly, Rawls's methodological approach is ideal in the sense that his principles of justice are designed with a 'well-ordered society' in mind. This well-ordered society is a sort of fiction which is characterized by various assumptions which allow Rawls to bracket certain troublesome aspects of the real world. These assumption are, primarily, 1) that everyone in the well-ordered society accepts and knows that their fellows accept and abide by the same principles of justice, and 2) that the social institutions of the well-ordered society satisfy, and are known to satisfy, these principles. Further assumptions made by Rawls include that everyone in the well-ordered society is presumed to act justly and to uphold just institutions, and that the society in question is a closed system which is isolated from other societies.

Finally, Rawls maintains that ideal theory precedes non-ideal theory on the grounds that injustice can only be fully understood with an ideal conception of justice in place. As Rawls states, “The reason for beginning with ideal theory is that it provides, I believe, the only basis for the systematic grasp of ... more pressing problems.”¹⁷

With these methodological notes in mind, it is important to clarify that ideal theory need not be completely comprehensive, as Rawls believes his theory to be. If an ideal theory of justice is to be considered totally comprehensive, then that theory should specify all of the conditions which must be met in order to eliminate all instances of injustice. The construction of such a comprehensive theory is, however, no small feat, and so it comes as no surprise that most

16 Rawls 1971: 584

17 Rawls 1971: 9

theorists do not undertake this ambitious project.¹⁸ As such, ideal theory can fall someplace on a spectrum, being more or less comprehensive. Sometimes, ideal theory may be partial. According to Ingrid Robeyns, there are three ways in which ideal theory may be partial: Ideal theory may be partial in the sense that it specifies only the minimal conditions or principles of justice, leaving open the possibility that further principles would need to be specified in order for justice to be met fully. Ideal theory may also be partial insofar as it only focuses on one domain of justice, such as justice with respect to health. An ideal theory which is partial in this sense may tell us which principles of justice would be required in order to ensure justice of the relevant kind, but does not speak to issues of justice in other domains. A further way in which ideal theory might be partial is that the theory may deal only with principles of justice that describe what justice requires from political institutions, rather than private associations such as businesses, or from individuals.¹⁹

Setting aside the nuances of ideal theory, Rawls's *A Theory of Justice* is now generally considered a classic work in political philosophy which outlines a method for the moral evaluation of social and political institutions, the appreciation of which has not diminished over time and continues to be broadly endorsed in philosophical literature on justice. However, a number of philosophers, particularly those who examine issues of justice through the lens of oppression, have expressed concerns about the methodology of Rawls's ideal theory and its wide-spread use in theories of justice.

18 Rawls, however, does intend for his theory to be comprehensive.

19 Robeyns 2008: 344

CHAPTER 2

IDEAL THEORY AND FEASIBILITY CONSTRAINTS

The goal of ideal theory, whether comprehensive or partial, is for ideal theory to function as what Ingrid Robeyns calls 'a paradise island.' Ideal theory is said to instruct us by showing us the direction in which we should move in order to reach a just society, or a society which is just in a designated respect, such as a society which is just with regard to health or with regard to gender, by specifying which conditions must be met in order for a certain practice or state of affairs to be just. One problem identified by Robeyns which is echoed by many oppositional theorists is that even if ideal theory marks the endpoint of the journey towards justice, a point of contention to which I will later return, it does not necessarily instruct us with regard to how we should reach that destination. As Charles Mills explains:

What distinguishes ideal theory is not merely the use of ideals...What distinguishes ideal theory is the reliance on idealization to the exclusion, or at least marginalization, of the actual...Ideal theory either tacitly represents the actual as a simple deviation from the ideal, not worth theorizing in its own right, or claims that starting from the ideal is at least the best way of realizing it.²⁰

Making an analogy to sailing, Robeyns notes that some seas are so treacherous that we cannot simply sail directly towards our paradise island. Attempting to draw prescriptions for public policy and social action from theories of justice designed with idealizing assumptions is,

²⁰ Mills 2005: 168

according to Robeyns, similarly dangerous.²¹

In order to understand the feasibility concerns which have been expressed in response to ideal theory, it would be prudent to clarify their methodological target. Critics of ideal theory have argued that many ideal theories are unhelpful or even misleading where the assessment of the conduct of actual societies is concerned because these theories ignore many pressing moral issues in real politics. Although these omissions may not suffice to undermine the theoretical plausibility of the ideal contained within an ideal theory, they may nonetheless be problematic if ideal theory is intended by its proponents to be action-guiding. The question, then, is whether or not ideal theories can serve as theoretical frameworks by means of which we can reason about what existing societies ought to do in order to move towards a state of perfect justice, and whether they are in fact doing so.

Certain critics of ideal theory, such as Onora O'Neill, claim that ideal theory omits important moral issues from its theorizing by means of 'idealization.' O'Neill distinguishes between abstraction and idealization in theorizing, and argues that while abstraction is an unavoidable part of all theorizing, idealization is typically misleading and should be avoided. According to O'Neill, abstraction involves the bracketing, but not the denial of certain predicates that are true of an issue under discussion, whereas idealization involves the ascription of predicates that are false of the issue under discussion, typically predicates which hold a positive connotation for the theorist.²² Although the distinction between abstraction and idealization which is championed by Onora O'Neill can seem cloudy, it may be clarified by a summary of the distinction offered by Charles Mills:

21 Robeyn 2008: 345

22 O'Neill 1988

Imagine some phenomenon of the natural or social world, X (e.g. the distribution of scarce resources). We could theorize about X by means of a model, or a representation. There is one kind of representation of X which is said to be descriptive of its crucial features and functions. However, since this model is not X itself, the model will have to abstract away certain, inessential features of X. In order to do this, simplifications will be made by theorists based on what they take to be the most important or salient features of X. As such, certain features will be included in the model, while other features will be omitted. Ultimately, this model should give us a sense of how X actually works. This, Mills says, is abstraction, which can serve to produce a schematic picture of X. ²³

There is another type of model which we might produce of the aforementioned phenomenon, X, in which we construct an exemplar or ideal of what X should be like, by attributing traits or features to X which deviate from the norm (i.e. traits which the actual X does not have, at least presently). For example, in theorizing about an ideal X, where X is a society, we may involve certain idealizations about the people in this society; they may be perfectly compliant, or perfectly informed about the laws, and so on. Presumably, the ideal X will differ from the actual X, and so there will be a gap between the actual and the ideal. How useful it will be to use an idealized model of X when theorizing about and making prescriptions for the actual X is a question which, according to Mills, cannot be answered *a priori*, because the answer will depend upon the significance of the gap between the actual and the ideal. In theorizing about the actual X, Mills says, we cannot simply start with an idealized model of X and hope that the actual X is only slightly different than the ideal. Instead, we need to start with an investigation of the properties of the actual X in order to determine how closely it resembles the idealized X, and,

23 Mills 2005: 166-167

if we want to transform the actual X to be more like the ideal, we must be able to examine a descriptive model of X in order to understand its contextual dynamics, and illuminate the factors which currently prevent the ideal X from coming to fruition. The crucial and defining feature of ideal theory, Mills argues, is not its reliance on models, but its over-reliance on idealization to the exclusion of description.²⁴

Although the distinction between abstraction and idealization is frequently referenced in discussions of feasibility concerns pertaining to ideal theory, I find the distinction shaky at best.²⁵ For example, in Rawls's construction of the original position, it might be argued that Rawls assumes that all citizens in society are equal. This would be a false or idealized assumption because it ascribes a predicate to the citizens of his ideal society which is untrue of citizens in actual society (at least, they are not all treated or viewed as equal by each other, or by political institutions). However, it might just as well be argued that Rawls brackets away differences which are considered to be morally arbitrary, such as economic class, sex, gender, race, and so on. When these facts which attach to people in the actual world are bracketed off within a theory, it seems as though the theory implicitly denies their existence, at least for the sake of theorizing, reasoning as if no one in society is actually subjected to differential treatment on the basis of these differences when they are in fact differentiated as such. Since bracketing off certain information during theorizing necessarily involves omission which is selective, it seems that some idealization may be unavoidable. Nonetheless, even if selecting what to include during theorizing cannot be avoided entirely, Charles Mills's description of ideal theorizing captures something important, which is that some theories capture social reality more accurately than

24 Mills, 167-168.

25 My concerns are shared by Lisa Schwartzman and expanded in her work. See Schwartzman 2006.

others. Insofar as ideal theory assumes away the relevant practical limitations to achieving justice that we encounter in actual societies, there is a legitimate worry that the gap between ideal theories and our non-ideal circumstances may be entirely unbridgeable, or that ideal theory is likely to be ill-suited or counter-productive in guiding action in the real world in which idealizing conditions do not hold.

The feasibility critiques of Rawls's ideal theory are not directed per se at a failure on the part of Rawls to recognize that his theory does not closely correspond to the current political reality. Although Rawls did not believe that his ideal theory was unrealistic, he did recognize that more humble political ideals might be needed in order to realize the political vision specified in his ideal theory. Nonetheless, he maintained that his ideal theory should operate as a tool for shaping the recommendations of a more practically efficacious non-ideal theory.²⁶ As such, these feasibility critiques are in large part the response of oppositional theorists to the theoretical paradigm which followed in the wake of Rawls's work. Charles Mills succinctly frames the problem as follows:

In *A Theory of Justice*, as earlier cited, Rawls argues for ideal theory on the grounds that while the injustices of partial compliance are the “pressing and urgent matters,” we need to begin with ideal theory as “the only basis for the systematic grasp of these more pressing problems” (8). But then why, in the thirty-plus years up to his death, was he still at the beginning? Why was this promised shift of theoretical attention endlessly deferred, not just in his own

26 Rawls 1971: 9

writings but in the vast majority of his followers?²⁷

The problem then, according to Mills, is that in failing to substantively connect his ideal theory to the rectificatory work of non-ideal theory during his career, Rawls established a precedent through which ideal theory became the presumed end of mainstream political philosophy.

A further and related practical problem with ideal theory is that it cannot guide us in making choices between different ideals of justice. For example, realizing justice of a certain type in the actual world, such as gender justice, may be at odds with what justice demands in other domains. Ideal theory does not instruct us about what we should do if different dimensions of justice come into conflict, as often happens in our non-ideal world in which various forms of injustice are interlocked. This may be because ideal theories tend to be partial in the sense that they consider justice of a particular kind in isolation, separate from justice of other sorts, or because all of the domains in which injustice occurs are said to be in a just unison in comprehensive ideal theories. As such, ideal theories tend not to have the resources to tell us what to do when we are forced to make trade-offs between different domains of justice in the non-ideal world. As race theorist Charles Mills complains, moral life in an idealized, hypothetical situation, such as the society mentioned by Rawls in *A Theory of Justice*, is imagined to be quite different from moral life in an unjust world. Thus, what ideal theories often cannot do is offer normative guidance which is practical for navigating through the relevant complexity of actual moral life.²⁸

27 Mills 2005: 179

28 Mills 2005

In a recent book on racial discrimination, Elizabeth Anderson, advisee of John Rawls, provides a powerful example of the feasibility constraints which can plague ideal theory. According to Rawls's work in *A Theory of Justice*, for instance, ideal theory tells us that an ideally just society would be institutionally color-blind, which means that the basic social structures of society must disregard race as a criteria on which to base the distribution of duties and benefits. Consequently, ideal theory entails that race-based affirmative action programs must be blocked, under ideal circumstances. Although Rawls's principle of equality of opportunity in his ideal theory does not entail that affirmative action programs should be discouraged in the realm of the non-ideal if they are enacted with the aim of achieving greater equality of opportunity, Rawls's ideal theory fails to provide any practical guidance at all, despite that, according to Rawls, his ideal theory is designed in such a way as to be extended and adjusted to address the unfavorable conditions of non-ideal society.²⁹ In fact, Rawls's principle of equality of opportunity has been used in protest against such reformative policies in American society, which has long failed to secure equality of opportunity for many of its citizens.³⁰ As Anderson argues, Rawls's ideal theory distorts the reality of the history of race relations in liberal societies like the United States. If our theories about securing justice begin with the world as it is, then we will observe that in the United States, African-Americans experience various disabilities caused by racism, much of which is not embodied in the law. From this, we may conclude, as Anderson does, that race-based affirmative action is a moral imperative, despite that it is at odds with Rawls's ideal theory, because it is a justifiable and necessary means for achieving better

29 Rawls 1971: 245-246

30 Taylor 2009: 490

outcomes for equality of opportunity in our non-ideal world.³¹

Insofar as we do not live in a perfectly just society, a point which I will assume to be self-evident, many theorists have been adamant about the need for a theory of justice which can guide us in moving towards our theoretical ideal. In short, these theorists demand a theory tailored for the transition from injustice towards justice, namely a non-ideal theory. Although certain defenders of ideal theory have yielded to this concern, some have replied to this aforementioned criticism of ideal theory by arguing that the criticism rests upon a misunderstanding of the limited role which ideal theory is meant to play.³² Nonetheless, in the light of these remarks made by defenders of ideal theory, contemporary philosophical work on theories of justice remains conspicuously quiet with regard to a transition theory, and continues to refrain from specifying how we should draw guidance from ideal theory.

31 Anderson 2010

32 Swift 2008

CHAPTER 3

IDEAL THEORY AND IDEOLOGY

As an issue fundamentally prior to the feasibility critiques which have been forwarded against ideal theory, oppositional theorists have questioned the methodological priorities of ideal theory. While both ideal and non-ideal theory aim to offer normative ideals that can reveal injustice and guide transformative action, non-ideal theory does not begin by developing a general and ahistorical vision of justice, but instead begins by examining specific injustices in the real world so that knowledge of them might inform its ideals. Ideal theory has been scrutinized by oppositional theorists who have raised concerns that because ideal theory treats the analysis of actual social structures and forms of oppression as secondary to the development of normative ideals, the ideals themselves may be ideological in the pejorative sense.³³

An ideology is a set of shared beliefs held between people or groups, often internalized through a process of socialization. As such, to call ideal theory 'ideological' is to claim, as James Boettcher says, that ideal theory is “..false, misleading, or otherwise distorted, or that it plays a role in legitimating various social relations or practices, or that it is generated or sustained, at least in part, by features of the social structure in which agents are embedded.”³⁴ In order to construct normative ideals of how society should be structured, ideal theorists such as Rawls must attempt to transcend the social structures of their current societies in order to develop ahistorical political ideals to which any reasonable person would agree, often by employing abstract reasoning. Rawls endeavors to do this by means of the 'original position' thought

33 Mills 2005: 166, Tessman 2010: 195,

34 Boettcher 2009: 242

experiment and the method of reflective equilibrium; this is worrisome, however, because the formulation of ideal theories, as well as corresponding sympathies to them, do not arise in the context of a hypothetical vacuum, or, as Rawls would have it, in a discussion between disembodied agents behind the veil of ignorance, but in the context of an unjust social world in which certain forms of oppression are systemic, embedded in our social structure, and are thus likely to bias the thinking of theorists in some respects.

Although concerns about normative or factual presuppositions are not unique to discussions about the methodology of ideal theory, oppositional theorists worry that certain presuppositions might inform the construction of ideal theories in ways that are antithetical to eliminating injustice. For instance, once in the original position behind the veil of ignorance, those who are party to the development of the social contract in *A Theory of Justice* are stripped of their embodied characteristics, and thus they cannot be sensitive to the actual experiences of those who are least advantaged in our present society. This is because the agents in the original position are essentially identical to one another, and so they cannot speak from particular perspectives. Yet, theorists who use the original position in an attempt to occupy an impartial perspective from which to reason about justice do, in fact, occupy a very particular social perspective which cannot simply be assumed away.

If theorists are not conscientious of the ways in which their thinking and methodologies might be biased in ways that reinforce unjust power dynamics, then there is a risk that the ideals of justice that they develop may “reflect and contribute to perpetuating illicit group privilege.”³⁵ In a society which is structured by conditions of oppression, oppositional theorists argue that those who are disadvantaged by these conditions are likely to stress different questions and

35 Mills 2005: 166

values in their moral reasoning than those which are traditionally stressed in ideal theories of justice, such as abstract individual rights. Although uniformity in moral reasoning and moral claims might be expected in an ideal society in which various forms of oppression have been overcome, oppositional theorists argue that the idealized methods of reasoning endorsed by defenders of ideal theory do not enable theorists to overcome reasoning which is structured by oppression, but instead must assume that the dissolution of this sort of biased thinking has already been accomplished, if it is intended to function as a critical tool for grounding the impartiality of theories of justice.

Conventionally, biased thinking has been thought to be explicit, and consciously accessible, such that if theorists did not recognize prejudice in their work, then prejudice was unlikely to underlie that work. In recent decades, however, social psychologists have documented the wide-spread effects of unconscious social biases, thereby providing evidence for a claim that oppositional theorists have long maintained: discriminatory or ideological thinking can be systemic in a way that affects theorizing, but it can also be unintentional or implicit. As such, a person who explicitly professes egalitarian beliefs, such as equality between the sexes, might nevertheless think and behave in a number of biased ways, such as unconsciously associating women with the family and care-taking. Implicit biases are biases in judgment and/or behavior manifested by attitudes or stereotypes operating below the level of conscious awareness.³⁶ The idea of implicit bias arose from the literature on implicit social cognition which began to circulate widely in social psychology in the 1970s, with many theorists arguing that most social behavior is driven by automaticity, and as such is not directly accessible through

³⁶ An attitude is a mental association between a concept, such as a social group, and an evaluation with a valence which can be either negative or positive (or, sometimes, neutral). A stereotype is an association between a concept and some trait. (Kang et. Al 2012: 1128)

introspection.³⁷ Accordingly, implicit biases can affect a person's behavior without their conscious endorsement of those biases.

Decades of research on implicit bias offer compelling evidence that implicit bias is a real and wide-spread phenomenon. For instance, an analysis of 122 research reports involving 14,900 subjects has revealed that implicit biases are likely to be systematic, pervasive, and generally consistent with social hierarchies such as White over Black, men over women, youth over elders, and so on. Further, it seems that implicit biases can have real effects on how people think.³⁸ As an example of the real-world effects of implicit bias, consider a study on bias in the domain of gender conducted by Michael Norton, Joseph Vandello, and John Darley. In their study, participants were asked to evaluate the profiles of job candidates for a high level position at a construction company. The participants ranked the candidates and explained their decisions by writing down what they considered to be important in determining which candidate was the most desirable. In the control condition, the profiles of job candidates were given initials rather than full names, thereby preventing participants from assessing the genders of the candidates. In this condition, participants preferred the candidate with the highest education 76 percent of the time. In the two experimental conditions, the profiles were given names that indicated gender. In the first condition, the man was listed as having a higher education than the woman, and in the second condition, the woman was listed as having the higher education. When the man had the higher education, participants preferred him 75 percent of the time. When the woman had the higher education, however, she was preferred only 43 percent of the time.

The difference in evaluation between the male and female candidate in this study is

37 Gawronski and Payne 2010: 2

38 Greenwald et al 2009

curious, but it is made more curious by examining how this difference in evaluation was justified. In both the control condition and the condition in which the male candidate had the higher level of education, participants ranked education as more important than experience roughly 50 percent of the time. Yet, in the condition in which the female candidate had the higher level of education, only 22 percent of participants ranked education as more important than experience, suggesting that the weight assigned to the criteria for the evaluation of these candidates was being changed during the decision-making process in order to justify a preference for the male candidate.³⁹

In light of the results of their study on gender-bias, Norton and his colleagues performed further experiments. They wanted to determine whether or not this shift in the weighting of criteria was done consciously in order to provide a rationalization for a decision motivated by an explicit bias or if the weight shift happened unconsciously, in a manner that is more consistent with implicit bias. The researchers ran another experiment, similar in nature to the first, in which participants were asked to rate the criteria for college admissions decisions with the race of applicants disclosed. The participants were asked to evaluate the admission criteria abstractly, without selecting a candidate for admission. In much the same way as the gender study, a change in the weight of criteria per the race of the applicant was observed, despite that the participants did not anticipate that they would be making a decision about which candidates to admit, nor did they expect that they would have to justify their evaluations of the admissions criteria.

In this study, participants were given two sample resumes with potential admissions criteria. The two resumes had equivalent SAT scores, but they differed with respect to grade point averages (GPA), and the number of advanced placement classes taken (AP classes). Both of

³⁹ Kang et al 2012: 1157

the resumes disclosed the race of the applicant. In the condition in which the Black candidate had the higher GPA, but fewer AP classes, 77 percent of the participants ranked GPA as being more important than the number of AP classes taken. In the condition in which the White candidate had the higher GPA, however, 63 percent of the participants ranked GPA as being more important than AP classes. Although participants in the study were not expected to have to justify their choices, the researchers did not believe that the changes in weighting which they observed in this experiment on racial bias could be explained merely as a means for justifying a prior decision, leading the researchers to suspect that decisions made under social constraints⁴⁰ can influence the processing of information even before a decision is consciously made.⁴¹ As such, they concluded that biases which track social categories may occur and factor as part of the decision-making process itself.⁴²

Given the evidence of the pervasiveness of implicit biases and their effects on information processing and decision-making, feminist philosophers such as Jennifer Saul and Lisa Schwartzman argue that philosophers are likely to imbue their work with certain biased assumptions which are shaped by the social dynamics of their own societies.⁴³ Further, insofar as theorists tend to occupy similar social positions, as most philosophers do,⁴⁴ Schwartzman argues that it can be difficult for theorists to identify the influence of biases in their work, or in the work

40 In particular, not wanting to appear to be racially biased against Black people.

41 Kang et al 2012: 1158

42 Kang et al 2012: 1158

43 Saul 2013: 46, Schwartzman 2012:

44 Recent research performed by the American Philosophical Association in 2011 on the gender demographics within philosophy estimate that among the 13,000 full-time and part-time instructional faculty queried, roughly 20% were women, and less than 1% of those women were women of color (see Norlock 2011). Information on the racial demographics within philosophy are much more difficult to find than information on the gender demographics within philosophy. However, an examination of the racial demographics of members of the American Philosophical Association may be indicative of the representation of racial minorities in philosophy more broadly. According to research conducted by Kathryn T. Gines, out of the 11,000 members of the American philosophical association, fewer than 125 are Black, and of those 125, fewer than 30 are Black women (for more, see Gines 2011).

of their peers.⁴⁵ As an example of this, Schwartzman points to Rawls's initial description of the original position. In the first edition of *A Theory of Justice*, Rawls suggests that the parties in the original position should be thought of as 'heads of families,' thereby allowing us to assume that they will care for the members of their own families.⁴⁶ In this discussion, Rawls relies on examples which are traditional in the sense that they involve fathers and sons, although it could be argued that the head of a family need not be a father.⁴⁷ Nonetheless, what is implicitly assumed by Rawls in suggesting that we think of the parties in the original position as the representative heads of families is that the family itself is internally just.

With the rise of feminism, philosophers such as Susan Moller Okin criticized Rawls for failing to account for injustice which is internal to the traditional family structure, citing the feminist mantra “the personal is political.” The problem with Rawls's assumption is, according to Okin, that:

He is thereby effectively trapped into the public/domestic dichotomy, and with it, the conventional mode of thinking that life within the family and relations between the sexes are not properly regarded as part of the subject matter of a theory of social justice.⁴⁸

Although Rawls's conceptual division of the public and private sphere seemed, and continues to seem, to many to be commonsensical, when analyzed from the perspective of

45 Schwartzman 2012

46 Rawls 1971: 128-129

47 Despite this objection, I suspect that the term 'head of the family' brings a man to the minds of most Western theorists.

48 Okin 1989: 92

gender-subordination, feminists found the distinction to be ideological in the sense that it contributes to the gender system by means of which issues faced by women are consistently relegated to a neutral or apolitical sphere. As such, Rawls never considers whether the traditional division of labor within the family should be scrutinized as an issue of justice, nor does he consider the ways in which the aspirations and dispositions of girls and boys are shaped contextually within the traditional family, thereby affecting the avenues of opportunity available to them. Rawls' assumption about heads of households effectively removes a large sphere of human life from the scope of his theory of justice – a sphere which features especially in the lives of women who have historically been segregated into the private domain. Since Rawls fails to theorize adequately about the relationship between the public and private domains, he consequently fails to fully identify the roots of sex-based discrimination which prevent gender-justice.

The problem with the top-down approach advocated by ideal theorists is that it is based on a sort of naivete which feminists have often called the Cartesian 'view from nowhere,' or conversely, 'the dream of everywhere.' As feminist philosopher Susan Bordo points out, the notion that reasoning and its physical basis can be disassociated, though not explicitly committed to Rene Descartes' metaphysical thesis of mind body dualism, is naively dualistic in the sense that it treats as irrelevant the context in which reasoning is exercised.⁴⁹ She maintains that a responsible approach to theorizing must guard against the view from nowhere, or the methodological supposition that there is an ideal framework for approaching philosophical

⁴⁹ In the sixth meditation of his work *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Rene Descartes proposed the thesis of 'mind-body dualism,' or the thesis that the mind and the body are distinct and theoretically separable substances. Immensely distrustful of the physical world, Descartes maintained that the mind, which is only contingently connected to the body, is capable of clear, objective thinking, provided that the thinker can transcend the deceptive nature of the bodily realm.

endeavors which is detached from any particular perspective, acknowledging that theorizing is always perspectival and bears investments which are social, political, and personal.⁵⁰ The methodology of ideal theory which puts the development of ideal theory before an analysis of real world social systems rests on a failure to recognize the effects that social systems have on everyone, and how this prevents the sort of thinking required by genuine impartiality. In particular, there is a failure to appreciate that philosophers, as human cognizers, are situated in the non-ideal world, have been socialized within systems of domination and oppression, and this cannot be remedied by thinking more abstractly about the rights and liberties to which individuals are entitled. As Mills astutely asks, “If it were obvious that women were equal moral persons, meant to be fully included in the variable 'men,' then why was it not obvious to virtually every male political philosopher and ethicist up to a few decades ago?”⁵¹

The central claim embedded in the ideology-based criticisms of ideal theory is that theorizing of any kind takes place within a social reality, and may be dominated by concepts, assumptions, and values which reflect the experiences and interests of privileged groups. With this in mind, many oppositional theorists turn once again to non-ideal theorizing.⁵² According to its defenders, non-ideal theory is not merely the best approach for realizing normative ideals, but is superior to ideal theory in developing those ideals in the first place. As Charles Mills notes, “...What distinguishes ideal theory is not merely *the use* of ideals, since obviously non-ideal theory can and will use ideals also...”⁵³ Non-ideal theory, like ideal theory, will appeal to visions of a better world in constructing theories of justice. However, what differentiates ideal from non-

50 Bordo 1990: 140

51 Mills 2005: 178

52 See Gilligan 1982, Okin 1989, Fraser 1990, Mills 2005, Robeyns 2008.

53 Mills 2005: 168

ideal theory is that the development of normative ideals in non-ideal theory will begin with and be tethered by an examination of the social world and the effects that it has on human knowledge claims, recognizing that all theorizing is perspectival and requires investigation, and thus better ensuring that those ideals are not illicitly ideological.

CHAPTER 4

FEMINIST STANDPOINT THEORY

The strategy of non-ideal theory, if it is to take bias and injustice seriously, cannot be a simple form of naturalism in which the development of normative ideals are supplemented by data about particular injustices. As oppositional theorists have long maintained, particularly in the domain of the philosophy of science, all cognition, whether explicitly moral or empirical, is not a matter of direct perception, but is instead reliant upon concepts and frameworks.⁵⁴ As such, non-ideal theorists must remain self-conscious about the concepts and frameworks which are used in the development of theories of justice, recognizing that many of the dominant concepts in philosophy are the results of social structures which may obscure crucial and oppressive realities. For instance, Margaret Walker and Alison Jaggar both maintain that philosophers should be interested in and concerned by the social and psychological origins of the theories which philosophers develop.⁵⁵ These theories should be able to stand up to rigorous investigation in order to determine if they are narrow, prejudiced, or motivated by particular (and non-representative) interests.

In order to adequately scrutinize their conceptual tools and avoid theories which marginalize certain social groups, many non-ideal theorists advocate the methodology of feminist standpoint theory.⁵⁶ Standpoint theory developed within feminist epistemology

54 Some feminists, such as Patricia Collins, express skepticism about the claim that some social locations provide a knowledge of social dynamics which is more accurate than others.

55 Walker 2003, Jaggar 2003

56 Standpoint theory began with the work of German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, who studied the different standpoints of slaves and masters and how they informed knowledge claims from the two respective groups in 1807. Karl Marx similarly discussed how the class position of workers shapes their knowledge (Wood 2008: 323-334). From these works, Nancy Harstock examined standpoint theory in relations between men and

primarily as a rejection of the positivist view of knowledge, which was inspired by the work of Auguste Comte. Comte was an empiricist, and as such, he maintained that knowledge can only be drawn from experience. He endeavored to create a methodology for solving social problems rooted in 'positive knowledge' or knowledge which is free of bias and perspective. The only existing example of positive knowledge, Comte claimed, is scientific knowledge, because scientific knowledge is purportedly free from bias because scientists utilize controls which are able to eliminate the influence of perspective in research. With this in mind, positivists proposed that the only assertions that can have meaning are those assertions which can be verified through normal observation.⁵⁷

The conditions under which observation can be characterized as 'normal' on the positivist conception are unclear, but feminists were quick to recognize a serious flaw in the positivist criterion for knowledge production, namely that on the positivist view, knowledge which relies upon an individual's perspective is not verifiable and thus is biased, but it seems, or so feminists contend, that all experience is irreducibly subjective.⁵⁸ In fact, the recognition of knowledge as situated has underlain much feminist criticism of science, in which feminist scientists such as Donna Haraway have argued that the abstraction from perspective in science has neglected the gendered nature of experience and the questions which arise from it, thereby rendering the experiences and interests of women and other marginalized groups invisible while disguising the

women, referring to sex as a biological category and gender as a behavioral category. The theory was developed in large part by social scientists, especially sociologists and political theorists. Harstock called her resulting theory 'feminist standpoint theory' in 1983, although the methods of feminist standpoint theory are nowadays used for the analysis of inter-subjective discourse which does not focus exclusively on gender (for more, see Harstock 2004: 35-54).

57 Durran 1998, Jaggar 2008: 268

58 Jaggar 2008: 268-269

experiences of certain men as 'objective.'⁵⁹

Feminist standpoint theory is both a theory of knowledge and a methodology for the analysis of inter-subjective discourse which consists of two central theses, one of which is the claim that social location systematically shapes and limits what we know. As such, standpoint theory maintains that knowledge is achieved from a particular socio-political position. The second thesis of standpoint theory is that certain social locations are, in certain respects, epistemically advantaged.⁶⁰ The situated knowledge thesis of feminist standpoint theory takes knowledge to be embodied. Historically, systems of oppression, such as racism and sexism, have negatively impacted the social and material circumstances of certain individuals, affecting their living conditions, opportunities, their treatment in social contexts, and so on. Consequently, by virtue of differences in material and social conditions, it is asserted by feminist standpoint theorists that individuals from different social locations will, to some extent, have different types of experiences which result in different beliefs and knowledge. Arguably, the thesis of situated knowledge rests on the assumption that experience is central to the development of knowledge, and as such, it is in keeping with the core of empiricism.⁶¹ However, feminist standpoint theory differs from the empiricism championed by Comte insofar as feminist standpoint theory claims that objectivity of the sort which is entirely free of perspective is an incoherent concept.

The ways in which social location shapes the experiences of individuals within particular social groups is not assumed to be homogeneous or essentialist, and will be contingent upon the present social dynamics within society. As Patricia Hill Collins notes in her work on Black feminism, the experiences of women, for instance, will be dissimilar in virtue of differences such

59 Haraway 1998

60 Wylie 2003: 23

61 Intemann 2010: 789

as race, class, sexual orientation, geographical location, etc. However, an individual's membership within a certain group will be relevant to the kinds of experiences that they can have because of the ways in which group membership influences an individual's socio-political circumstances.⁶² That is, whether an individual is a poor woman or a wealthy woman, in a gender-structured society, she will be constrained in certain respects in virtue of her womanhood.

Although it is tempting to think of the term 'standpoint' in 'standpoint theory' as a perspective developed as a result of the experiences had by an individual from a particular social position, contemporary standpoint theorists typically deny that standpoints are equivalent to perspectives which are socially located.⁶³ Instead, they maintain that standpoints are achieved collectively when groups of individuals together develop a critical consciousness about how power structures shape, for instance, research questions, the methodologies endorsed by theorists, the implicit assumptions underlying research, and so on. As such, the occupation of a particular social location by an individual does not itself produce a standpoint. Rather, the sort of critical consciousness which underlies a standpoint is a social project, achieved when members of a social group reflect on their individual experiences and collectively achieve an understanding of the nature and effects of oppressive social structures.⁶⁴ Nonetheless, individuals can endorse and be representatives of a collective standpoint.

Having clarified the situated knowledge thesis, the thesis of epistemic advantage claims that the inclusion of members of marginalized groups in epistemic communities renders an epistemic advantage because such communities are likely to be more critical or rigorous in certain respects than communities which are not similarly diverse because members of

62 Hill Collins 1990: 221-238

63 Wylie 2003: 31, Jaggar 2008: 35, Harding 2004: 31.

64 Jaggar 2008: 305

marginalized groups will often have the sorts of experiences which are integral to identifying problematically biased assumptions in theorizing, as well as research questions and methodologies which are obfuscatory in the sense that they marginalize or make invisible the interests and experiences of certain groups. That is, research communities which are homogenous and dominated by members of socially privileged groups may lack relevant criticisms that could arise from a greater diversity of experiences and evidence.

The claim of epistemic advantage in feminist standpoint theory rests on the notion of 'biculturalism' or 'outsiders within.'⁶⁵ These terms refer to members of marginalized groups who have endorsed a standpoint in virtue of understanding the assumptions and practices of dominant culture, but nonetheless have experiences which conflict with the views expressed by the dominant culture, allowing them to generate alternative conceptions of social reality.⁶⁶ Consider, for instance, the criticisms of Rawls's original position offered by Susan Moller Okin. Since she was a professional political philosopher, Okin must have understood the relevant theories and methodologies accepted in the practice of mainstream political philosophy. However, as Okin was both a woman and an active participant in the feminist movement, she had experiences which allowed her to recognize the problematic and partial nature of certain assumptions which were widely sanctioned in her field. For example, in virtue of having grown up in a society in which the dynamics internal to the family are generally dictated by gender norms, Okin was able to recognize that the family is a relevant source of social injustice where Rawls and many of his peers did not. Similarly, Charles Mills, a Black American philosopher and race theorist in a predominately White field, has noted that philosophical work on social justice is often

65 Hill Collins 1991

66 Jaggar 2008: 305

undertaken in such a way as to emphasize the *de jure* causes of racism in political institutions, but tends to ignore the *de facto* roots of racism in political institutions, thereby failing to seriously address institutionalized racism.⁶⁷

Recognition of the ways in which moral thinking is shaped by existing social structures and dynamics, particularly in favor of the socially privileged, is of immense importance to non-ideal theory, thus making the methodology of feminist standpoint theory a plausible means of highlighting important dimensions of social reality and revealing how certain modes of thought and conceptual frameworks are used to reinforce systems of oppression. In contrast to ideal theory, which treats partial perspectives as an epistemic impediment and thus attempts to divorce cognition from any particular point of view, non-ideal theories which rely on feminist standpoint theory as a conceptual tool treat the situated and partial perspectives of human cognizers as epistemic resources in the construction and criticism of normative ideals.

67 Mills 2009

CHAPTER 5

THE LOGIC OF THE LARDER AS IDEAL THEORY

Animal ethics is typically said to fall in the domain of applied ethics because it deals primarily with human-animal relationships and how the former ought to treat the latter. Applied ethics is, as its name implies, the application of moral theory to real world problems, including the philosophical examination of the permissibility of various actions and practices. As such, applied ethics is, by definition, concerned with ethics as a lived practice. The problem, however, is that although contemporary work in ethics is not often explicitly Rawlsian, much of it has proceeded in a Rawlsian manner by idealizing the world conditions to which moral theory applies, and by abstracting the judgments of theorists from the context of the actual world, including its history and politics. Insofar as ideal theory has become the paradigm methodology for moral theorizing broadly, this paradigm conceals a profound moral problem for applied ethics, because, largely, the problems dealt with in applied ethics are problems which arise in the context of the non-ideal.

As this thesis has attempted to show, the methodology of ideal theory in normative political philosophy has garnered an enormous amount of controversy, much of which has involved criticisms by oppositional theorists, such as feminist philosophers, who claim that the methodology of ideal theory too readily disregards the social world in which the injustices which much of ideal theory seeks to remedy is found, and sometimes illicitly contributes to those injustices. As an alternative to ideal theory, many of these oppositional theorists turn to the methodology of non-ideal theory. Although a full account of the debate between ideal and non-

ideal theorists is beyond the scope of this thesis, my objective thus far has not been to enumerate these aforementioned methodological critiques in their entirety, but instead to display their potency in order to draw parallels between the problems identified in oppositional critiques of ideal theory in political philosophy and similar shortcomings in the Logic of the Larder, thus revealing how non-ideal theorizing of an oppositional sort can make animal ethics not only more action-guiding, but also more critical and rigorous.

The Logic of the Larder, as stated at the beginning of this thesis, aims not only at justifying animal agriculture, but argues for its moral superiority to vegetarian or vegan diets. At this juncture, I will identify the methodological characteristics which mark the Logic of the Larder as a partial ideal theory. In political philosophy, an ideal theory is an argument pertaining to political and/or social arrangements made under certain favorable assumptions, such as ideal background conditions. Recalling a passage from chapter two, there are several senses in which an ideal theory in the domain of political philosophy, perhaps a theory of justice, may be partial, as opposed to comprehensive. An ideal theory may be partial in the sense that the theory provides a non-exhaustive list of the conditions or principles which are required for justice. An ideal theory may also be partial insofar as the theory focuses on the issue of justice in a particular domain, such as gender, but does not specify what would be required in order to ensure justice in other domains. Additionally, ideal theory may be partial in virtue of dealing only with what justice requires of public institutions, as opposed to private associations and individuals.

The Logic of the Larder is constructed under the assumption of an idealized moral background because entertainment of the argument is predicated upon certain preconditions, namely that the creation of farm animals for consumption is the best dietary aim that can be

hoped for, provided that moral life takes place in a setting where the animals can lead generally happy lives. As such, the Logic of the Larder seems to be a partial ideal theory in at least two of the three aforementioned respects: the Logic of the Larder is a partial ideal theory because it specifies at least minimal conditions or principles which must be met in order for animal husbandry to be morally permissible or morally good, and it does so by considering the industry of animal agriculture in isolation from the demands of morality in other domains of life.

The central assumption of the the Logic of the Larder, namely that the lives of the animals involve more pleasure than pain, seems clearly not to correspond to the reality of animal husbandry in the actual world, because this criterion is not only frequently violated by the predominant method of animal farming in the United States, factory farming, but this criterion is fundamentally incompatible with the functioning of factory farms.⁶⁸ Factory farms are industrial livestock operations which raise large numbers of animals either for direct human consumption, or for the foods which farm animals are instrumental in producing, such as dairy and egg products. These consolidations are essentially monopolies owned by profit-driven companies which place efficiency and output ahead of animal health and welfare, and are thereby able to produce high volumes of animal product by treating animals first and foremost as tools, rather than sentient, living creatures.⁶⁹ Animals on factory farms are confined for the duration of their lives to small cages in metal buildings in which they are given no room for normal behaviors,

68 Although I focus centrally on the actual conditions of animal husbandry in the United States, factory farming is not unique to the United States,. In fact, factory farming is a growing industry in developing nations, such as the Philippines, where governments are providing large loans to farmers in order to encourage the adoption of industrialized farming practices (for more, see Nierenberg 2003).

69 For example, according to a 2009 report by Duke University, the modern market for meat in the United States is dominated by four major corporations. Tyson Foods maintains 25% of the U.S. market share for meat products, and sells to 90 countries. Cargill Meat Solutions Corporation owns 21% of the U.S. market share and operates in 66 countries. The JBS corporation owns 18.5% of the U.S. market share, and maintains 54 processing plants on four continents. Lastly, the National Beef Packing Co., LLC owns 10.5% of U.S. market shares. Combined, these corporations own 75% of U.S. market shares in the meat industry (Lowe & Gereffi 2009).

such as playing and grazing, and little to no access to sunlight and fresh air; the animals kept on factory farms are routinely mutilated in order to adapt them to these conditions, and they are administered regular doses of antibiotics as a preemptive measure to stave off diseases which are bred by the unsanitary environment in which these animals are held.⁷⁰ In addition to these preventative medicines, the animals' diets are supplemented with hormones in order to promote faster growth.

According to the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, more than 99 percent of all farm animals in the United States are raised on factory farms.⁷¹ By intensively rearing as many animals as possible in small spaces, industrial farms are able to produce mass quantities of animal product at a low cost. The reality of the structure of modern animal farms is clearly at odds with overall quality of life of the animals that they raise, and as such, is at odds with the minimum standard of welfare assumed by the Logic of the Larder. On most renditions, the argument of the Logic of the Larder is constrained by the stipulation that the lives of the animals in question are at least more pleasant than painful, thus entailing that theorists who evoke the argument concede that moral consideration of non-human animals entails that certain lives, such as those lived by animals on factory farms, are so miserable as to not be worth living, but bracket this possibility by imagining a hypothetical, alternate reality in which it is guaranteed that farm animals live more or less happily.

70 Given the dictates of this thesis, I will not specify all of the ways in which farm animals are presently mutilated and mistreated, but I will clarify the claim that these animals are mutilated as a response to factory farm conditions. For instance, because animals like pigs are highly intelligent and social, they will often experience severe stress due to boredom when confined to small spaces for long periods of time. As a result, they will sometimes bite the tails of the pigs in neighboring cages. In order to prevent this sort of behavior, factory farms routinely remove pigs' tails. This procedure is called 'docking,' and it involves the cutting off of a piglet's tail without anesthetic. Similar practices are performed on egg-laying hens who, when confined to small wire cages, will peck hens in adjacent cages. The beaks of these hens are typically removed during infancy by means of a hot blade, also without anesthetic (for more on these practices, see the ASPCA's "Farm Animal Cruelty").

71 "Farm Animal Cruelty" 2015

In addition to its central idealizing assumption, the Logic of the Larder implicitly demands the entertainment of further ideal conditions in its departure from the real world, such as a morally ideal economic and political system which would not incentivize the abuse of farm animals. Consider, for instance, that in 2014 alone, meat producers such as the Tyson and Perdue corporations combined to spend nearly 4.3 million dollars lobbying the U.S. government, while the dairy industry spent an additional 6.7 million dollars.⁷² Lobbying is an attempt by either individuals or private interest groups, such as privately owned corporations, to influence the decisions made by the government, often by persuading individual members of the legislature to vote in favor of the group's interests through campaign contributions. As a result of their efforts, corporate factory farms routinely receive large subsidies from the United States government. A subsidy is a sum of money given to an industry or business by the government in order to ensure that the price of a commodity remains low and competitive. For instance, in 2012, the U.S. government granted industrialized farms a subsidy of 58.7 million U.S. dollars for livestock, and an additional 447 million U.S. dollars in subsidies for dairy manufacturing. In addition to subsidies, corporate farms receive other benefits from the U.S. government which contribute to the low prices of animal products, including, for instance, the purchasing of surplus animal products by the government for programs such as public school lunches.⁷³ These benefits allow farm corporations to maintain low costs for industrially sourced meat and dairy products against which smaller, humane farms cannot easily compete.⁷⁴

Although it is true that institutionalized animal exploitation is to blame for many of the

72 "Lobbying Spending Database, 2014" 2014

73 EWG Farm Subsidies, 2012

74 According to the United States Department of Agriculture, in 2012, more than half of these independently owned farms reported financial losses (Vilsack 2012).

barriers which prevent the realization of animal friendly animal husbandry, the problem has arisen as a response to consumer demands. Until the 1950s, animal farming in the United States relied predominately on more traditional farming methods in virtue of which animals were raised outdoors and grazed in pastures.⁷⁵ Following the second World War, however, the United States experienced an economic boom and an increase in average family size and consumer spending. As a result of a new demand for more animal products, the system of confinement was introduced to the industry of animal agriculture with the aim of producing mass quantities of animal products at low costs. Since the 1950s, this process of confinement has been intensified in keeping with an increasing demand for animal-based foods. Presently, it is estimated that the average American consumes between 230 to 270.7 pounds of meat annually, which is an increase of somewhere between 91.8 to 132.5 pounds per year from the 1950-1959 national averages.⁷⁶

A cursory examination of the origins of factory farming in the United States makes clear that the problem of industrialized farm animal abuse cannot be remedied by the creation of more animal-friendly farms alone, because these farms, by their nature, lack the production capacity which is necessary to maintain the present purchasing trends of consumers. In light of these considerations, it is apparent that the general well-being of farm animals stipulated by the Logic of the Larder implicitly necessitates the assumption of further ideal background conditions, such as an ideal economic and political system, and ideally compliant consumers whose demands do not exceed the production capacities of humane farms.

75 A notable exception to this, of course, is the production of animal products in large U.S. cities post-industrial revolution. As early as the 1920s, urban areas saw farming practices which were more intensive and mechanized than those which were employed in rural communities (for more on this, see Fitzgerald 2003).

76 “Profiling Food Consumption in America” 2002, “USDA – ERS” 2015, “Data Center – Food and Agriculture” 2014 (The USDA has not released exact numbers for 2015 meat consumption, but most sources estimate that the average American will have consumed well over 200 pounds of meat in 2015.)

CHAPTER 6

THE LOGIC OF THE LARDER AND FEASIBILITY CONSTRAINTS

Provided that the relevant conditions hold, the Logic of the Larder claims that animal friendly animal husbandry is morally obligatory. As I have explained, the dominant practices of animal farming in the United States result in great suffering for animals. Nonetheless, the argument is often used by contemporary moral theorists to defend 'humane meat' consumption. For instance, Roger Scruton, relying on the Logic of the Larder, claims that eating meat is a moral duty because many animals owe their lives to the system of animal husbandry, and although he acknowledges that some animals may have lives which are too unpleasant to be worth living, he contends that it would be easy enough to remedy this situation.⁷⁷ Such a defense of 'humane meat' seems to rest on a failure to appreciate the magnitude of the idealizing assumptions at work in the Logic of the Larder, and might be side-stepped by a non-ideal examination of the background conditions of the industry of meat production. However, it may be argued, in keeping with the tradition of ideal theory, that the Logic of the Larder represents an ideal towards which we should aim. That is, it may be said that the Logic of the Larder shows us how animal husbandry should look ideally, and as such, the Logic of the Larder need not be closely related to how the situation of animal husbandry looks presently.

The Logic of Larder implies that although arguments in favor of ethical vegetarianism or veganism are correct to claim that factory farming results in tremendous suffering for farm animals and is thus impermissible, if we lived in a world in which we were able to exclusively buy products from farms where the animals are raised on pastures and are treated humanely

77 Scruton 2004

during their lifetimes, this would be morally superior to refraining from eating animal products, under ideal conditions. Were it not for the demands of human consumers, farm animals would never experience life in the first place, and surely, the argument goes, if we value the lives of non-human animals, to live pleasantly and be killed as a means to an end is better than never living at all. Rather than eradicating animal agriculture entirely, the Logic of the Larder claims that a system of animal friendly animal husbandry is morally ideal. Assuming for the time being that the conclusion of the Logic of the Larder is morally correct, the Logic of the Larder, as a partial ideal theory, suffers from a host of feasibility constraints, similar in nature to those which have been identified in ideal theories of justice in political philosophy, because it provides no clear guidance for our behavior in the actual world.

One problem faced by those who would support animal-friendly animal husbandry is that nearly all animals raised for meat, dairy, and eggs come from factory farms,⁷⁸ and although it is possible to find small farms on which animals have better lives than they would on factory farms, doing so can be extraordinarily difficult, especially because 'humane' labeling on animal products is largely a marketing strategy employed by suppliers. Presently, there are few clearly defined or enforced regulations which dictate the use of humane labels.⁷⁹ As such, industrialized confinement corporations, such as Sparboe and Perdue, are able to keep millions of chickens raised for slaughter in unsanitary conditions which are so severely crowded that chickens are

78 As stated earlier, the number is higher than 99%.

79 Free-range labels are only legally applicable to poultry. As such, there is no legal restriction to the use of free-range labels on other animal products, such as beef and eggs. The requirements for a humanely raised, free-range poultry label are merely that the birds have access to the outdoors for an undetermined period of time each day. However, five minutes of access to open air suffice to gain a "Certified Free Range" label, and the label does not require that the birds do in fact spend time outdoors. If, for instance, the birds are unaware of an open door and do not go outside, they can still be considered free range. Further, these requirements are rarely verified by the United States Department of Agriculture. According to a statement by the USDA, the adjudication of a free-range label depends primarily upon the testimony of producers (see "Meat and Poultry Labeling Terms" 2014).

sometimes crippled or even crushed to death by the weight of their fellows, but nonetheless maintain a 'free-range' certification from the United States Department of Agriculture.⁸⁰ Undercover investigations performed by animal advocacy groups reveal that many of the cruelties inflicted upon animals on factory farms are common practice for purportedly humane and free-range farms, including the use of 'rape racks' on which female animals are forcibly restrained and inseminated; the removal of infant animals from their mothers, including the slaughter of billions of day old male chicks who are of no use in the egg industry and are thus killed by a meat grinder called a 'macerator'; the mutilation of animals without anesthetic, including castration, debeaking, tail-docking, ear-tagging, branding, and de-toing; and the confinement of animals to harmfully small spaces.⁸¹

In spite of these unfortunate truths about humane labels, it does not follow that we ought not to purchase from and support genuinely humane farms, but that purchasing from animal farms which meet the conditions of the Logic of the Larder is surprisingly difficult to do. This aside, however, by virtue of its methodology as partial ideal theory, the Logic of the Larder further fails to guide action in present circumstances because it does not account for what Lisa Tessman calls the 'dilemmaticity' of moral life, or the non-ideal conditions which often force a choice between different sacrifices which must be made in order to transform the unjust conditions of society.

In her work "Against the Whiteness of Ethics: Dilemmatizing as a Critical Approach," Lisa Tessman argues that the methodology of ideal theory leads conventional ethical theory to overlook the complexity which characterizes moral life in non-ideal circumstances, including

80 Certified Humane 2015

81 See Compassion Over Killing 2004, Peaceful Prairie 2015, Mercy For Animals 2015

injustice, oppression, and conflicts of obligation and value. According to Tessman, dilemmatization is a non-ideal approach to ethics which involves the re-examination of moral life in an attempt to reveal dilemmas which are not made obvious or apparent by traditional ethical theory in which moral life is often simplified, and moral issues are studied in a compartmentalized fashion. Tessman argues that ideal theorizing in ethics tends to portray moral life as being cleanly governed by rational procedures that yield ideal solutions, thereby obscuring the fact that people often face highly dilemmic moral conditions in the actual world, and they are sometimes forced to make sacrifices between their moral commitments.⁸²

When applied ethics is done under idealizing assumptions, the morally ideal actions prescribed by ethicists are often rendered unavailable or even inimical to moral progress by the unjust conditions of real moral life. The Logic of the Larder prescribes the consumption of humanely derived animal products as the morally ideal dietary choice. The Logic of the Larder does very little, however, in the way of guiding action in the non-ideal conditions of the actual world in which animal husbandry, even of the humane sort, is structurally connected to other moral problems. This echoes the concerns of non-ideal theorists in political philosophy such as Ingrid Robeyns, who claims that ideal theory rarely examines the intersection of justice in different domains, and so tends not to offer insight about how to make decisions when doing what justice requires in one domain conflicts with progress in another domain. If philosophers in animal ethics hope to speak to the present permissibility of animal husbandry as a concrete practice embedded in dilemmic conditions, then they must rely on detailed information about factual issues pertaining to it. Although I cannot here hope to fully detail the intimate relationships between animal husbandry and other moral dilemmas, in what follows, I will

82 Tessman 2010: 202

examine the industry of animal husbandry through a non-ideal lens in order to outline several contemporary issues in virtue of which collective abstinence from animal products seems presently to be a moral imperative.

CLIMATE CHANGE

It is generally agreed upon in the scientific community that human activities are negatively impacting the Earth's climate. The concentration of greenhouse or 'heat-trapping' gases within the Earth's atmosphere has risen steeply within the last century, primarily because these gases cannot be quickly dissipated by the Earth's natural processes. As a result, large-scale climate changes are being observed, including increases in sea and air temperatures, rising sea levels, decreases in Arctic sea ice and glaciers, loss of biodiversity, and desertification. These changes have been confirmed to correspond with long-established predictions of how the Earth's climate is expected to respond to increases in human generated greenhouse gases, rather than with explanations of climate change which identify the Earth's natural influences as the source of global climate change.⁸³

Climate change is predicted to lead to further increases in global temperatures, and consequently, to great risks for societies and ecosystems. As such, the debate over climate change has reached the level of policy in recent years. Often, policies responding to climate change aim at undermining some of the human activities which harm the atmosphere. For instance, some policies have attempted to make driving cars more expensive, or have encouraged home-owners to invest in energy-saving technology, such as solar panels. Of the many actions

83 "Human Induced Climate Change Requires Urgent Action" 2013

being scrutinized in order to promote climate-friendly living, substantive dietary changes, particularly in developed nations, may be the most pressing.⁸⁴

In 2012, a study published by the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences determined that livestock production is one of the most powerful and destructive sources of climate change⁸⁵: livestock production leads to the degradation of air and water quality, accounts for 70 percent of the world's fresh water consumption, causes 75 percent of the world's deforestation, and is the single largest use of arable land.⁸⁶ There is some debate as to precisely how much animal agriculture contributes to greenhouse gas emissions, with studies showing estimates ranging from 18 percent⁸⁷ to as much as 51 percent.⁸⁸ Most studies are in agreement, however, that raising animals for consumption produces more greenhouse gases in the form of methane and nitrous oxide than all of the carbon dioxide emitted by all of the world's transportation combined (e.g. automobiles, boats, planes, trains, etc.).⁸⁹

According to a 2009 study on food's contribution to climate change, carbon dioxide has traditionally been considered the most important anthropogenic greenhouse gas by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.⁹⁰ However, because different greenhouse gases have different radiative properties, some may cause more significant long-term changes when emitted into the atmosphere than others. Over a 20 year period, the climate change potential of methane gas is said to be 23 times that of carbon dioxide, while nitrous oxide has 296 times the

84 "Key Issues: Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions" 2010

85 Eshel et. Al 2014

86 Pimentel et. Al 2004

87 "The Role of Livestock in Climate Change" 2006

88 Goodland & Anhang 2009: 11

89 "The Role of Livestock in Climate Change" 2006, Steinfeld et. Al 2006,

90 Carlson & Gonzalez 2009: 1704S

climate change potential of carbon dioxide.⁹¹ The sharp global increase of methane and nitrous oxide in the atmosphere throughout the 20th century is now being identified as a significant source of climate change, with animal agriculture being the primary culprit.⁹²

Despite international efforts to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases, very little has been done to cut emissions from the industry of animal agriculture.⁹³ In fact, the emission of greenhouse gases from animal agriculture are expected to increase by no less than 80 percent by 2050.⁹⁴ This may be due to a fear of consumer backlash, or to the immensity of the industry of animal agriculture, especially in the United States.⁹⁵ However, according to recent studies, a global shift towards a plant-based diet may be the only way to avoid the most devastating of the predicted effects of climate change.⁹⁶ A new study published by researchers from the University of Minnesota and the University of Maryland confirms that industrialized society could collapse within the century if global greenhouse gas emissions are not reduced dramatically, entailing that there is a small window of time available to meaningfully affect change.⁹⁷ Research from the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency and Carnegie Mellon, however, project that greenhouse gas emissions could be impressively reduced with a global transition to veganism, with carbon emissions dropping by 17 percent, methane emissions by 24 percent, and nitrous

91 “The Role of Livestock in Climate Change” 2006

92 Smith et. Al 2007: 499, “Global Anthropogenic Non-CO2 Greenhouse Gas Emissions” 2006

93 Exceptions include France, Brazil, and Bulgaria (Bailey et. Al 2014)

94 Tilman & Clark 2014

95 Catham House has at least some good news on this front. Their report details the first international survey on public knowledge and perceptions of the causes of climate change. Their survey studied respondents from 12 countries, 83 percent of whom agreed that human activities are heavily linked to climate change. Although fewer people were likely to identify animal agriculture as a significant contributor to climate change, those who were determined to be aware of the ways in which the consumption of animal products impacts the global climate were more than twice as likely as other respondents to have significantly reduced their intake of animal-based products, or to express a willingness to do so, thus suggesting that public education about the environmental damages caused by animal agriculture may help to inspire a collective transformation (see more: Bailey et. Al 2014).

96 Bailey et. Al 2014, Tilman & Clark 2014

97 Motesharrei et. Al 2014

oxide emissions by 21 percent by 2050.⁹⁸ Further, a worldwide dietary revolution would achieve these reductions much more quickly and efficiently than other methods, such as energy-conserving technology, local eating, small-scale animal farming, and carbon taxes.⁹⁹

POPULATION GROWTH AND FOOD SCARCITY

According to a report published by the United Nation's International Panel for Sustainable Resource Management in 2010, the global population is predicted to exceed 9.1 billion people by 2050. By 2100, the global population is anticipated to reach 11 billion. Presently, it is estimated that roughly 1 billion people around the world suffer from hunger and are affected by malnutrition. As the population increases, the crisis of global hunger is expected to intensify.¹⁰⁰ In order to meet the demands of the world's growing population, the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations states that global food production must increase by 70 percent by 2050. However, the panel further predicts that the efficiency gains predicted by implementation of new technology in agriculture are likely to be overwhelmed by the expected population growth, and at odds with the fight against climate change.¹⁰¹

The problem of global hunger is in part attributable to the production of animal-based foods. The reality of the present situation for food security is that we are failing to feed the 7.3 billion humans who already exist, primarily because the majority of the world's crops are

98 As was earlier stated, these gases cannot be quickly dissipated, and so their emission into the atmosphere is compounding.

99 Weber & Matthews 2008, Stefhast et. Al 2009

100 United Nations Environmental Programme 2010

101 This statistic is meant to speak to the production capacity of agriculture broadly interpreted to include both animal and crop farming ("How to Feed the World in 2050" 2009: 8)

produced in order to feed roughly 70 billion livestock animals each year who supply us with meat and dairy products.¹⁰² In 2013, scientists from the Institute on the Environment and the University of Minnesota published a study which examines the use of agricultural resources in relation to the problem of world hunger. According to their study, which analyzed the production and use of 41 different crops, only 55 percent of the calories available from global crop production directly feed humans. Of the crop-based calories produced, 36 percent is devoted to animal feed, 89 percent of which is lost to humans because these calories are used by farm animals for metabolic processes, or for forming cartilage, bones, and other non-edible body parts, including feces. As such, only 4 percent of the crop-produced calories funneled into animal products are available for human consumption. An additional 9 percent of the crop-produced calories available to humans are used for industrial purposes and biofuels, some of which is used in the industry of animal agriculture. As a result of these processes, the study concluded that roughly 41 percent percent of the calories available to humans from global crop production are lost, most of them to the system of animal agriculture.¹⁰³

Although these statistics are derived from the present uses of globally produced crops, which includes factory farming, this does not entail that free-range products are viable in light of the growing problem of global hunger, climate change aside. According to a United States Department of Agriculture report published in 2012, the average American consumed 231.33 grams of meat, 408.2 grams of eggs, and 780.2 grams of dairy per day that year.¹⁰⁴ Although these numbers are projected to have increased in recent years, they are nonetheless useful for

102 "Factory Farms" 2015

103 Cassidy et. Al 2013: 4

104 "Food Availability (Per Capita) Data System" 2012 (This is the most recent analysis which has been made available by the USDA)

illustrating a problem for free-range products. If, for instance, the current system of meat production in the United States were replaced by an agricultural system in which animals raised for meat were primarily grass-fed, David Pimentel, a Cornell ecologist specializing in agriculture and energy, predicts that the United States would be able to produce no more than 113 grams of meat per person per day, bearing in mind that the term 'grass fed' does not prohibit the use of antibiotics and growth hormones to fatten farm animals, and the diets of pasture-raised animals are typically supplemented by a cereal product called 'silage.'¹⁰⁵ Further, these statistics provided by Pimentel do not take into account the additional resources which would be required if all of the animals raised for dairy products were pasture-raised, but if they did, it is reasonable to assume that the amount of meat which could be produced in the U.S. would be much less than Pimentel's original prediction.

According to research on trophic issues conducted by Patricia Muir of the University of Oregon, if everyone in the world ate as U.S. citizens do, deriving about 26 percent of their calories from meat or animal products, less than half of the world's population could be fed.¹⁰⁶ However, even if everyone in the world ate a diet in which only 15 percent of their calories came from meat or other animal products, only 4 billion people could be adequately fed.¹⁰⁷ Interestingly, however, the 2013 study by the University of Minnesota and the Institute on the Environment estimates that the 70 percent increase in global calorie availability said to be imperative by the United Nations is already within reach, if global agriculture shifts the use of

105 Pimentel 1980: 26 (In recent work, Pimentel argues that diets heavy in animal products are not sustainable.

Rather than arguing for a transition to grass-fed meat production, however, Pimentel advocates for a move to an at least lacto-ovo vegetarian diet. See Pimentel&Pimentel 2003)

106 This statistic assumes that present crop production will remain relatively stable.

107 Muir 2015 (It is worth noting that this 15% would, according to the work of David Pimentel, exceed the production capacities of a grass-fed meat production system because the daily production of 113 grams of meat per day is more than 50% less than what Americans presently consume.)

crops already being produced away from animal feed and biofuels. In fact, the resulting surplus of available calories would be sufficient to feed over 4 billion people in addition to the current 7.3 billion already in existence, including the 1 billion who struggle with hunger every day.¹⁰⁸

Of the nearly 1 billion people currently suffering from hunger, 98 percent are in developing nations.¹⁰⁹ The problem of world hunger is not, according to aforementioned research, a problem of food scarcity, because enough food is being produced to feed the world's hungry population, but a problem of food use and distribution. As such, starvation is a man-made problem, with some offenders being worse than others, and although it is true that the production of animal-based foods is a largely wasteful practice, a transition to exclusively plant-based agriculture cannot by itself offer a satisfactory solution to world hunger. Global hunger is a complex problem which is political, economic and social, and its solution must be correspondingly complex. Food must not only be available, but accessible and affordable to those who are hungry, and it must be made so in a manner that does not perpetuate an exploitative dependent relationship between industrialized and developing countries.¹¹⁰ Nonetheless, the production of animal-based products prevents a great deal of food from being made available for wider distribution in the first place. As such, a transition to global plant-based agriculture is integral to addressing the problem of global hunger.

NEOCOLONIAL INFLUENCE AND GENDER-BASED FOOD INEQUITY

108 Cassidy et. Al 2013: 6 (The numbers have likely increased in the past several years, according to projections based on past USDA reports. For more, see “Data Center – Food and Agriculture” 2014.)

109 “Who Are the Hungry?” 2015

110 Hill 1996: 143

The emphasis on animal-based foods in Western culture informs the eating habits and agricultural policies of those in developing countries through a process that is sometimes called 'neo-colonial seduction.'¹¹¹ The American diet is widely perceived in developing countries to be trendy and indicative of affluence. As such, people in these countries are increasingly prioritizing animal-based foods in their diets, leading to radical shifts away from more traditional eating habits towards a Western diet rich in meat and dairy products, thereby perpetuating hunger, and environmental devastation.¹¹² For example, in Ethiopia, over 60 percent of the population is considered hungry or starving, while over 75 percent suffer from preventable food-related diseases, such as malnutrition. Yet, Ethiopia has over 50 million cattle, nearly 50 million poultry, and 26 million sheep.¹¹³ The owning of livestock for dairy and meat production carries social significance among Ethiopians because it denotes wealth and social status.¹¹⁴ Yet, due to Ethiopia's drought-prone climate, there is often a shortage of animal feed and grazing land. Consequently, livestock animals are typically undernourished and unproductive. As such, many farmers graze animals illegally on protected national parks which are meant to protect endangered plants and animals. Due to these practices, more than 66 percent of Ethiopia's topsoil has been lost, resulting in desertification, which is a type of land degradation characterized by soil aridation and a loss of vegetation. Despite these problems, livestock ownership in Ethiopia continues to rise and supplant the farming of sustainable and traditional crops, such as teff.¹¹⁵

As many developing countries feel compelled to follow the lead of affluent Western

111 Pickover 2005: 163 (Some charitable organizations in Western Nations, such as World Vision, actually encourage the implementation of Western farming practices in developing nations. For more, see "Ethiopia" 2015)

112 Hu 2008: 1913

113 Ethiopia has one of the world's largest cattle herds

114 Ilyn 2011: 1

115 Ilyn 2011: 4

nations, the adoption of Westernized farming practices and diets heavy in animal products not only exacerbates the problems associated with animal agriculture, but it does so by disproportionately burdening already disadvantaged groups. Although hunger is a global issue, it affects poor women disproportionately. In many cultures, women routinely suffer in favor of males because women are seen as the less valuable sex. Thus, women are often expected to absorb the strain of food shortage and eat only when fathers and sons have gotten their fill.¹¹⁶ According to the United Nations World Food Program, as a result of cultural traditions and gendered social structures, women are more affected by poverty and hunger than men, with seven out of ten of the world's hungry being women.¹¹⁷ Further, due to a lack of food and good nutrition, these women's babies are likely to be malnourished and susceptible to disease. Children who are malnourished often suffer from life-long damages such as stunted growth and weak constitutions.¹¹⁸ Globally, poor nutrition is the cause of death for 3.1 million children each year.¹¹⁹ Although it is not immediately evident, an investigation of the roots of global food inequity make clear that the practice of animal agriculture presently has a strong impact on the welfare of women and children around the world.

The demand for animal products is, as I have argued, one of the primary reasons for the skewed distribution of food resources globally, and this problem is being made increasingly more severe as people in developing countries where hunger is pervasive begin to adopt the diets of industrialized nations. Further, these consumption trends are escalating the problem of gender-based food inequity. As such, a paradigm shift in agricultural practices is needed for developed

116 Bassett & Nelson 2010: 21

117 Mehra & Gupta 2008: 324

118 Kjelle 2015: 21-23

119 "Hunger Statistics" 2015

and developing countries alike. However, in light of the influence which Western dietary habits seem to hold over developing nations, it seems that the impetus for change in the face of global hunger may have to begin with the Western diet.

It is arguable that the Logic of the Larder, as an ideal theory, need not be immediately action guiding. Nonetheless, in virtue of its failure to engage with the non-ideal context in which ethical dietary choices are presently being made, the Logic of the Larder fails to provide any signposts to guide behavior in moving towards the ideal, or in navigating the cost-benefit analysis of pursuing that ideal when it is at odds with moral problems such as food equity or environmental sustainability. The Logic of the Larder, and its frequent evocation by defenders of meat-eating, fails to account for the highly dilemmic conditions in which animal agriculture currently takes place, and thus is not only used naively to defend a practice which, at least presently, may be highly inimical to moral progress, but provides us with no direction as to what we ought to do in light of those conditions.

CHAPTER 7

THE LOGIC OF THE LARDER AND IDEOLOGY

Although the Logic of the Larder dispenses of the Rawlsian machinery of the veil of ignorance, it endorses the core of Rawls's abstract reasoning by evaluating a moral proposition about ethically informed meat-eating through the lens of a hypothetical social contract. This procedure is thought of as an impartial method of justification for the terms of association to which reasonable human agents and non-human animals would agree in a situation of presumed fairness. The conclusion of the argument thus rests on the notion that because meat-eating under certain ideal conditions is ultimately in the interests of animals themselves, they ought to choose it, and we (humans) are thus at liberty to construct the consent of farm animals to the continued but reformed practice of animal husbandry on the grounds that we are helping them to achieve what is good for them.

As oppositional theorists have gone to great lengths to show, ideal theory in normative political philosophy is prone to a sort of conceptual injustice in virtue of the abstract model of reasoning which is utilized in order for theorists to transcend present social circumstances and judge the 'justness' of certain moral propositions. Abstraction of this sort effectively removes the troublesome features of the non-ideal world which must be critically examined if our theories are to offer alternative visions of reality which are truly just, including thinking which is structured by the forces of oppression. As Lisa Schwartzman argues, a failure to examine the effects that social structures seem to have on everyone during the construction of a theory makes it likely that certain ideological assumptions born from the current and non-ideal social system will be

included in that theory, and into the vision of the 'ideal' contained therein.¹²⁰ Having examined the feasibility constraints of the Logic of the Larder in some detail, I now turn my attention to considering whether the Logic of the Larder itself, as a partial ideal theory which is constructed and defended by means of abstract reasoning, contains any troublesome ideological underpinnings.

Oppositional theorists demonstrate the potency of their ideology-based criticisms of ideal theory both through examples, and by means of empirical research on social biases, such as implicit bias. Unfortunately, research on similar biases held by humans against non-human animals has not been undertaken. As such, I cannot support the assertion that our thinking is structured by speciesism with empirical evidence, and thus that use of abstract methods of reasoning in constructing a normative ideal involving non-human animals is liable to reify speciesism, whether we realize it or not.¹²¹ Nonetheless, by tracing the commonalities between the socio-historical tendencies which have supported and sustained speciesist oppression and the oppressions of racism, sexism, and ethnocentrism more broadly in Western culture, I suggest that there is compelling reason to believe that use of abstraction as an idealized method of reasoning is likely to permit speciesist features of our present social structure to enter theories about our ethical obligations to animals.

As has been argued by ecofeminist Karen J. Warren, many forms of oppression are sustained by ideologies which purport that some group of beings is superior to others. Upon examining these ideologies, it is plain to see that they share similarities in the way that superiority is justified. Warren claims that various forms of oppression, such as sexism, racism,

120 Schwartzman 2006: 73

121 This is a point to which I will later return.

and anthropocentrism, are sustained by value-hierarchical thinking, coupled with a 'logic of domination,' or a structure of argumentation which maintains that whatever is superior can and ought to subordinate whatever is inferior.¹²² The parallel between the ideologies which justify the domination of different groups tends to be a value hierarchy in which pairs of concepts with opposing valences are ordered with one characteristic being superior to the other, such as White/Black, man/woman, reason/emotion, civility/animality, etc.. Certain rights and privileges are typically denied to groups and individuals on the grounds that they lack superior characteristics, or that they embody inferior characteristics. For instance, women have often been oppressed through maintenance of the notion that they, unlike men, are too emotional to think rationally, and thus cannot be afforded certain liberties, such as the right to vote. Similarly, people of color have been categorized as too wild and uncivil to lead self-determined lives. These value hierarchies have served as justificatory tools by means of which some beings have been afforded a privileged moral status, while others have been relegated to the position of resources to be freely exploited.

Justifications of these value hierarchies can be found in the works of history's great thinkers. For example, research performed by the 18th century physician Petrus Camper aimed to use measurements of facial angles in order to substantiate the claim that Africans were less intelligent than Europeans.¹²³ In a similar fashion, the famous philosopher Aristotle had a habit of interpreting scientific facts in such a way as to justify the political relationships of his culture. According to Aristotle, women's inability to produce semen was a sign of their inferiority to men because it rendered women 'passive' in the process of reproduction, whereas men were deemed

122 Warren 1990: 126

123 West 2002

'active' contributors.¹²⁴ This inability, which Aristotle characterized as a physical deformity, was said to be accompanied by intellectual and moral deficiencies. As such, Aristotle maintained that women, by their nature, required the guidance of free, adult men.¹²⁵

In the same vein as these aforementioned justifications for claims that certain humans are superior to others and thereby entitled to better treatment, or occupy a higher moral status, the history of Western civilization reveals a great deal of hierarchical thinking about human/non-human relationships. The Stoic philosophers, for instance, argued that by virtue of lacking rationality, non-human animals, unlike humans, could not be considered members of the moral community.¹²⁶ The Stoic doctrine was eventually adopted by Christian theorists Saint Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, both of whom maintained that qualification for moral consideration is based on a hierarchy of capacities. Although they conceded that sentient creatures, such as non-human animals, mattered more than those lacking sensation, such as plants, intelligence placed humans near the top of the hierarchy, surpassed only by immortal beings, such as angels and God.¹²⁷ In fact, the oppression of certain human groups by other humans has often rested on ideological thinking about non-human animals. Throughout the civilizations of antiquity, humaneness has frequently been defined in opposition to non-human animals. The conception of humanity as unique and superior to animality produced a theoretical hierarchy in which humans occupy a position above and distinct from all other animals. This value hierarchy, which has been sustained, embarrassingly, by some of philosophy's famous moral thinkers, has been so powerful that it has served to qualify certain humans as more 'human' than others, thereby justifying the

124 Aristotle 1963: 28, 737a

125 Aristotle 1941: 1, 1259b

126 Steiner 2005: 88

127 Steiner 2005: 127

mistreatment of oppressed human groups on the grounds of the animality, and thereby the inferiority, of those groups.¹²⁸

Equating stigmatized human groups with nonhuman animals has served to undermine moral respect for the former because dehumanization as a method of subordination rests upon a clear ideological differentiation between 'humans' and 'animals.' In the United States, for example, slavery was often rationalized by maintaining that Africans were brutish and similar to animals in virtue of lacking civility and intelligence, so much so that it was often thought that no moral harm was done to them during their enslavement. Conversely, slaves themselves protested against being stripped of their human dignity and treated as 'beasts.'¹²⁹ Similarly, in Nazi Germany, propaganda categorized Jews as 'subhumans,' and likened them to animals such as rodents, and insects. Thus, justification for the atrocities committed against the Jewish populace rested on the notion that Jews were vermin which needed to be exterminated.¹³⁰ Women, too, have often been likened to animals such as cows, sows, bitches, and hens, each of which is almost singularly valued, both historically and presently, for their bodies, and their capacities for reproduction.¹³¹

Judging from a historical overview of the linkages in moral attitudes towards oppressed human groups and non-human animals, it is plain to see that Western civilization has a history of hierarchically ranking humans as vastly superior to non-human animals, and justifying certain forms of abuse as being appropriately directed at those beings who are characterized as

128 See Regan & Singer 1976 for discussion on famous philosophers who supported the notion of human superiority and the dismissal of non-human animals, as well as notable theorists who dissented from the majority. 129 Bay 2000: 119 (Further discussion can be found in Marjorie Spiegel's *The Dreaded Comparison*. See Spiegel 1996)

130 Arluke & Sanders 1996: 162

131 Dunayer, Joan. "Sexist Words, Speciesist Roots." *Animals and Women*. Ed. Carol Adams. 1st ed. Duke UP, (1995). 11-23. Print.

'animalistic.' As such, the possibility that such thinking remains a part of our cultural ideology is very high. In fact, according to Iris Marion Young in her work "Five Faces of Oppression," this sort of hierarchical system of moral evaluation (which she titles 'cultural imperialism') against oppressed groups does not originate from individuals per se, but is encouraged by the social structure of the society in which they live. As such, the prejudicial association of oppressed groups with certain characteristics said to bear testament to their inferiority to the dominant group is both a product and a tool of a broader oppressive social structural system. She maintains that there are five facets to the maintenance of oppression which have characterized the social structural systems supporting, for instance, racism, sexism, and classism: exploitation, marginalization, cultural imperialism, powerlessness, and violence.¹³²

Although Young's conceptual framework of the five faces of oppression was not intended to make visible the oppressive experiences suffered by non-human animals, an examination of their circumstances in contemporary Western culture makes clear that they are victimized in accordance to each of Young's criteria. In the absence of hard psychological evidence as to the associative biases which humans may hold in regard to non-human animals, a demonstration of the ways in which the ideological degradation of non-human animals occurs within an oppressive social structural system may, per Young's framework, offer further soft evidence as to the likelihood that such social biases exist, even if they remain undocumented:

Nonhuman animals are *exploited*. According to Young, exploitation involves "The steady process of the transfer of the results of labor of one social group to benefit another."¹³³ It is clear that the labor of non-human animals is used for the benefit of humans: animals provide raw

132 Young 1990

133 Young 1990: 49

materials for food and clothing, are used as research tools, generate profit as sources of entertainment, and replace humans for menial labor as 'beasts of burden.'¹³⁴ Further, non-human animals are routinely abused when they impede economic production, and are thus frequently worked to death.¹³⁵ Non-human animals are *marginalized*. Young says that marginalization occurs when “A whole category of people are expelled from useful participation in social life and thus potentially subjected to severe material deprivation and even extermination.”¹³⁶ There is virtually no place on earth where non-human animals are free from the negative impacts of human activities, and, because their various interests are often considered to be in conflict with human interests, if they are recognized at all, they are routinely made to suffer from material deprivation, or even outright extermination.¹³⁷

Non-human animals are further victimized in Western societies by what Young calls '*cultural imperialism*.' According to Young, this is a process by which “..the dominant meanings of society render the particular perspective of one's...group invisible at the same time as they stereotype one's group and mark it out as the Other.”¹³⁸ As I have explained, non-human animals are stereotyped as 'Other' in a value hierarchy by means of which humans have often measured their own superiority. These stereotypes are often normalized by research examining animal cognition which consistently identifies the cognitive deficiencies of non-human animals by using cognitive tests at which it is known that humans excel, rather than appreciating the different and complex cognitive, emotional, and social strengths of various non-human animals.¹³⁹ It is thus

134 For more on this, see: Adams 2010, and Kheel 2008

135 Human Rights Watch 2005

136 Young 1990: 53

137 Nibert 2002, Nibert 2013 (Sociologist David Nibert compares the marginalization of non-human animals to the marginalization of indigenous populations during the colonialization of the Americas)

138 Young 1990: 58-59

139 A number of cognitive ethologists have identified what they see as routine bias against non-human animals in

that non-human animals have been rendered morally invisible in the public's collective consciousness in virtue of having their lives and their worth defined by forces for whom their interests and values are rarely considered important, and over which they have no control. Lastly, given the sheer power of human industry and technology, as well as their inability to protest to their social construction in human discourse, non-human animals are rendered relatively *powerless*¹⁴⁰ to change the conditions in which they are presently situated, nor to avoid the systematic *violence* done to them.¹⁴¹

Echoing an earlier passage in this thesis, though structural oppression within a culture involves inter-group relations, these relations need not be paradigmatic in the sense of a dominant group consciously and maliciously oppressing another (though it seems that this does happen frequently in human-animal relationships). Rather, unjust dynamics of power are often the product of social conditioning. As such, many of those who contribute to and maintain oppressive social systems do so simply by living their daily lives, often failing to recognize the ways in which they are agents of oppression. Ideological manipulation serves to garner public acceptance of the exploitation of an oppressed group by fueling prejudiced attitudes and discriminatory thinking, which in turn helps to reinforce and maintain oppressive social conditions by making them appear natural, and thus morally innocuous. In virtue of the similarities between the ideologies and conditions which have served in the oppression of humans groups and non-human animals, if associative biases against the former have been shown to be systemic, I strongly suspect that the same would hold true for the latter, if

research on animal cognition. Their work has attempted to undermine the stereotypes of other, non-human, animals as radically different from humans (see Allen & Bekoff 1997, Bekoff 2007, Griffin 1992).

140 Young 1990: 64 (For more, see Spiegel 1996)

141 Young 1990: 61 (Since I have already spoken at some length about the violence perpetrated against non-human animals in this thesis, I will not further elaborate this point.)

investigated.

Until several decades ago, hardly any consideration was given to the moral status of non-human animals, and although recent literature in the domain of animal ethics suggests that an admirable amount of progress has been made on this front, the extent of the moral status of non-human animals is hardly settled in public discourse, if and when it is taken seriously at all.¹⁴² As such, it is highly unlikely that systemic bias against non-human animals has been eradicated. Since it is probable that our moral thinking about non-human animals is infected by prejudicial bias, including our moral reasoning about just how much consideration is owed to them and on what grounds, it seems that we should carefully examine arguments which are consequential for human/non-human relationships in an attempt to reveal any presumptions which may be ideological in nature. I will now inquire into the ways in which the use of hypothetical reasoning in the Logic of the Larder might covertly reinforce speciesist oppression.

Despite being a vegan and self-identified animal activist, even I was, at first, mildly sympathetic to the thesis of the Logic of the Larder, namely that raising non-human animals for slaughter and consumption would be permissible under suitably reformed conditions. Further reflection on the concerns articulated by oppositional theorists in political philosophy has given me pause, however. Were it not for the demands of consumers, there would be no farm animals, such as pigs, cows, and chickens, and so considering animals interests fairly necessitates, according to the Logic of the Larder's defenders, that we overcome or even remoralize religious and ethical dogma and accept that human participation in the food cycle is the rationale through

¹⁴² Although concern for animals and their well-being is not a new idea, as is evidenced by ancient Hindu and Buddhist scriptures advocating ethical vegetarianism, the collective movement to consider animals interests morally is often said to have started with Peter Singer's 1975 publication *Animal Liberation*. Singer's work was a catalyst for modern animal ethics, but its content remains highly controversial.

which individual animals are blessed with the opportunity to live. Thus, on the face of it, the Logic of the Larder, in keeping with the Rawlsian approach which eschews principles based on bias or prejudice, does not appear to rest on a claim about the unparalleled importance of human interests and gustatory pleasures, nor does it rest explicitly on any dubious assumptions about the competences of non-human animals or their inferior moral standing in comparison to humans. Instead, by judging the moral implications of animal husbandry under ideal conditions, the Logic of the Larder advocates a form of conscientious meat-eating on the basis of the interests of animals themselves.

Although the Logic of the Larder may carry an initial plausibility, it seems to rest on an assumption which is worth probing: that meat consumption and production is a fair (enough) deal for everyone involved, such that if animals could agree to the conditions of the Logic of the Larder, they would do so. The notion that lives produced with the aim of slaughter are sufficiently valuable for humans to presume that animals would consent to such conditions merits further examination. The opportunity to enjoy a pleasant existence may very well be considered a benefit. However, even if domesticated animals would, under the ideal circumstances stipulated in the Logic of the Larder, be benefited by the system of animal husbandry, some inter-group practices which procure an advantage to both parties are nonetheless considered too exploitative to be good. Although intuitions about how repugnant the background conditions of a life must be before the life ceases to be worth-while are liable to vary, begging the question as to whether death is an inordinately high price to pay for any benefit brings the Logic of the Larder to a murky domain of discussion in which disagreement may reasonably be expected, and in which its superficial simplicity and intuitive appeal might be

undermined. Consider, for example, this passage written by the Jewish philosopher Hannah Arendt during the Second World War, in which she criticizes the infatuation of intellectuals with the goodness of the opportunity of life on the grounds that this serves as a tool which legitimates exploitation:

There was once a happy time when men could choose freely: better dead than a slave, better to die standing than on your knees. And there was once a time when intellectuals grew feeble-minded and declared life to be the highest good. But now the dreadful time has come when every day proves that death begins his reign of terror precisely when life becomes the highest good; that he who prefers to *live* on his knees will *die* on his knees; that no one is more easily murdered than a slave.¹⁴³

A premature death is so great a form of payment that its requirement in exchange for received benefits, even the benefit of life, may be reasonably contested, and so the Logic of the Larder's reliance on the assumed consent of non-human animals may be regarded as too problematic to be valid, particularly in light of the fact no contemporary theorists seem to defend it as a justification for the reversion to any antiquated, albeit humane, practices such as the breeding of certain humans to serve the whims of others.¹⁴⁴ It is conceivable that such an

143 Arendt 2007: 163

144 It is sometimes asserted by philosophers, in an attempt to remain consistent, that they would find such practices as those found in the Logic of the Larder to be permissible when applied to humans. I suspect, however, that such assertions are the philosopher's 'poker face,' mere masks for speciesist beliefs maintained only because these philosophers recognize, even if only implicitly, that the likelihood that such practices would be widely instated against humans are highly unlikely, and that the odds that the consistency of their views would ever be put to the test

opportunity of life argument applied to human subjects is unlikely to be seriously entertained as a moral ideal because our present understanding of what it means for a subject to be human entails that even if gratitude is due for the benefit of existence, that gratitude is limited in such a way that a contract which demands death would be indefensible. In short, we are not generally tempted to claim that a human life can be owed in return for its production, and yet, the Logic of the Larder as an argument for the reformation, but not the abolition, of practices which result in the premature death of animals appears to be underlain by the notion that the animals owe us their lives, and should thus be grateful to so much as exist in the traditional role of livestock.

Upon being scrutinized, the apparent simplicity of the Logic of the Larder, as well as its side-stepping of claims about the relative moral standing of humans and non-humans, begins to appear deceitful and ideological. Although the Logic of the Larder appeals simply to the interests of non-human animals in claiming that animal friendly animal husbandry is a moral ideal, the argument seems to be predicated upon an unargued, but not unimportant, ontological assumption about what sorts of beings non-human animals are which likely derives from our present social structure, within which we are encouraged to regard species membership as important in considering who (or what) may be a means, who (or what) may be an end, and what is entailed by these respective categorizations.

Although the use of at least some abstract reasoning in envisioning normative ideals may be an unavoidable part of all moral theorizing, abstract reasoning can reinforce oppressive social structures and discriminate against groups who are already disenfranchised because abstraction, by necessity, relies on the perspectives and conceptual frameworks of theorists which have been produced in particular socio-historical contexts, and in which ideological influences are likely to

are extraordinarily low.

be deeply embedded. In the case of animal ethics, if a prior speciesist evaluation of non-human animals is built into our conceptual framework, which I have argued is quite likely, then the naive reliance on this conceptual framework in theorizing abstractly about non-human animals puts our theories at risk of simply naturalizing speciesism and marginalizing the distinct values and needs of animals, rather than critically examining our existing relationships with them or envisioning alternative relationships which are truly liberatory.

CHAPTER 8

AN ANIMAL STANDPOINT THEORY

Much of the philosophical work which has focused on the plight of non-human animals has advocated abstraction as a method of reasoning to avoid bias and arbitrariness in favor of humans, thus assuming, in keeping with traditional ethics, that theorists can and should transcend their situated perspectives in order to reason from a disembodied vantage point. For example, borrowing a phrase from Henry Sidgwick, Peter Singer advocates a method of rational inquiry which he believes may allow us to reason from 'the point of view of the universe.' Singer says "... My ability to reason shows me the possibility of detaching myself from my own perspective, and shows me what the universe might look like if I had no personal perspective."¹⁴⁵ Although Singer acknowledges that he does in fact occupy a much narrower perspective than that of an impartial, universal spectator, he further says "The perspective on ourselves that we get when we take the point of view of the universe also yields as much objectivity as we need if we are to find a cause that is worthwhile in a way that is independent of our desires."¹⁴⁶ Despite disagreement as to the conclusions which Singer derives from this method of reasoning, the impartiality which is said to characterize the method of abstraction has similarly attracted other notable animal ethicists, such as Tom Regan, who believes that the method of abstraction can be help us to distance our moral thinking from our own humanity in determining which individuals have inherent value in virtue of being 'subjects of a life.'¹⁴⁷

145 Singer 1995: 229

146 Singer 1995: 232

147 Regan 1983: 23-24 (Put briefly, subjects of a life are self-conscious actors capable of having beliefs and desires, and who have a conception of the future. According to Regan, such beings are 'subjects of a life,' and

Thus, many animal ethicists have, like Rawls, attempted to employ a method of reasoning by means of which theorists aspire towards a disembodied and impartial perspective which is cleanly separable from their situated position in the social dynamics of the non-ideal world. My intention here is not to argue that the work of these theorists has lacked strong content, but rather that the methods of reasoning which they have employed suffer from structural limitations which will often fail to provide adequate safeguards against thinking which is structured by oppression such as speciesism, and which may ultimately stagnate moral progress for animals.

Recognition of the fact that the human perspective is the only perspective from which our moral theorizing can begin does not entail a resignation to speciesism, but an honest acknowledgment of the inescapable *a priori* presence of our situated human perspectives in our theorizing. Thus, in order to avoid theorizing in a way that is harmfully limited and partial in favor of humans, the best approach may not be, as Singer and Regan maintain, to distance ourselves from our humanity by attempting to reason from the perspective of nowhere, but instead to recognize that human cognizers are contextually situated in inter-species relationships, such that we ought to employ a variety of perspectives in the service of our theorizing, including the perspectives of other animals.

Drawing from feminist standpoint theory, an animal standpoint theory might be developed to illuminate the speciesist nature of social reality which has been internalized and often rendered invisible to humans in virtue of our highly partial and privileged position. In keeping with feminist standpoint theory, an animal standpoint theory would incorporate the insights of non-human animals, who have been socially marginalized throughout history, in order to identify and transform the partial and flawed modes of theorizing which have been employed

thus have inherent value which grounds their moral rights.)

by humans as beneficiaries of the dominant (speciesist) culture. There are, quite obviously, some difficulties involved in producing a critical, anti-speciesist standpoint. Unlike members of marginalized human groups, animals cannot communicate their critical views with each other in order to form collective standpoints by which to resist their oppression, and if they could, the pervasiveness of speciesism may obscure their protests more ferociously than those of marginalized human groups. As such, it is clear that animal advocates must endeavor to navigate the awesome responsibility of articulating an animal standpoint on the behalf of animals.

In light of the long history of speciesism and its continued presence in our culture, within which the use of animals in industries such as factory farming and biomedical research are commonplace, it may not yet be possible for theorists to articulate a definitive animal standpoint. However, we can and should endeavor to do justice to other species and reveal the mechanisms of species domination. Here, I turn to the recommendations of feminist animal ethicist Josephine Donovan in her work “Feminism and the Treatment of Animals: From Care to Dialogue,”¹⁴⁸ which, despite focusing explicitly on a feminist care ethic for animals, offers many insights that can be put to use in the development of an animal standpoint:

Donovan recommends that an approach to theorizing about human-animal relationships should adopt a perspective which is politically motivated, and a method which is dialogical, imploring human advocates to refrain from speaking for animals, but instead to enter into conversation with them.¹⁴⁹ The development of dialogical relationships between humans and other animals, or learning which takes place through egalitarian dialogue between humans and non-humans, entails that humans must reach out to other animals, whose social realities and

148 Donovan 2006

149 Donovan 2006: 324

values have not been recognized (and, in fact, have been obscured) in the construction of human ideologies, rather than merely enfolded them into our moral thinking which is laden with human-based preconceptions.

As Donovan notes, a dialogical method is often implicit in the more careful and rigorous defenses of feminist care theory,¹⁵⁰ the methods of which may be borrowed and built upon in the cultivation of an animal standpoint theory. Feminist care theory attempts to validate, to at least some extent, emotional responses as contextually aware forms of knowledge which can and should inform philosophical debate.¹⁵¹ A feminist care theory aims at resistance to, and transformation of, relationships of subordination which have been naturalized through dominant ideologies. Feminist care theory encourages us to reshape our relationships with those who have been 'Othered' by reaching out to them, both intellectually and emotionally, in an attempt to understand them on their own terms. As with feminist standpoint theory, feminist care theory acknowledges that the 'view from nowhere' is often obfuscatory because it is based on the notion that the perspectives of different beings are more or less universal, often to the detriment of those whose voices have been historically marginalized. Thus, a theory of care applied to animals includes not only valuing what is the same between humans and other animals, but also what is different, thereby balancing an ethic of universal consideration with a component of care that recommends the inclusion of issues of particularity and context which are relevant to individual and group relationships.

Supplementing an animal standpoint theory with dimensions of feminist care theory in order to develop dialogical relationships between humans and other animals will put the animal

150 Donovan 2006: 306

151 Donovan 2006: 306

standpoint theory which I recommend at odds with the prescriptions of some of the more prominent members of animal ethics, such as Peter Singer and Tom Regan. Both of these theorists eschew the appearance of sentimental attachment to non-human animals in favor of purely rational methods of liberatory inquiry.¹⁵² According to Regan “...reason – not sentiment, not emotion – compels us to recognize the equal inherent value of ... animals and ... their equal right to be treated with respect.”¹⁵³ The incorporation of care in the methods of ethics does not necessitate the rejection of rational inquiry. It does, however, entail that rational inquiry alone does not, and in fact cannot capture fully what ethics, as a live practice, involves. In particular, the restriction of animal ethics to these approaches constitutes a failure to appreciate the fundamental role which human emotions, such as sympathy, play in our determination of which beings are appropriate recipients of our respect in the first place.¹⁵⁴

Feminist ethicist Robin Dillon argues that the conception of 'respect' in the traditional sense of according to a thing the attention of which it is worthy does not fully capture the meaning of respect.¹⁵⁵ In order to respect a thing, she contends that it is not sufficient to simply turn one's attention towards it, but that respect further calls for appropriate ways of acting with or in connection to the thing in question. As such, she says “Not only our attention is called for, however; respect is not simply a matter of staring long and hard...respect involves responding to the object in the appropriate fashion, which may involve certain ways of treating the object, certain patterns of conduct or behavior with regard to it, certain affective and attitudinal

152 Regan 1983: xii, Singer 1975: ix-x

153 Regan 1983: 24

154 For a discussion on this issue, see Donovan 2006

155 Dillon 1992: 70

responses to it.”¹⁵⁶ Thus, appropriately responding to the respect which someone demands of us involves more than recognizing that our attention should be paid to them (which seems to require an empathetic attention), but caring enough to respond to them on the basis of their own self-conception, by attempting to appreciate their apprehension of reality and those features which are, in their view, integral or necessary to who (or what) they are.

Human moral theorists cannot respect animals simply by responding to them through our favored way of seeing them, but only by earnestly trying to learn about how they view themselves. It is not enough, as Catherine MacKinnon argues, to demonstrate that animals can feel and are thus worthy of our moral attention. As she points out, this has often not been sufficient to end the oppression of marginalized human groups.¹⁵⁷ In order to respect animals, humans cannot assume a naive paternalism through which we promote the interests of animals merely on the basis of that which we regard to be important for them. We must aim to discover what is important to animals themselves, and promote their values as best as we can. This endeavor cannot be accomplished without caring because such an endeavor requires an emotional response from us: that we must become sympathetic and concerned, and put real effort into developing relationships with other animals, such that we can begin to appreciate what they truly need.

The cultivation of dialogical relationships will require listening, and caring to listen, sincerely to the voices of non-human animals, and incorporating their input into our ethical theorizing. As philosophers Val Plumwood and Mary Midgley argue, this sort of dialogic

¹⁵⁶ Dillon 1992: 70-71

¹⁵⁷ MacKinnon 2004: 271 (MacKinnon eventually uses this insight in order to argue against theories of care.

Although I concede MacKinnon's point that the mere proving that animals can suffer empirically is not enough to inspire humans to recognize their suffering as morally significant, I, like Josephine Donovan, reject MacKinnon's assertion that the theories of care are thus unhelpful. For more, see Donovan 2006: 314)

communication will be difficult, but not impossible. They maintain that the similarities between humans and other animals are sufficient for humans to understand at least some of their needs and desires. As Catherine MacKinnon notes, animals often display behaviors which are analogous to what humans would likely do in similar situations. For instance, when violence is used against them, animals often protest by screaming, by fighting, and by recoiling from the aggressor. When they find themselves in the slaughterhouse, they often speak to us by attempting to run.¹⁵⁸ Conversely, genuine attempts to appreciate and understand the ways in which humans and other animals differ may serve to produce a richer and more respectful dynamic between humans and animals.¹⁵⁹ Although humans must be careful to avoid assuming analogous behavior when and where there is none, encouraging a sense of care in our efforts to communicate with non-human animals may inspire us to ask new questions, to understand or learn about what animals mean when they do one thing as opposed to another. Further, knowledge derived from these endeavors must be prioritized as epistemically privileged over the abstract methods of reasoning which have been endorsed in animal ethics thus far.

Beyond encouraging interspecies communication, however, an animal standpoint theory, as a tool of analysis, must aim at a political critique of the social-structural system which encourages species-based prejudice and underlies the oppression of non-human animals. An animal standpoint theory will thus require a paradigm shift in inquiry on the part of theorists, so that they might investigate what is overlooked in the discourse and knowledge claims of the

158 MacKinnon 2004: 270

159 Plumwood 2002: 167-195 (Plumwood, however, argues that in fostering dialogical relationships with non-human animals, it is nonetheless possible to both take their claims seriously and communicate in an egalitarian manner with them, but nonetheless to eat them as food. Along with Josephine Donovan, I think that honest communication with animals makes clear that they do not want to be eaten, and thus, the gustatory pleasure of humans cannot seriously be considered to override the desires which they so clearly express) Midgley 1983: 113-115

dominant culture. In order to facilitate this process, the development of an 'epistemology of ignorance' may prove to be a useful starting point. Consider, for example, the absence of psychological research pertaining to human bias against non-human animals. Although it is unsurprising that such research has yet to take place, it is suspicious. In her work "Coming to Understand: Orgasm and the Epistemology of Ignorance," feminist science historian Nancy Tuana expands the conversation of feminist epistemology by claiming that insofar as the production of knowledge is social, knowledge gaps are also likely to be a social production. Although ignorance has traditionally been viewed as a simple lack of knowledge, Tuana argues that it is important to consider who is benefited and who is harmed by the cultivation of ignorance in certain domains.

Nancy Tuana claims that ignorance of the sort which underlies oppression is unlikely to be the accidental result of oversight, but actively produced in order to sustain domination and exploitation. As such, an appreciation of what we do not know may be a good place to begin investigating what we ought to know, in developing a critical consciousness. Tuana, for instance, examines our ignorance about female orgasm in order to reveal how the activity of constructing ignorance, or making certain knowledge invisible or inaccessible, can contribute to the oppression of a social group by those who are in power.¹⁶⁰ Although the link between male sexual pleasure and reproduction has been accepted by the medical community for centuries, the insistence that female sexual pleasure is inessential to reproduction has, according to Tuana, led to a lack of attention paid to the function and structure of female genitalia, and thereby a lack of knowledge about female orgasm and sexual pleasure. In her opinion, this knowledge gap is, upon examination of the intersectionality of sex knowledge with social relations such as gender,

160 Tuana 2004: 195

political in the sense that it serves to disempower and control female sexual pleasure.¹⁶¹

Although ideological conditioning may forestall human theorists from recognizing the many facets of speciesist oppression, an epistemology of ignorance may serve as a guiding tool in the development of an animal standpoint by aiding us in examining our ignorance, not only about other animals themselves, but about the knowledge practices and social structures of humans which harm them. An epistemology of ignorance about animals, in conjunction with knowledge derived from dialogical relationships with other animals, may thus help human theorists to problematize and politicize the human-based concepts of their theorizing, rather than to dispose of or, as best as they can, to ignore their humanity.

In conclusion, the development of an animal standpoint theory may be superior to abstraction as a method for reasoning fairly or impartially because such a standpoint theory would not mark our human perspectives as something to be denounced, a notion which often seems to underlie its use in animal ethics, but as a problem which must be embraced as an inevitability, and met with great humility. Thus, the cultivation of an animal standpoint theory as a methodological tool for animal ethics would be an acknowledgment on the part of human theorists that rather than trying to speak in everyone's favor by reasoning from nowhere, they may do better by following the advice of oppositional theorists, reasoning from many places by speaking with and listening to someone different.

161 Tuana 2004: 210

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I will review and summarize the content of this thesis, and discuss what ramifications its key findings might hold for future endeavors in the domain of animal ethics. In this work, I have argued that the Logic of the Larder, an argument which is used to defend conscientious meat-eating as the ideal dietary choice, employs the methods of ideal theory, and, by drawing on prominent criticisms of ideal theory provided by oppositional theorists, I have argued that the Logic of the Larder is susceptible to methodological problems, most notably a failure to guide action, and a risk of covertly sustaining speciesist oppression. Further, insofar as these methods continue to be broadly endorsed in the philosophical discourse on animal liberation, I have attempted to display their theoretical limits, and to lay the groundwork for new methodological approaches.

CRITICISMS OF RAWLSIAN IDEAL THEORY

Oppositional theorists have argued that the dominant methods of Anglo-American analytic philosophy often fail to adequately address or challenge many contemporary moral problems because those methods tend to distance moral theory from the historical and socio-political contexts in which those problems are found. Examining Rawls's work in *A Theory of Justice*, oppositional theorists have demonstrated the potency of their criticisms of what they see as the paradigm methodology of normative theory: ideal theory. This aforementioned

publication by Rawls is widely recognized as the most influential theory of justice in contemporary political philosophy, and is iconic in virtue of its methods as an ideal theory.

Rawls's theory is characterized as 'ideal theory' because it attempts to establish the principles which would regulate a perfectly just society by imagining which rules and conditions of social cooperation free and equal hypothetical persons would agree to under ideal circumstances (e.g. perfect, or nearly perfect, compliance, society as a closed system, etc.). What's more, Rawls stipulates that the agents who are privy to this social contract have no knowledge of their embodied positions within society, thus disabling them from arguing for principles which are biased in favor of their unique and contingent social locations. Rawls employs these idealizations in order to construct a vision of the best sort of society that can be hoped for, namely one that is maximally fair, in order to inform subsequent theories aimed at rectifying injustice in the politics and practices of the real world.

Rawls's theory has been criticized by oppositional theorists on the grounds that the many idealizing assumptions made by Rawls limit the feasibility of his theory. Although Rawls's theory paints a picture of what an ideally just society would look like, it fails to provide theorists with guidance about how to transform non-ideal society in moving towards the ideal, particularly because the simplifications made by Rawls in his theory do not obtain in the non-ideal world which is riddled with many interlocking forms of injustice. Although Rawls acknowledged the need for his ideal theory to inform and be complimented by a contextually relevant non-ideal theory aimed at rectifying present injustices, he did not develop such a non-ideal theory himself, nor did he specify how his ideal theory should guide others to develop such a theory in his stead.

A second and further methodological problem which oppositional theorists have

identified in Rawls's ideal theory is that it is prone to a sort of conceptual injustice. This criticism focuses on Rawls's use of abstraction as a tool to divorce his reasoning from the social context in which he writes in order to develop his ideal theory and ground its ahistorical impartiality. The purported objectivity of abstraction of this sort is often obfuscatory, oppositional theorists contend, of thinking which is structured by oppression and renders philosophical theories ideological because they are prone to reliance on conceptual frameworks which reinforce unjust dynamics of power and marginalize the unique needs and voices of socially subordinated groups. In this respect, oppositional theorists argue that the methods of non-ideal are superior to those of Rawls's ideal theory, because, although non-ideal theory will similarly develop and appeal to general normative ideals, non-ideal theory begins with an examination of particular real-world injustices, the knowledge of which informs the construction of normative ideals. Further, recognizing that theorizing necessarily takes place in discourse between theorists whose perspectives are limited and accompanied by presuppositions in virtue of their embodied social locations, non-ideal theorists often make use of conceptual tools such as feminist standpoint theory, calling upon a wealth of situated perspectives, especially those whose voices have been ignored historically, in order to problematize and enrich political ideals by revealing how they might serve as mechanisms which sustain oppression.

CRITICISMS OF THE LOGIC OF THE LARDER

Despite having first been articulated long before Rawls's work in *A Theory of Justice*, the Logic of the Larder proceeds in a Rawlsian manner by utilizing the device of a hypothetical

social contract to justify ethically informed meat-eating under ideal conditions. The Logic of the Larder has been defended by a number of contemporary theorists on the grounds that conscientious meat-eating is a fair deal for all who are involved. Were it not for the system of animal husbandry (and slaughter), many animals would never live, and, so long as their lives are valuable, it is in the interests of animals that the practice continue; in short, humans and animals alike would benefit from such an arrangement.

Drawing parallels between oppositional theorists' criticisms of Rawls's ideal theory and the similar methodological shortcomings of the ideal theoretic methods employed in the Logic of the Larder, I have problematized the latter argument in two ways:

1) I have argued that in virtue of the assumption of ideal background conditions, the Logic of the Larder, and its evocation by defenders of 'humane meat' consumption, abstracts the moral debate about the permissibility of eating meat from its historical context. As such, even if the conclusion of the Logic of the Larder is morally right under the conditions stipulated, the Logic of the Larder fails to speak to the permissibility of meat-eating in the highly dilemmic conditions in which the industry of meat production is currently situated. An appreciation of these dilemmic conditions may lead us to conclude not only that most of the currently available meat cannot be purchased and consumed in good conscience due the practices which take place on factory farms (and most supposedly humane farms), but that at present, the intersection between meat production and other contemporary moral problems, such as climate change, food scarcity, neocolonial influence and gender-based food inequity, may render even the consumption of 'humane meat' inimical to moral progress.

2) I have argued that the abstraction involved in the Logic of the Larder is such that

human theorists must attempt to transcend the social systems in which they are situated in order to reason impartially about the moral implications of a hypothetical contract between humans and other animals, within which human theorists construct the consent of said animals to the continued practice of meat-eating on the grounds that it would be reasonable for animals to consent to such an agreement because doing so would be in their interests. This method of grounding the fairness or permissibility of meat-eating, however, occludes an analysis of the structural preconditions which impede our recognition of speciesism within our conceptual frameworks. As such, the Logic of the Larder, and its defense, may be implicitly ideological in virtue of unjustly sustaining species-based inequality. Further, insofar as such methods of reasoning tend to be endorsed by the leading theorists in the discourse of animal ethics, the discipline continues to fail to critically address that humans who advocate on the behalf of animals are part of and encumbered by the dominant specieist culture, and thus, the discipline of animal ethics may undermine the very endeavor for which it strives, namely to eliminate speciesism and eradicate the unjust human domination of other species.

FINAL STATEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE WORK

My aim in this thesis has not been, predominately, to articulate in full a new approach to theorizing about human/animal relationships, but to draw attention to the problems of viability and ideology in the Logic of the Larder which are likely to have further purchase in animal ethics. I have, however, recommended the development of a contextually relevant animal standpoint theory, despite that such a project may presently be only partially realizable, as a

conceptual tool which holds some promise for bringing the voices of non-human animals into conversation with human theorists, thereby aiding those theorists in producing methods for animal ethics which do not lend support to the regime of speciesism.

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