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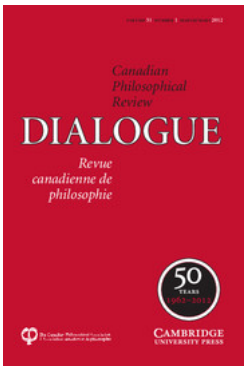

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Cosmopolitan Globalism and Human Community

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ABSTRACT: This article argues that the normative foundations and political implications of David Held's cosmopolitan social democracy are insufficient as solutions to the moral and social problems he criticizes. The article develops a life-grounded alternative critique of globalization that roots our ethical duties towards each other in consciousness of our shared needs and capabilities. These ethical duties are best realized in political projects aimed at fundamental long-term transformations in the principles that govern major socio-economic institutions.

RÉSUMÉ : Cet article soutient que les fondements normatifs et les implications politiques de la démocratie sociale cosmopolite proposée par David Held n'offrent pas de solution satisfaisante aux problèmes sociaux et moraux qu'il critique. Notre article développe une critique alternative de la globalisation, fondée sur l'expérience de la vie, qui fait de la conscience que nous avons des besoins et des capacités des uns et des autres la source de nos obligations morales réciproques. Ces obligations morales s'accomplissent surtout dans des projets politiques qui visent à introduire des modifications fondamentales et durables dans les principes qui régissent les plus importantes institutions socio-économiques.

David Held, one of the most astute critics of contemporary globalization, identifies a "moral gap" in life chances between the world's richest and poorest inhabitants as the pre-eminent ethical-political problem of our time. This moral gap is defined by "a world in which . . . over 1.2 billion people live on less than 1 dollar a day, 46% of the world's population live on less than 2 dollars a day, and 20% of the world's population enjoy over

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80% of its wealth; and, by commitments and values often shaped by 'passive indifference'" (Held 2004, p. 91). If it is true that this moral gap is the pre-eminent ethical-political problem then it is of pressing importance for ethical-political philosophy to understand its causes and structure as well as to pose strategies by which it might be closed. Here I am interested less in providing a detailed historical explanation of the forces of capitalist globalization as I am in understanding the ethical grounds upon which a gap in life-chances appears as a specifically ethical-political problem. As for the practical political dimension of strategies for social change, I am less interested in working out the complexities of an explicitly political response as I am in understanding what ideas might provide the best motivation for overcoming the "passive indifference" with which the moral gap is too often treated.

I will pursue these twin objectives through a critical examination of the ethical and political foundations of Held's cosmopolitan alternative to contemporary globalization. The fundamental principle of this alternative is that "the ultimate units of moral concern are individual human beings. . . . Human beings belong to a single moral realm in which each person is equally worthy of respect and consideration" (Held and Koenig-Archibugi 2003, p. 169). I will argue that while the (clearly) Kantian roots of this idea of a "moral realm" of equal autonomous agents provide grounds for an abstract idea of a universal human community, there are good reasons to conclude that it will lack the motivational force necessary to overcome indifference to the suffering of others. Hence, a different foundation is needed for the type of human community necessary to efficaciously confront and close the moral gap that mars the life-chances of billions in the world. In the first part of this article I will critically examine the Kantian grounds of Held's position and the ethical-political conclusions that he draws from them. In the second I will develop what I will call, following John McMurtry, a life-grounded conception of human community as a solution to the problems of Held's cosmopolitanism disclosed in the first part.

1. Moral Personhood, Human Rights, and Global Social Democracy

In a recent work David Held has produced a powerful critique of the Washington Consensus and posited as an alternative the internationalization of the values and institutions of social democracy (2004, pp. xiv-xv). Against the one-sided affirmation of unregulated capital flows and indifference to meeting the unmet vital needs of the world's poorest people, Held champions the regulation of global markets according to an imperative of fundamental need satisfaction. The normative foundation of this project is a principle of cosmopolitan egalitarian individualism which affirms

> those basic values that set down standards or boundaries which no agent, whether a representative global body, state, or civil association should be able to violate. Focussed on the claims of each person as an individual or as a member of humanity as a whole, these values espouse the idea that human beings are in a fundamental sense equal, and that they deserve equal political treatment; that is, treatment based on the equal care and consideration of their agency. (Held 2004, p. 170)

The cosmopolitan order that Held envisages is thus rooted in a system of human rights that is sensitive both to the basic claims of fundamental needs and the higher-level demands for democratic institutions implied by the moral nature of persons as agents. The essential philosophical foundations for this position were laid more than two centuries ago by Immanuel Kant.

That which is essential in Kant for understanding the strengths and limitations of Held's theory is less his political speculations about a future world governed by cosmopolitan law than his conceptions of moral personhood and moral community. Kant's explicit political writings on cosmopolitan law are too undeveloped to be of direct use in the radically changed socio-historical context of today (Held and Koenig-Archibugi 2003, p. 168; Kant 1963). The same is not true of his conception of personhood and moral community. Precisely because globalization appears to emphasize and intensify our differences at the same time as it draws everyone together into new and shared "communities of fate," the contemporary era is in more need than ever of universal ethical standards and political principles "that nobody, motivated to establish an uncoerced and informed agreement, could reasonably reject" (Held and Koenig-Archibugi 2003, p. 169). The question is, however, whether principles that no one could reasonably reject are sufficient as motivating reasons for action and foundations for a new institutional order capable of solving the key ethical-political problems of our time. Answering that question requires that we reflect more fully on the Kantian conception of persons at the basis of Held's argument.

According to Kant, human beings unite in themselves two worlds: the world of nature (governed by mechanical causes) and the world of reason (governed by the "causality of freedom") (Kant 1987, pp. 635-44). It is our rational nature that makes us objects of moral concern; our embodied reality ties us to the natural kingdom by feelings of pleasure and sets us at odds with each other. Kant argues that morality is grounded upon the rule of reason over the sensuous, embodied, natural self. "Only in such a case does reason, in as much as it determines the will by itself—not being at the service of the inclinations—occupy the place of the faculty of desire, to be entitled a higher faculty" (Kant 1998, p. 25). In other words, human beings are moral persons because they are rational and because they are rational

they are agents capable of determining ends for themselves. Insofar as all human beings are understood to be rational agents, they are all equally capable of understanding each other's rational ends. Insofar as they are capable of this essential form of mutual understanding they are capable of respecting each other. To the extent that this moral mutual recognition actually governs people's lives, human beings exist within a "realm of ends." "By 'realm' I understand the 'systematic union of different rational beings through common laws'" (Kant 1969, p. 58). As Habermas notes, Kant's kingdom of ends has political significance insofar as it enables people to think beyond locally constituted differences and recognize others as moral equals. As he writes, "the normative model for a community without any possible exclusions is the universe of moral persons—Kant's kingdom of ends" (Habermas 2000, p. 108). Held echoes this interpretation of the realm of ends insofar as his fundamental cosmopolitan principle, that of the equal moral worth of individuals, implies that "humankind belongs to a single moral realm" (Held and Koenig-Archibugi 2003, p. 169).

The problem, however, as Kant's ethical philosophy makes clear, is that human beings inhabit this realm of ends only insofar as they think of each other as autonomous agents. Kant's conception of agency is one-sided: it is focused exclusively on the internal condition of free will and ignores, as a consequence, the external, material conditions of free activity. Since agency in Kant's sense does not and cannot free us from our embodiment, it does not and cannot free us from the permanent possibility of discord over conflicting demands grounded in different desires and demands. Kant's political solution to this problem is a classically liberal conception of constitutional law as an agreed-upon framework for the pursuit of individual interest (Kant 1963, p. 17). Of more importance for our purposes is what Kant does not say about the conditions for realizing the realm of ends within embodied social life.

Insofar as human beings inhabit the realm of ends, Kant argues, they have dignity. Dignity may be defined as the unpriceable moral worth of human beings. Whatever does not have dignity, according to Kant, has a price. Since it is only our rational selves that have dignity, it follows that our body, considered only insofar as it is a natural organism, can have a price. I do not mean to imply that Kant's ethical principles permit the buying and selling of human beings as slaves. What I do mean to emphasize is that Kant sees no contradiction to his ethical principles in the pricing of the goods and resources that human beings need to live insofar as they are embodied beings. He says so explicitly: "That which is related to general human inclinations and needs has a market price" (Kant 1969, p. 60). Hence, for Kant's own theorization of the moral worth of persons there is no contradiction between the person as a free end in itself and the person as an embodied organism dependent upon market forces for the provision (at a price, of course) for the resources that they need to survive. If no

moral problem arises for the Kantian conception of the person from the rule of market forces over the material conditions of human life, and that structure of rule is the cause of the "moral gap" in life-chances, it would appear that Kant's ethical philosophy is ill-suited as a moral foundation for a politics designed to close that moral gap.

Stated in this bald form, however, this conclusion is unsound. The fact that Kant himself could not see beyond the social structures of the nineteenth century does not entail that the implications of his principles do not transcend those structures (Goldmann 1971, p. 170). Held himself, as noted above, does not commit himself to the determinate political conclusions that Kant drew. Instead he joins a long tradition of thinkers who have sought to unlock the more radical socio-economic and political implications of Kant from the limitations subsequent historical developments have revealed in Kant's own interpretation.[1] To what extent Held's cosmopolitanism succeeds I will now proceed to investigate.

Held's critique of the moral gap in life-chances clearly implies that a global capitalist economy ungoverned by the ethical principles of cosmopolitanism is incapable of satisfying fundamental human needs. Thus, a necessary consequence of its unregulated operation is the gross violation of human dignity represented by humanity-destroying absolute poverty. The fundamental principles of cosmopolitanism demonstrate the need for what Held calls a new global covenant. As he explains it, this covenant would "build on the strengths of the liberal multilateral order, particularly its commitment to universal standards, human rights and democratic values, and which seeks to specify principles on which all could act" (Held 2004, p. 171). The essential principles that form the content of this new covenant are the equal worth and dignity of human beings, active agency, collective decision-making on matters of public concern, the avoidance of serious harms (urgent need satisfaction), and environmental sustainability. The rule of market forces over the material conditions of human life would be replaced with a regulated market conceived on analogy with national forms of social democracy that prevailed in the interwar years. Held thus does not argue that market forces need to be progressively eliminated as the material condition of the equal realization of full human agency. Rather, he limits himself to calling for their "embedding" in the moral values of cosmopolitanism (Held 1995, pp. 240-41).

Held does not precisely define or supply a clear criterion of fundamental needs. Nor does he supply any criterion by which fundamental needs could be distinguished from non-fundamental needs or needs as such from contingent desires or wants. Hence, the material conditions for the realization of the value of agency are not clearly spelled out. Nor is the content of his understanding of agency clearly explicated. These particular problems all follow from his failure to question the deep normative implications of the globalized market for the human meaning of life-projects. His

express concern is to grasp the external effects market forces have on access to the most rudimentary material conditions of life (Held 2004, p. 155). To be sure, ameliorating the gross inequalities of the world is an immediate imperative and to this extent Held's cosmopolitan social democratic alternative to the Washington Consensus is a most necessary corrective. Nevertheless, there are at least three reasons to doubt whether Held's cosmopolitan alternative is a sufficient cure for the disease that he himself diagnoses. I will treat each in turn.

First is the question of motivation. The motivating force behind political movements is the moral power of the principle of equal worth of human beings and the moral community of humankind. To some philosophers these ideas might be inspiring but they are not sufficient to motivate transformations of consciousness amongst those who are "passively indifferent" to the moral gap in life chances. I am not simply asserting this point dogmatically. In fact, Held himself recognizes it. He writes that "the principle of egalitarian individualism may be widely recognized, but it scarcely structures much social and economic policy" (Held and Koenig-Archibugi 2003, p. 172). Why it fails to do so is a matter of extreme complexity, empirical and theoretical, that perhaps cannot be fully resolved here. Nevertheless, I think that one key reason the principle does in fact fail to motivate is that it lacks any connection to the affective dimension of human thought and experience of other human beings. I am not arguing that ethical principles are only motivating when they connect with some (dubious) moral sense. What I will argue, however, is that ethical principles acquire more motivational force the more their normative content is linked with affective experience (as opposed to abstract thoughts) of other people. We need to feel the harms that others suffer in order to overcome the passive indifference that Held correctly identifies as the primary impediment to change. Since the idea of agency is abstract (i.e., disconnected from our embodied being) and dependent—not upon direct affective experience of others, but upon certain philosophical principles that people may or may not understand or accept—it does not lead to the sort of felt link between one's own well-being and that of others, which is necessary to motivate action.

Held's recognition of the lack of motivating power of this principle is echoed by arguably the most important social and political philosopher of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, Jürgen Habermas. Commenting on Held's hopes for a global transformation of the institutions of political and economic governance, Habermas argues that "even a world wide consensus on human rights would not serve as the basis for a strong equivalent of the civic solidarity that emerged in the context of the nation state" (Habermas 2000, p. 108). It would not because the nation state was "able to succeed because [it was] able to articulate economic security with a shared sense of belonging to a common cultural heritage"

(2002, p. 58). The deep problem, as I noted above and will elaborate upon in the next section, is that the idea of a moral community of persons unified by an idea of human agency is too abstract, too distinct from consciousness of the lived reality of concretely human others. But it is just when we open our consciousness to the lived reality of concretely human others that we find in ourselves the motivating force for change.

The second problem is that, even if a worldwide consensus on human rights were to be achieved, the human rights actually recognized in the various charters of the United Nations are insufficient in themselves to correct the socio-material causes of the moral gap. As Gary Teeple masterfully demonstrates in his recent critique of human rights, these rights have co-evolved with the development of capitalist market forces (2004, pp. 9-20). That is, they have not developed primarily in the interests of human beings as needy, embodied, and potentially self-determining beings, but in the social interests of corporate market agents in stable legal systems and transparent forms of political power. That is not to say that human rights are morally or politically otiose or to be dismissed. Nor is it to foreclose once for all on the possibility of deriving more radical conclusions from different interpretations of human rights, such as those Gewirth derives in relation to worker's control of production (Gewirth 1996, pp. 257-73). It is to insist, however, that political philosophers who want to push a deeper critique of social dynamics on the basis of human rights consider the actual historical and socio-economic context of their emergence, their co-evolution with classical liberal rights, and thus their historical entwinement with the justification of private property in universally needed life-resources. This historical entwinement imposes real limitations insofar as any inference from human rights to economic democratization can and will be met with another (equally valid) inference from human rights to the security of private property and the free market. The inferences that philosophers draw from the idea of human rights, in other words, derive from their pre-existing political commitments. The idea of human rights cannot solve the dispute between opposed political positions because each party arrives at their preferred interpretation of human rights according to their respective political positions. Therefore, conflicts over the proper interpretation of human rights will prove intractable. A more efficacious approach, then, I will argue, is to proceed from normative premises that are independent of the idea of human rights.

The third problem is directly connected to the second. Held's concrete socio-economic alternative to the rule of unregulated market forces is global social democracy. There is little reason to expect, however, that a global social democracy would be more successful than its national form. It is true that the national form of social democracy reduced quantitative inequality. It is equally true that it did not end the problems of poverty. Of more central importance is that the welfare state did not advance to

any significant degree the quality of people's life activity (their "agency," in Held's terms). It did not do so because it too left market forces intact. While it did adjust real income to better meet people's needs, it did not free the form and content of human life activity from the determining power of market forces. That is, it did not satisfy the social and material conditions of free self-determination. Market forces, regulated or unregulated, not only produce and distribute basic life-resources, they also produce and distribute available forms of work, leisure, and time. What this fact means is that, where market forces control needed goods as well as the structures in which human activity will be developed, those activities will always be mere means to the overriding end of the market, namely, increased productivity and profitability. As with human rights, pointing out this limitation does not mean rejecting social democracy *tout court*, but demands that we tease out the deeper principle it implies. That deeper principle then forms the basis for a more radical global political project. The deeper principle implied by the welfare state is life-grounded and states that the economy really exists to satisfy human needs and enable free activity. It follows from this principle, I will argue, that the major institutions of a life-grounded economy must be democratic.

These then are the core objections that can be levelled against Held's cosmopolitanism. Their strength, however, should not be measured by weaknesses that they expose in Held's theory but only by the strength of the alternative that they collectively imply. I will now turn to the task of explicating the "life-grounded" conception of a human community as an alternative to Held's cosmopolitanism.

2. The Life-Ground of Value and Human Community

As I argued in the first section, Held's cosmopolitanism is a development of Kant's conception of moral personhood and community. Held does not explicitly maintain Kant's dualistic conception of human being. Indeed, insofar as he recognizes the way in which claims of urgent need are moral claims, he might be thought to reject it. Nevertheless, he does not articulate his ethical principles as following from a developed understanding of the embodied nature of human beings. Nor does he root his conception of moral community in an account of our needs for one another. The primary difference between the life-grounded conception of human community and Held's cosmopolitanism is that the life-grounded account proceeds from an integral understanding of human nature as synthetically socially organic. That is, human organic nature is such that human beings must exist together in definite forms of social relations because they can only satisfy their needs collectively. Humans can only satisfy their needs collectively because need-satisfying resources must be produced through collective labour. Furthermore, as conscious, potentially self-determining beings, we have needs that go beyond basic material resources to include

institutional structures in which, through various forms of social interaction (pedagogical, artistic, political), we are enabled to develop our self-creative capabilities. Social relations, therefore, may be judged from the perspective of the life-ground of value according to the general principle of how well or how poorly actual social relations satisfy our needs and enable us to develop our capabilities.

As a principle of ethical consciousness, the life-ground roots our ethical responsibilities in the actual, objective links that tie us together as embodied life-forms. It argues that the motivation to respond to ethical harm is a necessary consequence of opening one's consciousness to the lived reality of other human beings. Finally, it derives principles that could guide social transformation from the objective life-interests that follow from our social organic nature. I will explicate each of these points in turn.

Held recognizes that agency depends upon the satisfaction of urgent needs. However, he neither defines needs nor investigates whether the fact that we are needy entails any necessary relations between human beings which might be of profound moral and political significance. The life-grounded approach, on the contrary, starts from the reality of life as essentially needy and therefore outwardly directed, by which I simply mean that life depends upon maintaining constant connection with resources external to it without which it will be harmed and eventually die. The verifiable fact that humans are harmed when they fail to satisfy their needs is the basis for a criterion according to which needs can be distinguished from desires. In McMurtry's formulation needs may be determined according to the criterion that "N is a need, if and only if, and to the extent that, deprivation of N always results in a reduction of organic capability" (1998, p. 164). As the criterion implies, the end of need satisfaction is not simply satiety, but rather the maintenance and development of organic capabilities (to sense, to act, to think). Need-satisfaction is thus the means or material condition of the development of organic capabilities. If need-satisfaction is the means, then capability-development is the end or the value sought by life-forms satisfying their needs.

If McMurtry's criterion of needs is sound and the argument linking need-satisfaction and capability realization is cogent, then it follows that value for living things is in a real sense encoded in their organic nature. Life-value is the realized capabilities of living things that increases with the range and depth of the capabilities of the living thing in question (McMurtry 2005). If life-value can be realized if and only if needs are satisfied, and needs can be satisfied only through the constant maintenance of connection between living things and the resources that they require, then it follows that the ground of life-value is precisely the connections between living things and whatever they need to survive and develop. Hence, the life-ground of value may be defined as "the connection of life to life's resources as a felt bond of being that crosses boundaries of mem-

branes, classes, peoples, and even species" (McMurtry 1998, p. 23). The life-ground encompasses all life as such. However, my interest here is the conscious form that it assumes in human life. Human beings are capable of being conscious not only of harm to self, but also of harm to others. In other words, once consciousness is anchored in the life-ground, it reacts against harm wherever it happens to occur. As McMurtry argues,

> [I]f people observe or know of the destruction or brutal reduction of vital life ranges where no compensating gain in security of other life can explain it, they retreat from it within, as if there were an acquired structure of thought which put them "in common" with the lost life, and the life that remains. This is the civil commons within, and it is not a spiritual conceit. It is a general fact that is so self-evident underneath acknowledgement that murderous state and corporate agents will go to any lengths to provide cover ups . . . to keep people from this civil commons consciousness across boundaries. (1999, pp. 214-15)

That it is not simply a spiritual conceit or a mere postulate of contingent philosophizing, we may cite as evidence any movement where people who have no direct stake in the prevention of harm to others mobilize to reach out across time, space, and culture in solidarity with harmed others. The anti-war movement prior to the invasion of Iraq was an excellent example. No one outside of Iraq or not in the invading militaries was at risk of suffering diminished quality of life, and yet millions of people mobilized against the war. Its life-grounded foundation was evocatively expressed on a poster carried by a pregnant demonstrator in New York City on the worldwide day of action against the war on February 15, 2003. It read simply, "Power comes from giving life" (*Globe and Mail*, Monday, February 17, 2003, p. A6). Any act of solidarity that links the directly unaffected to the directly affected manifests the same life-ground.

This argument invites the objection that if the life-ground were something more than a spiritual conceit then it would make impossible the shocking brutality of people towards others categorized as essentially different, not to mention the passive indifference that characterizes attitudes towards the prevailing moral gap in life-chances. Is it not the case that passive indifference or active brutalization is a more pervasive fact of human relations than life-grounded care, concern, and solidarity (Cohen 2001; Geras 1998)? Taken as empirical propositions, either would be extremely difficult to prove. For present purposes, however, it is not essential to resolve the opposition at an empirical level. What is essential is the normative point in dispute: the fact of passive indifference or active brutality seems to demonstrate that the life-ground of value has no more—indeed, perhaps less—motivating power than Held's cosmopolitan principles.

I do not believe that the objection proves this conclusion. First of all, the claim is not that solidarity is mechanical or abstractly "natural" such that always and everywhere humans spontaneously accord with one another. Second, the life-grounded argument expressly maintains that people must open their consciousness—that is, pay attention to—others as needy and capable human beings. If they do not, if they judge others on the basis of various ideologies of difference, then they in fact can be indifferent or brutal. What allows us, however, to judge indifference or brutality as morally wrong if not the (at least implicit) recognition that such an attitude leaves persons to suffer under conditions that we know are harmful to them? If we in fact make ourselves conscious of the other as an embodied human being identical to ourselves in that foundational respect, then their suffering does become intolerable and we are motivated to do something about it. In other words, our cognitive recognition of the causes of harm is conjoined to an affective experience of another human suffering harm. We know and feel the harm they suffer because of the life-grounded identity we share as living human beings. This unity of understanding and shared feeling is always present, I contend, where concrete action is taken against the known social causes of harm. Where they are not present together people prove liable either to abstract rationalizations that explain away the need for transformative action, or xenophobic indifference to (or active hatred of), the suffering of others. It takes philosophical work to produce life-grounded unity of understanding and shared feeling, but once it has been created, solidarity and practical action against the causes of harm develop.

Does a focus on their agency in Held's Kantian sense of the term necessarily lead to a similar inability to tolerate the harms suffered by others? I do not believe that it does. If one interprets agency as a moral fact about human beings, i.e., an essential feature of humans that simply cannot be damaged by material conditions, then one could just as easily argue that no one ought to intervene to help others in need precisely because such intervention would violate their agency. This sort of argument is exactly the type used by libertarians such as Nozick who, on strictly Kantian grounds, conclude that any interference with market forces violates the Kantian principle that human beings are ends in themselves (Nozick 1974 pp. 30-31). I am not arguing that Kantianism properly construed leads to libertarian indifference to the harms caused by unregulated market forces. Nozick is no philosophical slouch, however, and the cogency of his argument proves at least that Kantianism is compatible with an interpretation radically at odds with Held's interpretation. In order to obviate the force of this objection Held would have to appeal to the reality of urgent need as a basis of moral concern for others. That position points us precisely in the direction of the life-ground.

Once ethical principles have become anchored in the life-ground, such that the primary object of moral concern is the whole embodied being as a needy and capable life-form that essentially depends upon the principles governing social relations for its life and well-being, it becomes impossible to generate moral defences of passive indifference to radical need-deprivation simply because it happens far from home. The life-grounded approach solves the problem of whether our duties toward those in our own region or nation are stronger than toward those in other regions or nations. From the life-grounded perspective duties do not derive from particular and accidental identities such as shared nationality but from our common needs and capabilities. Duties in any particular case may be discovered by considering them as a function of the relation between the intensity of the need and one's concrete ability to help. In general, our strongest duties are towards those most in need, proportional to our ability to help. Thus it may turn out that what we owe to those distant others most in need is not direct contributions to the immediate satisfaction of basic needs (because we can do little in this regard), but to join in longer-term struggles to change the social dynamics that can be demonstrated to cause radical-need deprivation. In each case, however, practical reasoning and argument will be required for conscientious decision-making.

It is on this basis of life-grounded consciousness of human interconnection that it becomes possible to conceive of a different sort of universal community. This community is neither a community purely "in mind," as the Kantian moral community is, but nor are its implications fully realized at present. Rather, the human community understood from a life-grounded perspective is best understood at present as what Keith Graham calls a "potential collectivity," by which he means "some group of people sharing some common condition and common interests and having the power to act collectively so as to further those interests, even if in fact they do not" (Graham 2002, p. 77). Our shared social-organic nature gives us a shared set of needs and capabilities. Since we suffer harm if we are deprived of that which we need because it reduces or destroys our capabilities, we also have an equal, shared life-interest (even if we do not always act on that interest) in need satisfaction. From this shared interest in need satisfaction we can derive a principle, adherence to which would constitute grounds for membership in the human community. The human community is progressively realized as people adopt the principle of membership.

The principle of membership in this human community could be stated as follows: one acts as a member of the human community when one responds to the unmet needs of others in such a way as (a) to satisfy those needs directly, when one is in a position to do so, or, more importantly from the political standpoint, (b) to work against identifiable social causes of harm and therefore to contribute indirectly to need satisfaction to the

need-deprived wherever they happen to be. Since the object of consciousness in the case of action is the humanity of the other person as an equally needy and capable being, then when I act in accordance with the principle I act in such a way that my act can only be understood by reference to my membership in the human community. As Graham argues, "practical identification with a collectivity consists in my associating myself with its decisions and actions, on appropriate occasions attempting to think and act as if for the collectivity itself, and taking its good as my own" (Graham 2002, p. 112). Thus the human community becomes real as a political agent when human beings direct their thought and action to identifying the social causes of harm and working to eliminate them. Because I act as a human and direct my activity towards the humanity of the other I expand my self-identity to embrace the well-being of the other. If "community" means that self-identity is expanded to comprehend the good of other members then this form of activity is rightly called acting as a member of the human community. This political agent could, in principle, embrace the totality of the human race but is not negated by the fact that not everyone acts all the time as a member of it, or by the fact that differences of social interest impede some empirical human beings from recognizing the humanity of others or of actively harming them. By the definition given above, those who serve demonstrably harmful social institutions or practice are acting "inhumanly."

It remains finally to justify the critique of Held's political solution to the harms caused by capitalist globalization, global social democracy, by examining the political implications of the life-grounded conception of human community. Recall that the key limitation was that Held's global social democracy is based upon the structures of the national form of social democracy which, while it led to a quantitative reduction in material inequality did not lead to a corresponding improvement in the quality of life-activity as measured by the range and depth of capability realization. It did not do so because it sought to regulate market forces but not to supplant them by democratic steering of major economic institutions. I also noted, however, that to stress the limitations of social democratic forms of regulation is not the same thing as to reject them outright.

Thus the key question to answer at this point is: if not social democratic regulation of market forces or laissez-faire globalization of market forces, then what? The only concrete alternative to both was the command economies of Stalinist societies, and those proved to be inefficient and maintained by totalitarian rule. Clearly it is neither reasonable nor morally legitimate to argue for a return to Stalinist authoritarianism. Thus it appears that my argument reaches a practical dead end. It may be the case that social democracy faces intrinsic limitations when judged from a life-grounded perspective, but if there is no actual alternative to it then I can serve up irresponsible and empty utopian principles at best.

That conclusion is not warranted, however. If we examine the long-term tendency of the development of liberal capitalist societies we can see that it is characterized by growing political and social intervention in the economic dynamics of capitalist markets. The further development of this tendency has been checked by the emergence of a more intensified form of globalization in the early 1970s. However, judged over the long term (roughly, the seventeenth to the late twentieth centuries), it is this retrenchment of private economic power and not economic democratization that is the aberration. What this means in the present context is that social democratization of the global economy should be interpreted as a plateau and not the summit of the social transformations necessary to close the moral gap and satisfy the equal life-interests in the material conditions of human freedom. An evolutionary movement towards an ever more democratic economy steered by negotiations between different social groups could deal with the problems of complexity and information that destroyed the Stalinist command economy. The key to success is gradual and evolutionary transformation, building on actual democratic elements already operative but suppressed by the overriding imperative of profit-maximization.[2]

It is the life-ground of value that provides the systematic link between these forms of political action, the motivation to undertake them, and the moral principles that guide and justify them. Once human beings become conscious of other human beings as embodied, needy, and capable, they become conscious of an essential identity that links them at the level of life-activity and its material and social conditions. Once this identity becomes the principle that orients consciousness in its affective and cognitive dimensions, we become alive to the reality of the harms that global market society imposes upon others. The unity of understanding and feeling that is definitive of consciousness of the life-ground of value motivates action towards the creation of a human community, i.e., an evolving and active movement towards a new world whose governing social principles would prioritize the satisfaction of the full range of human needs for the sake of the maximally rich development of human capabilities.

Notes

1 The best of those efforts is, I believe, Harry van der Linden's *Kantian Ethics and Socialism* (1988). In addition to being brilliantly argued, it also contains a comprehensive analysis of the work of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Kantian socialists such as Hermann Cohen whose work is little read in the English-speaking world. Alan Gewirth also develops socialistic conclusions about the need for economic democracy from the implications of his Principle of Generic Consistency (which, as a principle, owes much to the Kantian tradition). See his *The Community of Rights* (1996, pp. 19 and esp. pp. 257-301). How far these efforts go toward freeing the implications of Kant's ethical philosophy

from the limitations that Kant himself assigned to it cannot be satisfactorily determined here. I would argue, however, that to the extent that efforts from those such as van der Linden and Gewirth demonstrate the necessity of fundamentally transforming socio-economic life, they will be forced to take much more seriously (in an ethical sense) the fact of human embodiment than does Kant. Allegiance to a socialist version of Kant's principle that human beings are of intrinsic worth would also require fundamental revisions to how Kant intended readers to interpret that principle. It becomes questionable, to my mind, to what extent such positions really are Kantian in anything more than inspiration and general approach.

2 Pat Devine (1988) has demonstrated in elaborate detail how an economy steered by democratic negotiation can answer all the essential objections levelled against theories of democratic economies by classical and neoclassical economics. Readers interested in the details should examine his major work.

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