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Editorial

"Opdat we niet vergeten te worden zodat we kunnen zijn."
Lest we forget to become, so we can be.
- Caspar Smink

We are happy to present to you the 23rd edition of the ESJP! In this edition, you are invited to read papers by Gergana Boncheva, David Holroyd, Noortje Hermans and Zander Michaël Prinsloo; four curious and ambitious students who took the time and effort to put their thoughts on paper, resulting in four interesting papers. As becomes clear from the concrete and elucidating titles each author pours over, a variety of philosophical topics will be discussed. Gergana Boncheva will argue why surfers should not matter in discussions surrounding Universal Basic Income, unconditionality and democratic equality. David Holroyd will consider the question whether scientists should eliminate appraisal judgements in order to establish value-free science, by evaluating Alexandrova's take on the work of Nagel. Noortje Hermans will discuss the exploitation of our brain by considering the consequences of the lack of embodiment, situationality and contextuality in the neuroscientific perspective. Our last but certainly not least philosophical endeavor included in this edition is by Zander Michaël Prinsloo, who works towards a Spinozist conception of hope.

I want to thank the lovely editors who put their essential insights and continuous effort into the creation of this journal, working alongside the authors in several editorial rounds. We had the pleasure of welcoming several new editors into the ESJP. Alessia, David, Jasper, Cassandra, Roan, Menno, and Rutger; thank you for your time and enthusiasm. Their arrival in the ESJP is accompanied by the sad departure of several trusted editors: Gideon, Luc, Merel, Ermanno, Giovanni, Dimitri, Lara Rose and Alexandrine, I am thankful for the time we got to spend together and I wish you all the best. And, of course, I would like to sincerely thank those well-known and experienced ESJP editors who stuck around for yet another edition: Arwen, Noor, Jeroen, and Sonia. You once again helped bring about something special. I mustn't forget the members of our advisory board, Thijs Heijmeskamp and Jamie van der Klaauw, and the supervisory board; Prof. dr. Hub Zwart, Dr. Constanze Binder, and Prof. dr. Han van Ruler. Thank you for your continued support, we appreciate it greatly. To the readers of this journal, I thank you for taking the time to read the papers you wish to read, and for opening yourself up to the possibility of being affected, in any and all senses of the word.

There is one person so close to my heart that remains to be discussed, and that is our new Secretary and editor Caspar Smink. For Caspar, I don't mind resorting to clichés. Sometimes, even in a philosophical journal, saying that there are no words that would do justice to how much you mean to me, Caspar, is the most sincere I can be, as I simply don't have any words to give you. I struggle with silences, always feeling a need to fill every one of them with sentences flowing straight from a crevice of my mind closer resembling autocorrect than anything substantial. And yet, being next to you, walking through the city streets and parks, on campus grounds and working on this journal, overlooking all the antique houses you wish you'd one day live in, and when we talk about our lives and all the people in it over endless coffee, tea and chocolate milk, I cannot help but feel trusted in our moments of silence. Thank you for being there with me, Caspar. I couldn't have done it without you.

All the best,

Georgina Aránzazu Dijkstra
Editor-in-chief

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About

The Erasmus Student Journal of Philosophy (ESJP) is a double-blind peer-reviewed student journal that publishes the best philosophical papers written by students from the Erasmus School of Philosophy, Erasmus University Rotterdam and from the Humanities Programme of the Erasmus University College. Its aims are to further enrich the philosophical environment in which Rotterdam's philosophy students develop their thinking and bring their best work to the attention of a wider intellectual audience. Aside from serving as an important academic platform for students to present their work, the journal has two other goals. First, to provide members of the editorial board with the opportunity to develop their own editing and writing skills. Second, to enable students to realize their first official academic publication during their time as a student at ESPhil or the Humanities Department of the EUC. A new issue of the ESJP appears on our website every January and June.

To ensure the highest possible quality, the ESJP only accepts papers that (a) have been written for a course that is part of the Erasmus University College or Erasmus School of Philosophy curriculum and (b) nominated for publication in the ESJP by the teacher of that course. Each paper that is published in the ESJP is subjected to a double-blind peer review process in which at least one other teacher and two student editors act as referees.

The ESJP encourages students to keep in mind the possibility of publishing their course papers in our journal, and to write papers that appeal to a wider intellectual audience.

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In this Issue

What to do with surfers? This question is often raised in discussions about Universal Basic Income (UBI). Surfers, also known as free riders, refers to those members of a community who would theoretically choose to live solely off their UBI without contributing further to society. In her essay **Why Surfers Should Not Matter: *Universal Basic Income, Unconditionality, and Democratic Equality***, Gergana Boncheva addresses this question using Elizabeth Anderson' theory of democratic equality. Boncheva argues why surfers should not matter under Anderson' theory, and that granting a basic income that is not conditional upon work-related requirements is not only permissible but also necessary if we wish to end socially imposed oppression and improve equal social relations amongst people.

In his essay **Evaluating Alexandrova on Nagel: *Should Scientists Eliminate Appraisal Judgements in order to Establish Value-free Science?*** David Holroyd offers a novel response that cuts between either position: first, he defends Nagel's proposal that scientists should convert appraisal judgments into estimation judgments; and then second, he endorses Alexandrova's argument that Nagel's proposal fails to exclude non-epistemic values from science. This leads him to conclude that Alexandrova could strengthen her overall account if she adopted Nagel's proposal alongside her arguments for an inclusive and accountable procedure to determine scientific value-choice. Within his paper, Holroyd outlines clear and precise definitions for both scientific objectivity and even science itself, illustrating the distinct and valuable role that analytical philosophers can play in scientific research.

Noortje Hermans werpt een kritisch blik op de groeiende maatschappelijke tendens tot het 'ver(neuro)wetenschappelijken' van de ervaring, in haar artikel **De Exploitatie van Ons Brein: *De Gevolgen van het Gebrek aan Lichamelijkheid, Situationaliteit en Contextualiteit in het Neurowetenschappelijke Perspectief***. Hermans, in verzet tegen reductionistisch denken, richt zich tot de fenomenologie van Merleau-Ponty en het werk van neurowetenschapper Steven Rose om zo het brein in zijn belichaamde positie en positie binnen een co-evolutionair begrip van biologie en cultuur te plaatsen. Vervolgens bespreekt Hermans aan de hand van het gedachtengoed van Catherine Malabous de verontrustende invloed van het neoliberaal kapitalisme op het bedrijven en begrijpen van neurowetenschap. Als alternatief voor een reductionistische denkwijze gebruikt Hermans de roman *Serotonine* van schrijver Houellebecq, om zo uit een ander perspectief de weerbaarheid van het brein te aanschouwen.

In **Towards a Spinozist Conception of Hope**, Zander Michaël Prinsloo explores Spinoza's nuanced understanding of hope as a passion. This perspective has often been overlooked due to Spinoza being represented as conceptualizing hope in a pessimistic manner, whereas Prinsloo argues that Spinoza advocates for a mid-point between pessimism and optimism by virtue of his pragmatic approach towards hope. Prinsloo illustrates how Spinoza presents a dualistic conception of hope, wherein it is critiqued for running counter to reason and as an obstacle to attaining freedom, yet valuable in enhancing one's ability to act. The paper distinguishes between two conceptions of hope: "epistemic hope" and "regulative hope". Whilst both arising from reason, epistemic hope impedes human action, while regulative hope regulates people's being & functioning in society and therefore can bring cohesion in the state. Using this dualistic approach, Prinsloo demonstrates how Spinoza's attitude towards hope is more nuanced than simply rejecting it as a passion; seeing the potential for a pragmatic regulative hope that can provide stability and cohesion instead.

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Why Surfers Should Not Matter: *Universal Basic Income, Unconditionality, and Democratic Equality*

Gergana Boncheva

Should we feed surfers? Perhaps surprising to some, this is debated by political philosophers. The topic in question being universal basic income (UBI, for short). Popularized and strongly advocated for in recent years by Philippe Van Parijs, a universal basic income is "an income paid by a political community to all its members" (Van Parijs 2004, 8). It has the following distinguishing features: it is paid in cash, on a regular basis, to individuals, without any requirements related to a person's level of income, wealth, or employment status (8–9).

Why surfers?, you might wonder. The answer goes back to a footnote by John Rawls. In a brief comment on leisure time, he says that "those who surf all day off Malibu must find a way to support themselves and would not be entitled to public funds" (1988, 257n7). As a nod to Rawls, in 1991 Philippe Van Parijs makes his case for universal basic income in a paper titled "Why Surfers Should be Fed: The Liberal Case for an Unconditional Basic Income", making surfers a running example in the UBI debate. Plainly put, on Rawlsian terms we should not feed those who 'surf all day off Malibu', because they do not contribute to society. For Van Parijs, however, justice amounts to all members of a society having the means to pursue their own conception of the good (1991). If that happens to be surfing and not working, surfers should be fed.

Unconditionality, meaning the absence of work-related requirements, remains UBI's most-contested theoretical component (Van Parijs and Vanderborght 2019, 99). The liberal egalitarian objection holds that a basic income should not be provided irrespective of whether a person works or not, as doing so opens the door to a serious violation of reciprocity. It would mean that some can ride waves all day in Malibu and live off the work of those who make a productive contribution to society. This figurative (and literal) free-riding makes the liberal egalitarian consensus unwelcoming towards UBI.

In her proposed theory of justice called democratic equality Elizabeth Anderson also takes up Van Parijs' surfers. She shares the stance that surfers should not be fed, because doing so "effectively indulges the tastes of the lazy and irresponsible" (Anderson 1999, 299). Thus, her theory, too, seems to be in the 'Against UBI' corner. In the current essay, I challenge Anderson on this. I will argue that, within democratic equality there actually is a case for providing a basic income unconditionally. In what follows, I will suggest that UBI is not only a measure that is *permissible* under democratic equality, but that it could further be seen as a *necessary* measure to bring about democratic equality in a society. I make my claims for permissibility and necessity, respectively, along the following two lines. On permissibility, I point out that Anderson's stance on the question of an unconditionally provided basic income is not consistent throughout her work. If we look at other statements by her, it emerges that unconditional state support is permissible within her framework. On necessity, I appeal to the theory's primary normative commitment—to lift socially imposed oppression and to create a society in which people relate to each other as equals. I argue that, in transitioning from a society in which socially imposed oppression is present to one where it is not, a basic income that is not tied to any work-related requirements can be seen as a necessary measure.

The paper is structured as follows.[1] [1] In Section I, I outline UBI and the objection against unconditionality. In Section II, I outline Elizabeth Anderson's theory of democratic equality and make the case for UBI's permissibility within it. In Section III, I make the case for UBI as a necessary measure in bringing about democratic equality. I close with a summary of the discussion.

1. UBI and Unconditionality

A universal basic income's core features are that it is paid in cash, on a regular basis, to individuals, without any requirements related to a person's level of income and wealth, or employment status (Van Parijs 2004, 8–9). This paper focuses on the absence of work-related requirements. This means that a universal basic income is not conditional upon current or previous employment, nor is it tied to one's willingness to work (Van Parijs 2004, 6). So when it comes to being eligible for the grant it does not matter whether one is currently employed, searching for work, a stay-at-home parent, or an unemployed surfer. This creates the possibility for some people who are able, yet unwilling to work, to live off the productive efforts of others. Such an outcome violates a principle of reciprocity, underlying many theories of egalitarian justice, Anderson's democratic equality included.[2][2] According to this principle, people owe their society a productive contribution in return for the benefits they receive from the collective efforts of their fellow citizens. A UBI, the criticism goes, would allow some people to benefit from society's collective efforts without contributing anything in return. Because of this, the absence of work-related requirements has been the most contested theoretical component of the proposal (Van Parijs and Vanderborght 2019, 99).

Despite having the same core features, proposals for UBI can vary in the amount of the grant, the source of financing, the recipients, and the implications for other forms of public spending.[3][3] Because of this, it is important to outline the features of the proposal I will consider here. This should block complications ensuing from different variations of the proposal, keeping the discussion as focused as possible on the absence of work-related requirements.

Firstly, I work with the assumption that the provision of a UBI is feasible, without discussing whether and how a UBI scheme could be financed. Regarding the size of the grant—I consider a level just sufficient to cover a person's basic sustenance needs. This includes food, shelter, and clothing, and assumes that all people could have these needs met with the same amount of money.[4][4] Additionally, I am considering UBI as a complement, and not a substitute to other social benefits, such as healthcare and education.[5] Furthermore, I work with a closed society, which has the institutions needed to implement a UBI, and where no migration goes on.[5][6] One detail about the society in question I would like to make explicit, as it is crucial to my argument later on, is the presence of workers who face poor working conditions and below-subsistence pay. This is not a farfetched assumption to make, as such workers are present, to varying degrees, in all economies worldwide (Keeley 2015, 3; Kühn et al. 2019, 6).

Having described UBI and set out its parameters, I turn to Elizabeth Anderson's theory of democratic equality. She states that a cash grant, not conditional upon work-related requirements, is not acceptable under her theory. Contrary to this, I will argue that it is not only permissible under her theory but can further be defended as a necessary measure in bringing about democratic equality.

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1 Throughout this paper I will use the term unconditional to refer to the absence of work-conditionality, for the sake of being concise.

2 For an overview of the reciprocity objection to UBI, see "Part III: Reciprocity and Exploitation." in Widerquist et al. (2013, 79–141).

3 For an overview of the different features of a UBI proposal and their respective implications, see Bidadanure (2019, 485–486).

4 This is assumption is highly unrealistic, but necessary to make for simplicity's sake in the current discussion.

5 Doing away with all other forms of social spending, especially when the grant is set at a minimal amount, creates the risk of making some people even worse off than they were in the absence of a UBI. The reason being an inability to pay for such services on one's own.

6 The last point is to avoid discussions on how citizenship is to be determined and what the effects of a UBI on non-citizens would be.

2. Democratic Equality and Unconditionality

Elizabeth Anderson's theory of democratic equality emerges from a critique of the distributive paradigm, which she labels luck egalitarianism (1999). A guiding idea within luck egalitarianism is that we should compensate people for accidents of so-called brute luck. These are unchosen circumstances which can significantly affect one's prospects in life. Examples include "being born with poor native endowments, bad parents, and disagreeable personalities, [and] suffering from accidents and illness" (288). What does not warrant compensation are the products of one's voluntary actions, also called instances of option luck. To grasp the difference between the two: consider getting in a car accident because one's car is struck by lightning versus getting in a car accident because one chose to drive while drunk. The former, an instance of brute luck, is the product of unforeseen circumstances the agent could not have prevented. The latter, (arguably) an instance of option luck, is the product of one's reckless actions.

Under luck egalitarianism, compensating people for the outcomes they are not responsible for and holding them accountable for the ones they are responsible for is meant to express equal respect and concern for all (295). For Anderson, however, the means of luck egalitarianism do not achieve this aim. According to her, refusing to assist the victims of option luck because they brought the negative outcome upon themselves fails to treat them with respect and concern. Additionally, the rationale for assisting the victims of brute luck—that they got the short end of the stick in life—expresses disrespect for them.

With her critique of luck egalitarianism laid out, Anderson concludes that "there must be a better way to conceive of the point of equality" (312). She suggests this better way can be found by looking into the causes championed by egalitarian political movements and the systems they have opposed. Namely, systems of hierarchy and oppression where people were ranked as superior or inferior based on some predetermined markers, such as race, social class, or gender. The problematic inequalities there were not in the distribution of goods but in the relations between people, with some standing as superior and others as inferior. This inequality of social relations is what brought about and was used to justify distributional inequalities "of freedoms, resources, and welfare" (312).

According to Anderson, what egalitarian political movements aim to achieve against this background is to "assert the equal moral worth of persons" (312). Which is something not determined by and holds irrespective of one's native endowments, family background, and other life circumstances.[7] The twofold aim of egalitarianism here is to end socially imposed oppression and to establish a social order in which people live in relations of equality (313). Ending oppression means putting an end to "forms of social relationship by which some people dominate, exploit, marginalize, demean, and inflict violence upon others" (313). Establishing relational equality means that "people seek to live together in a democratic community, as opposed to a hierarchical one" (313).[8]

These two aims—ending all forms of socially imposed oppression and ensuring that all members of a community stand in a relation of equality to one another—form the basis of Anderson's democratic equality (288). Three defining features set it out as a distinct theory (313–315). Its ultimate aim is to end socially created oppression; it is a relational theory; and it mandates that redistribution be carried out in a way that shows equal respect for all. Under this view, equality is measured not in terms of the possession of goods or attainment of well-being, but in terms of the relationships between people within a community. Equality between two people exists when both recognize the importance of acting in ways acceptable to the other and when both approach each other by engaging in consultation, reciprocation, and recognition. The

7 Note the contrast with luck egalitarianism here. There, calls for redistribution are based precisely on these contingencies of life.

8 Anderson defines democracy as "collective self-determination by means of open discussion among equals, in accordance with rules acceptable to all" (1999, 313).

redistribution of goods is seen as instrumental to relational equality. Even though it might be needed to achieve equal standing among citizens, the fundamental concern is the relationships within which distributions occur, and not the possession of goods itself. What is more, the proper driver of redistribution is a recognition of people's standing as equals, and not as inferiors. When carried out, it must not require people to demean themselves.[9] For Anderson, equality has been achieved in a community once its members are not subordinate to others as a consequence of being marginalized, dominated, and exploited. It is then that all can freely participate in a society's social, economic, and political life.

For Anderson "a person enjoys more freedom the greater the range of effectively accessible, significantly different opportunities she has for functioning or leading her life in ways she values most" (316).[710] With this conception of freedom in mind, a baseline requirement for democratic equality is that a society must provide its members with access to the means necessary for human functioning. This includes being nourished, housed, and clothed (317–18).[811] Crucial to note is that what is ensured is not unconditional provision itself. Instead, what is ensured is *access* to the necessary means for obtaining given functionings. Thus, Anderson holds that for those able to work and with access to work the attainment of the above-outlined functionings is contingent upon participation in society's productive system (321, 328).[912]

It is here that the permissibility of an unconditionally provided basic income under democratic equality comes into question. As mentioned in Section I, the absence of work-related requirements makes it possible for those who are able but unwilling to work to nonetheless have their basic needs met. This clearly goes against Anderson's requirement for participation in society's productive system. What is more, Anderson herself is explicitly critical of the proposal for a guaranteed income, stating that it "effectively indulges the tastes of the lazy and irresponsible at the expense of others who need assistance" (299). This seems to give a clear-cut case against an unconditionally provided basic income under democratic equality. Thus, under democratic equality surfers should *not* be fed.

However, I think that such a conclusion is rushed. Anderson's view on the matter is not consistent throughout her work. By considering other statements of hers, we can see a tension in her stance on unconditional support. In the same paper as the one cited above Anderson states that even if people decide to act recklessly or irresponsibly, under democratic equality they remain entitled to having their basic needs met (326–328). By calling Malibu surfers "lazy and irresponsible" (299), Anderson implies that a refusal to work counts as irresponsible behaviour. Hence, if a refusal to work (when one is able to do so) amounts to irresponsible behaviour and if under democratic equality the irresponsible should still have their basic needs met, then an unconditional, subsistence-level basic income appears to be permissible under her theory. What is more, in a separate paper on welfare benefits and work-conditionality Anderson states: "For the few who refuse to cooperate, although they can reasonably be expected to engage in paid work, I would oppose a complete cut-off of benefits" (Anderson 2004, 254). She adds that the level of benefits for those who refuse to work should be sufficient to provide for health care, housing, and adequate nutrition. From here I conclude that for Anderson, even if people are able to provide for themselves but refuse to do so, they could still receive assistance, sufficient to cover their basic needs. With Anderson's statements in mind, it follows

9 One might wonder what it means to demean oneself in this context. This ties to Anderson's critique of appealing to brute luck as a rationale for redistribution. She illustrates with an imaginary State Equality Board that sends out letters to people who would be entitled to some sort of redistribution because they are victims of brute luck. The letters would read: "To the stupid and untalented: Unfortunately, other people don't value what little you have to offer in the system of production. Your talents are too meagre to command much market value. Because of the misfortune that you were born so poorly endowed with talents, we productive ones will make it up to you: we'll let you share in the bounty of what we have produced with our vastly superior and highly valued abilities." (1999, 305) I thank the ESJP editors for raising this point.

10 Here Anderson draws on Amartya Sen's capability approach.

11 The set of human functionings outlined by Anderson also includes access to medical care. I exclude it from the main body of the text purposefully because, as mentioned in the Introduction, I work with the assumption that publicly funded medical care is not replaced by a UBI.

12 It is important to note that for Anderson participation in society's productive system includes both participation in the labour market and socially valuable work not performed in the market sphere, such as dependent-care. For further detail on this, see Anderson (2004, 243–256).

that a UBI would be permissible under democratic equality.[1013] To put it differently, surfers could be fed under democratic equality.

This, however, entails an internal tension for the theory. The requirement that those who can work should do so remains. At the same time, as I just argued, even if people do not contribute, we should still ensure that their basic needs are met. To resolve this, one of the two statements needs to be given up or somehow modified.

What I suggest is to revise the requirement that one's basic needs should be conditional upon being employed. To show why I think this is sound within democratic equality, in the next section I appeal to the theory's underlying normative commitment—to end socially imposed oppression and to create a society in which people relate to each other as equals (Anderson 1999, 313). I will argue that if we take this commitment to heart and if we consider the situation of oppressed workers, an unconditionally provided basic income is not only permissible, but also necessary for democratic equality to obtain.

3. The Case for UBI Under Democratic Equality

Democratic equality requires us to look at distributive issues by asking what social and distributional arrangements would lead to the establishment of a society where people relate to one another as equals (Arneson 2013). With this in mind, I would like to suggest that in assessing the provision of an unconditionally provided basic income, we need to consider two things. Firstly, whether making social assistance conditional upon being employed sustains socially imposed oppression, thereby undermining relational equality. And secondly, whether untying social assistance from one's employment status benefits those who face oppression in the presence of such conditions, thereby advancing relational equality.[1114] I will argue that the answer to both is 'yes'. That is, work-conditionality sustains socially imposed oppression and undermines relational equality. And its absence benefits those who are harmed by its presence. Because the unconditional aspect of a universal basic income unties social assistance from work-conditionality, I will conclude that it makes UBI a necessary means for bringing about democratic equality.

To address the first point—in discussing work-conditionality and welfare benefits Stuart White (2017) argues that, in order to be just, conditionality itself depends on the wider fairness of societal structures (186–187). An obligation to do one's bit ceases to hold if these are set up to one's disadvantage. He borrows the following example from Shelby (2007) to illustrate. There are people who can only attain jobs with poor conditions and below-subsistence pay because they lack the relevant skills and education. If this is due to a lack of access to training and education, then an expectation to do one's bit as part of society's collaborative effort cannot be seen as just. White adds that enforcing work obligations by making welfare conditional on employment in this context may have the effect of worsening people's disadvantage (2017, 186–187). The worst-off members of society find themselves under unfair societal structures, face poor work opportunities, and lack fallback options in the form of labour-independent sources of income. In such a context making people's subsistence conditional upon taking whatever work is available means weakening the bargaining power of the worst-off in society. And this weakening of bargaining power only worsens their already disadvantaged position. To illustrate: if a poor, unskilled person has to take on low-paying, exploitative work because no other option is open to them due to a lack of education and training and welfare assistance is conditional upon them being employed, they are faced with two options—take the job or starve. So, one layer of their disadvantage is their lack of education and training. However, work-conditionality adds a

13 Recall that, as stated in the Introduction, the level of UBI I discuss in this paper is set at an amount sufficient to cover just one's basic needs.

14 These questions can be seen as two sides of the same coin. Yet, it is important to consider them explicitly as two separate issues because they help us highlight two crucial, yet distinct, points. Both of which are relevant to the conclusion I reach. I thank the ESJP editors for asking me to clarify this point.

further layer of disadvantage to this. It essentially forces them to take on the poor work option and deprives them of the bargaining power that would come with being able to withhold their labour.

Moving onto the second point of whether the absence of work-conditionality benefits those who are harmed by its presence. The discussion so far has only covered the negative side of unconditionality—that it opens the door to violations of reciprocity. However, there are also benefits to it. Related to the point above, untangling the coverage of basic needs from participation in the labour market is beneficial for the worst-off workers in society. The reason being that their survival no longer hinges on taking any available job, irrespective of the conditions and pay. This creates a third option for the workers mentioned above—that of withholding their labour power while being able to cover their basic needs. Van Parijs (2004) argues that the absence of work-conditionality would give the most vulnerable workers in society the necessary financial security to refuse jobs with exploitative and degrading conditions, to pursue job training, or to take on work in which they find intrinsic value (16). White (2006) argues that an added benefit of the absence of work-related requirements is that workers' ability to turn down low-paid, poor-quality work would exert pressure on employers to improve pay and work conditions (6).[1215]

I have argued that work-conditionality further reinforces socially imposed oppression and that its absence benefits those who are harmed by its presence. Hence, I conclude that the absence of work-related requirements makes UBI a necessary measure for bringing about democratic equality. An objection arises that some (think surfers) might still refuse to work, even in the presence of favourable work opportunities, and just free-ride on the productive efforts of others. Such behaviour clashes with the principle mentioned in Section II of approaching others by engaging in mutual consultation, reciprocation, and recognition and would therefore undermine relational equality. Should this risk lead us to rule against UBI under democratic equality? Given the benefits in terms of reducing oppression outlined above, I argue that it should not. In her critique of luck-egalitarian theories, Anderson points out that justice should not occupy itself with "beach bums" (Anderson 1999, 288). What she means is that egalitarian justice should be concerned not with trivial issues but with the claims of those who face oppression and suffer from inequalities brought about by "race, gender, caste and class" (288). With Anderson's stance in mind, I would like to argue that our focus should not be on surfers. That is, it should not be on the few who might free-ride the wave of an unconditional cash grant. Instead, in assessing the absence of work-related requirements under democratic equality, our focus should be on the oppressed groups who would benefit from it. In this case these are the workers who face exploitative working conditions and poverty wages and who rely on conditional welfare benefits to have even their basic needs met. As I have tried to show above, the absence of work-related requirements would benefit this group. For a theory which is ultimately concerned with improving the lot of the least-advantaged members of society and distances itself from trivial issues, surfers should not matter.

But how can we be sure that, as I say above, 'only a few' will free-ride? Imagine that in the presence of a UBI everyone stops working and just lives off the grant. This would lead to societal collapse. We depend on others' work to obtain the goods and services which make our day-to-day possible. What is more, if no one works, there would be no way to finance a UBI. Surely, the possibility of UBI bringing about such a doomsday scenario can be seen as a decisive argument against the grant. However, the extent to which this is likely to occur is an empirical matter. And a review of the literature on UBI interventions in both developed and developing countries shows that said risk is small, with the introduction of a UBI scheme and of unconditional cash transfers leading to either no reduction or a minor reduction in labour supply (Gentilini et al. 2020; Marinescu 2018). I take this to address the worry that free-riding would be excessive, as it appears that, when implemented, a UBI does not lead to such outcomes. In the case I am discussing this worry is

15 Adding support to the normative claim here is empirical evidence. Namely, a review of unconditional cash transfer programs, which reports outcomes consistent with the above-listed claims (Gentilini et al. 2020, 108–109).

further mitigated by the size of the grant, which only covers one's basic needs. If people would like to enjoy goods beyond the bare minimum needed for survival, then they would still need to work.

Conclusion

When outlining her theory of democratic equality, Elizabeth Anderson expresses a stance against UBI. The reason being that the unconditional provision of a basic income, one that is not tied to any work-related requirements, "effectively indulges the tastes of the lazy and irresponsible" (299). My aim in this paper has been twofold. I have argued that the absence of work-related requirements makes universal basic income not only *permissible* but also *necessary* under Anderson's theory. To make the case for UBI being permissible under democratic equality, I highlighted passages by Anderson which suggest that her conception of justice actually allows for an unconditionally provided basic income. On necessity, I appealed to the theory's primary normative commitment—to lift socially imposed oppression and to create a society in which people relate to each other as equals. I have argued that, in transitioning from a society in which socially imposed oppression is present to one where it is not, a basic income that is not tied to any work-related requirements can be seen as a necessary measure. Because firstly, making the means necessary for one's subsistence conditional upon being employed weakens the bargaining power of the worst-off workers, further reinforcing oppression in a context where the underlying system is marked by injustice. And secondly, because the absence of work-conditionality grants better opportunities and increased bargaining power to society's worst-off.

It is important to highlight that I am in no way claiming that UBI, on its own, is sufficient for achieving democratic equality. My claim in this paper is that one of its aspects—the absence of work-conditionality—would make UBI a permissible and necessary intervention in advancing democratic equality. Nor am I saying that UBI would be *fully* justifiable, in all of its aspects under Anderson's theory. For a claim of full justifiability to hold, one would have to consider how the other aspects of the proposal—such as the absence of a means test, the fact that it is granted to individuals and not households, and the fact that the same amount is given to all—square with democratic equality. These caveats, however, do not take away from the strength of my conclusion. Namely that, contrary to Anderson's expressed stance, an unconditionally provided basic income is not only permissible under her theory, but it is also a necessary measure to achieve democratic equality in a context where some workers face socially imposed oppression.

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Evaluating Alexandrova on Nagel*: Should Scientists Eliminate Appraisal Judgements in order to Establish Value-free Science?*

David Holroyd

Disagreement about the proper role of values is central to the philosophy of both human and natural sciences, especially when discussing scientific objectivity. This term is contested, but a popular view identifies scientific objectivity as the ideal of a value-free science where non-epistemic values play no significant role when determining scientific knowledge. This definition appeals to a helpful distinction frequently drawn in the literature between epistemic and non-epistemic values.

Epistemic values refer to values that constitute grounds for choosing one scientific theory over another (Malecka 2021). They include the values of simplicity, explanatory power, coherence, predictive accuracy, and generality. They are contrasted with moral, prudential, political, and aesthetic non-epistemic values. Thus, according to the value-free ideal, the justification for scientific conclusions should only appeal to epistemic values, lest scientific objectivity be undermined.

This is the context in which Anna Alexandrova situates her chapter titled '*Can the Science of Well-Being Be Objective?*', written as part of her 2017 book '*A Philosophy for the Science of Well-Being*'. It should be noted that Alexandrova's book has stimulated important debate amongst philosophers of science, and not just those concerned with studies of well-being. Her work is now rightly accepted as a worthwhile read for newcomers to the field. In chapter 4 of the book, she argues in favour of the view that a science of well-being can be objective despite the presence of non-epistemic values.[131] Central to her account is the concept of a 'mixed claim', which she defines as a scientific claim about a correlation or causal relationship that mixes both an empirical and normative judgement. For example, an economic researcher's conclusion that *Higher income increases welfare* is a mixed claim. This is because it involves an empirical judgement (that higher income increases welfare) and a normative one (of what is meant by the term 'welfare'). This normative judgement is contentious because 'welfare' is a thick concept with its meaning loaded with both descriptive and evaluative content. The term could be understood as the satisfaction of one's preferences, one's feelings of happiness, or the attainment of various external goods necessary for the good life even if the person in question does not desire them. Any particular definition presupposes a non-epistemic value of what it means to fare well, whether it be moral, prudential, or political. Thus, the economist's choice of what she means by the term 'welfare' necessarily appeals to her non-epistemic values, and so violates the value-freedom of her conclusion. There are numerous thick concepts employed across science: within well-being research Alexandrova identifies 'efficiency', 'rape', 'spousal abuse', 'unemployment', 'inflation', 'aggression', and 'health' just to name a few. Consequently, the use of these terms will give rise to mixed claims that prevent science from being value-free.

Beyond violating public beliefs in value-free science, Alexandrova draws attention to two further concerns about mixed claims: scientific inattention when scientists ignore the non-epistemic values that underlie their research; and imposition when this normativity affects the lives of those with reasons to reject these non-epistemic values. Despite this, Alexandrova argues that mixed claims should not be

1 Fortunately for the purpose of this paper, Alexandrova's discussion in this chapter is not overly embedded in the other arguments from her book. Therefore, I shall consider this chapter independently.

eliminated from science by challenging an argument presented by Ernest Nagel in his 1961 book '*The Structure of Science*'. The core of this paper will assess Alexandrova's rejection of Nagel's argument against appraisal judgements in science.

In a section titled '*On the Value-Oriented Bias of Social Inquiry*', Nagel discusses whether the social sciences can, in principle, be value-free. There are different ways that science might be value-laden, and Nagel draws an important distinction between 'appraisal judgements' and 'estimation judgements'.[142] In the case of mixed claims, appraisals endorse an ideal definition of a thick concept and judge whether phenomena meet this definition. So the economist takes an active stance on what 'welfare' means, and then judges whether increased income affects welfare under this conception. Thus, she would conclude *Higher income increases welfare*. In contrast, estimations merely judge the extent to which empirical phenomena exhibit the features characteristic of a particular thick concept's definition. Our economist would instead conclude that *If welfare is defined as X, then higher income increases welfare*, where X stands for her particular conception of welfare. Estimation judgements, therefore, only assess whether a particular criteria of a thick concept has been met. Importantly, Nagel argues that it is possible for natural and human scientists to make estimation judgements without offering their appraisals, and this principle could be used to establish value-free science. For sake of clarity, this principle can be formulated into what I shall call 'Nagel's Proposal'.

Nagel's Proposal: Scientists should convert appraisal judgements into estimation judgements.

Peters (2020) rightly notes that Nagel's chapter does not explicitly claim that converting appraisals into estimations is something that scientists *should* do. Instead, Nagel actually states that it is something scientists *could* do to achieve value-freedom. However, given that Nagel later defines the desirable trait of scientific objectivity as "value-free and unbiased" (Nagel 1961: 502) science, I contend that it is fair to formulate his proposal normatively, which is how Alexandrova understands it. Since mixed claims are reasonably appraisal judgements on Nagel's account, his proposal recommends the elimination of mixed claims from science. This would be achieved by converting regular causal or correlation claims into conditional statements. *Higher income increases welfare* then becomes *If welfare is defined as X, then higher income increases welfare*. In her new estimation judgement, our economist does not commit herself to the truth of the antecedent that X is the only or best definition of welfare. She merely asserts a conclusion of what other phenomena relate to welfare, if welfare were to be defined as X.

Contrary to Nagel, Alexandrova argues that scientists should refrain from eliminating appraisal judgements because this cannot achieve value-free science. Thus, we can characterise the distinction between the authors as follows:

	Should scientists convert appraisals into estimations?	**Would the use of estimation judgements make science value-free?**
Nagel	Convert	Value-free
Alexandrova	Do not convert	Value-laden
This paper	Convert	Value-laden

I argue that Alexandrova's account does not properly distinguish the separate Nagelian claims: first, that scientists should convert appraisals into estimation judgements; and second, that doing so would make

2 Nagel refers to estimation judgements as 'characterising value judgements'. However, I shall stick with Alexandrova's own terminology within this paper.

science value-free. This is to the detriment of her chapter. To show why, in the following sections I defend what I consider to be a stronger account that recognises the benefits of Nagel's Proposal while also asserting that science remains value-laden. By doing so, I hope to clearly distinguish the two philosophical debates.

2.

Argument (1): Scientists Should Eliminate Appraisal Judgements

My argument here is simple. Converting appraisal judgements into estimation judgements results in epistemic benefits for science. If so, then scientists should eliminate appraisals in favour of estimation judgements. This provides the sufficient grounds to accept Nagel's Proposal.

Allow me to defend this argument. For the first premise, there are two clear reasons why converting appraisals into estimations would epistemically benefit science. First, re-expressing mixed claims in a conditional format reduces the risk of misappropriating scientific conclusions. Suppose an economist wanted to establish a correlation between a person's class and their lifetime savings rate. But 'class' is an ambiguous concept because it could refer to the person's type of occupation, their family background, or their self-identification. Suppose our researcher prefers the self-identification measurement because it is easier to determine and because she wants to respect an individual's personal classification. When reporting her findings, she could either present her conclusion as an appraisal or estimation judgement:

Appraisal judgement	*There is a strong correlation between class and lifetime saving.*
Estimation judgement	*If class is understood as self-identification, then there is a strong correlation between class and lifetime savings*

Because the estimation judgement is more specific, it reduces the risk that other researchers (or even the same researcher) would confuse these findings as applying equally to other understandings of the term 'class'. Science is interactive, and research findings are often used to justify later research. Confusion would cause misappropriation if a later economist, who understands class as tied to occupation, tried to use our initial researcher's findings as a justification for his own work. But because the self-identification and occupation definitions of class are not perfectly aligned, this could result in inaccurate or false conclusions being drawn by our second economist. Appraisals require the categorical acceptance of an arguable definition, and when kept implicit blinds other scientists to the results' specificity. Thus, by clarifying that the initial research findings were established using a self-identified measure of class, our initial economist reduces the risk that her findings will be misappropriated later.

In addition to the above, estimation judgements expose further research opportunities for scientists to explore. After formulating her conclusion as an estimation, our economist could then test whether a similar correlation holds using occupational or family-background measures of class. By not asserting that 'class' is adequately captured by her initial results, further research is prompted to test whether the findings apply to other definitions of class. Not only does this help rule out misappropriation (as per the above), but discovering how alternative definitions of class correlate more or less with lifetime savings should provide insight into why a person's class correlates with their lifetime savings in the first place. If our economist finds that occupational class has a stronger correlation than what was found in her initial findings, for example, then it might suggest that the relationship is more likely to be explained by factors tied to a person's type of employment and workplace environment rather than self-classification or experience during one's formative years. Thus, estimation judgements invite further research that can offer more scientific clarity on the factors explaining correlations and causal relationships.

Consequently, converting appraisals into estimation claims would benefit science epistemically.[153] The aim of science is to expand human knowledge, so scientists should adopt practices that offer epistemic benefits. This justifies the second premise of the argument, and so our conclusion in favour of Nagel's Proposal follows.

Objection (1a): Discrediting Normative Knowledge within Science

To strengthen my argument for Nagel's Proposal, I shall consider two objections that Alexandrova could raise. These objections are not explicit in Alexandrova's own work, since her chapter conflates the rejection of Nagel's Proposal with rejecting the claim that it results in value-free science – a matter I return to in section IV. In her chapter she offers only two objections that actually confront Nagel's Proposal, and only one of these has any argumentative substance.[164] This argument is drawn from her claim that Nagel's Proposal "ignores or devalues scientists' knowledge about values" (Alexandrova 2017, 92). According to Alexandrova, scientists are sufficiently qualified in their field to offer legitimate appraisals about what constitutes the important concepts within their research. When formulating their judgement on what should constitute a child's well-being, for example, non-scientists should incorporate the expert advice of scientists. However, by forcing scientists to reformulate their judgements as estimations rather than appraisals, Nagel's Proposal symbolically rejects the ability of scientists to offer their own views on how we should define these important terms.

On the surface this objection seems plausible, yet it can easily be challenged by arguments Alexandrova offers elsewhere in her chapter. I agree that scientists do possess normative knowledge that should not be ignored, and also that formulating research findings as estimation judgements might suggest that controversy exists over definitions when there is actually consensus. But Nagel's Proposal does not block scientists from expressing their normative knowledge. When justifying her particular choice of the 'class' estimation judgement she uses, our economist remains free to offer a normative account within her article outlining why she decided to adopt this particular definition in her research. Nagel's Proposal does not prevent scientist from voicing their normative views whatsoever: it only removes these appraisals from their research conclusions.

Moreover, Alexandrova overlooks the argument that allowing scientists to test appraisal judgements risks cases of imposition, a danger which she herself is especially keen to avoid. Imposition arises when those being studied can legitimately reject the scientist's appraisal choice. Suppose a community believes that an individual's welfare is determined by the satisfaction of his or her preferences. If a researcher decided to measure welfare within the community by recording the level of actual enjoyment experienced rather than preferences satisfied, then this imposes a hedonistic definition of welfare that the community itself would reject. To avoid imposition, the normative knowledge of scientists should be incorporated as part of an inclusive and accountable procedure determining which estimation judgements scientists pursue in their research. Such a procedure might reflect Alexandrova's own sketch later in her chapter, one which involves scientists, philosophers, policymakers, and a sample of the public. This procedure could be relied on to ensure that scientists' normative knowledge is not devalued, and at the same time mitigate any risks of imposition. Thus, Alexandrova's objection here seems opposed to the other arguments she presents in her chapter: it cannot be used to reject Nagel's Proposal.

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3 There may be further non-epistemic advantages to a science that applies Nagel's Proposal. By establishing the value-laden nature of definition-choice, this justifies a greater role for accountable and inclusive procedures in determining science's value-laden choices.

4 The first of her objections is presented as (1a). The second is alluded to in her comment that Nagel's Proposal would push the decision involving non-epistemic values back to an "arguably less appropriate stage" (Alexandrova 2017, 90). However, she offers no justification for this passing comment. Since I lack the grounds to fairly reformulate this claim into a proper objection, I have decided not to consider it in the main body of this paper.

Objection (1b): Impossible to Eliminate All Appraisals

The second objection I will consider is raised by Ludwig (2016). According to this argument, it is impossible for researchers to eliminate all appraisals within their research due to the interconnected nature of our thick concepts. Suppose a sociologist wants to measure how a person's religiosity affects their number of friends. According to Nagel's Proposal, they would have to clearly specify what definition of 'religiosity' and 'friend' their research assumes. But this creates a regress problem, because both definitions rely on further ambiguities that are impossible to define without making other appraisals, and so on. Indeed, there is no shortage of contested definitions in philosophy.[175] Thus, if scientists must eliminate all appraisals from their research, then Nagel's Proposal would effectively prevent scientists from offering any conclusions at all.

Whilst this objection is interesting, it does not pose a serious risk to applying Nagel's Proposal. The epistemic benefits justifying Argument (1) derive from the use of estimation claims when stating overall research findings. Because of this, there remains a strong case for eliminating the appraisals that scientists make within their central hypotheses. It may be true that some appraisals will always remain within a scientific paper, but this does not reject an argument in favour of eliminating appraisal judgements when and where possible. Analogously, failure to discourage all instances of burglary does not provide good reason against any laws criminalising theft. Nagel (1961: 494-495) himself acknowledges that practicality dictates that some appraisals may remain within scientific research. Indeed, it might be useful to do so when there is universal consensus on what a scientific term means. His arguments instead apply to cases where converting appraisals into estimations is both possible and sensible. So the objection misses its mark.

This may indeed be an interesting problem for philosophers to consider, but I believe that the threat this objection poses to science is overstated. Many scientific definitions are adequately self-contained, and even when they are not scientists are free to work with philosophers to help clarify the meaning of their concepts. Incorporating multiple estimation judgements within a scientific conclusion is entirely feasible as well (e.g. *If 'religiosity' is classified as X, and 'friendship' classified as Y, then religiosity's effect on friendship is Z*). Thus, the objection fails to significantly challenge the justification to convert appraisal judgements into estimation judgements when possible, especially in cases when there exists disagreement over the meaning of key scientific terms used. Nagel's Proposal remains standing.

3.

Argument (2): Science is Value-Laden

Now we turn to the second philosophical problem to address: is Nagel correct that non-epistemic values can be excluded from science? I argue that Nagel's Proposal does not eliminate these values from science, and in doing so I defend the account offered by Alexandrova in her chapter. In short, my argument is that forming estimation judgements necessarily involves non-epistemic values. If so, then scientific conclusions are based on non-epistemic values too, and science is not value-free.

How so? Because deciding which estimation judgement a scientists should adopt in their research is itself a decision involving non-epistemic values. Epistemic values, by themselves, cannot determine which estimation claims we should prefer. Consider our economist correlating class with lifetime savings, who chooses the self-identification measure of class because of her prudential and ethical concerns. There is continued disagreement among political sociologists over how class should be defined; our economist lacks the epistemic grounds to prefer any one definition outright. So even if she phrased her conclusion as an

5 This argument reflects earlier appeals to a 'Hermeneutic Circle' as a key distinction between the natural and social sciences (Taylor, 1994). Other authors are right to note that this problem affects both types of science (Martin, 1994).

estimation judgement, her choice of *this* estimation necessarily appeals to her particular non-epistemic values for justification, namely the pragmatic ease of measurement and the normative grounds for preferring self-classification. Rather than eliminate non-epistemic values, Nagel's Proposal just pushes them one step back to the question of which non-epistemic standards one should use when deciding on estimation judgements.

Could our economist rely on epistemic values alone when making her choice? Perhaps she could just defer to common folk theories of definitions instead? It seems not: there remains wide disagreement over non-epistemic values within – let alone between – communities. And the decision to trust in folk understanding is again normative, however this 'folk' is identified. Consequently, our economist's research findings are still based on non-epistemic values. This prevents value-free science, contrary to Nagel's claim.

Objection (2a): Undermining Scientific Objectivity

I shall consider two objections to my argument. First, one might be motivated to reject the conclusion that science is value-laden because of what this implies about scientific objectivity. As is commonly believed, science may only be objective if value-free. If scientists necessarily appeal to non-epistemic values in their research, then the public's trust in science might wither (Schroeder 2019). This effect would be dangerous, especially in a time when the epistemic authority of science is already being questioned by partisan groups. Thus, we have grounds to instead deny an earlier premise from the argument in order to reject the overall conclusion that science is value laden.

In response, we should reject the narrow definition of 'objectivity' as arising *only if* science is value-free. Whilst this is a popular understanding of the term, it is neither the only nor the most sensible definition. There are other alternative renderings of 'objectivity' in the literature, but to save space I shall only address the appeal to 'procedural objectivity' as offered by Alexandrova. This form of objectivity focuses on a process of scientific inquiry that is "transparent, legitimate, and resistant to hijacking by specific individuals or groups" (Alexandrova 2017, 98). Not only has procedural objectivity become a favoured rendering of scientific objectivity within the philosophy of science literature, but importantly it does not require complete value-freedom. Science is worthy of public authority when it ensures that we have firm grounds to believe that research findings are not the product of controversial personal bias or weak inference. Thus, the presence of non-epistemic values within scientific research does not necessarily threaten procedural objectivity if these values are incorporated as part of a deliberative process. Even if procedural objectivity is not the only rendering of the term possible, objection (2a) relies on the implausible claim that value-freedom is necessary for scientific objectivity. Once we acknowledge the other challenges to value-free science from the literature beyond mixed claims (Brown 2013), we have strong grounds to dismiss the objection.

Regardless of how one defines objectivity, however, the objection is unconvincing. Even if the public's image of science were tarnished by accepting that non-epistemic values play a role in research, this does not make science value-free. Whether science is value-free or value-laden is determined by the scientific process itself, not how that process is understood by regular citizens. Since objection (2a) focuses on the role of science in society rather than the scientific process itself, I find this argument unpersuasive. This leads me to address the final and most significant objection to this paper's argument.

Objection (2b): Values are Pre-Science

This second objection is the most plausible case Nagel could offer against Alexandrova. As articulated by Peters (2020), this objection argues that science can be value-free if the choice of which estimation claims to adopt occurs outside the realm of science. The Nagelian might concede that non-epistemic values are essential when deciding on which estimation judgements our economist should prefer. However,

Alexandrova's conclusion is only correct if this decision occurs within science. The Nagelian can argue instead that this decision is made at a pre-scientific stage, regardless of whether it is the choice of scientists, philosophers, or someone else entirely. Science, on this account, is a process of reasoning that occurs only once the definitions have been agreed. Deciding on estimation judgements sets the initial definitions and hypothesis for the research. The subsequent science remains value-free.

This objection opens up an important debate on what constitutes 'science' – a debate which I cannot hope to resolve in the (increasingly-)limited space of this paper. My initial response would point to the literature on values in science to argue that there are plenty more cases of non-epistemic values arising within scientific research. Values have been shown to play a role in cases of underdetermination (Longino 1990) and epistemic risk (Rudner 1953, Douglas 2000). There are many places where non-epistemic values enter science: the formation of estimation claims represents just a minority of these cases. Thus, even if the decision of which estimation judgement to use is relegated to a pre-scientific stage, it does not entail that science can be value-free.

But this response would not convince everyone. Perhaps the Nagelian claims that *all* these other value-laden decisions occur at a stage beyond science. So a better reply to objection (2b) directly challenges this narrow understanding of what constitutes 'science'. It is a shame that Alexandrova is not more explicit in what she means by the term. Defining science is a contentious and somewhat overwhelming matter, but for the purpose of this paper I argue that it means an epistemic institution encompassing the systemic study of the structure and activity of the natural and human world through observation and experiment. Using this definition, I argue that decisions concerning which estimation judgement to study does occur within science. Scientists themselves choose which questions to test, and such decisions are essential to their scientific work. To study something means to interact with it to gain understanding, and developing research questions by formulating estimation judgements is essential to this interaction. The value-laden decision of which estimation judgements to study is therefore an essential part of this interactive process as well, and so should be recognised as occurring within science.

Conversely, the Nagelian conception severs us from regular understandings of the term 'science'. It does so by relegating the choice of research question, balancing of evidence, the assertion of conclusions, and the publication of results as all beyond the narrow confines of science. The Nagelian would be forced to accept that scientists deal with value-laden choices in their regular activities, but that this is somehow in a role other than being a scientist. But this is an odd conclusion to reach: currently, there does not appear to be anyone making these choices other than scientists. If science requires one to make a number of value-laden decisions tied to one's work *as a scientist*, why not accept that science includes such value-laden choices? Resolving these challenges remains a problem for the Nagelian definition of science, weakening objection (2b). A broader understanding of 'science' should be preferred.

4.

The time has come to combine the conclusions from previous sections and reveal my overall argument. As shown in II, Alexandrova's case against Nagel's Proposal is unconvincing: scientists have good grounds to eliminate mixed claims by converting appraisals into estimation judgements when possible. While definitions for all thick concepts do not have to be fully self-contained within scientific work, adopting a principle where scientists ensure that their central hypotheses are framed as estimation claims would result in epistemic benefits. This is especially important when there exists disagreement over the meaning of the key terms used.

Combining this conclusion with the arguments in III, we see that Alexandrova's account fails to recognise the important distinction between Nagel's Proposal (as formulated in this paper) and the claim

that this establishes a value-free science. By focusing her argument against the latter, Alexandrova cannot effectively reject the former. Defending an account that relies on the distinction between these two claims, I have revealed an alternative position she overlooks in her chapter: scientists should convert their appraisal judgements into estimation judgements, even if science remains laden with non-epistemic value.

This position, I argue, would strengthen Alexandrova's own account by further reducing the risk of scientific inattention to non-epistemic values. To add to this, the procedural measures she outlines against the danger of imposition could also be incorporated when deciding on which estimation claims scientists should adopt in their research. To achieve procedural objectivity, we must ensure that scientific value-choices reflect a deliberation involving a broad arrange of parties, including scientists, philosophers, policymakers, and the public. Thus, if we combine Nagel's Proposal with Alexandrova's recommendations for procedural objectivity within science, we provide stronger protections against Alexandrova's two concerns about scientific normativity: inattention and imposition. Misunderstanding the nuance that can be drawn within Nagel's position, Alexandrova's oversight represents a notable shortcoming within an otherwise interesting and important chapter of her book.

But what broader conclusions can be drawn for scientists themselves? There is more to offer than a mere commentary on Alexandrova's chapter. Indeed, my defence of Nagel's Proposal indicates how philosophers can help scientists in their research. Scientists, I have argued, should adopt a new practice of formulating their conclusions as conditional statements tied to the particular definitions assumed for key research terms. To navigate the contentious or complicated definitions, these scientists should turn to philosophers for guidance on how to formulate their estimation claims precisely. Offering advice on precise definition is a service that analytical philosophers are already well-trained to provide (the stereotype of philosophers as picky over definitions still retains a degree of truth). In addition to this, philosophers can help scientists defend their choice of estimation claims according to the scientist's own non-epistemic values. Whether these are moral, political, prudential, aesthetic, or otherwise, philosophers have considerably more experience than scientists in constructing arguments to defend claims made according to non-epistemic values. This is another area where the involvement of philosophers can greatly benefit the scientist in their work, as well as establish a procedurally objective science open to reasonable disputes about non-epistemic values.

Thus, I conclude my paper on a far more ambitious claim: philosophers can and should play an active role in scientific research. They should help scientists formulate their research questions as precise estimation judgements, and they should support scientists when defending the research choices made according to their non-epistemic values. Mixed claims, I assert, should be addressed with a mix of expertise: that of philosophers and scientists combined.

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De Exploitatie van Ons Brein: *De Gevolgen van het Gebrek aan Lichamelijkheid, Situationaliteit en Contextualiteit in het Neurowetenschappelijke Perspectief*

Noortje Hermans

In 2019 verscheen de roman *Serotonine* van de Franse schrijver Michel Houellebecq (1956). De titel van de roman is verwant aan de conditie waar het hoofdpersonage aan lijdt. De aanname, hoewel inmiddels medisch ietwat omstreden, is namelijk dat een van de fysiologische kenmerken van een depressie een tekort aan serotonine is, een neurotransmitter verantwoordelijk voor verschillende vormen van stimulatie.

Depressie is een conditie waarbij de ervaring haar vanzelfsprekendheid verliest. Er ontstaat een verstoorde verhouding met de ervaring van onszelf, ons zelfbeeld en wereldbeeld. De manier waarop wetenschap bedreven wordt, speelt in deze beeldvorming een cruciale rol. Wie wij als menssoort en als individueel mens zijn wordt in toenemende mate begrepen aan de hand van fysiologische kenmerken van het brein. Onze reductionistische verhouding tot depressie is toonaangevend voor deze ontwikkeling. Het is hierdoor dat ik in Houellebecqs *Serotonine* een gevatte illustratie zie voorgesteld van deze onderlinge verhoudingen. Waar het in *Serotonine* hoofdzakelijk om draait, is het op de spits drijven van wetenschap als ontologie. Het presenteert een wereld waarin alleen wetenschap nog houvast biedt. Uit dit uitputten van een wetenschappelijke ontologie blijkt een kritiek op de maatschappelijke achtergrond waartegen de roman gesitueerd is, een achtergrond die grotendeels wordt bepaald door de hedendaagse manier waarop wetenschap wordt bedreven.

In deze tekst zal ik in drie delen beargumenteren waarom het 'ver(neuro)wetenschappelijken' van de ervaring een zichzelf uitputtende aangelegenheid is, en soms zelfs gevaarlijk kan worden, benaderen. Ik zal een eerste aanzet maken met Maurice Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945). Hierin geeft hij antwoord op de dominante ervaringsdiscoursen van zijn tijd, en laat hij zien dat die uiteindelijk beide een reductionistisch denken aanmoedigen. Daarna werp ik op basis van het hoofdstuk "The Need for a Critical Neuroscience," van neurowetenschapper Steven Rose, een blik op enkele vooronderstellingen die in de neurowetenschappen heersen en bepalend zijn gebleken voor de manier waarop onderzoeksresultaten geïnterpreteerd worden. Rose stelt tegenover de puur fysiologische benadering van de ervaring en het brein een co-evolutionair begrip van biologie en cultuur. Tot slot zal ik aan de hand van Catherine Malabous analyse in *What Should We Do with Our Brain?* (2008) ingaan op de rol die de historische en maatschappelijke contexten spelen in het bedrijven en begrijpen van neurowetenschap. Daarbij zal Houellebecqs roman *Serotonine* doorlopend aangehaald worden om de materie vanuit een ander perspectief te belichten.

1. Merleau-Ponty: Empirisme en Intellectualisme

Direct in het voorwoord van zijn hoofdwerk *Phenomenology of Perception* noemt Merleau-Ponty een aantal zaken die duidelijk maken in welk discours, en in reactie op welke intellectuele tegenstanders, zijn tekst tot stand is gekomen. Over zijn eigen fenomenologie schrijft hij het volgende: "it is a transcendental philosophy that suspends the affirmations of the natural attitude in order to understand them, it is also a philosophy for which the world is always "already there" prior to reflection – like an inalienable presence – and whose

entire effort is to rediscover this naïve contact with the world in order to finally raise it to a philosophical status." (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 7). Eén woord in deze regels is toonaangevend: "finally," eindelijk. Merleau-Ponty adresseert hier twee concurrerende scholen die toentertijd leidend waren op het gebied van de ervaringsleer; het empirisme enerzijds tegenover het intellectualisme anderzijds, en beschrijft de tekortkomingen van de door hen gedeelde aannames.

Onder het empirisme verstaat Merleau-Ponty elke theorie waarin het primaat ligt bij reductionistische uitleg op basis van relaties tussen externe oorzaken (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 24). Onder het intellectualisme verstaat hij elke reflectieve theorie waarin het primaat ligt bij het bewustzijn dat de eenheid van objecten en ervaring constitueert (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 34). Volgens Merleau-Ponty is dit niets anders dan het herleven van een klassiek dilemma: het pure externe tegenover het pure interne. Om te ontdekken wat ervaring werkelijk is, moet de leer van ieder van de twee scholen tot het uiterste worden gedreven om achter de vooronderstellingen de gemene grond te vinden. Hij schrijft: "Not wanting to prejudge anything, we will take objective thought literally and not ask it any questions it does not ask itself. If we are led to rediscover experience behind it, this passage will only be motivated by its own difficulties." (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 74). Dit herontdekte gebied van de ervaring noemt hij ook wel een derde dimensie, waar schijnbare tegenstellingen als activiteit en passiviteit, onafhankelijkheid en afhankelijkheid, elkaar niet langer uitsluiten. Geen puur buiten, geen puur binnen, maar een incorporatie.

Het klassieke dilemma heeft volgens Merleau-Ponty verduisterd waar het werkelijk om gaat als we de ervaring willen beschrijven: het belichaamde bewustzijn, de ambiguïteit van de verhouding tot het lichaam dat geleefd en net als andere uitgebreidheden waargenomen kan worden (Landes 2012, xxxiii). Die incorporatie vindt plaats in en door het lichaam. Het intellectualisme heeft het lichaam behandeld als een door het bewustzijn geconstrueerde eenheid terwijl het empirisme het lichaam heeft behandeld als materieel, een object wat is afgesneden van affecten en motoriek.

Voor Merleau-Ponty is ervaring niet geïsoleerd maar een verhouden tot. Hij stelt dit tegenover de empirische, wetenschappelijke benadering van de ervaring, waarbij: "Sensing, thus detached from affectivity and motricity [*motricité*], became the mere reception of a quality, and physiology believed itself capable of following, from the receptors right through to the nervous centers, the projection of the exterior world into the living being." (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 56). Het levende, ervarende lichaam is in de wetenschappelijke benadering niet langer een eigen lichaam, niet meer mijn lichaam, niet meer de expressie van een eigen en specifieke 'ik.' Het geleefde lichaam is ten koste gegaan van de ervaring als onderwerp van wetenschappelijk onderzoek.

De belichaamde ervaring waar Merleau-Ponty voor pleit heeft juist een grote rol weggelegd voor affecten en motoriek. De reden daarvoor is dat elke ervaring gemerkt wordt door perspectief: iedere ervaring vindt plaats vanuit een belichaamde positie en een bepaalde context. Normaal gesproken nemen we ons eigen lichaam in dit fenomenologische veld voor lief, en vergeten we deze wezenlijkheidsconditie. Hoewel die vanzelfsprekendheid ons in normale situaties in staat stelt de wereld in haar mogelijkheden tegemoet te treden, wordt die vanzelfsprekendheid kwalijk als we er achter willen komen hoe die ervaring tot stand komt. Dat wil zeggen, de manier waarop de empirische wetenschap zich via het derde persoonsperspectief formuleert gaat aan haar eigen perspectief voorbij. Maar Merleau-Ponty is duidelijk; in plaats van het derde persoonsperspectief in te nemen zoals gebruikelijk is in de wetenschap, doet hij een beroep op de geleefde ervaring (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 57).

Met het oog op wat Merleau-Ponty aankaart omtrent perspectief is het interessant om nader te bekijken hoe in *Serotonine* de depressieve hoofdpersoon Florent-Claude Labrouste zijn veranderde ervaring van zijn lichaam beschrijft:

> *Volgens mij ging het niet zo heel slecht met me. Er was om precies te zijn maar één punt waarop mijn geestelijke toestand me echt grote zorgen baarde, namelijk dat van de lichaamsverzorging, en zelfs simpelweg van het wassen. Het lukte me nog min of meer mijn tanden te poetsen, dat ging nog, maar de gedachte aan een douche of een bad stond me ronduit tegen, om eerlijk te zijn had ik het liefst geen lichaam meer willen hebben, het idee om een lichaam te hebben en daar aandacht en zorg aan te moeten besteden vond ik steeds ondraaglijker worden* (Houellebecq 2019, 78).

Deze passage demonstreert een duidelijke spanning met betrekking tot depressie; namelijk van een verstoring van de vanzelfsprekendheid van de verhoudingen tussen ervaring, zelf- en wereldbeeld. Binnen het kader van Merleau-Ponty lezen we hier de ambiguïteit en de onlosmakelijke verbondenheid tussen het *zijn* van een lichaam en het *hebben* van een lichaam met betrekking tot de ervaring. Labrouste heeft en is een lichaam, en dat is bepalend voor zijn ervaring. Er is, aldus Merleau-Ponty, geen puur buiten of binnen dat reflecteert op de ervaring. Terwijl Labrouste aan de ene kant zijn gesteldheid als 'niet zo heel slecht' beoordeelt, stelt hij ook vast dat zijn lichaam hem tegenstaat. Enerzijds is hij in staat zijn lichaam als intentioneel object te beschrijven, anderzijds doet hij dat vanuit zijn geaffecteerde eerste persoonsperspectief.

2. Aan de Grenzen van Neurowetenschap

De problemen die Merleau-Ponty signaleerde inzake het reductionistische begrip van de ervaring – ofwel puur extern oorzakelijk, ofwel puur intern constituerend – hebben zich desalniettemin diep genesteld in de neurowetenschap. Dat de neurowetenschap zich als dominante hedendaagse autoriteit heeft gevestigd als het gaat om ons begrip van de ervaring, is in het licht van het voorgaande dan ook opmerkelijk.

Neurowetenschapper Steven Rose maakt in zijn bijdrage aan *Critical Neuroscience* duidelijk dat er in zijn werkveld een aantal aannames ten onrechte niet ter discussie zijn gesteld (Rose 2012, 53). Hij plaatst dit in de context van de bredere verwetenschappelijking van ons mens- en zelfbeeld, waarin ook de neurowetenschappen zich steeds verder bewogen naar een naturalistisch, fysiologisch begrip van de mens, waarbij het bewustzijn (*mind*) wordt gereduceerd tot het brein. Aangezien neurowetenschap van origine bedoeld was als een medische discipline welke zich richtte op het begrijpen van hersenstructuren, kan vastgesteld worden dat ze haar streven heeft overschreden. Rose schetst de belofte van de neuro-utopie: "we are offering not just to explain the human mind and its elusive properties, from memory to consciousness, but also to provide technologies to cure brain and mind diseases and enhance human happiness; indeed to use these technologies to control and manipulate the mind." (Rose 2012, 53). Van de incorporatie van binnen en buiten, van een begrip van belichaamde ervaring die altijd zowel positioneel als situationeel is, zoals Merleau-Ponty voorstelde, blijft dan niet veel meer over. Het brein wordt naar voren gebracht als het orgaan van het bewustzijn. We begrijpen onszelf en elkaar aan de hand van het brein.

Onder aanvoering van wetenschappelijke boeken als Dick Swaabs *Wij zijn ons brein* (2010) zijn spreekwijzen als 'mijn brein denkt,' of 'mijn brein is verantwoordelijk voor' steeds gebruikelijker geworden. Maar als we hetzelfde doen met andere lichaamsdelen blijkt al snel de onvolledigheid van zulke spreekwijzen. We zullen immers nooit, zoals antropoloog Tim Ingold heeft geschreven, zeggen dat 'mijn benen lopen.' (Ingold 2000, 225-246). We hebben onze benen nodig om te lopen, maar zíj lopen niet, ík loop. Op dezelfde wijze stelt Rose dat het niet zo is dat het brein denkt, maar dat een 'ik' het brein nodig heeft om te denken (Rose 2012, 57). Wat nu wel algemeen geaccepteerd wordt binnen de neurowetenschappen, is dat het brein in verband staat met de omgeving. In tegenstelling tot Dick Swaab wil ik daarom stellen: Wij zijn *als* ons brein, niet geïsoleerd maar altijd in verhouding.

Het credo 'wij zijn ons brein' komt voort uit een medisch reductionisme in de neurowetenschap waarin correlatie en causatie met elkaar worden verward. Rose beschrijft dat de actuele neurowetenschap grotendeels wordt vertegenwoordigd door genetica en 'brain imaging,' twee technologieën die beide reductionistisch denken in de hand werken (Rose 2012, 54-55). Hij legt uit dat men in genetisch onderzoek lang heeft aangenomen dat een gen een op zichzelf staande en unitaire entiteit zou zijn. Ontwikkelingen in moleculaire biologie hebben echter aangetoond dat het tot uitdrukking komen van een gen geschiedt op een complexere manier dan voorheen werd aangenomen. Dit proces vindt immers plaats in interactie met andere genen en omgevingsfactoren. Naast genetica is er ook brain imaging, of brain mapping, waarbij er plekken in het brein gelokaliseerd en vervolgens geïdentificeerd worden met breinprocessen of bepaalde mentale staten van het bewustzijn, zoals emoties, gedachten of verlangens. Deze twee technologieën, die bovendien veelvuldig in de media onder de aandacht zijn gebracht, noemt Rose omdat ze bepalend zijn geweest voor het dominante (wetenschappelijke) mensbeeld.

In zijn tekst problematiseert Rose hoofdzakelijk het veronderstellen van correlatie. In het observeren van het samengaan van processen die plaatsvinden in het brein aan de ene kant, en mentale staten aan de andere kant, wordt een relatie verondersteld. Maar beschrijven is niet hetzelfde als begrijpen. Wat een hersenscan toont kan bijvoorbeeld op verschillende manieren geïnterpreteerd worden, en bovendien moet er een programmatische keuze worden gemaakt voor wat een beeld toont – en wat het niet toont. Als het gaat om het onderzoek naar de ervaring moeten we, in de geest van Merleau-Ponty, geen genoegen nemen met coïncidentie van breinprocessen en mentale staten. Rose concludeert met een oproep tot een kritische neurowetenschap waar afgestapt moet worden van het idee van het brein als pars pro toto. Het brein is altijd ingebed in het grotere geheel van het lichaam (Rose 2012, 57).

Deze inbedding wordt geïllustreerd in een fragment uit *Serotonine,* waarin de lichamelijke werking van het fictieve antidepressivum Captorix wordt beschreven. Waarheidsgetrouw aan de destijds nieuwe wetenschappelijke bevindingen op dit gebied, heeft dit middel tot doel de serotonineafgifte in het maag-darmslijmvlies te bevorderen door middel van exocytose (Houellebecq 2019, 8). En bovendien:

> *(...) was serotonine een hormoon dat verband hield met zelfwaardering en erkenning binnen de groep. Maar verder werd het vooral aangemaakt in de darmen en was het bij zeer veel levende wezens waargenomen, zelfs bij amoeben* (Houellebecq 2019, 80).

Door het verband te leggen tussen interne biologische processen en erkenning in groepsverband raken we aan een cruciale zaak, die ook door Rose is aangekaart. De notie van inbedding moet namelijk breder dan slechts fysiologisch, maar ook situationeel begrepen worden. Als mensen zijn we ingebed in een netwerk van geschiedenis, maatschappij en cultuur. Evolutie zou dus niet langer moeten worden begrepen als een exclusief biologische aangelegenheid, maar ook als een sociale. Dit is bepalend voor de ontwikkeling van het bewustzijn. Hoe en wat wij als menssoort zijn, is niet te reduceren tot de beschrijving van het brein. De ervaring is immers, volgens Rose, een veel wijder systeem dan het brein. Hij stelt daarom voor te spreken van een co-evolutionair proces, waar zowel biologie als cultuur bij worden inbegrepen (Rose 2012, 59).

3. Het Gekapitaliseerde Brein

Dat de ervaring in een veel wijder, open systeem dan enkel het brein bestaat beschrijft Catherine Malabou in haar boek *What Should We Do with Our Brain?* (2008). Malabou onderzoekt hoe de neurowetenschappen zich steeds meer manifesteren in de vorm van de drie-eenheid kennis-kunde-controle. De informatie over het functioneren van het brein wordt in toenemende mate ingezet om gedrag te (be)sturen. Deze controle over het brein is niet langer exclusief toebedeeld aan de medische wetenschap. Specifieker dan Rose, situeert Malabou deze ontwikeling in de onze tijdsgeest.

Vanuit Malabous situering is het interessant om een blik te werpen op de manier waarop *Serotonine* op dit vraagstuk ingaat. Het schetst een wereld die in navolging van neoliberale idealen haar ijkpunten alleen nog lijkt te vinden in de wetenschap. Op deze manier manifesteert de wetenschap zich als ontologie, een structuur die de roman bloot weet te leggen. De personages in het boek zijn op zoek naar manieren om langdurige verbintenissen aan te gaan, in plaats vankortstondige verstandhoudingen, maar de geïnternaliseerde tijdsgeest maakt van dit verlangen iets potsierlijks. Ten opzichte van Houellebecqs oeuvre is het dan ook niet moeilijk om te herkennen in welk soort wereld *Serotonine* is geschreven, namelijk die van het neoliberale kapitalisme.

Wanneer Labrouste zijn oude vriendinnen opzoekt, blijken deze personificaties, of producties, van verschillende problematische tendensen in de maatschappij die met elkaar interfereren. Zo staat de aan internet en comfort verslaafde expat Yuzu in schril contrast tot de plattelandse Claire, die alleen floreert in vaste relaties, wat in de huidige samenleving —zoals in de roman wordt beschreven— steeds moeizamer lijkt te gaan. Dit thema is te herkennen uit Houellebecqs eerdere werk: er zijn winnaars, maar veel meer verliezers van de geglobaliseerde markteconomie.

Door het wetenschappelijke mensbeeld en het kapitalisme aanvankelijk heel serieus te nemen en diens grote beloftes voor waar aan te nemen, en dit uit te werken, wordt gedemonstreerd hoezeer dat ten koste gaat van andere menselijke capaciteiten die meer afhankelijk zijn van de omgeving. Dit komt in het volgende citaat uit *Serotonine* naar voren:

> *"Zijn we gezwicht voor de illusies van individuele vrijheid, open leven, onbegrensde mogelijkheden? Dat kan, die ideeën hingen in de lucht; we hebben ze niet geformaliseerd, daar hadden we geen behoefte aan; we hebben niets anders gedaan dan ons eraan conformeren, ons erdoor laten kapotmaken; en daarna, heel lang, eronder lijden"* (Houellebecq 2019, 303).

Daarmee komen we ook bij het punt dat Malabou maakt. Ook zij wil tonen dat neoliberalistische idealen zoals 'kennis is macht' juist heel onliberale mechanismen in de hand hebben gewerkt. Een van de capaciteiten die verloren is gegaan is volgens Malabou ons besef van de plasticiteit van ons brein. In haar introductie stelt ze de volgende vraag: "*What should we do so that consciousness of the brain does not purely and simply coincide with the spirit of capitalism?*" Die vraag leidt tot de these dat de echte betekenis van plasticiteit verborgen is geraakt en er een aanhoudende tendens heerst om haar te vervangen met de ten onrechte aanverwante term flexibiliteit (Malabou 2008, 12). Met de term plasticiteit wordt in deze context bedoeld dat het brein tegelijkertijd vormgevend én vormbaar is. In het licht van wat eerder is besproken, dat de ontwikkeling van het brein en het bewustzijn begrepen kan worden als een co-evolutionair proces van biologie en cultuur, wordt Malabous stellingname nog duidelijker. Ze schrijft dat het neurale en sociale functioneren elkaar wederzijds vormgeven – daarin ziet zij de kracht van plasticiteit naar voren komen – tot op het punt dat het niet langer mogelijk is om ze van elkaar te onderscheiden (Malabou 2008, 9). Waarom we de plasticiteit van ons brein niet indachtig zijn, heeft volgens haar de volgende reden; het valt ons niet op. Ze duidt op het gegeven dat we zo bekend zijn met hoe we functioneren, dat we geen acht slaan op de onderliggende wezenlijkheidscondities – zoals Merleau-Ponty dat ook al aankaartte.

Dit weinig actieve begrip van de neurale en sociale vorming is niet zonder gevolgen. Malabou legt uit dat de vanzelfsprekendheid een passiviteit in de hand werkt. Omdat onze neoliberale omgeving er baat bij heeft om in te spelen op een mate van rigiditeit van het brein, oefent deze invloed uit op de manier waarop wij ons vormen. Vanzelfsprekendheid is immers een manier en een effect van naturaliseren. Naturaliseren is een onderwerpen aan de status quo, waarbinnen er weliswaar een zekere flexibiliteit mogelijk is, maar flexibiliteit verschilt wezenlijk van plasticiteit. Malabou haalt in dit verband Luc Boltanski en Eve Chiapello aan die in hun *The New Spirit of Capitalism* opmerken dat naturaliseren een bijzonder krachtig effect heeft in

disciplines die in hun streven naar een incorporatie van biologie en cultuur, hun representatie van de maatschappij construeren op basis van fysiologische metaforen (Malabou 2008, 10). Daarmee duidt ze op een blinde vlek in ons denken. We vergeten veelal dat we ons brein zelf vormen en denken niet na over de plasticiteit van ons brein. Vervolgens wordt het brein steeds nauwkeuriger gekapitaliseerd. Het model voor de taal en de ideeën die bij onze arbeidsorganisatie horen worden geïnternaliseerd. De plasticiteit van het brein – de vormgevende en vormbare aard – is opgegaan in de manieren waarop we arbeid organiseren, en streven naar maximale effectiviteit.

Hieronder schuilt ook een ethisch vraagstuk. Immers, als we weten dat het brein plastisch is, moeten we dan niet zorgen dat we het beschermen? Echter zijn er grote belanghebbers bij de heersende passiviteit. Zowel Houellebecqs romans als Malabou richten zich tegen de organisaties, of de bestuursvormen – namelijk het kapitalisme, of het neoliberalisme die er baat bij hebben dit systeem in stand te houden. De focus op optimaal effectief gebruik maken van het brein draagt een maatschappelijke belofte, maar daar zit een forse prijs aan. Optimaal effectief gebruik van het brein is gelijk gesteld aan het optimale leven. Wie wij zijn als mens, wat ons menselijk kapitaal is, valt niet samen met het brein. Hoe ons brein wordt gekapitaliseerd is een reducering van wie wij als mens zijn. We zijn meer dan een geïsoleerde commoditeit.

4. Conclusie

De heersende normen die richting geven aan de manier waarop hedendaagse neurowetenschap wordt bedreven, stimuleren een reductionistische manier van denken. Door het brein enkel in haar fysiologische aspecten te benaderen, worden andere invloeden gepasseerd. De reductionistische manier van denken leidt tot claims vanuit een geïsoleerd derdepersoonsperspectief – dat directief is voor de wetenschap. Onder het mom van een vermeende objectiviteit is er echter geen aandacht voor de situationele en gecontextualiseerde aard van het brein. Allereerst is het brein, zoals Merleau-Ponty's fenomenologie heeft aangetoond, ingebed in een lichaam, of wat hij noemt een belichaamde positie. Daarnaast is het lichaam op zijn beurt gesitueerd in een sociaal systeem. Rose pleit daarom voor een co-evolutionair begrip van biologie en cultuur. Tenslotte is het brein ingebed in een maatschappelijk-ideologische context. In deze context uit Malabou haar zorgen, aangezien het neoliberale kapitalisme baat heeft bij een reductionistisch concept van de weerbaarheid van het brein. Het is uiteindelijk ook deze context waarin Houellebecqs roman *Serotonine* misschien vooral toont wat we hierdoor moeten missen.

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Towards a Spinozist Conception of Hope

Zander Michaël Prinsloo

The philosophy of hope is an extensive philosophical body represented by ancient thinkers such as Hesiod to more modern thinkers like Terry Eagleton. A drastic shift in how philosophers came to evaluate hope arose during the early Enlightenment, in which there was a discernible move from the Christian and broadly providential understanding of hope towards a more critical evaluation of the nature and value of hope. However, one of the early Enlightenment's preeminent figures, Baruch de Spinoza, is seldom linked to this development. Spinoza's brief mention of hope in *Ethics* resulted in the lack of historical attention regarding the Spinozist understanding of hope. Furthermore, due to his conceptualisation of hope as a passion, Spinoza has been primarily represented as providing a pessimistic account of hope. In the paper it will be shown that Spinoza's conception of hope is more nuanced and extensive, and thus deserves greater attention since it relates to his discussions on freedom, reason and the *conatus*. The argument of the paper develops the findings of Simon Wortham who, in *Hope: The Politics of Optimism,* presents a dualistic interpretation of Spinoza's understanding of hope. The aim of the present paper is to better evaluate Spinoza's attitude and argue that he advocates for a mid-point between pessimism and optimism by virtue of his pragmatic attitude towards hope.

Within the confines of the paper Spinoza's understanding of hope as a passion and its relation to concepts such as the affects, reason, the *conatus* and freedom will be explicated. It will be argued that Spinoza presents a dualistic conception of hope, wherein hope is, on the one hand, critiqued insofar as it runs counter to reason, and on the other hand, is seen as valuable insofar as it is derived from joy. It will be argued that this dualistic approach leads to the development of two differing conceptions of hope, namely 'epistemic hope' and 'regulative hope.'

1. Spinoza on the Affects, the *Conatus* and the Passions

If one is to arrive at Spinoza's understanding of the passions, it is imperative that his notions of the affects are clearly explicated. In part III of *Ethics,* Spinoza describes the affects as states that influence the body's ability to act either through an increase or a decrease in action (*Ethics III*, D3). The affects as first described in *Ethics* seem to be dissimilar from states of mind inasmuch as they are directly related to the body's ability to act. For Spinoza, something that influences the body necessarily influences the mind, as mind and body for him are one and the same (*Ethics III*, P2S). This leads Spinoza to state that the affects of the body are the same as those of the mind.

When an affect is seen to increase the body's activity, it is called an action; when it is seen to diminish the body's ability to act, it is referred to as a passion. Spinoza relates the understanding of the affects to the epistemic distinction between adequate and inadequate ideas (*Ethics III*, P1). An idea is considered adequate when the causes of the said idea are clearly understood and are seen to emerge from the individual's nature. Therefore, adequate ideas are self-generating and allow for causality to be understood. In other words, adequate ideas relate to epistemic clarity because the agent is able to understand how certain ideas emerge from within the said agent. Inadequate ideas, in contrast, represent something incomplete because they relate to a variety of external forces that confuse the subject, leaving them unable to understand the causal connection (Nadler 2020). Inadequate ideas lack epistemic clarity because a variety of forces outside the individual impinge and cloud their understanding of the generation of ideas. Spinoza goes on to state that all passions derive from inadequate ideas. Therefore, passions leave the subject passive because they are

unable to act properly (i.e., in accordance with reason), due to a lack of sufficient understanding of causes of their ideas and thus, as stated by Spinoza, lead to a deficit of knowledge and a lack of power (*Ethics IV*, P47D).

Spinoza's understanding of the affects relates directly to an individual's ability to act. The notion of the *conatus* describes the striving and self-preservation of a given organism (Hampshire 2005, xxvii). Stuart Hampshire in *Spinoza and Spinozism* claims that for Spinoza the *conatus* or the striving for self-preservation *i*s the very essence of an individual (Hampshire 2005, xxx). According to Hampshire, Spinoza sees the *conatus* as linked to the desire for "greater power and freedom" (Hampshire 2005, xxvii). In part IV of *Ethics,* Spinoza states that virtue is defined by striving to preserve one's being and asserts that happiness can be found in such a striving (*Ethics IV*, P18S). Spinoza justifies this claim by stating that to be virtuous is to act in accordance with the laws of nature and thus he suggests that striving and actively preserving one's being is the virtuous essence of humankind (*Ethics IV*, P22).

Owing to Spinoza's understanding of the *conatus,* it is clear that his attitude towards the affects *i*s dependent on the extent to which they allow for action and the aiding of the *conatus*. Spinoza treats the passions with disdain given that they restrain action and therefore contradict the need for action implicit in the *conatus*.

For Spinoza, there are two primary passions from which all other are subsequently derived: joy and sadness. Spinoza views joy as that passion that allows the mind to reach greater perfection; conversely, sadness is that which leads the mind to lesser perfection (*Ethics III*, P11S). From this definition of joy and sadness, it is not clear why joy should be considered a passion since, if it allows for the mind to attain greater perfection, it is involved in the search for adequate ideas and thus aids the *conatus*. A further complication arises in *Ethics IV*, wherein Spinoza explicitly states that joy cannot be a passion, since we experience joy through the presence of adequate ideas (*Ethics IV*, P63D). However, from reading the text it is clear that joy is not a passion provided it does not become excessive, and that both joy and desire allow for action (*Ethics IV*, P59). Although joy can aid the striving implicit in the *conatus*, it can also lead to a variety of other troublesome passions such as hope and pride. Therefore, joy in itself is an action, but its derivatives are passions. Spinoza's treatment of sadness, on the other hand, is more definite; sadness and all the passions that derive from it impede action.

Spinoza's description of the primary passions and their derivatives illustrates his attitude towards the passions as confused ideas that, in the words of Lilli Alanen, are viewed as "obstacles to true knowledge" (Alanen 2018, 315). The passions, as based on inadequate ideas, do not prompt comprehension and reasonable outlooks, but instead lead to confusion. For Spinoza, inadequate ideas do not allow for action inasmuch as the subject is unaware of the true causes as long as they are guided by the passions. For Spinoza, an understanding of the true causes is the prerequisite for action. Therefore, the passions go against the very essence of human nature, namely the *conatus*.

Spinoza further evaluates the passions by way of illustrating their relation to freedom. According to Spinoza, people believe themselves to be free because they are conscious of their desires and passions. In other words, people see themselves as free because they know what they want (*Ethics III*, P2S2). However, freedom according to Spinoza can only arise once an individual is aware of the causes of their actions and lives in accordance with reason (i.e., true knowledge and adequate ideas). Although an individual may be aware of their desires as they are driven by passions, they do not understand the reason or cause for their desires, and therefore cannot be considered truly free. Spinoza contrasts the passions with the search for freedom, thus indicating that someone who is driven by passions is incapable of attaining true freedom. Rather, freedom can only be achieved by living under the "guidance of reason" (*Ethics IV*, P37S), which relates to being aware of the causes behind one's actions.

Although Spinoza seems to critique the passions because they impede freedom, he does not believe that the passions can be totally overcome. Spinoza believes that humans are always liable to be influenced by external forces that manifest themselves as passions (*Ethics V*, Preface). For Spinoza, the way in which to attain freedom is through the moderation of the passions. An individual must attempt to minimise the delirious influence of the passions by striving to be aware of the true causes of their actions, and thereby living according to the dictate of reason.

2. Hope as a Passion

A detailed understanding of the affects, *conatus*, as well as Spinoza's attitude *vis a vis* the passions, enable one to address Spinoza's attitude towards hope, which in Part III and IV of *Ethics,* Spinoza explicitly states is a passion derived from joy. The following paragraphs present the definition and discussion on hope as presented in Part III and IV of *Ethics*. It will be argued that there are two diverging accounts of hope hinted at in *Ethics*. The first will be referred to as 'epistemic hope,' inasmuch as it expresses hopes' delirious effects with regards to the attainment of reason and knowledge. The second will be referred to as 'regulative hope,' which relates to hope's connection to joy and its role in political discourse. This distinction between epistemic and regulative hope illustrates Spinoza's dualistic conceptualisation of hope as well as his latent pragmatic attitude towards hope.

Any discussion of hope in Spinoza's work must yield to the definition of hope provided in *Ethics III*, in which Spinoza describes it as "an inconstant joy which has arisen from the image of a future or past thing whose outcome we doubt" (*Ethics III*, P18S2). For Spinoza, hope is inseparable from fear, which is the "inconstant sadness, which has arisen from a doubtful thing" (*Ethics III*, P18S2). Therefore, where hope exists, fear will necessarily be present. As stated by Spinoza, "there is no hope without fear and no fear without hope" (*Ethics IV*, P50S). This coupling of hope and fear can be referred to as the hope-fear dyad. The following paragraphs will problematize this dyad and state that hope, because it arises from joy, is fundamentally different from fear; and that although hope might always be accompanied by fear, there are cases in which hope is more prominent than fear.

Spinoza's discussion of hope and fear allows one to better assess how the two passions function. One can assume that what is said of fear extends to hope on the basis of the hope-fear dyad (*Ethics III*, P50S). In *Ethics* IV, Spinoza clearly indicates that hope and fear are primarily negative in character as they are not valuable or "good" by themselves and are seen as obstacles to living according to reason (*Ethics IV*, P47).

In line with their definitions, hope and fear are both related to the imagining of a doubtful thing. Imagination is contrary to reason because it is influenced by a variety of external factors and uncertainties as opposed to true knowledge. When we are affected by hope and fear, we do not seek out the true causes because we are distracted by a doubtful eventuality. Imagination is not a benevolent force unrelated to our ability to act, but rather something that directly influences the *conatus*. According to Spinoza, inasmuch as an individual is "affected by the image of a thing," they will incorporate this imagined thing into the present, thus influencing the activity or striving of said individual (*Ethics III*, P18D). Hope and fear are passions that affect our present and that influence our ability to act, and like all passions they are liable to render the individual passive rather than active.

Spinoza strongly asserts that being guided by fear does not allow one to act in accordance with reason. Rather, to live in accordance with reason requires one to jettison all fear and imagination and embrace adequate ideas (*Ethics IV*, P63). To embrace fear and hope is to be superstitious because hope and fear impede virtuous living in accordance with reason. Spinoza goes on to illustrate to what extent they limit the possibility of human freedom.

Spinoza makes the link between reason and freedom explicit in *Ethics* IV when he states that "a free man is one who lives according to reason alone" (*Ethics IV*, P67D). For Spinoza, freedom is defined as the embodiment of reason, adequate ideas and thus the moderation of the passions. Hope and fear more specifically leave the individual liable to manipulation by others and lead to the said individual passively awaiting that which causes either inconstant joy (hope) or inconstant sadness (fear). Hope and fear are not mere epistemological obstacles towards an ideal form of knowledge, but rather obstacles to the *conatus* as well as human freedom.

However, the aforementioned critique of hope might not be as definite as it initially seems. Spinoza attacks hope by virtue of its coupling with fear. The most vehement denunciations of the passions take place in *Ethics* IV, in which the passions are seen as that which "torments" and places humans in bondage (*Ethics IV*, P15). Fear is mentioned frequently, whereas in the strongest statements against the passions, hope is not mentioned. The fact that Spinoza refers to hope and fear as one and the same leads one to discount such a discrepancy. However, as stated by Justin Steinberg, the strict hope-fear dyad must be reconsidered (Steinberg 2021, 207). Furthermore, Wortham has indicated that hope receives a radically different treatment in *TTP*. All reassessment of Spinoza's attitude towards hope needs to relate to its definition, namely that it is an "inconstant joy." Hope's nature as a derivative of joy points to it being less harmful than fear, which is a derivative of sadness.

3. Spinoza's Conception of Regulative Hope

The above paragraphs have illustrated that hope, insofar as it is conceived as a passion receives a negative appraisal by Spinoza in *Ethics*. However, authors such as Moira Gatens, Justin Steinberg and Simon Wortham have pointed out that Spinoza comes to provide a different evaluation of hope in *TTP* and *TP*, in which the pessimistic account of hope presented in *Ethics* gives way to a more optimistic one.

This section will illustrate that hope as a derivative of joy comes to be viewed as a passion that allows for motivation and social cohesion, whereas fear is seen as something overtly negative. In line with the argument presented by Susan James in *The Interdependence of Hope and Fear*, this section argues that Spinoza diverges from the hope-fear dyad and comes to privilege hope over fear, although he does not extinguish the dyad as such (James 2021, 217). It will be claimed that although hope is seen as more beneficial than fear, it is still conceived as a passion that can lead to superstition and inadequate ideas. It is argued that Spinoza provides an account of regulative hope, a form of hope, the value of which lies in its ability to regulate and aid individuals and society. The novel concept of regulative hope exemplifies Spinoza's dualistic conception of hope, an understanding that ranges from more pessimistic interpretations of hope to more optimistic interpretations which constitute Spinoza's pragmatic approach to hope.

In *TTP*, Spinoza indicates that hope and fear both play a significant role in the make-up and functioning of the state. This is because the real world is not the ideal society where people could cease to "fluctuate wretchedly between hope and fear" (*TTP*, 3) Rather, in the real world, fear and hope are present in the minds of the common people. Both hope and fear impel people to keep promises and maintain stability. For Spinoza, no individual will keep a promise unless they "hope for a greater good or fear a greater evil" (*TTP*, 199). Due to the *conatus*, we are innately driven by a desire to preserve our own being. This form of self-interest means that we will keep a promise or undertake a given act provided we hope that it benefits us, or if we fear that to not do so will be to our detriment. Hope and fear therefore emerge as practical tools to ensure a form of obedience. However, Spinoza claims that although fear is an effective tool in terms of encouraging social cohesion, it cannot be the basis for a long-lasting state (*TTP*, 200). Fear, according to Spinoza, does not lend itself to stability. Rather, when a leader's hold on the people is predicated on fear

alone, the state cannot exist for long (*TTP*, 199). Spinoza in Chapter 20 of *TTP* states that one of the central principles of the state is to not control citizens by use of fear (*TTP*, 251).

Spinoza's rejection of fear as a constitutive part of political life marks the beginning of his differentiation between hope and fear. Such a differentiation emerges in the hope-fear dyad's genealogy. Although both are passions, the fact that hope is a derivative of joy means that it is imbued with more value than fear, the latter being a derivative of sadness. For Spinoza, nothing good can come from sadness, whereas joy can lead to action and aid the *conatus*. Spinoza comes to view the derivatives of joy as passions and not actions. However, the fact that hope is a derivative of joy (action) means that it is more liable to lead to action than fear, which is derived solely from sadness.

Prior to investigating the specific views on hope as espoused in *TTP* and *TP*, it is imperative that the hope-fear dyad is better understood. More specifically, one must ask the question whether hope can be decoupled from fear. A reading of *Ethics* could lead to such a question being answered in the negative on the basis that whenever one hopes one is necessarily affected by a degree of fear and vice versa, because, as stated in *Ethics*, hope and fear are inseparable. However, the seeming disparity between Spinoza's valuation of hope and fear in his political and theological works has led to a variety of assertions regarding this supposedly inseparable dyad.

Susan James has argued that hope and fear are indeed inseparable (James 2021, 217). According to James, one must rather see the dyad in terms of degrees and not separation. For it is impossible that in the act of hoping for something, we are not afflicted by the fear or anxiety that such a thing might not occur. According to James, when Spinoza refers to fear in the negative sense and hope in the positive sense, he does not jettison the dyad, but rather refers to a psychological state where hopefulness is more pronounced than fear. Although hope and fear are always intertwined, individuals and societies can be affected more by hope than by fear (James 2021, 221).

Spinoza aims, in *TTP* and *TP,* to envisage a society in which people are compelled more by hope than by fear. He privileges hope inasmuch as he states that citizens should be driven by hope of rewards rather than fear of punishment (Gatens 2021, 204). Furthermore, Spinoza states in *TTP* that the laws of the state should ensure that "people are restrained less by fear than hope of something good" (*TTP*, 73). For Spinoza, such laws that accommodate the hopes of citizens, lead them to do their duty willingly. Thus, by implication, laws premised on the perpetuation of fear diminish the citizens' ability to carry out their duty willingly, because to act under fear alone is merely to avoid punishment or harm (*TTP*, 74).

Spinoza's assertions presented above support the claim that hope can allow for increased activity of the citizens. Hope compels people to act, whereas fear incapacitates them. Spinoza agrees that fear can be useful in order to free people from the state of nature. However, fear cannot become the *modus operandi* of the state. Rather, hope and faith in political institutions ensure the long-term existence of a state. In short, hope leads to an active and duty driven citizenship. This duty driven citizen will be willing to keep their promises and will remain obedient to the ruling institutions. As stated by Wortham, hope in this sense can be seen as the "glue" that keeps society together (Wortham 2020, 32). Steinberg echoes such a claim by asserting that hope is a "species of willing motives," and thus linked to the increase in activity and willingness on the part of citizens (Steinberg 2018, 82).

In *TP,* Spinoza goes further by asserting that a hopeful community is freer than a fearful one, stating that a "free community is led more by hope than by fear" (*TP*, V/VI). For Steinberg, Spinoza's notion of *securitas* can be defined as the feeling of safety and confidence and lack of fear, not only in a physical sense but also a psychological sense. For Steinberg, *securitas* leads to an empowered and liberated citizenry, and allows for freedom within society (Steinberg 2018, 81). The notions of hope and freedom are partially

incommensurable on the basis that the former is a passion, and the latter requires reason devoid of passions. However, Spinoza suggests in *TP* that although hope is a passion and thus anathema to reason, a hopeful citizenry is *freer* than a fearful one. This is premised on the fact that hope being a derivative of joy allows for an increase of activity and "making use of life" (*TP*, V/VI). Fear, however, being a derivative of sadness, is solely related to avoiding punishment or death (*TP*, V/VI).

The above indicates a more optimistic treatment of hope. However, the hope-fear dyad remains in Spinoza's discussion of hope in *TTP* and *TP*, as well as hope's nature as a passion. The citizenry that is hopeful is not to be seen as an ideal. Rather, they are liable to become superstitious and be misled. Although hope can lead to an increase in action and willingness to contribute to society, Spinoza (as stated in *Ethics*) would rather people be motivated and driven by true reason than hope for a reward. Therefore, this reading of *TTP* and *TP* must be offset with the understanding that hope, as a passion, is contrary to Spinoza's ideal world in which people live in accordance with reason.

Spinoza's political works are concerned less with ideals than with the reality of the world. On the basis that humans will always be afflicted by passions, Spinoza seems to realise that the ideal psychological make-up as presented in *Ethics* is untenable in the real world. Rather, we will always be afflicted by both hope and fear to some degree, and thus be liable to manipulation and superstition. However, because hope is less harmful than fear, Spinoza advocates for a degree of hope in any political society, inasmuch as it can allow for stability and cohesion. Hope in this sense is therefore regulative. Its regulative nature is premised on the fact that its existence can allow for beneficial effects such as cohesion. In other words, hope can regulate and stabilise society. This conception of hope as a regulative concept fits in with Spinoza's overall theory of the moderation of the passions. For hope, in this regulative sense, is viewed as partly beneficial, but not as something to be embraced wholeheartedly. Individuals and societies must, in line with Gatens, adopt a "reasonable hope": a form of hope that precludes the more illusionary qualities of the passions, and focuses on the concrete socio-political sphere and allows for stability and cohesion (Gatens 2021, 204). "Reasonable" hope phrases the need to moderate the superstitious and ignorant aspects of hope, but admits that hope is regulative and allows for stability. Gatens' conception of reasonable hope allows for one to conceive of hope as a functional and beneficial force, provided it is moderated and made devoid of its illusionary qualities. The present paper, however, uses the novel concept of regulative hope because the use of the word 'reason' in Gatens' formulation contradicts the definition of the passions, which are innately distinct from reason. Therefore, 'regulative' hope can be said to be a more applicable concept, since it does not presuppose that hope can be reasonable, but rather that it can be beneficial for a given society due to the fact that it regulates and stabilises society. Spinoza's understanding of regulative hope indicates a pragmatic attitude towards hope. Although hope is fundamentally negative in character, Spinoza can be said to be a pragmatist insofar as he allows for it to proliferate in society on the basis that it can lead to stability.

In conclusion, it can be said that Spinoza holds a dualistic conception of hope which leads to a pragmatic attitude towards it. In line with Wortham, for Spinoza, "hope is both false and true" (Wortham 2020, 33). In other words, Spinoza conceives of hope both in a negative and a positive sense. This dualistic approach illustrated above points to Spinoza's attitude towards hope being more complex than the simple rejection of hope on the basis of it being a passion. Rather, it can be said that, within Spinoza's conception of hope, there is a dualism which includes an epistemic hope that receives negative appraisal because it is contrary to true reason, and a pragmatic regulative hope, which can allow for stability and cohesion.

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