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Poverty, Blame and the Privilege of Self-Control

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The Undeserving Poor.

In modern neo-liberal societies, the working-aged poor tend to bear a double burden of deprivation and insecurity while being blamed for their poverty and, if receiving income support, held to exacting standards in return for their inadequate income.

Much of the blame seems to centre on their presumed imprudence, laziness, and lack of self-control. A 2013 report from a combined churches taskforce in Britain identifies several widespread views or myths about people living in poverty including the following:

‘They’ are lazy and just don’t want to work; ‘They’ are addicted to drink and drugs; ‘They’ are not really poor – they just don’t manage their money properly; ‘They’ are on the fiddle; ‘They’ have an easy life on benefits.¹

¹ See <http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Truth-And-Lies-Report-smaller.pdf>.

Keep the Date Free:

Annual Plunkett Lecture

Wednesday 20 Nov 2024 5.30-7.00 St Vincent’s Clinic, Darlinghurst

Prof David Kissane: *Demoralization: its influence on the will to live*

When poverty is presented and understood as an *individual* problem, caused by individual moral failings (or sometimes, in the case of the deserving poor, individual bad luck), institutional and social responses to poverty need not be targeted at correcting the underlying social and structural causes of poverty, or at ameliorating their effects, but at the management and control of the individual who is poor.

Apart from the brief flowering of the welfare state post second world war, where poverty was seen as a structural problem requiring government intervention, it has always been thus. In *The Road to Wigan Pier*, after describing the miserable conditions of unemployed miners, George Orwell notes of the year 1928:

The middle classes were still talking about 'lazy idle loafers on the dole' and saying that 'these men could all find work if they wanted to'... That was the attitude towards unemployment in those days: it was a disaster which happened to *you* as an individual and for which *you* were to blame. (79)

The claim that poverty is an individual moral failing is widely and successfully propagated, and those who live in poverty live with the moral stigma attached to its acceptance.

In Australia at least, this negative view of the character of welfare recipients has been further ramped up by suggestions, enthusiastically taken up by mass media, that many welfare recipients actively cheat the system.

On January 22nd 2015 the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported that:

New Social Services Minister Scott Morrison has issued a warning to would-be dole bludgers, Disability Support Pension rorters and terrorists who want to wage war while on government benefits: a tough new welfare cop is on the beat.

Morrison claimed, in a speech that signalled a shift in approach to welfare recipients, that while Australians:

generally are quite happy to have a system that helps people who are genuinely in need and deserve our support ... what they won't cop ... is they're not going to cop people who are going to rort that system. ...So there does need to be a strong welfare cop on the beat. ['Strong welfare cop': Scott Morrison's new self-proclaimed title \(smh.com.au\)](http://www.smh.com.au)

Morrison's words neatly encapsulate a number of the myths about people on welfare identified above. In particular, he encourages the view that welfare fraud is a significant problem (despite verified social security fraud being at less than 1%) and so all recipients must be viewed as potential cheats, bludgers, and criminals in need of close monitoring and the threat of punishment to weed out the undeserving among them.

“Mutual” Obligations and The Threat Of Punishment

Under conditional welfare regimes in place across the Anglosphere and Europe, recipients must comply with a network of rules governing their conduct; failures to comply can result in suspension or cancellation of payments. Welfare systems that assume poor character and widespread cheating are built on lack of trust, and prioritise avoidance of fraud via extensive monitoring, tough sanctions, and aggressive debt recovery for alleged overpayments.

In Australia, the conditions imposed on recipients of income support are couched as “Mutual Obligations”. The state provides an income and in return the recipient is required to undertake a variety of activities to demonstrate their fitness to receive it. In addition to a range of required activities, the recipient must meet further strict reporting requirements including of income, changes of relationships or address, rental receipts, and medical certificates, on pain of removal of payment, in case of failures. This threat causes considerable justified stress and anxiety to participants:

It is a special kind of shame when you realise how powerless you are in a room where the other person can remove your only source of money ... The system we are forced into is ... a system of relentless bowing and humiliation – being forced into pointless busywork like unrecognised courses to feed this government’s insatiable need to make the unemployed “do something” ... Refuse these humiliating tasks and your payment is suspended... The negotiations are as fair as having a gun to your head and agreeing to hand over your wallet (Nijole Naujokas. *The Guardian*, March 6, 2019).

While some defenders of mutual obligation argue that financial penalties are not intended as punishment and are simply there to “encourage re-engagement” and assist people into work, those subject to the regime regularly describe it as deliberately punitive. And the punishments are harsh!

Consider what a loss or steep reduction of income means for a person who is already poor and marginalised. They cannot buy food, they cannot pay rent or utility bills, they cannot put petrol in their car or take public transport. They cannot buy prescribed medication or see a doctor. And note that, during the period of suspension or cancellation of payments they are still expected to meet the requirements of their job plan and apply for work, attend appointments and so forth. Is the knowing and intentional infliction of hunger, malnutrition, untreated illness, loss of housing and effective exclusion from even minimal social participation, a reasonable and proportionate response to offences such as failing to submit forms on time, missing appointments, or not applying for enough jobs? Since many of those punished have dependent children, we must also ask whether it is fair to inflict these deprivations on children for whom the effects will be lifelong.

A punitive system based on mistrust, combined with poverty rates of payments, has been found to work against social and economic participation and to increase rates of physical and mental illness, homelessness, crime, and other social ills – all of which harm communities as well as individuals, and are arguably more expensive than unconditional welfare such as Universal Basic Income.

One view that might be thought to favour conditional welfare is based on principles of solidarity and reciprocity. Buyx argues that “members of a liberal and solidarity society owe one another a reasonable degree of effort and care, which are essential to support and preserve the system and its institutions in the long run.” Hence “a *moderate* expectation that people contribute towards this system and behave responsibly within it is justified” (Buyx 2008, 873).

However, it is doubtful that modern neo liberal societies meet the criteria for solidarity or reciprocity. Elizabeth Anderson argues that:

a just society must assure to all citizens effective access to the social bases of equal standing as citizens [34]. This view ... requires that all citizens have effective access to the means they need ... to fully participate as equals in the political, economic, and social life of the community. "Effective access" means within reach by individuals exercising the capabilities they have or can realistically acquire (2004 p.251).

Welfare payments in Australia and the UK are set so far below the poverty line that they do not allow recipients to secure the bare necessities of life, let alone permit effective and equal social participation. The low level of payments is thus a barrier to the successful completion of the very obligations that must be met to access the payment. Hunger, poor health, caring responsibilities, insecure housing, and the stigma of poverty all undermine a person’s present capacity to reciprocate. The current system is also insensitive to the various forms which reciprocity can take and to the fact that people’s ability to reciprocate fluctuates over time and so is best assessed over longer time periods than those that elapse between payments. Many recipients have long histories of paid employment and care work – in other words, that they have already contributed in “effort and care” to their communities and are repaid by forced participation in a system many describe as abusive. Our current welfare system would need to undergo considerable reform before it could generate a fair requirement of reciprocity or solidarity. Moreover, a genuinely reciprocal or “mutual” system of obligations would need to be co-designed and co-managed with recipients rather than paternalistically imposed upon them.

There is another view, Luck Egalitarianism, that is also implicitly invoked in discussions around welfare payments and mutual obligations. It holds that “Inequalities warranting compensation are those resulting from factors that individuals have no choice about (so-called “brute luck”). As for inequalities resulting from freely chosen behaviour, such as lifestyle choices or risky

behaviour (so-called “option luck”), these do not warrant compensation... (Buyx, 872). This is expressed by Roemer in the language of responsibility:

society should indemnify people against poor outcomes that are the consequences of causes that are beyond their control, but not against outcomes that are the consequences of causes that are within their control, and therefore for which they are personally responsible (1993 147).

On this view, withholding income is *not* punitive because society has *no obligation* to compensate or indemnify people whose poverty arises from voluntary behaviour and poor choices. In brief, since there is no requirement of fairness to provide an income to such people, we may decline to do so without wronging them, and given that we do provide an income, we may impose conditions on the receipt of public charity.

While it is no doubt true that some people who live in poverty have made bad choices, for which they are responsible, many have not. The trope of the young dole bludger who prefers surfing to working is far from representative. In 2020 a Parliamentary Budget Office report “found the most likely person to be on JobSeeker before the advent of the coronavirus pandemic was a woman over the age of 45.” In other words, a growing number of people who require income support are older women with significant work histories or significant care responsibilities, and who face both age and gender discrimination in the workplace. Older men are also badly affected by industry closures in times of economic change and find difficulty in regaining employment.

Treating all recipients as potential crooks and cheats is unfair. However there is a more fundamental problem with any attempt to rely on a distinction between brute luck and option luck to underwrite the division of poor people into deserving and undeserving categories. Put simply, brute luck determines and shapes options in myriad ways and a just determination of the role of brute luck in each individual case is arguably unachievable. To reach a better understanding of the ways in which poverty shapes people’s options and their choices we must return to the stereotypes with which we began. It’s time to look in more detail at the alleged moral defects shared by the undeserving poor.

Self-control and Diachronic Agency

Doing well as an adult relies (in part) on the development and maintenance of self-regulatory and self-management capacities. Adults must have the capacity to plan and to follow through on their plans and this requires, among other things, the capacity to delay gratification.

In psychology, self-control is primarily characterised in terms of a conflict between smaller sooner (SS) and larger later (LL) rewards. The presence of SS rewards places the agent in a situation of conflict and requires the exercise of self-control to overcome the temptation and

to achieve LL rewards. Life success is popularly thought to track the capacity to eschew SS rewards for LL rewards. In Walter Mischel's famous marshmallow experiments young children were offered the choice between one marshmallow now, or two marshmallows if they waited until the researcher returned to the room. And, equally famously, the children who were able to generate and successfully employ various strategies of self-control to wait for the two marshmallows did better on a variety of measures later in life, including education, drug use and delinquency, and conscience (Shoda et al. 1990; Eigste et al. 2006).

We will return to the marshmallow experiments and conclusions later. For now, however we should note that self-control has a normative dimension that is not fully captured by the rendering of it as a response to a competition between goods arriving at different times or even as a conflict between our desires and our all things considered judgments.² We certainly exercise self-control when we leave a cosy bed to go for a run because we value health, or forgo a party to prepare for an important talk the next day, or restrain an urge to punch someone who has angered us. However, beyond this, the kind of control which is most valuable is control over the shape and direction of our life as a whole.³ This executive form of control, which harmonizes, prioritizes, and trades off our various goals and values and responsibilities, broadly involves the selection of ends that we deem both desirable and achievable, and governs the particular actions, or sequences of actions that we might choose in the pursuit our ends. There is thus an important distinction between *synchronic* self-control which is exercised in situations of temptation or conflict, and *diachronic* forms of control that are exercised in advance of or in the absence of temptation and so need not involve a direct psychological conflict between desire and values. Synchronic self-control requires willpower or the ability to rapidly deploy techniques of distraction or removal. Diachronic self-control involves setting priorities, making commitments, planning, and in general organizing our lives in such a way that we mostly avoid the kinds of temptations that might derail us. So, I might arrange for the automatic transfer of funds from my pay into a separate account for holidays or a house deposit. Knowing my tendency to backslide on solo exercise plans I join a basketball team with friends.

Without the capacity to exercise control via planning and strategies we could not access and secure some of the most important human goods—those that require sustained attention over time such as friendships, careers, making a home, and creative endeavours—or shape our lives in accordance with our values. These goods confer meaning, structure and social recognition on the agents who possess them and contribute to mental health and well-being. They also make available and intertwine with a variety of synchronic goods. My income from my rewarding, though demanding, career and the relationships I've developed with my colleagues, support sharing a nice meal or a fun trivia night at the pub. And the possession of the diachronic

² This account of self-control is summarized from my previous work where it was developed. See especially Kennett (2001) Kennett (2013) and Kennett & Wolfendale (2019)

³ What Bratman (e.g, 2022) terms 'planning agency'.

goods scaffolds and supports further exercises of both synchronic and diachronic self-control.

How?

One's diachronic plans, projects, and commitments provide a structure that removes the need for constant decision-making and choice. They regulate our day-to-day choices and help determine what will be counted as a reason in situations of conflict. Important decisions are already made and do not need to be revisited unless circumstances change. Diachronic goods such as loving relationships, absorbing work and interesting hobbies also work to protect against passing temptations and provide motivational resources for the exercise of self-control. The person with a rich array of interests, relationships, and commitments sees the cost of yielding to temptations which threaten to derail those goods. The person who lacks those goods is not so protected. The acquisition and exercise of diachronic self-control – control over the shape and direction of one's life – thus depends to a significant extent upon a degree of social privilege and a sense of trust and security that is not available to those living under conditions of scarcity, hostility, and stigma.

My contention is that poverty removes important social resources that support the exercise of synchronic and diachronic self-control. However, the stigma and myths surrounding poverty also work to render many exercises of self-control by people living in poverty invisible to others or to mischaracterise them as *failures* of self-control.

Self-control and Hopelessness

You can't settle to anything, you can't command the spirit of hope ... with that evil dull cloud ... hanging over you. (Orwell)

Diachronic self-control is motivationally dependent upon two critical assumptions.

- (i) **A possibility condition:** we must believe we have the power to act upon the world so as to bring it about that the holiday, the writing retreat, the fitness plan, or the house purchase happens at least roughly according to plan.
- (ii) **An identity condition:** we must feel that the envisioned future is mine.

Both conditions are subject to social contingency. Both may be subject to brute luck. The possibility condition, in particular, relies on an assumption that the social environment is relatively benign. It relies on what Jessica Wolfendale (2017, see also Kennett & Wolfendale 2019) has dubbed, *moral security*. Moral security engenders a sense of competence and confidence in our own agency – it supports what Abraham Maslow called feelings of “being at home in the world,” “emotional stability,” “self-esteem,” “self-acceptance,” and “courage”

(1942, pp. 334-335). This sense of security provides a basis for planning and so supports active agency and active control of our lives.

We possess moral security when we have confidence that our interests and welfare are regarded as morally important, and that our moral standing is protected by the social, political, and legal institutions in our society. Moral security requires three forms of social and legal recognition: recognition of our basic physical needs and welfare, recognition of our status as moral agents with our own values and conception of the good, and recognition of our epistemic standing or epistemic authority of our testimony regarding our needs, experiences, and welfare.

Where these forms of recognition are systematically denied – as they are in punitive and paternalistic welfare systems – we are morally injured. We are injured in our capacity *as agents*. These injuries are compounded for welfare recipients by the stigmatizing myths about poverty used to justify the system. Where people are held to be blameworthy for their own poverty they are often seen as lacking any entitlement to the goods we hold central to a decent fulfilling life. Poor people have no entitlement to recreation, play, meaningful work, parenthood, or indeed to *anything* nice. Their every purchase, possession, and action is thought ripe for scrutiny and criticism. If you doubt this do a quick survey of social media where welfare recipients are constantly called upon to justify e.g., having a smartphone or computer, spending money on a hobby, being on social media at all, or, heaven forbid, buying food that does not meet their critic’s standards of thrift and nutrition.⁴

Such grim and hostile environments undermine efforts to exercise control over one’s actions and one’s life. In her mental visits to the future, the agent must see the future she would value having as one which is open to her. Where that assumption does not hold, where a person cannot trust that they can bring about the outcomes they desire by their own or joint actions, they may lose hope and motivation. As Cheshire Calhoun says “When exercising one’s agency has ceased to be reliably connected to producing intended effects, deliberation may well seem pointless and the future hopeless.”(2008, 205)

⁴ A recent UK MyGov survey [What should living standards look like for people on benefits, minimum wage, and average earnings? | YouGov](#) found:

- 49% of respondents don’t think that people on government benefits should be able to afford rent.
- 45% don’t want them to have a TV, 55% don’t think they should be able to afford a basic smart phone (essential for recipients in Australia), or a non-active hobby.
- 73% think they shouldn’t be able to afford to go out to socialize.
- 72% are opposed to a monthly takeaway meal.
- 49% don’t want them buying art supplies for their kids

Punitive welfare systems characterised by arbitrary demands, combine with poverty and stigma precisely to produce this sense of pointlessness and hopelessness, by undermining the recipient's sense of agency and denying access to the goods that motivate and resource self-control.

As one respondent to the Workforce Australia enquiry put it:

"I would ask you to consider and recognise that those of us who are reliant on this are deprived of any means to control our circumstances. A system failure, a missed phone call, a misunderstanding or a simple lack of communication can lead to suspension of payments.

The stress associated with being constantly under threat by the whims of a particular person, system faults or even a missed phone call are immeasurable. That I might be unable to go to the doctor, pay for medication, buy petrol, pay bills on time (so as not to incur further costs, pay for internet/phone (which is now a requirement to meet with Centrelink & Workforce obligations) is considerable and has a massive impact on those of us who are living under unfortunate circumstances. *It effects our physical and emotional health, our ability to participate in our communities, our sense of future and diminishes our self-worth and our accomplishments – reducing them to meaninglessness while keeping us in poverty.* " (Submission #229, my emphases)

The effects of the system as described here are not merely unpleasant or disliked. A system which has design-features that undermine self-worth and hope, damages physical and mental health, and which excludes people from social participation, inflicts *moral* injuries – injuries to us as moral agents.

What do agents do under circumstances of deprivation, stigma, and authoritarian oversight? Where diachronic goods are out of reach it becomes *rational* to refocus on those goods that are available.

Synchronic Goods and the Privilege of Self-control.

When you are underfed, harassed, bored and miserable you don't want to eat dull wholesome food ...there is always something cheaply pleasant to tempt you...That is how the mind works (Orwell: The Road To Wigan Pier).

The original Marshmallow experiments, which purported to show the lifelong benefits of the capacity to delay gratification, used a small relatively homogenous sample of children and did not control for class, income, or parental education levels. Later studies of larger more heterogenous groups have suggested that the ability to delay gratification is significantly shaped by social and economic background – and it is this background that explains long term success:

among kids whose mothers did not have college degrees, those who waited did no better than those who gave in to temptation, *once other factors like household income and the child's home environment at age 3... were taken into account*. For those kids, self-control alone couldn't overcome economic and social disadvantages.

Conversely:

among kids whose mothers had a college degree, those who waited for a second marshmallow did *no better in the long run*—in terms of standardized test scores and mothers' reports of their children's behaviour—than those who dug right in. (McRory Calarco (2018) my emphasis)

These later studies suggest that either we are wrong about the benefits of self-control to successful agency, or we have failed to notice the extent to which diachronic self-control relies upon social resources and social privilege. We have treated self-control as an individual achievement, just as we have treated poverty as an individual failure, and we are mistaken on both counts.

Where self-control does not offer a pathway to the diachronic goods it is no failure of self-control to grab the short-term goods that *are* available. As Orwell says, "That is how the mind works." Poor parents cannot afford school camps, they cannot afford holidays or ballet lessons, visits to the circus, or the cost of team sports for their children. But on the days where they do have money – before it all evaporates on rent and bills – they will often seek to indulge their children with small treats, such as sweets, fast food, or cheap trinkets, in part to make up for all that they cannot provide. As McRory Calarco observes, "for poor children, indulging in a small bit of joy today can make life feel more bearable, especially when there's no guarantee of more joy tomorrow." (2018)

This reality is often lost on those who monitor and judge the poor. If only "they" could delay gratification and exercise self-denial, the narrative goes, they would be able to "get ahead", pay their bills, buy a house, and so forth—when the truth is that for most poor people no amount of self-denial will deliver the promised rewards. As Linda Tirado puts it:

I will never not be poor, so what does it matter if I don't pay a thing and a half this week instead of just one thing? It's not like the sacrifice will result in improved circumstances; the thing holding me back isn't that I blow five bucks at Wendy's. (Tirado 2013)

People living in poverty are struggling to cope with challenges that more privileged individuals can often avoid, and with vastly reduced resources. So, for example, while both well-off and poor people use treats and rewards strategically to support self-control and to further their goals, or simply to get through a tough day, the use of strategic rewards is judged very differently in the poor.

When we praise a middle-class person's success in sticking to their commitments and achieving their diachronic goals, we often do not notice just how important a role social and economic privilege has played in resourcing and supporting their self-management strategies. Well-off people may often forgo *some* SS rewards for the sake of LL rewards, but they rarely forgo SS rewards completely. Perhaps I decide that I must miss trivia night at the pub with friends because I need to complete my essay marking. But what often happens in such cases is that I substitute other SS rewards that are compatible with my LL goals. I might stock up on chocolates and reward myself with a fine scotch at the end of the evening. This is hardly Olympic level self-denial. I also have a high baseline of comfort. My house is heated and comfortably furnished, I am well-fed, my work is interesting and well paid. The rewards and incentives that we middle-class people arrange for ourselves in the pursuit of larger goals either pass unremarked or are seen as well-deserved and appropriate self-care.

By contrast the efforts of the person living in poverty, without that baseline of comfort and security, to strategically manage their lives and commitments through the use of SS rewards attracts very different commentary. It is often interpreted as evidence of poor judgement, weakness of will, or shameful self-indulgence. Food shaming is particularly common. A poor person who eats a donut when they could have chosen an apple is deemed unworthy of public support. Poor people are expected to get through their day without any of the indulgences the rest of us rely on. On the self-control front they are expected to do more with far less resources. But like us they use rewards strategically.

I smoke. It's expensive. It's also the best option. You see, I am always, always exhausted. It's a stimulant. When I am too tired to walk one more step, I can smoke and go for another hour. When I am enraged and beaten down and incapable of accomplishing one more thing, I can smoke and I feel a little better, just for a minute. It is the only relaxation I am allowed. It is not a good decision, *but it is the only one that I have access to.* (Tirado 2013, my emphasis)

Tirado's horizons and options are limited by her poverty. Self-control is directed at getting through bleak, demanding days, not at achieving a step towards larger goods such as a house, fitness, career, or creative endeavour. She says, "I will never have large pleasures to hold on to." In directing her efforts accordingly, her exercises of self-control and self-management go unrecognised or are mischaracterised as *failures* of self-control. The stigmatization of her options for self-management – smoking and fast food – are another aspect of the lack of moral security and respect afforded to people living in poverty and an illustration of social denial of their epistemic authority over the meaning and normative significance of their lives and choices.

Conclusion

Philip Pettit has argued that a person or group enjoys freedom to the extent that no other person or group has “the capacity to interfere in their affairs on an arbitrary basis” (1999, 165). Welfare recipients conspicuously lack this form of freedom or security.

People on income support in Australia experienced the arbitrariness of their entitlement to a decent life firsthand during the pandemic, when they were given proof that poverty is a policy choice. Pandemic payments raised their income to the poverty line. Mutual obligations were suspended. Studies and first-person reports of the effects of this increase show all round improvements, (e.g., Fisher 2021, ACOSS 2020). People could afford fresh food, they could schedule repairs to their car, a long overdue visit to the dentist, a replacement for their clapped-out fridge, birthday presents for their children. Their health improved. The cloud of hopelessness, that Orwell speaks of, lifted. They made plans for study, for work, for creativity, for social participation. And then it was all over. They discovered once again that governments would rather spend billions on companies that monitor the poor for profit than use that money to raise their income. Once again, their time, their commitments, their aspirations, their point of view were not valued, respected, or even considered; their epistemic authority regarding their needs, capacities, interests, talents, and values was denied. Once again, they had to decline invitations from friends because they could not afford a cheap meal or even a coffee. Once again, poverty led to social isolation, rental stress, homelessness, hunger, and increased physical and mental ill-health.

Under these conditions individuals living in poverty may well give up on deliberating and planning for a future they are assured can be theirs, but experience has taught them they cannot believe in.

We don't plan long term because if we do we'll just get our hearts broken. It's best not to hope. You just take what you can get as you spot it. (Tirado 2013)

To sum up: People living in poverty lack moral and social security; their agency is externally undermined through stigmatizing social and political narratives, social and legal structures, and punitive practices, that deny them important elements of moral recognition. Their poverty deprives them of the range of resources that are available to more privileged people in developing and adopting strategies of self-management and self-control to achieve their longer-term goals. They are then subject to blame for their supposed moral deficiencies which are used to further justify punitive and intrusive oversight of their spending and activities.

In the field of moral psychology, an examination of the lived reality of poverty should make us question dominant theories which see self-control as an *individual* achievement, and as partly reflective of essential moral character. The strategies people develop and adopt to manage

their lives are reflective of and responsive to their options. And what options people have is very often a matter of brute luck. Self-control helps to achieve the good life, but equally social access to those goods can be a condition of and resource for exercises of diachronic self-control. Apparent self-control may thus more often be a manifestation of social privilege than of self-discipline or superior character.

One can participate in the general injustice, even if one does not do any injustice according to civil laws and institutions. Now if one shows beneficence to a wretch, then one has not given him anything gratuitously but has given him only what one had earlier helped take from him through general injustice. For if no one took more of the goods of life than another then there would be no rich and no poor. (Kant, Lectures on Ethics)

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They who have put out the people's eyes reproach them of their blindness. Milton 1654

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⁵ This article is an abridged version of Prof Jeanette Kennett's 2022 Gavin David Young Lecture. Available at: <https://gavindavidyounglectures.au/index.php/gdylp>

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