

WHO'S AFRAID OF REASON ?

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## CHAPTER I

### THE NATURE OF CRITIQUE

“The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to *change* it.” Karl Marx, Eleventh Thesis on Feuerbach

Over the past 2000 years philosophers have been changing the world. Perhaps Marx, with his radical economic theories, can serve as the epitome of his own ideal philosopher. If Marx was correct that until his day no philosopher had changed the world, one could hardly argue that any one thinker has changed the world as greatly as he. Certainly, other theorists may not have left as indelible impressions as Marx has. Yet, we can certainly note that the way that social and political theorists have thought about the world has changed in many different ways over time due to the theories of particular philosophers. This project serves to evaluate the historical progression of reason in several ways, but must begin with the explicit acknowledgement of the power of ideas.

Whether one thinks that Hegelian dialectic is the best way to conceptualize reason over time, that perhaps Foucault’s interpretation of power is better than Hobbes’s or that the strong republican notion of citizenship that Rousseau and Barber lay out is the way we should govern ourselves, we can certainly observe the fact that these ideas have influenced the way we now think. Not only have we begun to think about problems in new and interesting ways, but also we have started to change the way we think *about thinking*. Recognizing the different ways that communication, language and institutional structures constrain human abilities (and vices) has allowed us to develop new modes of

reason to accommodate and answer the problems that we continually face. As political philosophers, problems of good governance and justice will occupy our thoughts until politics is no longer a human necessity. Until then, we can only look to the nature of reason's progression within philosophy to understand how to solve them better.

The details of this historical progression could fill multiple volumes, but the point most relevant to this project is that it has been occurring. Time and time again, human reason has faced obstacles and overcome them by developing more "advanced theories." These theories are not necessarily normatively superior, but they help us understand the world around us and explain phenomenon. Copernicus and Galileo both used their senses and reason so that they would understand the natural phenomenon of planets' orbits. Newton's understanding of the laws of motion and gravity, coupled with his (and Leibniz's) invention of calculus to explain other observable phenomenon, empowered the scientific revolution of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries and enabled scholars and theorists to work across disciplines to answer old questions and discover new ones. This, as I was once told by a philosophy professor, is the purpose of philosophy: while we may never get to any answers, philosophy always leads us to better questions.

When faced with these new and exciting problems, in a growing number of disciplines, human beings have been able to hypothesize and test new solutions that in the long run of history have resulted in some notion of progress. Progress in this sense does not mean that we are approaching something of a higher truth, or even necessarily of greater moral value. Instead, progress in this conception is related to thinking about the history of social and political thought in a series of sequential stages where each stage is influenced by its predecessor and is the genesis of the next. In this understanding of

philosophical progress over time, it is a vantage point where we may see how the machine is moving, but not exactly where it may be headed. Still, one cannot help but empirically notice how such an evolution has occurred.

In the grand history, philosophy may not have evolved at all. Cornel West's (1989) genealogy of American pragmatism labels this school of thought an "evasion of philosophy." Beginning with Emerson, West chronicles the rise and fall of pragmatism and its resurgence with John Dewey. Here, pragmatism is seen to have its own unique history under the entire discipline of philosophy. For West, the pragmatists were distancing themselves from a continental philosophy that could not be reconciled with the unique American experience. West writes that Emerson and future pragmatists were armed with "rhetorical strategies, principally aimed at explaining America to itself" (1989, 10). In this example, philosophy meets experience and undergoes a transformation that empowers its practitioners with new tools to answer somewhat culturally relative philosophical dilemmas. While the American pragmatic project may have been an evasion of pure, continental philosophies, it still served a profound purpose in later influencing democratic theory and American political thought as a whole.

A more recent example of philosophy responding to change would be the deconstructionist movement. Those who wanted to refute the logocentrism of the enlightenment argued that words and oppositions of meaning could not be transcended using ordinary conversation because the vocabulary of the discussion is perhaps influenced by historically relevant power structures. By dismantling the axioms of one period of thought, the deconstructionist hopes to understand the very nature of thought over time. Similarly, deconstructionism has aided theorists who advocate for historically

disenfranchised groups by explaining how hegemony may still exist in places that are nearly impossible to see. In the deliberative democratic literature, scholars like Mouffe and Young have used this approach to advocate for stricter egalitarian measures regarding the code of conduct in a democratic forum. While in some cases philosophy may have been dodging or evading the real project, or using new conceptions of power and reason to deconstruct older ways of thinking, either way it seems to shed light on the nature of the philosophical project in its entirety.

The nature of philosophy is that it allows for constant criticism to lead to a better understanding of phenomena. One only has to examine Socrates's questioning of Athenians (as presented by Plato in The Apology) to see the power of deconstructive critique. However, it is in this very questioning that we, as philosophers, come to new (though not necessarily better) modes of conceptualizing and communicating about phenomenon. By asking his fellow citizens what they knew, and in relation to what they thought they knew, Socrates is able to show people that there is wisdom in the consciousness of ignorance. The Socratic irony, that all Socrates knows is that he knows nothing, is one that squares with his conception of wisdom. By knowing our limitations and ability, as philosophers act as introspective agents, we may come to a greater understanding of the power of human reason.

The Hegelian telling of history as stages of dialectic and the process Hegel describes is useful for the understanding of philosophical progress that this piece advances. Ideas for Hegel are found within consciousness, and our values help to shape our reality. In this way, reason-guided ideas do change and improve over time. Essentially, Hegel believes that some prevailing idea, a thesis, will run up against the

power of critique. This critique, guided by reason as antithesis, will transform the idea (via *Aufhebung*) into a newly revised position that has both changed and remained the same with respect to reason. Now, Hegel's conception of ideas throughout history has inspired other theorists to develop a prediction of the end of history. Most notably, Fukuyama (1992) posits that the end of history will be characterized by free market capitalism and the spread of democracy across the globe. Fukuyama predicts that objections to both democracy and capitalism as modes of organizing politics and the economy will be shown to be inferior to the eventually perfected system of the state. Still others may reject Hegel's conceptualization of reason's progress over time based on metaphysical or epistemic grounds. Yet, for the sake of the project at hand, I believe the case for the plausibility of Hegel's theme must be made explicit.

One way of understanding, or more importantly learning over time is based on the power of individuals to change the way they conceptualize ideas and empirical phenomena. In schools we may empirically witness pupils learning progressively difficult tasks as they continuously revise and improve their skill set. Doing this enables students to answer new questions using a compilation of skills that improves over time. In this manner, students (like philosophers) develop better methods for answering increasingly "difficult" questions. This accumulation of knowledge is, in fact, probably most readily witnessed in the natural sciences. In mathematics, one would not be able to solve an advanced calculus problem without the knowledge of addition and subtraction. Perhaps the very notion of problem solving is one that also requires knowledge of method. This dilemma may be, even more basically, rooted in the complexities of language or what Wittgenstein (1961) would call language games.

Whether we interpret the progression of reason across history in exactly the same way Hegel did, the point remains that we can empirically witness human progression in modes of understanding in classrooms all around the world. For the sake of this project, this notion need not be deconstructed or interpreted through the lens that Wittgenstein provides, but can be used to show that the method of questioning truths via critique can lead to a new understanding of reality. This simple conception of method, or particularly the scientific method, will be used as a springboard into the rest of this section on the empirical functionality of critique. This basic notion of reason's revisability, that how we come to understand ideas can (in this process) create new ideas, is central to this project's larger goal of situating the proper role of reason in deliberative democratic theory.

Simply put, the asserted purpose of dialectical critique is to gain knowledge. Again recall the Socratic irony about knowing what one does not know. This process appears to create something, knowledge, from something that appears to have not yet been conscious of its own existence – ignorance. In the history of social and political thought there have been several prominent critics who aimed at removing the powers that certain ideas held. Socrates's questioning in The Apology of all those around him regarding their conceptions of the good can serve as the most basic and influential example of the birth of philosophy as critique (West and West 1998). By questioning the conceptions of wisdom that his fellow Athenians held, Socrates was pursuing a fuller understanding of human existence. Since then, it seems all philosophy has followed this critical path. If one constructed a complete genealogy of social and political thought we would see that it owes its method to the same praxis that brought about Socrates's death. As Alfred North Whitehead acknowledges, "the safest general characterization of the

European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato” (1978, 39).

In the end, it is as if all philosophy throughout history has been concerned with this process of transformation. Implicit in this pursuit is the belief that human beings are capable of practicing philosophy. This Enlightenment view of human potential, that everyone is an individual and rational agent, presented philosophy with the opportunity to evolve into an art that all could practice. Not only did this liberal shift profoundly influence the philosophers of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, it also began to be taken for granted by society writ large. This view of reason, as a faculty of communication and understanding, is what jettisoned philosophy towards its present state. Without this notion of revisability to allow reason in history to move toward some greater understanding, philosophy would have reached its endpoint centuries ago (Jones 2005). The very nature of the philosophical pursuit is that it always ends in the Platonic *aporia*: we never arrive at any True solution; we only appear to arrive at new questions.

As I noted above, the path that philosophy has taken as a whole has far more branches than any one thesis could conceivably address. This empirical fact about our discipline is also evidence regarding the Hegelian picture of history as a series of progressions of reason. Whether one believes Hegel’s exact account, it still appears to be the case that the willingness to change and the revisability of ideas over time are two of the catalysts of human progress. Hegel’s notion of the dialectical transformation of reason over time is only one way of characterizing this historical progression. Hegel’s view of reason, that its pursuit of Truth may cause change over time is illustrated in his notion of dialectic:

Dialectic as a negative movement, just as it immediately *is*, at first appears to consciousness as something which has it at its mercy, and which does not have its source in consciousness itself. As Scepticism [sic], on the other hand, it is a moment of self-consciousness, to which it does not *happen* that its truth and reality vanish without its knowing how... this self-conscious negation it procures for its own self the certainty of its freedom, generates the experience of that freedom, and thereby raises it to truth. (Hegel 1977, 124).

This is Hegel's telling of progress, one that is characterized by two key notions. The first is that reason is able to act reflexively and revise itself. This notion of revisability will become key in the later sections of this project. Secondly, reason undergoes change over time. The historical context of any project can then be questioned in relation to larger social forces that are moving across time.

John Stuart Mill's concept of progress in On Liberty may more closely resemble how philosophers may want to characterize historical changes without getting mired in the language of Hegelian dialectics. As one of the greatest proponents of a free and open marketplace of ideas, his project was also guided by the reasonability of human beings. While the pursuit of Truth may still be seriously considered by some philosophers, political philosophers today are quick to adopt a different conceptualization of "Truth" as an ongoing compromise between competing truths. As Mill writes, "every subject on which difference of opinion is possible, the truth depends on a balance to be struck between two sets of conflicting reasons" (1989, 38). In this conception, conflict tests our reasonable beliefs and arrives at new truths via free and open discussion. This system lends itself both to progress and to a commitment to the abilities of human reason to evolve. Clearly, if this were not the case, Mill would not advocate for such a free and open marketplace of ideas by writing "the beliefs which we have most warrant for, have

no safeguard to rest on, but a *standing invitation* to the whole world to prove them unfounded” (1989, 24 emphasis added).

This “standing invitation” is what contemporary philosophy offers the world. By developing expressions of human reason over hundreds of years, philosophy has evolved to include many different methods to pursue the concept of Truth. All guided by reason, social and political theorists have always been involved with various methods of investigation, and some of the most famous philosophers had great successes in the natural sciences (Newton, Leibniz, Bacon, and Mill). One could plausibly argue that the roots of all modern natural sciences could be traced to philosophy; especially if one believes in the Hegelian-Milliean approach to influences across time, space and discipline. It seems that at the heart of every science is the notion of revisability. At the core they all share a commitment to critique. As Popper (1940) contends, beliefs change over time in response to some societal norms that are probably closely following the path of the scientific method.

In this sense, reason in philosophy has an impact on science, which helps us to understand the empirical world better. Even the influence of science on philosophy is reciprocated through dialectical progress. As Condorcet wrote, when he sketched what he anticipated to be the stages of historical progress, “the progress of the sciences ensures the progress of the art of education which in turn advances that of the sciences” (1955, 196). This understanding of reason as both cause and effect moving across history is what has allowed such great human progress. Fields like mathematics and computer science have recently adopted this line of thinking and rejected the strictly binary dialectic of Truth and Falsehood, ones and zeros. This is but one example of the

realization of reason's changing nature, and will be discussed at length in the sections to follow.

Most importantly, these theorists all realize that the enlightenment conception of reason can certainly lead to great atrocities rooted in evil ideas. Any horrible idea in the mind of a citizen bent on seeing it come to fruition could certainly cause some harm to society's utility. In history we have seen examples of genocide when perceptions of genetic superiority in the minds of those with power in their hands can lead to millions of lives being lost and can threaten our very existence. Still, Mill's argument for an open and transparent marketplace of ideas is echoed today. We cannot silence or execute the heretics, as Socrates and Jesus were, because these radical individuals always appear to be dangerous to society. Those citizens who allow reason to guide their lives, as was the case with Socrates, are the only ones who can ever bring about historical change. This possibility for radically progressive change is why Mill believes that "if all mankind minus one, were of one opinion, and only one person were of the contrary opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person, than he, if he had the power, would be justified in silencing mankind" (1989, 20). The presence of contrary opinions in the marketplace is a good for Mill because truth and falsehood are dialectically linked: a "clearer perception and livelier impression of truth, [is] produced by its collision with error" (1989, 20).

This conception of the public discourse is akin to Marx's call for a "ruthless critique of everything existing," where "criticism must not be afraid of its own conclusions, nor of conflict with the powers that be" (Marx 1978, 13). By employing this commitment to reason we may be able to *change* the world for the better, just as Marx

thought philosophers should do. Eventually, Mill believes, society will come upon some truths that are so widely held where no one would reasonably refute them in the public arena. The example Mill gives is the freedom of the press, in the beginning of chapter two of On Liberty. He anticipates a time in the future where no one would ever have to offer a defense of free press. In this way, and similar to Marx's progression of critique over time, the practice of philosophy has set the stage for an understanding of reason as a clearly historical process. By looking at the changes philosophy has made, with regard to the teachings of Hegel, Marx, Feuerbach, Condorcet, Mill, Popper or Fukuyama, the concept of revisability essentially remains the same. This dialectical revisionism is what enables individuals to continue to compromise between competing claims and adjudicate contrary premises so that they square with their current understanding of the world. All around us we may witness the benefits and evils of human reason, but its project is still far from complete.

What this first section has aimed to do is come to understand the importance of critique in the praxis of philosophy. The empirical phenomena around us appear to be changing constantly, and they influence our realization of truth in nature. As philosophy closely allies itself to critique, dialectic and deconstruction, we have seen evidence for the radical nature of the dynamic philosophical project. Through various conceptions of historical progress and change, this subsection begins to address the two natures of reason that will be addressed further in the following sections. Until now, I have used the word reason to mean a variety of concepts. Now the work will become more intentional. For our purposes, *Reason* will be used to denote the historical process that has been described herein. In this aspect, Reason is influenced and principally guided across time by *reasons*

– those communicative aspects of language that enter into Mill’s marketplace of ideas.

The phenomenological embodiment of reason in discourse and language is what enables

Reason to revise itself and change over time, which will be discussed at length in the next

chapter.

## CHAPTER II

### THE REFLEXIVITY OF REASON

The central question this thesis will investigate is: how can deliberative democratic theory properly address the role Reason has in influencing good governance? Given the recent proliferation of deliberative democratic literature, especially the myriad critiques of traditionally articulated modes of democratic communication, this paper's aim is to assert that not only are deliberative democracy and this aforementioned Enlightenment view of reason compatible, but they are fundamentally linked. Recall that there are two conceptions of "reason" to be discussed in this essay. First, *Reason*, is an object that has existed across time as the consciousness that manifests itself in human faculties and is also an ongoing process. The second conception, as *reason*, is an object or a product of this historical process. This second way, for example giving reasons in the larger structure of a conversation, is importantly linked to the larger and overarching sense of Reason. Reason causes the phenomenological manifestations that we see as reasons, and for the sake of this project, Reason is operating within the context of reason-giving.

In the everyday context, we use this language of reason quite frequently. Becoming an adult was once referred to as reaching the "age of reason." When one will not hear us out or is not being responsive to our words, we may declare that they are being *unreasonable*. Obviously, the immediate leap cannot be made from empirical existence to the normativity of some action. More importantly, there seems to be a strand

of democratic thought that has unfairly taken aim at the faculty of Reason's privileged status in the deliberative democratic arena. Critics of a democratic enterprise based exclusively on Reason and rationality contend that the historical biases that esteem articulate reason-givers, unduly punish others who lack the privileged historical experience. These criticisms will be discussed at length in the following chapter of this project.

This brings us to question the role of Reason in democratic theory, and more importantly in democracy as a whole. To complete this project effectively, I will aim to do two things. First, as was done in the previous section and will be completed in the current one, I will trace some path of logic-centered political philosophy and understand the role of reason as both subject and object in this genealogy. Secondly, and in the final two sections I shall move to articulate the role of Reason, explicitly, in democratic philosophy. The theory that I will put forth is that the privileging of Reason, or of *Reason-guided reason-giving*, should be the ultimate standard for deliberative democratic discourse.

While it is the case that individuals may have different ways of knowing, the one concept that seems to link all of these discussions, discourses on epistemology, or even competing conceptions of the good (life) is the faculty of Reason. But how do we understand Reason? It seems that we can view it as both a faculty (Reason as historical process) and as a mode of understanding and communication (reason as product of Reason). How do these competing interpretations influence the way we understand and think about politics? It seems as though theories of human understanding, or epistemology have always been present in political philosophies – not only in questions

surrounding knowledge, but in questions centered on the way individuals *choose to act*. For Hobbes it was a process of both ratiocination and reckoning. Reason, rationality and decision-making for Hobbes are all fundamentally mathematical (Hobbes 1996).

Ratiocination, the notion of reasoning through a complex series of problems to arrive at a conclusion, is seen by Hobbes as a product of mathematical processes, most notably addition and subtraction. These theories are based in the realm of formal logic, “these operations are not incident to numbers only, but to all manner of things that can be added together, and taken out of another” (Hobbes 1651, 5.1). Thus reason and rationality are nothing but a form of reckoning by which we can express our understandings to those around us. From this conception, Hobbes posits that individuals are creatures who operate in a sense of moral philosophy by seeking to maximize that which is seemingly good to them while minimizing what are perceived as harms. Hobbes writes that, “*Good* and *evil*, are names that signify our appetites, and aversions,” and may differ from person to person (1651, 15.40). Rationality also leads one to examine “long chain[s] of consequences” to understand what one action may lead to and use ratiocination to understand what is going to be an individual’s best option in the long run (1651, 6.57).

Hobbes’s notion of reason is just one example of how an understanding of epistemology, or at least a nascent theory about human nature and human actions may be necessary for a full and complete political theory. The point of this project is not to say that one philosopher has come to realize what is the proper model for human interaction. Also, it is not to say that cost-benefit analysis, rational choice, or formal logic paint a complete picture of the world or of how to discern the good life. The point is how

Reason can help shape our understandings in various ways, across time and space, to allow philosophers to come to a greater level of understanding regarding those very questions. In this model, philosophy is philosophizing upon itself – Reason producing reasons to change Reason. This transformation is of particular import regarding the democratic-philosophical project as it acknowledges the inescapability of Reason in affecting our modes of thought and communication. Further, it illustrates how the pursuit of an absolute Truth may impede that project's progress.

This understanding of multiple truths is the same notion that has plagued political theorists from Mill to Rorty. Those members of a liberal society who appeal to some absolute Truth are unable to engage in the act of political philosophy. This very notion stifles conversation, holds up the advancement of reason, and will slow Reason's advancement across time. Rorty (1994) argues that citizens who bring religious reasons to the democratic forum ought to be discouraged from doing so. More recently, Rorty revises this view: "I want to start back-pedaling by making a distinction between congregations of religious believers ministered to by pastors and what I shall be calling 'ecclesiastical organizations' – organizations that accredit pastors and claim to offer authoritative guidance to believers. Only the latter are the target of secularists myself" (Rorty 2003, 141). The reason for this clarification is made clear by Rorty's concern about those who believe that they know some absolute and authoritative Truth. As has been illustrated above, the conception of ideological progress as measured by the presence of competing ideological claims is violated in any arena where dissent is not permitted. For Rorty, and probably for all liberal theorists, this situation is very tense.

In the course of human history we have witnessed (what we would call from our current state of Reason) atrocities committed time and time again by those who believed they knew some Truth. The Spanish inquisition, the Crusades, the Holocaust, Islamic jihad and the seemingly endless conflict between Israel and Palestine are all examples of what happens when a group in society possesses both power and a virulent belief that they cannot err. In Rorty's conception of the end of history, he sees the level of social justice increasing as individuals work together "towards the fulfillment of social ideals." His main reason for removing religion from the public square is that "putting political convictions in religious terms gives aid and comfort to ecclesiastical organizations, and thus to religious exclusivism, contempt for people that should be accorded the same respect as the rest of their fellow citizens" (Rorty 2003, 143). This commitment to the future of Reason is based on the empirically observable fact that Mill's conception of the free and open market place of ideas is generally preferred to authoritative groups who speak of absolutes and who have, over the course of history, "done more harm than good" (Rorty 2003, 143).

Mill and Rorty's reservation about this type of citizen seems indicative from our current conception of Reason. Our very notion of Reason must be able to be revised and changed over time. If it is not capable of doing this, then we have failed its project and ended intellectual progress. The key concept of Reason that needs to be taken from this section is that Reason is capable of reflexive action, revising itself to meet and face new and interesting problems. Without the revisions of hundreds of intellectuals, the conceptualization of human thought and reason-giving may have ended with Plato's "myth of the metals" as presented in The Republic (414a-414d). Without philosophy and

the ability to revise the way we conceive of human nature and behavior, this story would have lasted in perpetuity. Some of us would have been fated by the gods to rule, others to serve as auxiliaries and still others destined to produce for the good of society. Instead of this static view of human nature and understanding, philosophy provides us with an outlet for reflexive Reason. Instead of Hobbes's definition being brought to light (or the countless definitions prior to his), all radical thinkers may have been branded heretics and been silenced. It seems we have come far to believe that individuals should govern themselves through their direct participation in a deliberative forum.

In fact, the very prospect of excluding some people from the deliberative arena seems to contradict Mill's intent and society's "open invitation" for radicals to change the way we think of our world. Moreover, the literature presented in this section illustrates the shifts in ways human beings *reason about Reason*. Hobbes saw rationality and human preferences as a product of appetites and aversions, costs and benefits. Mill saw rationality and reason through a utilitarian lens. He hoped that allowing individuals to exercise their capabilities freely would result in the greatest happiness for society as a whole. Game theorists have devised different concepts of preferences and mechanism design to understand why we may make the decisions that we do. Yet, what does this tell us?

In the dualism of traditional formal logic, premises are either True or False and normally are assigned a truth-value of one or zero, respectively. That model has since been replaced. When computer scientists and mathematicians devised a system for explaining the shades of gray in a black and white world, they did so using their reason. By using this faculty to invent and explain a new mode of thought, they have advanced a

theory of *fuzzy logic* that now stands out in our free marketplace of ideas, waiting to be disproved. Bart Kosko, a pioneer of this “new science” that can assign truth values between zero and one, notes how dialectic and dualistic thinking (along side reason-guided critique) has helped logicians in overcoming the pitfalls of the old system: “the binary faith has always faced doubt. It has always led to its *own critical response*, a sort of logical and philosophical underground” (Kosko 1993, 6 emphasis added).

Here, this process indicates is a key characteristic of human Reason, its ability to act reflexively and revise its positions vis-à-vis multiple competing truths. Just as in the previously evaluated historical frameworks, we are now able to see evidence that a system of dialectic, theses and antitheses, ones and zeros, may be able to change to a system of infinite possibilities through the art of Reason-guided critique. This reflexive action, the power for Reason to shift its focus over time, is one of the most important aspects of this project with regard to the deliberative democratic arena. In this rendering, Reason can now be understood as both subject and object (of itself). For a project that seeks to re-center deliberative democracy on a clearer understanding of the faculty of Reason, this serves the purpose of clarifying the capabilities of all individuals as reason-givers to reach a mode of communication that eventually begins to resemble Mill’s understanding of the marketplace. This way, there are no truth-falsehood dichotomies. While that principle had originally served philosophy, math and logic as a nimble and able guide, it has now led us to a position that has been revised and enabled us to come full circle toward a more complete understanding of Reason.

Notice that Kosko and fuzzy logic are not alone in changing the way we use Reason to think about reason and rationality. Kenneth Arrow’s (1951) “impossibility

theorem” has radically changed the way social scientists think about democratic procedures. This theory, supported by economic choice theory, asserts that democratic voting is inherently undemocratic. Social choices that are made by groups will always have to violate some democratic principle in order to achieve an outcome. Essentially, any way that a group decides on how its decisions will be made will compromise some higher principle (e.g., the independence of irrelevant alternatives). This advancement in social choice theory illustrates how (in Hegel’s terms) Reason is beginning to become more self-conscious of its place in a particular historical moment. By revising our models of human understanding, we are able to move towards a conception of Reason that realizes its unique temporal place in philosophy.

Similarly, scholars like Buchanan and Tullock (1965), Riker (1982) and Shepsle and Bonchek (1997) have made their careers as social scientists by incorporating mathematical and spatial models within methodologies to understand preferences, choices and democratic progress within political science better. The purpose of analyzing politics, for these descendents of Karl Popper, is to attempt to gain a better way of illustrating the seemingly complex modes of behavior and rational choice. Within the same branch of philosophical inquiry lies game theory or rational choice theory. These models of human behavior show how *rational individuals should act* given a certain set of conditions and laws. Yet, even this field has been able to revise itself by following principles at the heart of the philosophy of science. Using modern day laboratories to test the theories that were put forth by famous game theorists like John Nash (1950, 1953), modern social choice theorists have revised the original idea that given a certain set of conditions, human agents will act in a particular way.

One revision to the original game theoretic or expected utility model of reason has been prospect theory (Khaneman and Tversky 1957 ; McDermott 1998 ; McDermott 2001). This research points to interesting conclusions about the nature of rationality, and the future for choice theory. They found that when individuals are making decisions framed in a *domain of losses*, they are much more likely to become *risk acceptant*. Conversely, the data indicate that those making decisions framed in a *domain of gains* to be much more *risk-averse*. What this means is that depending on how an individual's initial situation (the point in time when an individual is confronted with a choice) has changed, that actor may be more or less likely to accept risk. For example, a gambler who is on a losing streak is more likely to be *risk-acceptant* because she is operating from a domain of losses. Conversely, a gambler who has just won a large sum of money will be less likely to continue to gamble having already won. This example indicates that across time, individuals may revise what they believe to be a reasonable choice, and even more importantly, it illustrates that the faculty of Reason is at work within these disciplines to revise and correct previous beliefs to explain current phenomena. This is an example of the fundamental principle of falsifiability that is at the core of many the philosophies of science.

We can also see traces of Mill's arguments in contemporary debates and research on the amounts of information that are available to consumers in a marketplace. In On Liberty, Mill writes that "the time, it is to be hoped, is gone by, when any defense would be necessary of the 'liberty of the press' as one of the securities against corrupt or tyrannical government" (Mill 1989, 19). Mill is writing roughly four hundred years after the invention of the printing press, which in the grand scheme of history is hardly a long

time. What Mill envisions has seemingly been brought to fruition. Societal norms in liberal democracies are such that no reasons must be given to defend this position and it may seem like intuition why democracy is strengthened by a free flow of information. During political campaigns in the United States, the blitz of negative campaign advertisements seem to influence democratic turnout in a variety of ways. While individuals may complain about the pejorative nature of this material, it still seems to have an effect on the way voters behave (Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1995 ; Geer 2006). Even the news seems to influence the way individuals shape their beliefs (Iyengar and Kinder 1987). These phenomena seem to be empirical validations of Mill's reasons for allowing liberal discourse. By allowing information to be in the hands of the public, citizens are able to revise and change their beliefs in accordance with new information.

In social and political psychology, the same revisions haven taken place over the last few decades. Zaller's (1992) conception that the beliefs that the majority of people have are influenced by elites indicates how responsive individuals may be to reasons over time. Other research has found and both find that racial tensions are exacerbated when individuals are forced to interact with someone of a different race (Berinsky 2002 ; Berinsky 2004). In these studies, respondents often use racist heuristics to arrive at conclusions regarding social policy or opinions on racialized policies (Gilens 1999). Stenner (2005) finds that those with authoritarian personalities (based on the work of Adorno) are more likely to be xenophobic and to avoid revising their beliefs. As a result, they will fail to seek out actively information that contradicts their current reason but their beliefs can be revised. Sunstein's (2002) work illustrates that when a group of like-minded individuals engage in discourse without any dissenting voices they eventually

move towards more extreme. In this sense, Rorty, Stenner and Sunstein offer evidence that the flow of information in democracy is key to keeping individuals from taking a position that they would be unwilling to revise.

What this truncated list of examples serves to illustrate is how social and political theorists as well as political scientists have continued to develop new theories about human behavior. Most important is the fact that all of these examples have been offspring of the progress of Reason across time. Eugene Halton believed that the “time has come to find a new way of renewing reason” (1995, 280). I believe that the time is now, and an effective way to renew the appreciation and importance of Reason is by giving reasons in its defense. By defining reason in relation to Reason, and noting the important historical transformations in how philosophy has thought about thinking, we have arrived at a realization of Reason’s reflexivity. By raising the examples of how Reason has advanced our understanding of social and political thought, this second chapter has begun the task of renewing reason, and we may now begin to address a pragmatic, and more pressing, claim. The project now turns, in its final three sections, to reconcile the dilemma in contemporary democratic theory surrounding the privileging of reason-giving in democratic forums. This will be done in two parts. The first part will be a review of the relevant literature in modern democratic theory, including an explication of contemporary objections to the deliberative model. Here the work of Iris Young, Chantal Mouffe and Lynn Sanders will be drawn upon to raise a collective critique of the reason-giving model. Next, a reconceptualization of this dilemma will be employed to remedy the apparent incongruence between Reason and the deliberative realm. This abstraction will involve conceiving of the deliberative democratic literature as a

*deliberative forum*. This nuance will allow the apparent tension between Reason and deliberative speech to be resolved.

## CHAPTER III

### DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY AND ITS DISCONTENTS

The purpose of this thesis is to articulate an argument for *Reason-guided reason-giving* as the primary standard for all democratic discourse. For the last few decades, political theorists have launched several well-founded attacks against the use of pure reason as a standard for deliberative discourses. Yet all do this without simultaneously explicating how valuable the employment of reason is to their own particular critique – a critique normally aimed toward some refinement of justice or morality. Heretofore, theorists have seemingly discounted the use of reason over time to allow for increasingly just and ethical programs. Whereas theorists have traditionally placed *logic-centered* positions at direct odds with inclusion, justice and ethics, we must recognize reason’s role in all of these developments and therefore reevaluate Reason’s place in democratic thought. In order to expound on this line of thinking effectively, several tasks must be completed. First, we should call to mind the nature of deliberative democracy, as well as the relevant criticisms of reason-based democratic discourse. After this review of the literature, the project will move to explicate the criticisms that some theorists have offered of the privileged status of *Reason-guided reason-giving* in deliberative democracy. Finally, this section will emphasize the importance of critique and make the transition into the final section of the project where we can return to an emphasis on Reason.

Joshua Cohen lays out the fundamental qualities of the deliberative democratic context as centering upon three explicit needs that the deliberative model constructs. The first aspect is the need to “decide on an agenda,” followed by the proposal of “alternative solutions to the problems on the agenda” that are supported by reasons. The final aspect is for the individuals to “conclude by settling on an alternative” (Cohen 1997, 73). As traditionally articulated, democratic debate seeks to empower individuals by allowing their voices to be heard in a more egalitarian context. These political philosophers argue for this forum in the pursuit of a just outcome, defined so that all those who are affected by any decision must play a part in the decision-making process. Democracy in this fashion enables citizens to express their concerns for changing government and its bounds, as well as its general role in their everyday lives. A position like this is the most elementary explanation of the preference for democracy above other forms of government, as the deliberative or direct conceptions of democracy allow for individual interests to be articulated more clearly as well as many more voices to be heard. The argument follows that such an institution would be able to produce a fairer social policy, like a shared understanding of the politics of a community or deliberative body. This itself is a relatively modern concept. One only needs to look at how democracy was an idea treated with suspicion in early political philosophy (Plato, Aristotle and Hobbes all come to mind).

In the contemporary literature, the deliberative forum is normally described as individuals speaking with equal voices in some sort of parliamentary forum or roundtable where everyone’s voice is counted equally as they attempt to reach some sort of consensus either by voting or passing legislation (Cohen 1997). Though it has been

conceived in many different ways, the essential components of deliberative democracy have remain unchanged since Joseph Bessette coined the term in 1980. Central to this line of thought is that the process of deliberation, whereby every individual who is influenced by the decision the deliberative body makes is given equal voice, legitimates the end result of the democratic discourse. Obviously, this basic premise has acted as a springboard for theorists to modify and tweak the details of the deliberative process. Whether by examining acceptable modes of speech (like Young or Sanders) or carrying the project towards a national “deliberation day” (Ackerman and Fishkin 2004), the basic tenets of deliberative democracy remain unchanged.

Variations on the theory are limited only by the number of theorists who offer their own opinions and alternate models for deliberation. Fleming (1995) adds a concept of *deliberative autonomy* that enables “citizens to apply their capacity for a conception of the good to deliberating about and deciding how to live their own lives.” Others, such as Ivie note that “pluralistic politics, then, is a foremost matter of figuring out how a necessarily conflicted polity can bridge its divisions sufficiently for people to live together without sacrificing a healthy degree of diversity” (2002, 277). One of the fundamental beliefs about modern democracies is that they will be pluralistic along many different axes. This assumed level of diversity, especially regarding different conceptions of the good, is what makes the deliberative rules even more important because questions of fairness, equality and justice permeate the literature in constructing the deliberative arena. Dryzek and Niemeyer posit that this change is indicative of the shift in political philosophy when “the deliberative turn in democratic theory meant that the legitimacy of political arrangements came to be seen in terms of the right or capacity

of those subject to a collective decision to participate in deliberation about its content” (2005, 634). This indicates, perhaps, a revision in the way political theorists had conceived of democratic legitimacy. Currently, some argue that all decisions that affect any individual or group must be open to consideration by those citizens in some public forum.

Deliberative democracy has also been conceived based upon other structural technicalities. All the while the crux of deliberation, and the aspect that has drawn a significant number of critics, is that the deliberative process relies on formal reason to work through problems and come to conclusions. While the procedural aspects of deliberative democracy have also received a good deal of attention, it is this stress on reason and the reasonability of individuals that will be the main focus of this essay. Talisse articulates the definition of reasonability that is the focus of the democratic persona, that “reasonable citizens are *responsive* to reasons” (2005, 427). He continues, “reasonableness is hence a two-way street: the reasonable citizen is able and willing to offer justifications for her views and actions, *but is also* prepared to consider alternate views, respond to criticism, answer objections, and, if necessary, revise or abandon her views” (2005, 427-428). Here the concept of reason is seen in two ways expanded upon above. First, *as a faculty* that is used to develop theories of deliberative democracy (Reason) and secondly *as a justificatory mechanism* that allows individuals to articulate ideas and thoughts (reason). So while “accounts of deliberative democracy have so proliferated that many wonder whether there is anything to the idea,” the premise of deliberative democracy that is most important remains reasonable deliberation (Freeman 2000, 371). Although deliberation has taken on these many faces, largely for the

concerns expressed in this paper, these differing forms are normally influenced by the agenda of the particular theorist who is writing it.

Habermas, for instance, notes that the dialectical aspect of discourse theory is one that “invests the democratic process with normative connotations stronger than those found in the liberal model but weaker than those of the republican model. Once again, it *takes elements from both sides and fits them together in a new way*” (1996, 27 emphasis added). Politics, for Habermas arises from this total communication. Similar to the discussion of legitimacy concerned with all citizens affected by any political decision, Habermas contends that the notion of popular sovereignty arises out of a shared public discourse. Habermas advocates for a forum of “rational-critical public debate” characterized by “the people’s public use of their reason” (1989, 27-28). This point indicates one interpretation of how reason is important to the deliberative democratic context. Fraser characterizes Habermas’s forum as a public sphere that is merely like a “theater in modern societies in which political participation is enacted through the medium of talk.... where citizens deliberate about common affairs” (1990, 57).

Benhabib’s (1996) ideal forum for deliberation is rooted in the value of egalitarianism where legitimacy arises “in complex democratic societies ... from the free and unconstrained public deliberation of all about matters of common concern” (68). For her, “the normative basis of democracy as a form of organizing our collective life... are so arranged that what is considered in the common interest of all results from processes of collective deliberation conducted rationally and fairly among free and equal individuals” (68-69). In this context, deliberative democratic procedures may “generate legitimacy as well as assure some degree of practical rationality” (71). Finally, Benhabib

notices that one of the great conclusions of deliberation is that whatever political claims the deciding body makes, they are only “rational until shown to be otherwise,” and that “majoritarian decisions are temporarily agreed-upon conclusions, the claim to rationality and validity of which can be *publicly reexamined*” (72, emphasis added). In this way, Benhabib acknowledges the reflexive power of Reason at work within the deliberative democratic forum. The constituents are able to reevaluate whatever decision is made, in a legitimate context, over time. In this way, deliberation seems to permit (if not explicitly encourage) the notion of revisability discussed in the previous section of this thesis.

Hauptmann (2001) notes that a clear tension between deliberative theories and participatory theories exists. For Bernard Manin, and other strong democrats, these deliberative processes are ones that impart information to all those who participate. Manin agrees that deliberation can bring about a greater sense of political legitimacy regarding policy choices because it involves “political decisions [that] are characteristically imposed on all” and also reserves the “right of all to participate in deliberation” (1987, 352). Other strong democrats like Benjamin Barber focus on a “revolutionary spirit associated with political spontaneity” (1996, 351). Here the belief is that having a more active citizenry will lead not only to more legitimate decisions being made but also to a revived sense of civic life that revitalizes democracies. The benefits of this social capital, both bridging and bonding, are well documented in the work of Robert Putnam (2000). Like Putnam, Barber is concerned with the decline in civic engagement for normative-philosophical reasons. He believes that a “strong dose of political participation and reactivated citizenship” may be able to “cure” the ails of liberal institutions (1984, xi).

Empirical research has also found that the political participation or public engagement of people with differing beliefs may result in compromises across some political bargaining space. One of the most interesting pieces of this research is Sunstein's (2002) work on group polarization, which notes that if individuals are only exposed to like-minded others, they are more likely as a group to move toward a more extreme position. Group polarization is also understood by Zuber, Crott and Werner (1992) to change the way individuals make political decisions as both rational individual agents and as democratic participants. Stasavage (2007) carries this information onto a Rousseauian critique of representation, that elected officials are more likely to respond to private information than public information when making a political decision. In this sense, perhaps as Rousseau (1968) envisioned deliberation among everyone in a small community may be a better way of arriving at decisions that are in the best interest of the whole society.

For John Rawls, *public reason* must be used within the deliberative realm to allow for the legitimacy of democratic decisions to obtain. Rawls understands this public reason as reasons that all individuals may be able to accept reasonably. Rawls writes that, "what public reason asks is that citizens be able to explain their vote to one another in terms of a reasonable balance of public political values" (1997, 116). Of course Rawls's other works (1993, 1997 and 2001) show that he has changed his understanding of public reason over time, the main idea stands. The legitimacy of deliberative democracy hinges on individuals being able to offer one another reasons that may be publicly accepted. For modern democratic theorists, Rawls's position raises a number of questions regarding the practical uses for public reason. For instance, where should

religious convictions fit into a deliberative model? Other theorists attempt to answer this question, but their projects will not be discussed at length here. The purpose of noting this is that several of political philosophers have answered Rawls and served to revise further the notion of what the role of reason should actually be (Audi and Wolterstorff 1996 ; Perry 2003 ; Eberle 2002 ; Macedo 1990 ; Macedo 1997 ; Horton 2003 ; Rosenblum 2000).

Gutmann and Thompson found that the concern surrounding which reasons should count is “inescapably a substantive question” (2004, 99). Yet Gutmann and Thompson posit that the norm of reciprocity, where individuals are expected to give others reasons for the rules that bind them, has a part in the development of all deliberative situations. Gutmann and Thompson also believe that deliberative democrats must be willing to have their “own principles, as well as other moral principles, [subjected] to critical scrutiny over time” (2004, 112). In this schema, deliberative democrats may move past Ackerman’s (1989) situation where moral objections to policies are kept out of the liberal democratic realm because there may be an eventual consensus on some moral issue that allows its entry into the liberal democratic forum. As Misak notes, the deliberative context is one that is closely tied to the “pragmatist theory of truth,” where we defend the beliefs we hold but must also be open to revising them after critical inquiry (2004, 9). In this reading, deliberative democracy seems to follow the reflexivity of Reason over time to arrive at a temporary truth that will hold until it is corrected through the critical enterprise. This concept is the very nature of pragmatism.

Still others eschew the pragmatist’s conclusions regarding truth and look instead towards the epistemically justifiable conclusions. Estlund, for instance, is concerned with

a type of *epistemic proceduralism* where “democratic legitimacy requires that the procedure is procedurally fair and can be held, in terms acceptable to all reasonable citizens, to be epistemically the best among those that are better than random” (1997, 174). Dryzek’s (2005) *discursive democracy* centers on the ability for the democratic conversation to occur across time and space much like the notion of Reason’s reflexivity. For Dryzek, democracy ought to be “discursive in that public reasoning is thought of as a decentred [sic] conversation carried on across time and space” (Parkinson 2003, 185). In this way, Dryzek believes discursive democracy may more readily focus on the dilemmas of “prominent identity politics” that have arisen recently in democratic literature (2005). *Agonistic democrats* believe that the “conflictual or oppositional aspect of politics is not merely an unavoidable but regrettable condition to be mediated and ultimately minimized through endless bargaining” (Deveaux 1999, 3). For these theorists, democracy should not appeal to some universally acceptable conception of rationality. The very attempt to do this, as Mouffe and others contend, is that it would silence ethical or normative differences and encourage conformity to some fixed principles of justice.

Taken together, all of these conceptions of deliberative democracy “show not only the variety of positions within deliberative theory, but also the robustness of the deliberative ideal in dealing with the problems facing contemporary democracy” (Bohman and Rehg 1997, xiii). Whether one believes Barber’s claim that “democracy enjoins constant, permanent motion – a gentle kind of permanent revolution,” it is clear to see that theorists have been busy answering one another’s claims regarding the right way to order a legitimate democratic polity (Barber 1997, 352). Other concerns, such as the size of the polity (Walzer 1999), and the vigor of the citizens (Lummis 1996) have also

been brought to bear in contemporary democratic theory. For the aim of this project, the most important point about the diversity of the democratic literature is that authors are able to critique previous conceptions of ideal democratic situations. What this section will now do is elucidate the criticisms of three theorists who do not believe that Reason-guided reason-giving ought to be the preferred mode of communication in a deliberative setting: Iris Young, Chantal Mouffe, and Lynn Sanders.

Young seeks to end oppression and domination in the deliberative democratic context by adding more inclusive forms of speech. Young does not want to do this, however, by changing the disadvantaged individual's resource base or background justice (e.g. a Rawlsian appeal to primary goods) that may have unfairly disadvantaged them, but by permitting and placing equal moral worth on certain styles of communication and expression that anyone may employ. While some may argue that her appeal to *greeting*, *rhetoric* and *storytelling* does not solve the systemic biases against underrepresented groups, this criticism of deliberative democracy will serve as the main example in properly situating both modes of *reason* in deliberative democratic theory.

In our minds we may already have an idea of deliberation closely akin to a formal debate, where points are presented, reasons are given, conclusions are drawn and votes are tallied. This conception, in fact, is typical of formal and organized legislative thought: an issue is raised, interpretations given, logical arguments presented, and policy prescriptions rendered. This deliberative scheme is in accordance with the rough sketch of deliberative democracy as presented by Cohen (1997). This process, according to Young, is incomplete. In order to avoid the pitfalls of using only formal reason, Young advocates for the inclusion of modes of expression that "a broader conception of

communicative democracy requires in addition to critical argument: greeting, rhetoric, and storytelling” (Young 1996, 129). To serve the aim of this project best, it would be prudent to begin with a summary of what Young means by *greeting*, *rhetoric* and *storytelling*.

*Greeting* is what those deliberating use to “recognize one another in their particularity,” and includes, aside from “hello” and “good morning,” “forms of speech that often lubricate ongoing discussion with mild forms of flattery, stroking of egos, and deference” (Young 1996, 129). To have a deliberative session requires the “polite acknowledgement of the Otherness of others,” as Young puts it, advocating that flattery and deference must occur for political dialogue to be possible. Young apparently disagrees with the claim that individuals can somehow tacitly consent to treating those in the political realm as equals. Based upon the criteria of reason-giving alone, she instead advocates for individuals to defer and recognize this “Otherness in others.” In order to have a free exchange of ideas we should acknowledge the difference in individuals and their histories as well as an individual’s particular situatedness.

*Rhetoric* “names the forms and styles of speaking that reflexively attend to the audience in speech” (Young 1996, 130). Rhetoric for Young is what “constructs speaker, audience, and occasion by invoking or creating specific meanings,” acting as a bridging mechanism “whether the speaker and audience share meanings or not” (Young 1996, 130). According to Young’s theory, one of the functions of rhetoric is “to get and keep attention.” Here, rhetoric is essentially diametrically opposed to rational speech and serves an important function in engaging the mind. By drawing people to listen, rhetoric liberates deliberative democracy from being confined to “making assertions and giving

sober reasons for them, with the logical connections among them spelled out” (Young 1996, 130).

*Storytelling*, or narrative, “fosters understanding across [difference]” in three distinct ways (Young 1996, 131). First, narrative helps individuals understand a problem with which they have no experience in order to “do justice to others” (Young 1996, 131). Second, “narrative reveals a source of values, culture, and meaning” and can explain the basis for why people hold the beliefs that they do (Young 1996, 131). While this “basis often emerges from the situated history of a people,” Young believes that these modes of speech are a welcome alternative to individuals being charged with reason-giving. Here, Young employs narrative as a means to understand where a deliberator (or in Young’s language, a communicator) is coming from. Third, narrative “reveals a total social knowledge,” again from the point of view of the speaker. Young concludes that storytelling allows the audience to “learn about how their own ... values appear to others from the stories they tell” (Young 1996, 132).

In including these three forms of communication, Young seeks to expand the nature of possible discourse, as pure deliberation (or formal reason giving) “can privilege the dispassionate, the educated, or those who feel they have a right to assert” (Young 1996, 132). Young’s argument is particularly important because it draws attention to the ethical and feminist implications of rigidly structured and regimented formal discourse. Certain modes of speech, explicitly those normally considered to be “rational argument,” are unduly privileged based on cultural and historical norms that have marginalized certain groups across time. Power hierarchies in democracy are certainly not trivial issues. If an individual is committed to including a greater number of people while also

limiting perpetuated hierarchies, Young's position seems to be a step in the correct direction.

Young's argument then is to make deliberative democracy more inclusive, something that is important to most democrats in order to achieve legitimacy. Questions of exclusivity may also pose pragmatic problems as James Bohman posits that "while including everyone makes the ideal impractical, limiting participation and opportunities for influence makes it potentially elitist" (2004, 24). This central tension between efficiency and participation seems to exclude some people on the margins, no matter who is left in or out. On the one hand, this pragmatic need for efficiency acts in one way to argue that direct democracy (where everyone voted) would not be worth the pitfalls of pragmatic implication (Dryzek 1996). Conversely, the egalitarian aspect of Young's argument seem to limit e-democracy (or internet based voting) because it would only let those who possess the proper technology into the democratic forum. For Young, the concern now is with explaining to deliberative democrats that the privileging of certain modes of speech discounts already marginalized groups. Creating a power hierarchy thereby disallows some voices to be properly accounted for, and therefore calls the legitimacy of any deliberative project into question. In this critique lies Young's laudable commitment to feminism, egalitarianism and social justice.

Most importantly for Young, and underlying her addition of greeting, rhetoric and storytelling to the deliberative realm, is the concern with the connection of reason and impartiality. Young, like many other theorists (Sanders 1997 ; Mouffe 1999), contend that the standard of reason as calm and impartial is misconstrued on two accounts. First, the fact that reasoned speech is desirable because it is calm is something that discounts

passion (a stereotypically feminine mode of communication) and thereby unfairly privileges men:

The norms of deliberation, finally, privilege speech that is dispassionate and disembodied. They tend to presuppose an opposition between mind and body, reason and emotion. They tend falsely to identify objectivity with calm and absence of emotional expression... The speech culture of white middle-class men tends to be more controlled, without significant gesture and expression of emotion (1996, 124).

The second aspect of the dispassionate nature of democratic speech is the question surrounding impartiality. Young argues that the quest for impartiality “seeks to eliminate otherness” often “resulting in authoritarianism” (1985, 385). Young and other critics of this logocentric position believe that the quest for reason’s impartiality or justice’s blindness are misguided because neither impartiality nor blindness is a desirable feature for a democratic standard as neither allows us to recognize individuals in the particular situatedness or difference.

This line of thought, stressing the recognition of difference, is carried out by Young in Justice and the Politics of Difference (1990) as well as Benhabib in The Rights of Others (2004). Benhabib’s position is to recognize others in the universal humanness, not by any other means except a person’s intrinsic worth as a global citizen. Sanders also echoes Young’s claims on the basis that “although deliberators will always choose to disregard some arguments, when this disregard is systematically associated with the arguments made by those we know already to be systematically disadvantaged, we should at least reevaluate our assumptions about deliberation’s democratic potential” (1997, 349). For Sanders, the dilemma calls into question the very legitimacy of the deliberative democratic project. Compounded with Young’s analysis that the quest for

reason's impartiality is undesirable, these two theorists raise serious doubts concerning the effectiveness of deliberation to achieve its goals of a more representative mode of governance. This however, brings us to Chantal Mouffe's criticisms regarding the possibility of a freely arrived at consensus, one that is absent of coercion.

For Mouffe, the problem is rooted in Wittgenstein's conception that reason-giving eventually gives way to persuasion as opposed to rational discourse. For Mouffe (1996), the way we view others in the democratic forum ought to be

As an "adversary," i.e., somebody with whose ideas we are going to struggle but whose right to defend those ideas we will not put into question. This category of the adversary does not eliminate antagonism, though, and it should be distinguished from the liberal notion of the competitor, with which it is sometimes identified. An adversary is a legitimate enemy, an enemy with whom we have in common a shared adhesion to the ethico-political principles of democracy. But our disagreement concerning their meaning and implementation is not one that could be resolved through deliberation and rational discussion, hence the antagonistic element in the relation.

Taken as such, the adversary replaces the notion of the individual that is engaged in a democratic roundtable with other citizens. Instead of being forced to use formal arguments or reason-giving alone, this adversarial model sets out "not to eliminate passions nor to relegate them to the private sphere in order to render rational consensus possible, but to mobilize those passions towards the promotion of democratic designs" (1996, 755). Thus, Mouffe's model allows for individuals to use passionate speech to stress the importance of her beliefs as opposed to formal modes of reasoning that are situated among multiple hierarchies of power.

This shift for Mouffe is a change that is normatively warranted, otherwise there would be no problem within the traditionally argued deliberative forum. As Mouffe

(2000) contends, “a well-functioning democracy calls for a vibrant clash of democratic political positions. If this is missing there is always the danger that this democratic confrontation will be replaced by a confrontation between non-negotiable moral values or essentialist forms of identifications.” Furthermore, though the notion of Reason-guided reason-giving “did play an important part in the emergence of democracy, it has become an obstacle in the path of understanding those new forms of politics, characteristic of our societies today, which demand to be approached from a nonessentialist perspective” (Mouffe 1989, 33).

As illustrated by Young, Mouffe and Sanders, if the deliberative realm weighs the process of reason-giving as the most important part of coming to agreements regarding the future of the deliberative body, the forum seemingly privileges traditionally androcentric or logic-centered modes of speech which inadvertently perpetuate gender-based domination and oppression within a democratic forum. The solution to this new problem is to downplay the importance of reason-giving and allow women or other historically disenfranchised groups to be on an equal footing with those privileged peoples who are more easily able to produce these other traditionally privileged modes of speech. This leveling of the playing field is an admirable cause *vis-à-vis* legitimacy. Even though some may argue that Young’s communicative model lacks mechanisms to prevent egalitarian modes of speech from becoming co-opted by these historically favored groups, perhaps those who may be able to pay for training in homiletics or storytelling, Young’s critique of traditional deliberative democracy seems to be supported through one of the very same modes it criticizes: the use of Reason.

In this reading, Young's commentary on communicative democracy is practically self-defeating as she employs formal appeals to Reason. Instead of using the communicative measures of greeting, rhetoric or storytelling, Young employs academic writing standards to get her point across, and does so very effectively. By appealing to the reader's *reasonable* nature, that they may revise their beliefs about acceptable modes of communication in the democratic context, Young's work illustrates the fluidity of democratic beliefs and one of the great promises of deliberative democracy. In so doing, Young adequately illustrates the question at the heart of this paper: if *reason* is still permitted to make arguments for historically *unreasonable* modes of communication, why should anyone say that Reason ought not be the ultimate standard for democratic discourse? It seems as if Reason should be the democrat's standard if Reason-guided reason-giving allows us to progress towards justice, ethics and the rightful inclusion of historically disenfranchised groups – as it most certainly does in Young's case.

When asked to evaluate Young's critique of deliberative democracy and her *communicative model*, the reader must employ both modes of reason to adjudicate competing claims. The same process must occur in Cohen's ideal deliberative context. This dilemma is certainly not something that Young had overlooked and is not a criticism of her communicative model. Rather, this project seeks to explain the *necessity* of a reason-based standard for deliberative discourse situated within the larger context of deliberative democratic theory. To accomplish this task will require the reframing of the debate surrounding deliberative democracy in a larger context by employing an argument similar to the Rawls's "Archimedean point" which will allow us to evaluate the system we are inspecting objectively (1999, 230). Obviously, employing a purely Rawlsian

construct would not come without its fair share of reason-based criticisms (Pateman 1988 ; Mills 1997).

Instead of applying the lens of any one particular theorist, the final substantive section of this thesis will use a synthesis of the theories presented heretofore and use them to extrapolate an answer to the question that was posed in the introduction to this thesis: what ought the role of Reason-guided reason-giving be in the deliberative democratic context? This answer will require the reader to reconceptualize democratic theory and deliberation to redefine modes of deliberation and civic engagement in the democratic realm. From here, this thesis shall move on to employ a technique similar to Marx's *Critique of Critical Criticism* where the idea of critique may be employed upon itself, similarly to Reason's reflexivity, so that we may establish Reason-guided reason-giving as the ultimate standard for the exchange of ideas in the deliberative democratic forum.

## CHAPTER IV

### WHO'S AFRAID OF REASON?

My argument proceeds by asking the reader to envision the very act of reading this essay, writing scholarly pieces on deliberative democracy, discussing theories of democracy or even thinking about democratic participation as *modes of deliberation*. In this way, leading a classroom discussion, presenting a paper on deliberative theory, talking to your neighbor or any of a variety of thought processes (however articulated) may be conceived as participation in the democratic realm. Oftentimes, deliberative theorists get caught in the procedural aspects of deliberation and therefore lose sight of what deliberation may also be. Would anyone reasonably argue that members of a graduate seminar on democratic theory, who may speak about concepts of democracy, do not adequately characterize the reason-giving aspects of the deliberative democratic body? Granted, these students may not receive a vote or change policy, but that may depend on the structure of the course. The discussion may still remain exactly the same as it would in a deliberative body that was posed the following question: what is the most just *modus vivendi* that we may theorize? Perhaps one way of noting this in the deliberative democratic literature is in the way authors constantly respond to one another in scholarly journals. Whether it is Talisse's (2005) response to Posner or Pinter's (2004) reply to Habermas, we can see the way these ideas affect one another over time to cause a revision of argumentative positions in the history of democratic philosophy.

In this way, past theorists and current deliberative democrats are simultaneously engaged in a larger democratic forum. This conception of the academy as a reason-employing assembly serves to illustrate what I envision the standard for democratic discourse ought to be. Political philosophers often engage with others regarding questions of the good life and the best modes of governance. Over time the discipline, its members and their conversations have become increasingly egalitarian (in the grand scheme), shifting ideologically. Now we seem to understand that while reason itself is not the only way by which democrats may discuss different concepts, it still stands as the litmus test for the ability for deliberative democracy to change (Scanlon 1992). For a historical account of this, one can turn to Ivison's (1997) discussion of the idea of public reason in political philosophy from Hobbes to Rawls.

More importantly, we must suppose that everyone believes themselves to be a *rational agent*. We must suppose, that while some people may not have the best reasons for holding a certain belief, no one would say that they hold this belief for no reasons whatsoever. This is Scanlon's (1982) argument that an individual will go to great lengths to convince others that she is making the proper or most rational choice, no matter how absurd it may seem. As long as every agent will not concede that they are irrational, whether they are objectively acting rationally or not, we may suppose that they will respond to reasons and potentially revise their beliefs. While this process may be more painstaking for some individuals than for others, the willingness to revise one's beliefs is a central tenet to this deliberative democratic model. Gaus's (1997) discussion of sincerity or Postema's (1995) concern with public practical reason also serve this point: individuals when they are giving reasons "supposes that they are giving what they believe

to be good reasons” (Gaus 1997, 207). Thus, whether rationality grounded in reason is a fair standard to evaluate both democratic theory as a deliberative conversation and the ability for Reason to serve as the ultimate standard for any democratic debate.

Here, the self-critical nature of critique may be seen as the manifestation of Reason’s reflexivity. Ongoing dialectical critique, as Marx envisioned, is the “critique of critical criticism” that allows Reason-guided reason-giving to serve as the ultimate standard to determine whether a mode of discourse may enter the deliberative. In this way, we may hold up the standard of formal reason-giving and determine that it ought to be privileged based on its egalitarianism, as it permits a variety of arguments to be made that may act as self-correcting mechanisms within any theorist’s deliberative schema. We have seen how some authors have shifted their positions over time. Rawls notably redefines his notion of *public reason* over the course of several essays: this serves as an indication of Reason’s power, certainly more so than the legitimating force of the “public reasons” Rawls was offering for his own position.

Furthermore, my conception of Reason-guided reason-giving does not limit the marketplace of ideas as some contemporary critics may fear. Those same criticisms offered by Young, Mouffe and Sanders would all be permitted into the deliberative arena and would be able to be contested by other competing ideas. After all, as we can see from all three of those authors, they make their own particular arguments towards some goal of justice or egalitarianism by offering reasons why a legitimate democratic body would want to adopt revised principles that define communication. The nature of critique as dialectic can serve to illustrate this process. By having critics like Young and Mouffe welcomed into the deliberative democratic arena, we may ensure that their arguments, for

the use of what some may call non-arguments, are heard and evaluated in a fair context. After their arguments are presented, the political community may approve them. In Young's case, this would mean that individuals may be able to come forward and offer *greeting, rhetoric, and storytelling* as viable modes of communication instead of the traditionally privileged formal argumentation or reason-giving.

Here, Young serves as an exemplar. By giving reasons to illustrate why reason-giving may not be enough in the democratic context, she tacitly illustrates the multidimensional nature of Reason that deliberative democrats have yet to embrace explicitly. As Reason is able to reflect upon itself and influence the secondary and latter standards for democratic discourse for the better, we may find a way to achieve the Archimedian point and some level of desirable impartiality. Thus, by beginning as the ultimate standard for inclusion in democratic discussion and thereby eliminating initial ploys to undermine reason, this pure reason allows deliberative democrats to *derive* further principles of inclusion, egalitarianism, ethics and justice from within a complete democratic context. This conception also allows for academics and philosophers (of any sort) to continue the conversation towards a greater understanding of democratic truth.

The progression, similar to Hegel's conception of history, allows for reason to be impartial and to allow for better outcomes over time. Reason, now reasoning for itself without an object nor a subject to confine it, progresses through history to arrive at the same conclusions that Young and others have: the critiques of reason as an unfair ultimate standard are validated through the use of new reasons, and thereby illustrate Reason's primacy in the deliberative democratic context. Therefore, in the style of Young, it seems as if the most effective way of arguing for the inclusion of *traditionally*

*unreasonable* modes of speech is to set reason as the highest standard for deliberative discourse and draw upon it to derive corollary premises and axioms that normatively define and characterize the deliberative landscape. This conception of Reason affords the deliberative democrat the ability to hold that, at its core, her project is impartial and reasonable (in the sense that *reason itself* is now willing to revise its views).

Using political philosophy as a type of deliberative forum allows us to make a strong case for reason as the standard that shall lead democracy, over time, into a more progressive era. By realizing that Reason may act reflexively to make the case for justice, ethics and democracy, the faith in Reason as the ultimate standard may be fully restored. Whether one accepts this view of deliberative democracy grounded in pure reason, the primacy of reason is still apparent. Whether it is Young's own reason-giving in advocating a "more just" *communicative democracy*, the Hegelian progression of Reason towards a fairer and more just democratic theory, or the power of ideas and reasons to change and shape the world, the role of Reason in philosophy must be recognized.

In this way, deliberative democrats may be able to entertain the idea of Reason as the ultimate standard for what may enter the deliberative arena. As it is currently employed, democratic theorists must only recognize the role of Reason in the development of "more just" or "more ethical" democratic theories. The most important aspect of using Reason then is not to be able to criticize systemic power hierarchies or show that certain types of speech are exclusive. Instead, Reason may be used to support those criticisms that say that reason-giving cannot be the *only standard* for what enters into deliberation. However, if this reading of deliberative democratic theory *as a*

deliberative forum is incorrect, what might that say of the true nature of democratic philosophy? In order for a forum to meet the basic tenets of being deliberative, it seems that individuals must be treated as equals, no one should be able to discriminate against any other by silencing her opinion, and the conversation must be guided by Reason over time. It seems, at least according to these minimalist standards, that deliberative democratic theory fits as a mode of deliberation.

However, if one believes that deliberation should not be seen as a context for free and equal deliberation, then perhaps it can only be seen as an elitist enterprise where notions of the best form of government are put forth by some sort of ivory tower aristocracy. Would academics really believe that the only voices worth listening to are those who have published peer-reviewed journal articles? Would we expect that all citizens have (or should have) read the latest publications on particular questions and have stayed on top of a changing field, as many democratic theorists are expected to do? The answer to both of these questions is that the liberal commitment to equality of personhood dictates that we should not qualify what counts for citizenship in a democracy. Either way, it seems as if certain theorists are voicing privileged positions based on what they perceive the treatment of society's ignorant masses to be. In this telling, deliberative theory becomes a mode of deliberation where anyone may be allowed to give any opinion on the deliberative process they have. Judging by the notion of peer-review, scholarly conferences, etc. it seems that all along the way we have Reason-guided reason-giving channeling the course of democratic philosophy.

In this way, as Estlund describes, "the merits of democratic decisions are held to be in their past" (1997, 173). As deliberative democratic theorists, we are able to

understand the legitimacy of our own arguments based on a continually changing conception of both justice and the good life. By adopting a critical framework to challenge current and future dilemmas that questions of good governance face, we will always be able to revise our system of governance towards another dynamic truth. As Benjamin Barber writes, “this means that democracy is self-correcting: its insufficiencies are corrected democratically rather than by the imposition of externalities on the democratic process. The process is dynamic because it is self-transforming: educative” (1996, 354). In this way, we can see that “reflexivity...turns out to be democracy’s great virtue” (Barber 1996, 355). In order to understand the future of democratic theory, we must be continuously conscious of how far we have come.

By enabling a radical critique of all ideas, we can understand that the only way for philosophy to continue its enterprise is by understanding that the entire process has always been guided by Reason and reason-giving. Whether we impart this understanding of Reason through our classrooms, publications, or through some semblance of civic education (Gutmann 1995 ; Enslin, Pendlebury and Tijattas 2001), it seems that raising awareness of Reason’s role in democracy (and democratic theory) should be an objective of both endeavors. As for this project, it has served as only one voice in the deliberative democratic discourse, adopting various perspectives from the history of philosophy in order to synthesize a cogent argument for why democratic theorists ought not fear the privileged status of Reason-guided reason-giving. In the end, this particular project is open to the same revisability that all philosophy is – and I openly and deliberately ask for critiques of this view in accordance with Mill’s “standing invitation.”

## CHAPTER V

### THE FUTURE OF REASON

“Yet if human thought is bounded by a historical horizon, is there the possibility, as in Hegel's system, of an "end of history," that is, a moment when philosophy can transcend the bounds of historical determination and see things as they truly are? In particular, does Jefferson's assertion that "all men are created equal"--the guiding principle of modern democracy--have the status of a transcendent truth that philosophy has progressively come to comprehend, as opposed to being merely the latest in a series of historical horizons (something we would today relegate to the category of "culture")? And if so, is the historical progress of democracy then driven by the progressive uncovering of this timeless truth?” ~ Francis Fukuyama, The March of Equality

While any political theorist would probably be skeptical of a project that begins with a quote from Marx and finishes with a quote from Fukuyama (2000), the purpose of this juxtaposition is that we can make entire worlds of truth from the method that critique has given to philosophy. As Fukuyama notes, we are never truly sure if we are at a point in time where something will be considered True. In this sense, democratic theory might as well adopt the same theory that William James acknowledged of pragmatism, one that “has no dogmas, no doctrines, *save its method*” (James 1978, 31-32). In this manner, a critical orientation to all ideas is what will help us move from one historical stage in philosophy to another.

As we may empirically witness (Druckman and Nelson 2003), the deliberative discourse that philosophers partake in has a profound effect on how elites shape the ideas that govern society. Acknowledging that political decisions are made more effectively in a situation of more complete information, and understanding the historical relativism underpinning conceptions of the good, we can see that actual deliberation may only be

achieved through the process of Reason-guided reason-giving (Neustadt and Ernest 1986). If, as was realized in the first section, we can see a clear progression over time of ideas greatly influencing the way individuals even *think about thinking*, then we may wish for political philosophy to adopt the position of embracing reflexive Reason (Kuhn 1957). Such a philosophical progression is probably why Ryfe (2005) acknowledges that theorists could gain from greater interaction among schools of thought because no one has perfected democratic theory in the context of multicultural and pluralist dynamism. With the commitment that diversity of persons and thoughts is, as Galston would say, an “intrinsic value,” we may use critique to advance to greater conceptions of the good (2002, 27). In the end, perhaps we should heed the advice of Benjamin Barber. Barber believed that “to think aright about politics, we must act aright, and to act aright calls for better citizens rather than better philosophers” (1988, 211). This process, as witnessed in Young and others, begins with embracing Reason-guided reason-giving as the standard for deliberative democratic modes of communication and the perpetual motion of critique.

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