Consider the following case: As Jones is driving home from a union meeting, he sees an injured motorist lying in the ditch. He stops to help, but as he steps into the ditch he realizes that the person he is about to help is Smith, the owner who has been waging a bitter and protracted campaign to break Jones's union. How should Jones respond? Should he be moved by an obligation to do what will advance the interests of workers or should he be moved by an antagonism-blind obligation to help another person in distress? In what follows I will argue that Jones will be attracted, at least initially, by both of these answers and the radically different views of ethics they express. But I will also argue that he will see serious problems with both views. Thus, the last sections of this paper will be concerned with sketching a third view of ethics, one that promises to incorporate the attractive features of the first two answers while avoiding their problems.

It should be noted at the outset that I won't be trying to give a fine-grained analysis of the obligation to help another person in distress. Rather, my concern is to use Jones's (admittedly special) case to bring 'out a deep tension in our thinking about the role of ethics in the face of group conflict. Thus, my discussion will move very quickly to a rather global contrast between Marxist and liberal approaches to ethics. This does not mean, however, that I will be trying to provide yet another abstract characterization of the difference between Marxism and liberalism. Instead, I will be trying to see how the various moves and counter-moves between and within these traditions are reflected in the concerns and deliberations of White male workers such as Jones. In short, my aim is to use Jones's real life situation to get clearer on the theoretical impasse between Marxism and liberalism and to see if there is any hope of moving beyond it. One final introductory note - I've made Jones a White male worker rather than, say a Black activist who discovers that she is about to lose her job. This does not mean, however, that I will be trying to provide yet another abstract characterization of the difference between Marxist and liberal approaches to ethics. The fact is that we'll never get to such a social order if we attempt to base present obligation on such yearnings. This doesn't mean, however, that such yearnings can have no purchase at all in our daily lives. Indeed, these yearnings might provide the basis for such things as an obligation to help strangers in distress. Then we could say that Jones should try to become the kind of person who is moved by an obligation to do what will advance the interests of workers.

Consider, first, the following gloss on the case for saying that Jones should try to become the kind of person who is moved by an obligation to do what will advance the interests of workers:

(A) We live in a society where the interests of one group of people (workers) are sacrificed to the interests of another group (owners). A key factor in stabilizing such a social order is the notion that ethics should transcend the interests people have as members of particular groups. This view of ethics leads workers to ignore their long-term interests in bringing about a radically different social order. It also leads workers to downplay the conflict between the immediate interests they have as workers (e.g., the interest in defeating automation proposals that would eliminate their jobs) and the immediate interests of owners (e.g., in using automation to gain greater control of production processes). Furthermore, it leaves the stage open for owners to fill in abstract moral claims in ways that serve their own interests (e.g., the call to respect individual autonomy becomes the call to respect, above all else, individual property rights). Thus, in a society such as ours the role of ethics should be to clarify and make historically effective the interests workers have in creating a radically different social order. To be sure, workers yearn for a time when ethics will have the task of enunciating moral claims that rest on universal interests, but the fact is that we'll never get to such a social order if we attempt to base present obligation on such yearnings. This doesn't mean, however, that such yearnings can have no purchase at all in our daily lives. Indeed, these yearnings might provide the basis for such things as an obligation to help strangers in distress.
another person in distress:

(B) We live in a society where different groups of people have different interests and different visions of the good. To be sure, there is always the danger that the interests of some group will have a disproportionate influence on the overall direction of the society. But this doesn't mean that ethics should take sides. Rather, the role of ethics should be to enunciate, and make effective, overarching norms that members of all groups can accept as setting out a mutually acceptable framework for life in such a society. Since differing group interests and visions of the good seem to be enduring features of modern society, it is unlikely that we will ever achieve a society where ethical obligations can be based on universal interests. Thus, even when we incorporate a future-looking dimension into the role of ethics, we should not presuppose a social order without differing group interests. What we need from ethics when we look to the future is the same as what we need from ethics when we try to deal with present conflict, viz., overarching norms that contain conflict within mutually acceptable bounds. This means that Jones should determine how he should act by asking what obligations would clarify and make effective the consensus needed for life together when groups have different visions of the good. Once he sees ethics in this way, he will set aside as misguided the distinction between obligations we have toward strangers (where one presupposes ignorance of potential conflicts between group interests) and obligations we have toward people regardless of whether or not we recognize them as members of groups whose interests conflict with ours. Only the latter kind of obligation is relevant to the task of enunciating the consensus needed in our present society and in any future modern society. Thus, Jones should try to become the kind of person who is moved from the beginning by an antagonism-blind obligation to help another person in distress. Since such an obligation is not afforded by group interests or not, it will lead him not only to go into the ditch in the first place but to follow-through on the helping mission even though he recognizes Smith as his adversary.

Here it would be well to pause briefly to show how both (A) and (B) could have at least some purchase on Jones. Consider, first, what might attract Jones to (A). Suppose that as the strike drags on, some union members are beginning to consider giving up and moving to another town where there seem to be more jobs. Others are thinking of pursuing an early retirement strategy. Old personal quarrels are beginning to show themselves when union meetings take up difficult questions such as how to distribute striking strike benefits. Younger workers are starting to argue with older workers on how long a war the union should take. (Should we settle in a way that might get us in trouble in ten years?) Most important of all, perhaps, Jones himself is beginning to feel that a union defeat is possible, especially in view of the current technological and political climate. (Reaganism/Thatcherism, deskilling due to automation, etc.). Perhaps all these problems could be met without (A)’s appeal to ethics. (Indeed, Jones yearns for the time when co-workers lived in the same part of town, went to the same churches, etc., and didn’t need ethics to promote solidarity in the plant.) Perhaps new forms of solidarity will emerge if things get bad enough, but this strikes Jones as a risky bet. What worries him most is the possibility that if workers don’t find a basis for unity now, it may soon be too late for any effective resistance. For all these reasons, then, Jones will be attracted to (A), with its call for each worker to put group interests above private interests. Such an ethic would help people stick out the struggle rather than leave town, greatly reduce petty squabbles, and give hope to individual workers. How about (B)? What might attract Jones to it? Here we need to consider other parts of Jones’s life, say, his work with the local veterans group (which brings together people of different classes, religions) and his family life. Suppose that in these other aspects of his life Jones tends to adopt a ‘live and let live’ approach. (As he says at veterans’ meetings, ‘Though we might not agree on religion, we simply have to find a way to get along together.’) Suppose Jones has gone even further with this kind of thinking. Suppose, e.g., he’s come to think that contemporary ‘religious wars’ between Catholics and Protestants, between various branches of Islam, etc., are simply crazy, that these groups have got to begin to get along just as he and his cronies learned many years ago to get along with soldiers of different backgrounds. Suppose that this kind of thinking sometimes seeps into his views of owners. (Try as he might to resist it, he finds himself thinking ‘They’re people too - just trying to do well by their family, etc.’) Add to all this the growing feeling on Jones’s part that it’s just possible that the union might lose this struggle. Maybe, then, it’s time to hold out the olive branch a bit. When thinking along these lines, Jones begins to worry about the (B) because it makes ethics a matter of consensus around mutually acceptable norms rather than a matter of one point of view winning out. This pull toward (B) would also be supported by Jones’s life as a parent if, say, he’d been trying of late to be fairer to his teenage son on things like what kind of music gets played in the house. (He’s been allowing punk music on the record player at certain agreed times even though he hates it with a passion.)

III

Suppose it is granted that both (A) and (B) would have at least some purchase on Jones’s deliberations. How might Jones begin to deal with the obvious tension this creates? He might well, I now want to suggest, try to strengthen the case for (A) by focusing on a problem with (B), or vice versa. So that important questions aren’t begged, he might begin to focus on internal objections to (A) and (B), objections that require only that one take seriously the basic ideas of (A) and (B).

Consider, first, the following objection to our initial case for saying that Jones should try to become the kind of person who is moved by an obligation to do what will advance the interests of workers: (A) assumes that ethics can play a progressive role only if workers see ethics as grounded in the interests they have as workers. But if ethics is to be made relative to worker interests, there can be no objection to other groups doing the same. Now this may not worry proponents of (A) when they are considering the case of owners. Here they might say: ‘Let them have their own obligations, etc. If that’s the price we pay for workers beginning to focus on their own interests, so be it.
Nothing will change without class struggle and this struggle can only be aided by a view of ethics that clarifies the class basis of all ethics. (A bit of 'truth in advertising' won't hurt in this case!) But such a maneuver would work out for another disturbing possibility, viz., that a group-relativist approach to ethics will create conflicts between workers and other non-owner groups. Suppose that in some important contexts the interests people have as women point in different directions than interests people have as workers. Now group relativism begins to look problematic, at least when it's justified by reference to its ability to unify the historical forces needed to radically change the social order. To say obligation should be based on interests once has as a member of a group how begins to look like a recipe for conflict between various non-owner groups and within individuals who are members of several such groups. (E.g., how should a woman respond to her union's position on an issue when it is not clear that the interests of women and workers coincide?) It seems, in short, that (A)'s group-relativist approach to ethics will subvert rather than promote the unity needed for an effective struggle against the status quo.

Consider, next, the following objection to our gloss on the case for saying that Jones should try to become the kind of person who is moved by an antagonism-blind obligation to help another person in distress: (B) presupposes that people can distance themselves from the interests they have as members of certain groups. It assumes that they can step back from such interests and critically endorse ethical norms that do not presuppose any particular vision of the good. Furthermore, this answer presupposes that people can actually be moved by such norms once they are intellectually endorsed - even when those norms express the behavior they goes against the interests they have as members of particular groups. In short, this answer presupposes what has been called a 'Kantian' theory of the self. But such a metaphysical view of the self cannot serve the purposes for which it is introduced: first, such a self is too bare a self to be able to produce determinate, non-arbitrary norms; and second, even if it could produce such norms, it would be a mystery as to how they could move real people when the interests they have as members of particular groups pull them in conflicting directions. Thus, the seemingly liberatory vision of a morality based on critical choices of 'unencumbered selves' flounders on an unacceptable metaphysical theory of persons [3].

Let me try, in the spirit of this paper, to summarize how the objection to (A) and (B) takes hold. Suppose, first, that Jones has picked up signs from his sister, who also works at the plant, that she might not go on the picket line. He senses that the kind of 100% female solidarity that women share when they talk about their children on the picket line. He senses that the kind of unity women and male workers are going to need if they are to succeed can't be got in the way the army used to get 'unity' between, say, Jewish and Protestant soldiers when he was in the army. In fact, when thinking about these issues, Jones is inclined to think the latter 'unity' was forced and superficial. What (B) needs, but doesn't seem able to deliver, is a unity between women and male workers that does not require women to downgrade 'the women's point of view'.

IV

So far I have resisted the temptation to make Jones either a Marxist or a liberal. My concern has been to try to show that regardless of any theoretical orientation he would, first, be attracted to both (A) and (B); and second, see the internal trade-offs both these refined positions. In the final section I'll consider how contemporary Marxist and liberal theorists have tried to deal with the issues we've raised so far. Once these refined versions of (A) and (B) are in hand, I'll go on in the next section to consider the feminist critique of both these refined positions. In the final section I'll try to relate these theoretical moves and counter-moves to Jones's situation as a White male worker.

The Marxist tradition has an answer to the above objection to (A). It goes as follows: Class conflict is primary in the sense that it is the basis for all other forms of conflict. Milton Fisk puts this as follows: The centrality of class polarity does not mean merely that class domination is a reason, but that it is the reason for other forms of domination. Hence, the sexist attitudes of men are not themselves sufficient to sustain women's oppression. Attitudes exist and change only in relation to a social context. Thus, in a capitalist context, sexist attitudes are intermediate factors in getting at the reason for women's oppression [4].

So we can set aside the worry that grounding ethics in interests people have as members of particular groups will lead to irresolvable and damaging conflicts between non-owner groups and within individuals who belong to several such groups:

Class domination is the linchpin of the entire present system of domination. Implicit in the aim of liberation of any non-class group must be the aim of doing away with the current form of class domination. The ethical codes valid relative to non-class oppressed groups will be consistent with the interests of those groups themselves only if they are consistent with the interests, and hence the ethical codes of dominated classes. Without implying that there is a genuine conflict, one can then say that in ethics class has precedence over other groups [5].

The liberal tradition also has a reply to the objection we raised against (B). It goes as follows: A consensus around overarching norms doesn't require a 'Kantian' theory of persons, where one's core identity is independent of interests one has as a member of a particular group. Indeed such a consensus needn't presuppose any metaphysical theory of the self at all because we don't have to view a political system as expressing some ideal of the person. As Charles Larmore has recently noted, we can look at the consensus needed in a pluralistic society as a 'modus vivendi' among people having different ultimate commitments (often at home in different sub-environments), a system of mutual advantage, to which we
primarily adhere, not because it represents our deepest self-understandings, but rather for the more prudential reason that it serves our other values' [6]. So it's just false that such a consensus rules out a 'constitutive role for the interests we have as members of particular groups. All that is required that in the public realm we abstract from those interests that constitute our identity in the private realm. Once we set aside the notion that a political order must express some ideal of the person, we can see why deep differences in such ideals don't subvert the project of enunciating and making effective a consensus for a society such as ours.

Rawls makes just this point when he says that the 'original position' - his favoured device for enunciating a public consensus about justice, no more 'commits us to a metaphysical doctrine about the nature of the self than our playing a game like monopoly commits us to thinking that we are landlords engaged in a disparate rivalry, winner take all' [7]. All that his approach presupposes, Rawls now argues, is that as citizens we can step back from those loyalties that are constitutive of our identity in our private lives:

It is essential to stress that citizens in their personal affairs, or in the internal life of associations to which they belong, may regard their final ends and attachments in a way very different from the way the political conception involves. Citizens may have, and normally do have, at any given time, affections, devotions, and loyalties that they believe they would not, and indeed could and should not, stand apart from and objectively evaluate from the point of view of their purely rational good. They may regard it as simply unthinkable to view themselves apart from certain religious, philosophical, and moral convictions, or from certain enduring attachments and loyalties. These convictions and attachments are part of what we may call their 'nonpublic identity'. These convictions and attachments help to organize and give shape to a person's way of life, what one sees oneself as doing and trying to accomplish in one's social world. We think that if we were suddenly without these particular convictions and attachments we would be disoriented and unable to carry on. In fact, there would be, we might think, no point in carrying on. But our conceptions of the good may and often do change over time, usually slowly but sometimes rather suddenly. When these changes are sudden, we are particularly likely to say that we are no longer the same person. We know what this means: we refer to a profound and pervasive shift or reversal in our sense of self. This may be, for example, the way in which the road to Damascus Saul of Tarsus becomes Paul the Apostle. There is no change in our public or political identity, nor in our personal identity as this concept is understood by some writers in the philosophy of mind [8].

Are these replies adequate? I think not; for both confront serious external objections, objections put forward most forcefully by feminists and spokespersons for the various movements for racial equality. Although I will concentrate on showing how the women's movement challenges the refined versions of (A) and (B), it is important to note that parallel challenges are implicit in the various movements for racial equality. (As we shall see in the final section, the various movements for racial equality not only offer confirmation of the feminist critique of the refined versions of (A) and (B), they also express a point of view which, like that of women, must be taken into account by people like Jones if a third approach to ethics is to take hold in history.)

There is at present a serious debate within the women's movement as to how the struggle for sexual equality relates to workers' struggle for economic equality. Both sides in this debate agree that women's struggle for sexual equality must be seen as autonomous, that the goal of equality for women is to be pursued for its own sake and not just as a means to ending economic inequality. But feminists differ as to what this means for the orthodox Marxist claim concerning the primacy of economic conflict. Some argue that honouring the autonomy of the struggle for sexual equality demands something short of a total rejection of the Marxian claim and its replacement by the claim that patriarchal forces are primary [9]. Others argue for a 'dual systems' approach, granting equal force to economic and patriarchal factors. It is this last position that brings out most clearly the feminist challenge to (A) as we have developed it so far. The problem cannot be glossed as follows: On the one hand, it seems that one cannot preserve the autonomy of the struggle for sexual equality if one makes it an aspect of a larger struggle for economic equality; on the other hand, it seems that the struggle for sexual equality can't be a historically effective struggle unless it is seen as part of a larger economic struggle. Granted, writers such as Juliet Mitchell have tried to soften this tension, by claiming that 'the social conditions of work under capitalism potentially contain the overthrow of the exploitative conditions into which they are harnessed and it is these same social conditions that make potentially redundant the laws of patriarchal culture' [10]. But it is unclear whether her political point - that 'There is no question of either political movement taking precedence,' is compatible with her theoretical point that 'the social conditions of work under capitalism' hold the key to progress in the struggle for sexual equality [11]. Indeed, just this worry is behind Iris Young's critique of the feminist critique of the refined versions of (A) and (B), they also express a point of view which, like that of women, must be taken into account by people like Jones if a third approach to ethics is to take hold in history.)

The final strand of feminist theory also cast doubt on the refined version of (B) we considered above. To set the stage for this part of my argument I want to consider briefly Charles Taylor's analysis of what is involved in critical agency. To Taylor, such agency must build on, rather than transcend, certain 'horizons' or 'fundamental
evaluations' of the person:
Our identity is ... defined by certain evaluations which are inseparable from ourselves as agents. Shorn of these we would cease to be ourselves, by which we do not mean trivially that we would be different in the sense of having some properties other than those we not have - this would indeed be the case after any change however minor - but that shorn of these we would lose the very possibility of being an agent who evaluates that our existence as persons, and hence our ability to adhere as persons to certain evaluations, would be impossible outside the horizon of these essential evaluations, what we would break down is persons, be incapable of being persons in the
The notion of identity refers us to certain evaluations which are essential because these are the indispensable horizon or foundation out of which we reflect and evaluate as persons. To lose this horizon would make metaphysical claims about what it is to be a person. Rather, they are bringing to the fore certain views of ethics that presuppose a 'Kantian' self. They are psychological claims that have implications for any psychological facts about reflective agency. Thus, it

affirmation: ---

•••

affirm similar norms, but do not do so on the basis of a shared vision of the good:
In justice as fairness, social unity is understood by starting with the conception of society as a system of cooperation between free and equal persons. Social unity and the allegiance of citizens to their common institutions are not founded on their all affirming the same conception of the good, but on their publicly accepting a political conception of justice to regulate the basic structure of society [18].
Different groups will affirm justice as fairness for different reasons - but none simply go along with it for no reason at all. Indeed, some groups will do so only on the fact that there are various bases of affirmation:
As for the question of whether this unity is stable, this importantly depends on the content of the religious, philosophical, and moral doctrines available to constitute an overlapping consensus. For example, assuming the public political conception to be justice as fairness, imagine citizens to affirm one of three views: the first view affirms justice as fairness because its religious beliefs and understanding of faith lead to a principle of toleration and underwrite the fundamental idea of society as a scheme of social cooperation between free and equal persons; the second view affirms it as a consequence of a comprehensive liberal moral conception such as those of Kant and Mill; while the third affirms justice as fairness not as a consequence of any wider doctrine but as in itself sufficient to express valuable non-prudential values. All of these regard the acceptance of the principles of justice simply as a prudent modus vivendi given the existing balance of social forces. Of course, there are many other possibilities [19].

Rawls's last remark, where he rejects a modus vivendi approach to justice, seems to suggest that Rawls wants to take a middle position between what Sandel calls 'deontological liberalism' (which makes critical agency problematic) and a purely prudential liberalism (which leaves no room for non-prudential values). Larmore, by the way, suggests such a middle ground when he says that the modus vivendi approach can find room for values that do not themselves have a prudential basis. In the midst of disagreement about the good life it not only preserves civil peace, but also protects our own particular view of the good and, because of the variety it permits, enriches our sense of its value. (These other values need not themselves have a prudential basis.) [20].
The question remains, however, as to whether such a manoeuvre can succeed: does such a middle ground provide arguments for the greater stability of the liberal consensus as Rawls suggests; or does it undercut such a consensus by smuggling-in the notion that one's own view of the good is after all the best view of the good? But again, my aim is not to show that we have a knock-down external objection to our refined version of (B). My aim is simply to show that there is a serious challenge here. That challenge, to summarize the above, goes as follows: Taylor and Sandel's point that critical agency must build on group loyalties seems to generate a conflict between the Rawlsian requirement that we transcend such loyalties
I would urge us to speak out of that experience, as part of a way of changing it, but also out of a recognition of what there is to learn from the perspectives on human life that have been distinctively ours [23]. None of this should be taken as suggesting that feminists argue that affirming the 'constitutive attachments' one has as a woman is all that there is to becoming a critical agent. As Jane Flax has argued, this only a necessary component in such a process: it is necessary to develop an autonomous feminist viewpoint... But women's experience, which has been excluded from the realm of the known, of the rational, is not in itself an adequate ground for theory. As the other pole of the dualities it must be incorporated and transcended... Feminist theory and practice must thus include a therapeutic aspect, with consciousness raising as a model and an emphasis on process as political [24]. The point that emerges from this focus on a 'feminist viewpoint' as a necessary starting point is that it may be difficult to get the critical agents needed for a Rawlsian consensus if each of us is required to see our constitutive analysis from the ground up, beginning with their own experience [22], and with Naomi Scheman who says that 'Rather than claim the right ... to transcend our experiences as women, I would urge us to speak out of that experience, as part of a way of changing it, but also out of a recognition of what there is to learn from the perspectives on human life that have been distinctively ours' [23]. None of this should be taken as suggesting that feminists argue that affirming the 'constitutive attachments' one has as a woman is all that there is to becoming a critical agent. As Jane Flax has argued, this only a necessary component in such a process: it is necessary to develop an autonomous feminist viewpoint... But women's experience, which has been excluded from the realm of the known, of the rational, is not in itself an adequate ground for theory. As the other pole of the dualities it must be incorporated and transcended... Feminist theory and practice must thus include a therapeutic aspect, with consciousness raising as a model and an emphasis on process as political [24].

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point to be stressed is that such a view of ethics would put
the various struggles for equality on an equal footing -
something a claim about the primacy of economic
domination is to succeed. That is, affirming one's
values around overarching norms would flounder on the fact that
individuals who are asked to transcend their constitutive
loyalties would be incapable of critically affirming any
norms at all. On the modified view we're now considering,
this worry would be met by drawing on (A)'s notion that
ethics should be grounded in the interest dominated groups
have in ending their domination. On this third view,
members of dominated groups begin by affirming the
constitutionally privileged groups' memberships and the idea is that as a result of this first affirmation they
will go on to a second affirmation, viz., of the need to
work together with other dominated groups if any struggle
against domination is to succeed. That is, affirming one's
constitutive ties as a woman or a member of a
racial minority is a necessary first step toward
participating in the historical process whereby the needed
inter-group solidarity will be created.

Support is gained that this third approach looks
promising at the theoretical level. This would mean
little if it didn't also look promising at the practical
level, if it didn't also promise to engage the concerns and
deliberations of people like Jones. I want to conclude,
therefore, with some highly tentative remarks about the
practical prospects for this third approach. Here I think it
is important to resist two temptations. The first has to do
with my suggestion that the women's movement has had at
least some impact on White male workers like Jones. Our
third approach requires that Jones will be equally
influenced by the movements for racial equality. But it
seems to me that our racially segregated society makes
this more problematic than the claim that Jones has been
forced to take more seriously the interests of women. I do
not in any way mean to suggest that racism is 'deeper
than sexism in some abstract sense. Rather, my point is that
existing social arrangements push White male workers
toward acknowledging the 'woman's point of view' in a
way that they do not force them to acknowledge, say, the
'Black person's point of view' [27]. The first temptation to
resist is to argue for the viability of our third approach
as we are joined

Notes
1 This way of introducing a forward-looking dimension into the first
answer is developed in Milton Fisk in Ethics and Society: A Marxist
Interpretation of Value (Harvester Press, 1980): 'I am driving
along a deserted street and come across the victim of a hit-and-run
accident who is now lying on the sidewalk. Meanwhile, I am playing baseball
with my son in the park and play expends into a game as we are joined
by a group of strangers. Each possesses a forensic life apart from the
conflict resulting from the relations of domination within class
society... The right and obligations of people during such gaps are
different than they are elsewhere. Though Rockefeller of Exxon is
owed nothing by me, Rockefeller the unidentified hit-and-run victim or
the unidentified second baseman is' (p. 12).
2 For a recent discussion of this worry, with particular reference to the
need for active resistance to automation, see David Noble, 'Present
Technology?', Democracy (Fall 1983). To Noble, the same
technology that has extended capital's reach and range of control has also rendered it more dependent upon highly complex, expensive,
and precarious systems and thus more vulnerable to worker resistance and
especially to disruption through direct action. But it is becoming
increasingly apparent that this 'window of vulnerability' of capital will not stay open forever. At some point, the situation will become
stabilized, the new systems will be sufficiently debugged and the
opportunities for opposition will be foreclosed. Moreover, in light of the
current trend toward an ever-weaker labor movement, more people are beginning to understand that, however weak it might be now, labor
is at present more powerful than it is likely to be in the future' (p.
76). (Note: This essay is part of Noble's forthcoming book, Smash
Technology, New York: Oxford University Press, 1983.)
3 Michael Sandel develops these points in his critique of what he calls
'deontological liberalism' (Liberalism and the Limits of Justice,
Cambridge University Press, 1983): 'the deontological self, being
wholly without character... is incapable of self-knowledge in any morally serious sense. Where the self is unembodied and
desperately dispossessed, no person is left for self-reflection to
reflect upon. This is why, on the deontological view, deliberation
about ends can only be an exercise in arbitrariness... When I act out of
more or less enduring qualities of character, by contrast, my choice of
ends is not arbitrary in the same way... I ask, as I deliberate, not only
what I really want but who I really am, and this last question takes me
beyond an explanation to my desires alone to reflect on my identity itself... Although there may be a certain ultimate contingency in my
having wound up the person I am - only theology can say for sure - it
makes a moral difference none the less that, being the person I am, I
affirm these ends rather than those, turn this way rather than that.
While the notion of constitutive attachments may at first seem an
obstacle to agency - the self, now embittered, is no longer strictly
prior - some relative fixity of character appears essential to prevent
the lapse into arbitrariness which the deontological self is unable to
avoid' (p. 180).
4 Fisk, Ethics and Society, p. 30.
5 Ibid., pp. 51-52.
6 Charles Larmore, 'Liberalism and Limits of Justice', Journal of
7 John Rawls, 'Justice as Fairness: Political Not Metaphysical',
Philosophy and Public Affairs, Vol. 14, No. 3 (Summer 1985), p. 239. It
should be noted that although Rawls seems to endorse this 'nonexpressive'(in Larmore's view) view in 'Political Not Metaphysical', in 'Justice as
Fairness: Political Not Metaphysical' that he explicitly sets himself to the task of showing that 'Justice as fairness can be understood as political not
metaphysical' (p. 240). Rawls sets aside Sandel's critique of his work
by saying: 'I think Michael Sandel mistook in supposing that the
original position involves a conception of the self "...shorn of all its contingently-given attributes", a self that "assumes a kind of supra-empirical status, ... and given prior to its ends, a pure subject of agency and possession, ultimately thin" ... I cannot discuss these criticisms in any detail. The essential point (as suggested in the introductory remarks) is not whether certain passages in Theory call for such an interpretation (I doubt that they do) but whether the conception of justice as fairness presented therein can be understood in the light of the interpretation I sketch in this article and in the earlier lectures on constructivism, as I believe it can (p. 239n).

8 Ibid., pp. 260-61.

9 Perhaps the clearest statement of this position is due to Shulamith Firestone in The Dialectic of Sex (Bantam, New York, 1970).


11 Issac Balbus develops such a critique of Mitchell in Marxism and Domination (Princeton University Press, 1982), pp. 178-88.


13 For a Marxian critique of Young's position see Milton Fisk's 'Feminism, Socialism and Historical Materialism', Praxis International, July 1982.

14 Fisk calls for an historical materialism that distinguishes between stimulus causes and the underlying structural causes. On Fisk's view, this would allow us to say that 'Neither economics events nor related class phenomena have primacy as stimulus causes. But the economic is primary as a structure within which both patriarchy and racism can act as stimulus causes' (p. 124).

15 Similar debates occur within other liberation movements. E.g., Harold Cruse sees the orthodox Marxian claim as to the primacy of class phenomena have primacy as stimulus causes. But the economic is primary as a structure within which both patriarchy and racism can act as stimulus causes' (p. 124).

16 Published, p. 179.

17 Ibid., p. 179.


19 Ibid., p. 249.

20 Jürgen Habermas, 'Review of Liberalism and the Limits of Justice', p. 338.

21 Malcolm X makes a similar point when, in explaining why he was drawn to Black Nationalism, he says 'Well, in competitive American society, how can there even be any White-Black solidarity before there is first some Black solidarity? ... Even when I was a follower of Elijah Muhammad, I had been strongly aware of how Black Nationalist political, economic and social philosophies had the ability to instill within black men the racial dignity, the incentive, and the confidence that the black race needs today to get up off its knees, and to get on its feet, and get rid of its scars, and to take a stand for itself' (The Autobiography of Malcolm X, Ballantine Books, New York, 1965, p. 374).

22 Nancy Hartsock, 'Feminist Theory and the Development of Revolutionary Strategies', in Capitalist Patriarchy and the Case for Socialist Feminism, ed. Z. Eisenstein (Monthly Review, New York, 1978), p. 59. Teresa de Lauretis supports this point when she says 'the fact that today the expression "consciousness raising" has become dated and more than slightly unpleasant, as any word will that has been appropriated, diluted, digested and spewed out by the media, does not diminish the social and subjective impact of a practice - the collective articulation of one's experience of sexuality and gender - which has produced, and continues to elaborate, a radically new mode of understanding the subject's relation to social-historical reality' (Alice Doesn't, Macmillan, London, 1984, p. 183).


25 For a recent interpretation of Marx's own position on this issue and a critique of the view that the revolutionary project need not appeal to ethical motivation, see Allen Buchanan, Marx and Justice: The Radical Critique of Liberalism (Rowman and Littlefield, Totowa, N.J., 1983).

26 Roberto Unger holds out for this possibility in Knowledge and Politics (Free Press, New York, 1973). Unger warns, however, against using this possibility as an excuse for downplaying, here and now, the various struggles for equality. 'Until ... the central problem of domination is resolved, the search for community is condemned to be illatratous, or utopian, or both at once' (p. 252).

27 This is even more true, I believe, for White academics. Typically we live in White neighbourhoods and have little opportunity to interact at a daily level with members of racial minorities as they struggle to deal with crime, absentee landlords, etc.

28 For a survey of some recent work in this area, see E. Frances White, 'Listening to the Voices of Black Feminism', Radical America, Vol. 18, No. 2-3; Margarite Fernandez Olmos, 'Sex, Color, and Class in Contemporary Puerto Rican Women Authors', Berys, 15, pp. 46-47,