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## Insurrectionist Ethics: Advocacy, Moral Psychology, and Pragmatism

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A philosophy that offers moral intuitions, reasoning strategies, motivations, and examples of just moral actions but falls short of requiring that we have a moral duty to support or engage in slave insurrections is defective. Moreover, a philosophy that does not make advocacy—that is, representing, defending, or promoting morally just causes—a seminal, meritorious feature of moral agency is defective.

I query whether pragmatism offers compelling intuitions, strategies, motivations, and examples for persons to be insurrectionists or to support slave insurrections.<sup>1</sup> I do so by first exploring the sort of morality practiced and advocated by model insurrectionists. In this way, I provide a sketch of the intuitions, strategies, and motivations common among insurrectionists. I then consider common features of pragmatic moral thinking. The argument is conjectural and incomplete; it is intended to raise vexing issues as much as it is intended as a more coherent inquiry.

David Walker, Maria Stewart, Henry D. Thoreau, and Lydia Child, I believe, practiced insurrectionist morality. I choose these authors as models because they lived during the formative years of classical pragmatism. The authors of classical pragmatism inherited a world

shaped by racial slavery and lived in a completely racially segregated society. Insurrectionists fought to end both such worlds. My model insurrectionists lived during America's period of slavery and fought against a system that by any reasonable account was historically antiquated. Every Western and industrial nation, for example, had abolished slavery, racial as well as endogamous, prior to America's Civil War. If slavery was considered justified by appeal to some version of evolutionary ethics, America's racial slavery retarded evolution by stifling a valuable work force. If slavery was considered warranted because it was unknowingly used to enhance material production and thereby help secure longevity for a favored gene pool, or because it was a consequence of inevitable group conflict pitting a weaker group against a stronger one, then America's racial slavery lacked warrant. It was historically antiquated because the "white" gene pool became a hybrid; and it was hardly inevitable because the racial group categories of black and white were historically constructed.

David Walker (1785–1830), born in North Carolina, published and distributed the *Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World* in September 1829. Walker, a free black, owned a secondhand clothing shop near Brattle Street, in Boston. Walker was the Boston agent for the distribution of the *Freedom's Journal*, a New York–based weekly abolitionist newspaper. Walker's *Appeal* provided a secular and theological basis for insurrection by arguing that racial slavery was morally the worst form of slavery in history: It made race a marker separating humanity and promoted perpetual servitude for a people as a way of transferring assets from one population to another, preventing the possibility of manumission save through purchase and promoting the enslavement by Christians of Christians. In addition, he argued that the fact that the majority of white Americans were proslavery indicated the morally deficient character of Americans. The unfortunate outcome of American democracy was not a warrant for those that suffered death, beating, rape, and dismemberment. Biding their time in hopes of some future salvation was no solace for slaves. Walker and his work were banned in several states, although Walker as well as his book was instrumental in initiating slave escapes and insurrections. On June 28, 1830, Walker was found dead near his shop, the most likely cause being

assassination by proslavery forces. Walker used instrumental reasoning techniques as well as foundational principles to advance abolitionists' arguments and objectives.

Maria W. Stewart (1803–1879) promoted Walker's form of morality with particular emphasis on the liberation of women. As Stewart proclaimed in an 1832 Boston lecture: "Why sit ye here and die? If we say we will go to a foreign land, the famine and the pestilence are there, and there we shall die. If we sit here, we shall die. Come let us plead our cause before the whites; if they save us alive, we shall live and, if they kill us, we shall but die."<sup>2</sup> Stewart expresses a sense of tragic possibility: death with either action. And she expresses a sense of the possible: freedom if blacks confront the very population that holds them in chains. Stewart also expresses righteous indignation not only at the condition of slavery but also at discrimination practiced for the benefit of white business women: "I have asked several individuals of my sex, who transact business for themselves . . . would they not be willing to grant them [Negro girls] an equal opportunity with others? Their reply has been, for their own part, they had no objection; but as it was not the custom, were they to take them into their employ, they would be in danger of losing the public patronage." No matter the character, skill, taste, or ingenuity of Negro girls, they could scarce "rise above the condition of servants. Ah! Why this cruel and unfeeling distinction?" It is a lack, for Stewart, of moral character and religious conviction and the presence of greed that motivates persons to accept and to perpetrate prevailing heinous conventions. A sense of identity, the *we* Stewart uses, entails herself and all persons subject to being enslaved or who were slaves. As a free black, Stewart faced the possibility of being forced into slavery. She expressed righteous indignation and a refusal to accept instrumental calculations of individual benefits at the expense of the lives of others.

Henry D. Thoreau (1817–1862), in two important works, "Slavery in Massachusetts" (1854) and "A Plea for Captain John Brown" (1859), expressed deep sensibilities concerning the plight of blacks.<sup>3</sup> His "Slavery in Massachusetts" argued against the fugitive slave acts. Numerous states, including Massachusetts, passed a series of laws that allowed whites to treat blacks as chattel even if they were in a

state that did not sanction slavery. Thus, if black persons who had escaped slavery were found in a state that did not practice slavery, they could be captured and forcibly returned to their former owner. Blacks thus maintained the status of property even in free states; free blacks could become property if they traveled to states that outlawed free blacks and were deemed, through any number of contrivances, to be property. Moreover, in certain states, a child of a runaway slave might be deemed property of the parents' owner even if the child was born in a free state. Thoreau found such laws a violation of all good governance and human rights. "I would remind my countrymen, that they are to be men first, and Americans only at a late and convenient hour. No matter how valuable law may be to protect your property, even to keep soul and body together, if it do[es] not keep you and humanity together."<sup>4</sup> And in his support for the insurrection at Harper's Ferry led by John Brown, he praises Brown as "A man of rare common sense and directness of speech, as of action; a transcendentalist above all; a man of ideas and principles."<sup>5</sup>

Brown, a white abolitionist who attacked a federal arsenal, was considered notorious by much of white America for participating in the killing of white soldiers and attacking the principal supporter—the government—of slavery. Thoreau evinces a willingness to defy convention, popular preferences, and the instrumentality of law by sanctioning the use of civilian violence against reigning authority:

The slave-ship is on her way, crowded with its dying victims . . . a small crew of slaveholders, countenanced by a large body of passengers, is smothering four millions under the hatches, and yet the politicians assert that the only proper way by which deliverance is to be obtained, is by the "quiet diffusion of the sentiments of humanity," without any "outbreak." As if the sentiments of humanity were ever found unaccompanied by its deeds, and you could disperse them, all finished to order, the pure article, as easily as water with a watering-pot, and so lay the dust. What is that I hear cast overboard? The bodies of the dead that have found deliverance. That is the way we are 'diffusing' humanity, and its sentiments with it.<sup>6</sup>

The absolutely murderous sentiments and acts of barbarity commonly practiced by American slavers to maximize profit and create

subservience among blacks were not the sort of character traits Thoreau believed were sufficiently condemned by discourse. Moreover, romantic notions of persons as subject to change without force would leave generations of victims to suffer.

Lydia Child (1802–1880), the noted abolitionist and suffragette, was hailed by the famous antislavery agitator William Lloyd Garrison as “the first woman in the republic.”<sup>7</sup> The Radical Republican senator Charles Sumner credited her with inspiring his career as an advocate of racial equality; Samuel Jackson, an African American correspondent for the *Liberator*, proposed enshrining her alongside John Brown; suffragist Elizabeth Cady Stanton cited Child’s encyclopedic *History of the Condition of Women* (1835) as an invaluable resource for feminists in their battle against patriarchy. Child’s 1824 novel *Hobomok* included interracial marriage as a positive good. In so doing, she incensed liberal and conservative whites, despite her well-established reputation as an author and a journalist. In 1833, her literary reputation and her livelihood were sacrificed by publishing *An Appeal in Favor of That Class of Americans Called Africans*—continuing the approach to advocacy of Walker’s *Appeal*—a sweeping indictment of slavery and racism that called for an end to all forms of discrimination, including antimiscegenation laws. After the Civil War, Child crusaded for black suffrage and land redistribution and designed a school reader for emancipated slaves; she campaigned against the dispossession and genocide of Native Americans, publicized the plight of the white urban poor, championed equal rights for women, and worked to promote religious tolerance and respect for non-Christian faiths. Child’s life is indicative of what it is to engage in advocacy. Child knew that living by her principles would involve material losses, decline in social status, confrontation with established authority and opinion, and disadvantages to her family. When her sense of self-worth and respect as a principled person were measured and weighed against losses to others and to herself, surely there were reasons to avoid principles and actions for which there was little public support. Child, however, was dedicated to downtrodden and outcast groups that, like all the insurrectionists mentioned above, were groups understood as ontological entities

and collectives of kinds (for example, Negroes, slaves, whites, women, and Native Americans).

Representative heuristics “involves the application of relatively simple resemblance or ‘goodness of fit’ criteria to problems of categorization. In making a judgment, people assess the degree to which the salient features of the object are representative of, or similar to, the features presumed to be characteristic of the category.”<sup>8</sup> The use of representative heuristics is replete with inferential problems. There is a tendency to view outcomes as if they represented their origins (if a Chinese American is found guilty of a crime, for example, it’s not unusual for persons to suppose that China itself is implicated); or to judge each individual instance as if it represents a category (thinking that each rose, for example, is an exemplar of all roses); or to judge antecedents as representatives of consequences (for example, if America caused the action and is assumed to be a moral nation, then the consequence of the action is assumed to bear the marks of a moral outcome).<sup>9</sup>

There are also forms of stereotyping associated with representative heuristics. Some of the classical ways that representative heuristics is used in relation to racial and ethnic stereotyping include metonymic displacement, metaphysical condensation, fetishistic categorizing, and dehistoricizing allegories that strip the racial or ethnic category from being understood as a historically changing group. Representative heuristics is often a way of reifying the subject.

One fallacy and common feature of representative heuristics deserving special attention is that more often than not we believe that acts and beliefs are “dispersed” within the category. That is, we have a tendency to believe that individual bad moral acts are members of the class of bad moral acts, and that if such acts are performed by a group member, other members are highly likely to so perform; each act is not only added to the aggregate number of bad moral acts in the moral universe but substantively influences that universe, that is, the universe is worse off, and each act influences that universe in a way that makes more such acts possible. Conversely, good acts add to the moral universe and will influence others (possibly because a good act adds to the aggregate and thus makes the good

moral universe stronger, or in some amorphous world of consciousness, others will learn and be influenced by good acts).

We know that representative heuristics are faulty logical reasoning methods but that cognition is impossible without them, and they may not be, collectively, ineffective reasoning methods for the species. The naturalization of epistemology, at least the naturalization of this feature of how we understand reality, makes the idea of living "behind" reasoning impossible. In addition, the use of representative heuristic forms of cognition are not necessarily the source of ideations justifying or motivating oppression, although they can be major contributing factors. That is, it is not that the sheer existence of a necessary feature of what makes cognition possible is invariably a cause of oppression—a claim not even held by Derrida in *L'écriture et la différence*.<sup>10</sup> Rather, representative heuristics helps inform what sorts of categories we live through and how those categories inform our lived experience.

Insurrectionists were often against the imposition of conceptions of block universes, absolutes, and arid abstractions and against treating abstract social entities as stable categories. This is possible—self-identity as both transvaluing and representative of a kind—if the category that one understands oneself to be representing is a category that one is seeking to ultimately destroy. The deeply divided classes for Marx, the poor for Martin Luther King Jr., and the slaves for Walker are groups destined to go out of existence. For Alain Locke, limiting and provincial identities of segregated communities should, and would, succumb to a broader identity of humanity; a broader identity that would be mediated by local identities with much less meaning and stability than existed in human history. Walker, Marx, King, and Locke, however, saw themselves as representing groups that they hoped would go out of existence. Whether insurrectionists see themselves as representing a group that would eventually disappear, or whether they see themselves as representing the broad interest of humanity that should be used to end fractured or essentialized local groups, insurrectionists envision a world overcoming the very bounded local identities, categories, and kinds that they represent. In this sense, it is arguable that insurrectionists may very well stand against block universes, absolutes, arid abstractions, and

stable categories. Yet, they promoted interests of narrowly defined categories, such as slaves, women, and natives. The world of limitation is replaced by a world with broader and more inclusive categories, for example, humanity, men and women, blacks and whites, and so on. But these categories are not without the same sort of problems associated with any category invested with ontological status to some degree.

Pragmatists have frequently cautioned against the use of representative heuristics, particularly the use of general categories as if they were ontological entities, such as class or nation. Pragmatists contend that arid abstractions, treated as if they were real beings, are misleading. We should use categories as heuristic tools to help us think about problems and not about stable essences. What Alain Locke termed our "invariable tendency to make categories into entities," or what William James held was treating abstractions as a block universe, is to be viewed with suspicion. Pragmatist social psychology holds that "we" categories are suspect, even if a necessary or integral feature of cognition.

There are numerous ways that one might define oneself. Livingston, for example, might be right in believing that James's conception of the subject is extremely radical and revolutionary because it offers a way of seeing the subject as always in formation.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, for Livingston, James's view of the subject requires that we move beyond traditional Western conceptions of the subject as either "real"—having objectively defined and limited traits—or "natural"—having traits solely shaped by limited historical experience. Moreover, Livingston may have a strong defense for a Jamesian subject, because he argues that pragmatists are indebted to the ideals of proprietary capitalism—particularly ideals of small communities and self-motivated, experimenting entrepreneurs.

Would a Jamesian subject feel compelled, against popular sentiment, to promote, organize, or encourage slave revolts and insurrections? Would such a subject organize slave escapes, knowing that they would need to kill Jim and Jane Crow slave-catchers and sellers of children, as well as cause the unintentional death of innocent bystanders? These are not the same sort of questions as "should Americans have participated in World War I or II," because insur-

rectionist actions are against established community consent (quite possibly democratically formed) and against established authority. Nor are they the same sort of questions as "should workers have participated in or supported the Chicago Haymarket riots," which erupted in an effort to promote an eight-hour working day. Although James in 1888 considered the riots senseless and anarchist, the rioters were not attempting to destroy a system of governance. Moreover, riots, organized and spontaneous, are important and influential features helping to create social change.<sup>12</sup>

Are the normative resources so deeply ingrained in classical pragmatism adequate? Is the category of *humanity* understood in a way that would justify radical action on behalf of the downtrodden, even if the consequences were likely to be harmful to the actors and others?

Contemporary forms of slavery, whether in Mauritania or southern Sudan, demand contemporary insurrectionists. In addition, they often require rejecting a commitment to one's own community and citizenship in favor of commitment to unknown persons. In America's racial slavery, slaves were seen as members of a separate human type and outside of the moral community established by whites. Commitment to such persons by whites was a commitment to people outside their community; so, too, for blacks who, in the early days of American slavery, frequently saw one another not as "black" but as strangers. It was not until the 1850s, for example, that blacks held "Negro only" conventions, and this was only after years of debate concerning whether it was justifiable to hold conventions organized by blacks for the purpose of establishing black organizations to promote racial uplift. Such organizations or meetings were considered anathema to the objective of ending slavery, racial segregation, and a race-conscious society. What resources are available in pragmatism that compels individuals to reject their own community, citizenship, and national allegiance to risk their lives for the well-being of strangers?

It will do no good to point to the accomplishments of Jane Addams and the Hull House any more than it will be convincing to point to the Paris Commune or the First International as adequate examples of how pragmatist or communist practice can be enriching. Where,

for example, are the pragmatist insurgents against contemporary slavery or the indentured servitude of Philippine nurses in California? I know where the monks, nuns, liberation theologians, Buddhist altruists, and communists are located on the world historical stage as agents of insurrection—but it is not clear that pragmatists are on the world historical stage as insurrectionists *as a function of their pragmatism*. There are certainly persons who cite pragmatism as one philosophy central to their philosophic orientation. Cornel West, for example, is a self-described prophetic pragmatist. However, his insurrectionist morality is clearly a function of his radical socialism, left-Christian sensibilities, and African American traditions of resistance against slavery, racism, and exploitation. Certainly, John Dewey, Alain Locke, and Jane Addams held deep commitments to uplifting the downtrodden. My query is whether there exist features of pragmatism that require, as necessary conditions to be a pragmatist, support for participation in insurrection.

Possibly, Theodore Draper is right in his story of the American Revolution—the revolutionaries never intended to create a democracy.<sup>13</sup> Their intentions, quite like those of most advocates seeking greater spheres of power, authority, and the imposition of their wills against prevailing traditional, religious, and political practices, were not realized. As agents in violation of prevailing customs and laws, they failed to shape social consequences to match their intentions. Voting, for example, involving the participation of the citizenry unfettered by exclusions according to station was hardly intended. Women, nonwhites, and men of low station, such as indentured servants, were normally considered persons that should not be allowed to vote because of some inherent defect. Possibly, Theda Skocpol has a defensible view: Revolutionary theories purporting to predict outcomes based on scientific analysis of social conflict systemically fail in their predictions.<sup>14</sup> Her institutionalist, comparative-historical approach, rather than a Marxist class analysis, a rational choice approach, an interactionist sociology, or an interpretative narrative, may very well prove a more effective account of revolution. Institutional accounts look at how rules and regulations shape behavior independent of the reasoning actions and be-

haviors of agents. Institutional rules and practices often generate results that have more to do with expectations and disappointments than models of change usually allow.

One reason an institutional account may prove more effective than its rivals is because it insists on an incongruity between explanations and predictions, intentions and outcomes. Yet, Skocpol is not blind to the radical changes in ways of living shaped by strong advocates and actors. There is at least accord between many competing explanations of revolution to some degree on the singular point of importance to my argument: Concrete predictions of revolutionary outcomes are rarely in accord with the intentions of revolutionaries, yet fundamental alteration of social structures does not occur without the concerted effort of individuals who see themselves as representative of a group intentionally trying to create a new world. There simply are no modern revolutions that did not include, if not decisively, at least in terms of important discourses, class conflict; no modern revolutions without conflicts over what rules should be followed; no modern revolutions in which intelligent plans and reasonable predictions were not nearly all wrong. Moreover, there are no revolutions or insurrections without representative heuristics, that is, without women who see themselves as representing "women" as an objective category; without persons who see themselves as representing the interests of the poor; without workers who see themselves as the embodiment of meritorious traits; without environmentalists who see themselves as pressing for the best interests of all sentient beings by pressing for the interests of environmentalists.

What are the pragmatist sources for justifying insurrection, given that the outcomes of insurrectionist action or support for such actions are not predictable, that the vast majority of insurrectionist actions and movements fail to liberate, and that contributions to liberating a population by insurrection or support for insurrection range from useless to tremendous? Instrumental and functional reasoning can be of limited value for predicting future events.

Insurrectionists normally believe that the outcome of their actions will lead to eventual success. Walker held the romantic belief that individuals and groups responsible for unjust acts would eventually be punished—if not while they were alive, at least in the next life.

Socialists normally believe that if not human nature then humanity's embedded sense of justice will incline people to favor greater income and ownership equity rather than less equity. Yet, income and ownership disparities have only increased over human history. Evolutionists and Marxists characteristically hold that antiquated forms of production will be replaced either because of a biologically driven tendency for populations to seek more effective and efficient control over reproduction or because conflicts tend to be resolved in favor of dialectically driven solutions. However, it is arguable that hope for ending the misery of existing generations is highly unlikely.

If an individual has no duty, from a pragmatist standpoint, to alleviate the existing misery of strangers, will that absence of action negatively influence that individual's flourishing and moral development? Assuming we have duties that are not contingent on the successful outcome of action nor on effective predictions of what will become successful, what duties are there from a pragmatist standpoint to overthrow slavery? No Americans had good reason to believe that their heroic acts to destroy slavery would, as an isolated set of acts, produce the desired results for themselves or for persons they loved. Nor had they any historical evidence to suggest that highly risky social acts would substantively encourage others to fight for abolition or result in successful outcomes.

The unpredictability of outcomes does not stand as a sufficient reason to defeat the justification that oppressed individuals or groups can offer for pursuing instrumentally useful paths. There is no human progress without the discord of social conflict, insurrections, and revolutions.<sup>15</sup> These are instrumental social actions. The outcomes are uncertain. Even if one is committed to an evolutionary view of change, there is no history of evolution without the history of insurrections, revolts, and revolutions. The uses of intelligence, dramatic rehearsal, dialogue, and discourse are hardly the sole modes through which institutions fundamentally change. As one author saw Dewey's views about revolution, "His theory could ride the crest of change but could not explain how such change might be initiated."<sup>16</sup> Moreover, even in Dewey's *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, there is no escaping the value of instrumental reasoning, although Dewey has numerous other reasoning techniques he pro-

motes: "If ideas, meanings, conceptions, notions, theories, systems are instrumental to an active reorganization of the given environment, then the test of their validity and value lies in their accomplishing this work. If they succeed in this office, they are reliable, sound, valid, good, true. . . . Confirmation, corroboration, verification lie in works, consequences."<sup>17</sup> As I have argued, however, consequences and their predictions are not good criteria for justifying insurrection.

The range of sentiments that can work as means for defensible ends is hardly limited to the ones most appealing to Dewey, such as dialogue. Murder, pillage, and destroying the property of democratically supported governments have on occasion produced favorable consequences for some individuals and groups. The material and mental well-being of interested populations may also gain from such actions. To deny this would be like denying that evolution exists without conflict, parasites, or unanticipated consequences of intentional and unintentional action.

In Walkerian terms, what sort of slave, Christian, or republican is it that does not strike a blow for abolition? Slaves in nearly every society used a wide array of strategies to survive and resist. These strategies included, but were not limited to, infanticide, suicide, self-mutilation, poisonings of masters and their children, flight, marooning, arson, and revolt. What method is considered preferable is irrelevant to my argument. That the use of some methods of absolute destruction of slaveholders and the bonds of servitude, however, should be given meritorious ranking is a crucial feature of insurrectionist moral criteria. Moreover, advocacy representing, defending, or promoting in some form the liberation of self and other from bondage is a good that warrants special honorific status. Change may be best understood as irreversible, cumulative, and gradual. Change is not "one" phenomenon. It is a multitude of accidental, intentional, and unpredictable results. It does not happen, however, outside the context of insurrection—persons who want a different world and are willing to be insurrectionists of one form or another.

Advocates and advocacy, regardless of the goal or method used, are necessarily authoritarian but not necessarily dictatorial—advocacy presupposes that the advocate or what is being advocated

should determine reality and that the advocates have a fundamentally advantageous viewpoint. Advocating is always expressed in an authoritative voice; advocates want their ideals to shape or become reality. Moreover, character traits of aggressiveness, self-assurance, self-confidence, tenacity, irreverence, passion, and enmity are evinced and applauded by insurrectionists. Lydia Child and Maria Stewart were in no way passive in promoting women's suffrage, abolition, and racial equality. Nor did they believe that traits associated with aggressive behavior were traits best left to men. Such traits as benevolence, piety, temperance, compassion, self-assurance, and self-confidence were character virtues. That is, insurrectionists prescribed character traits that included traits associated with aggressive behavior for the downtrodden.<sup>18</sup>

John Diggins and Cornel West, for radically different reasons, recognize a serious lack in classical pragmatism: There seems no way to require advocacy and authoritarian moral voices.<sup>19</sup> West argues for a sense of the prophetic, particularly a Christian-inspired visionary leadership with an optimistic approach to the future as an authoritarian voice. It is the prophetic, rather than an evasion of philosophy as belief in that which cannot be established through the aegis of reason, that West considers important for our web of beliefs. Diggins, a critic of pragmatism in this regard, argues that pragmatism lacks the resources to justify the need for democratic institutional authority.

Is it the case that pragmatists see the self as necessarily lacking if it is bereft of such traits as aggression, self-assurance, self-confidence, tenacity, and irreverence? Are self-deprecators not just instrumentally and functionally disadvantaged but in some sense morally lacking? It is certainly the case that self-deprecators could live more fulfilling lives if they had a greater sense of self-worth. But what principle or conception of fulfilling lives is there in pragmatism that says we are compelled to act in ways that prevent people from living self-deprecating lives? Walker describes the wretchedness of the slave in terms that make one feel that such a condition violates basic human nature. Normal life for Walker should include the possibility of accumulating assets, transferring assets to one's progeny, loving one's mate, and freely selling the product of one's labor. Are



these endogenous to a pragmatist conception of the self such that if others lack such desires or the means to carry them out, pragmatists are duty bound to seek their liberation? If self-deprecators do use the method of intelligence and remain self-deprecators, are we duty bound to nonetheless change the conditions under which they labor, for example, change the conditions of poverty from which voluntary slaves do not seek to escape?

Evaluating processes, means, ends, and reflective considerations—the basic features of Dewey's method of intelligence—is no surety against someone's being a racist. Racism is not inherently a set of propositions that are internally contradictory.<sup>20</sup> It is arguable that the method of intelligence so frequently applauded by Dewey as a reasoning strategy, joined with the objective of socially engineering progress and increasing democratic participation, was useless during the era of America's racial slavery. The persons empowered to engage in social engineering favored slavery; persons invested with the education capable of appreciating the subtleties of Dewey's method were often proslavery; and Americans practiced one of the highest levels of democratic participation in human history, and the majority were in favor of slavery. As Orlando Paterson argues, societies that favor democratic freedom have been societies that characteristically practiced slavery.<sup>21</sup> Lives of millions were destroyed as abolitionists engaged in debates and protest. Abolitionists that promoted or helped persons escape the horrible trade could more often than not count actual lives saved—all such persons acted against extant law and popular authority. That is, the immediate lives of the enslaved were not changed by dialogue, debate, democratic voting, or petitions—such actions helped to eventually end slavery and certainly helped abate the misery that slaves might have suffered if not for the tempering norms influencing slaveholders and their friends. The point is that pregnant women, children, old men, and young men were lynched, beaten, raped, threatened, and coerced while the world of relatively civil abolitionist discourse and protest occurred.

In America's advanced capitalist society, democracy works without centralized planning to effectively exclude and exploit while allowing open political participation. Corporations and rich families can accumulate vast sums of capital and enormous profits. Many

personal life choices are open to them. Those who own little to nothing have their choices and employment options, by contrast, severely restricted. The city and the country, if Rabin's *Soft City* is at all near to being an appropriate picture, are spaces in which there are hundreds of overlapping locations of authority and no single entity capable of planning, implementing, or controlling social experiments or policies.<sup>22</sup>

Of what use is a "method of intelligence" in a postmodern society where very few persons are motivated by a desire to socially engineer society to enhance everyone's well-being? Of what use is the method of intelligence in a society where the misery of noncitizens is considered of little consequence, although the profit of citizens is contingent on expropriating the wealth of noncitizens? Without the self that James, Dewey, Locke, and Addams seem to presuppose—a self that is already motivated to desire the well-being of others—is there any reason to suppose that the method of intelligence would incline anyone to be motivated to seek the abolition of slavery through insurrection or seek the end of servitude, if it required a commitment to an ontological or an heuristic category (i.e., moral commitment to a group of strangers)?

Commitment to humanity is always a commitment to some group of humans first and always requires the use of representative heuristics. That is, it requires us to do just what good reasoning methods tell us to avoid—treat groups as if they were real ontological entities. Moreover, commitment to improving the condition of humanity requires that persons share meager resources with strangers and take personal risk they could well avoid. What, then, are the intuitive motivations, guidances, and criteria for pragmatists that require them, as pragmatists, to advocate insurrection, to help destroy realms of viciousness, the trade in land mines, proliferation of nuclear weapons, tremendous expropriation of wealth from less-developed countries to wealthy Western nations, the sale and use of life-destroying drugs among adults and children, forced prostitution, and the selling of stolen babies and body parts?

If the advice a pragmatist would give to persons in a society of racial slavery did not include insurrection and honor for those engaged in insurrection—if no more than as a form of self-defense—

then pragmatism's penchant for prudence and dialogue is sufficient to suggest that pragmatism is woefully inadequate. Moreover, if there are no resources in pragmatism to motivate and encourage persons to be insurrectionists, it is defective. The metaphorical reincarnation of Walkerian character traits are appealing—tenacity, irreverence, aggressiveness, self-assurance, self-confidence, tenacity, enmity, and passion—because they help make possible the sort of advocacy and authoritarian voices that demand liberation of the enslaved. The moral sensibilities of insurrectionists, including a willingness to lend support or act when consequences are likely to be unfavorable in the immediate future, disadvantageous for individual actors, and contrary to popular beliefs and practices, are important sources of motivation for insurrectionists. An insurrectionist would desire the destruction of oppression and would have a willingness to work through the enmity of irreconcilable differences. Advocates for change use authoritarian voices often representing abstract social entities, entities excluded from dominant moral communities.

Achieving the possibility of honor for communities or for members of communities is contingent on facing the reality of advocacy and authority enlivened by insurrectionist moral sensibilities and character traits. Moreover, the reality of representative heuristics should not be understood as inherently unfortunate features of cognition, always associated with misguided, arid abstractions. Rather, a philosophy such as Walker's that makes representing, defending, and promoting the well-being of a community because that community's human rights have been violated is preferable to one that makes such commitments suspect.

#### NOTES

Portions of this paper were used in "Revolutionary Pragmatism," the Dotter Lecture, Pennsylvania State University, March 1966.

1. For an example of the vast variety of slave revolts, see Joseph C. Carroll, *Slave Insurrections in the United States, 1800–1865* (New York: Negro University Press, 1938).

2. Maria Stewart, "Lecture Delivered at the Franklin Hall, Boston, September 21, 1832," in *Philosophy Born of Struggle*, ed. Leonard Harris (Dubuque: Kendall Hunt, 1999), 34.

3. Henry D. Thoreau, *Civil Disobedience and Other Essays*, (New York: Dover, 1993).

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