



Men, individualism, and process: A Pardoner's Tale

Title	Men, individualism, and process: A Pardoner's Tale
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Publication Date	2021-08-04
Publisher	Palgrave MacMillan

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Abstract

Taking a long look back through the philosophical underpinnings of contemporary hyper-masculinity, from renaissance writers such as Thomas Hobbes and John Locke up to modern American philosopher, Robert Nozick, this chapter maps out the key philosophical fault-lines of the possessive individualism driving the hyper-masculinised competitive capitalism that has brought environmental destruction upon us all. The chapter offers Henri Bergson and Alfred North Whitehead's process philosophy as an antidote, outlining its reappraisal of the nature of time, and of the interrelated multiplicity of a world understood as a flow of events, rather than as an agglomeration of things. Could such a philosophical shift help reorient masculinities toward a more collaborative, more fluid, and more ecological future?

Keywords

Individualism, methodological individualism, possessive individualism, property, Locke, Hobbes, process, philosophy, Bergson, Whitehead

Biography

Kreps, David is a Reader in Philosophy of Information Systems. His books include *Against Nature: The Metaphysics of Information Systems* (Routledge); *Bergson, Complexity and Creative Emergence* (Palgrave), *Gramsci and Foucault: A Reassessment* (Routledge), *This Changes Everything: ICT and Climate Change – What We Do?* (Springer) and *Technology and Intimacy: Choice or Coercion?* (Springer) and he has published in the *European Journal of Information Systems*, *Information Communication and Society*, *First Monday*, *Information Technology and People*, *Journal of Information, Communication and Ethics in Society* and *Ethics and Information Technology*. He is Chair of the International Federation for Information Processing's Technical Committee 9 on ICT and Society (IFIP TC9) and current Chair of the Human Choice and Computers conference series, HCC12 "Technology and Intimacy: Choice or coercion" Salford, Manchester, 2016, HCC13 "This Changes Everything," Poznan, Poland, 2018, and HCC14 "Human-Centred Computing in a Data-Driven Society" Tokyo, Japan, 2020.

Prologue

Early Modern Man, c1550CE, Europe: a selfish, brutish beast prey to savage urges, governed only by the restraining might of King, and tax collectors. Strutting the muddy pathways of the newly burgeoning mercantile world, he carries a sword at his hip to ward off his rivals yet has no truck with the knightly romance of his forbears, nor indeed the gentlemanly restraint of his descendants and their canes. It is the beginning of financialisation: putting an exchange value, weighed in the numbers of the new science, upon all things, as sanctity retreats behind the doors of the churches, where the canons count the day's indulgences. Maintaining that aloof disinterest that enables him to calculate self-interest over and above all other-interest, early modern man focuses his mind upon the reduction of all importance to the singular, where the calculus of more and less may be played for the gaining of advantage. He reifies disdain, all in the pursuit of gain.

Introduction

Such a picture is not a million miles away from that painted by one of the fathers of the modern world, Thomas Hobbes, a century later. Its possessive individualism, from Hobbes and then on to John Locke, and the methodological individualism that arose with it, from Renee Descartes to the 20th century's US proponent for libertarianism, Robert Nozick, are the philosophical and political spines of the post-Medieval world that have brought us today's hyper-individualised competitive capitalism, and the environmental degradation that has accompanied it. Such possessive individualism, described in the early 1960s by Crawford Macpherson (2011), has also been incisively analysed at the turn of this century by Karen Warren (2000), as an advanced separation of self from other, especially otherised humans and nature, and lies at the root of the contemporary hedonistic pull of self-gratification. Possessive individualism is a quality intimately associated with the kinds of hyper-masculinised behaviours that developed through the late medieval and early modern period. Individualism, and hyper-masculinity, indeed, might be seen as not only parallel developments in early modernity, but two aspects of a single development: a form of alienation that at once revels in its distance and aggressively defends its isolation.

This chapter contrasts these philosophies of individualism with the process philosophy of Henri Bergson and Alfred North Whitehead. Process philosophy is an ontology of becoming, a view of the universe as a flow of events, as opposed to an

agglomeration of things. Using process philosophy, the chapter argues (i) that there is ontological support for the ecological understanding that not only are we not isolated as individuals, but that men cannot be isolated from women, girls, and boys in the manner that many of our socio-economic philosophies and politics have persisted in asserting, and (ii) that our place - as individuals, as humanity - within the ecological totality of this planet, cannot be isolated as the living subject to which all else is but inert object, to do with, in isolation, as we please.

Both Bergson and Whitehead worked as public intellectuals, for progressive causes. Bergson was a leading light in the League of Nations, encouraging science across borders. Whitehead was a strong supporter of the Women's Suffrage movement (Chair, no less, in 1907, of the Cambridge branch of the Men's League for Women's Suffrage (Randall, 1991, p.7)). The process philosophy they espoused was a direct critique of the subject/object divisions of scientific materialism, and a defence of individual experience against abstraction.

For process philosophy, Hobbes' and Descartes' most fundamental mistakes were in their concept of N¹ature itself, which rests upon distinctions that bifurcate the world: on one side the disembodied (masculine and heteronormative) individual subject aloof from the world – and from his fellows; on the other, women, all other genders, children, and all matter: lifeless, a mere object of measurement, and trade. This divide, for Whitehead, is a product of abstract thought and our abstractions are never the whole story. This chapter asks if the “whole story” of our experience is not in fact far more connected and interdependent than this subject/object division of (masculine) individualism attempts to persuade us. The separative othering of hyper-masculinities, indeed, at the heart of the subject/object division, cuts out much of what should otherwise be counted as valid experience. Is not, after all, the pecuniary calculation of self-interest based upon a false assumption: that what we gain in this manner today, we – or our descendants - will not have to pay for tomorrow? It is quite clear today that the generations following WWII, for all that their own lives have been far better and more comfortable than their parents', have in the achieving of such betterment eaten up centuries-worth of the planet's resources, and belched the waste into the atmosphere with increasingly devastating effects. Is the immorality of

¹ 'N'ature is capitalised here in acknowledgement that, as with other proper nouns, it is reified and othered as something separate, as if we were not a part of it.

such individualism not, in the end, self-defeating? (David, 2018) Could a reassessment of the masculine subject in these terms, moreover, bring us all to a more collective state of being, and a greater awareness and appreciation of our place in a living world?

This chapter, then, sets out the following claim: that the possessive individualism that has gripped Western, and increasingly global society, over the last few centuries, is a hyper-masculinised abstraction and a fatal strategy, and that a more collectivist, holistic approach to understanding, to how we organise our societies, and to how we relate to one another, is not only a “good” that we should strive for, but an existential need, now that the ecological catastrophe resulting from possessive individualism has become clear.

Possessive Individualism

In the mid 17th century, the philosopher Thomas Hobbes became excited by the reductionist ideas that were at the time bringing about the birth of the scientific revolution. This method, ‘...reduced the world to its analytic components of individual self-interest and built it up again from this single base’ (Mansbridge, 1990, p.4). Noting this, Hobbes claimed that a universal, irreconcilable conflict lay at the heart of human society, that in the ‘state of nature’ life would be ‘solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short’ (Hobbes, 1909, p.99). He saw selfishness in men and reduced all mankind to that one single aspect of his behaviour. He thus implied that conflict and harm are intractable, and the foundational bedrock of human experience. For Hobbes, indeed, every man was a Machiavellian *Prince* (1532) – the archetypal powerful man devoid of morality who uses cunning and duplicity for his personal gain. This notion located the Selfish Man as the basic unit of society, looking out for his own interests, who – mostly out of fear of them - joins his fellows in a social contract: they agree to submit to the governance of a sovereign, who will protect them from each other’s selfishness and violence. Such a bleak picture nonetheless gained much traction among those able to read, aligned as it was with the growing scientific revolution, which itself focussed exclusively upon isolating and identifying individual facts, and provided a theme that was to underly the evolution of Western philosophy from then on: that the violence and selfishness of men must be institutionalised if it is to be contained. By the 19th century, as Herbert Spencer interpreted the work of Charles Darwin, Nature itself was to be understood as a battle for the “survival of the fittest.”

In the 20th century Richard Dawkins took this to its logical next step with the “Selfish Gene.”

Writing half a century after Hobbes at the time of the English expansion of colonial power, contrary to Hobbes and other theorists who had thought that political power could reside only in the community as a whole, John Locke placed that too in the hands of individuals (MacPherson, 2011, p.271). Locke’s ideas evolved during the course of the English Civil War, in which his father was a combatant. He was a supporter of religious toleration, pleased with the way, in some German states he visited, people of several Christian denominations and other religious faiths all lived together harmoniously (Locke, 1824). By the time his most famous philosophical works were penned he had decided that in the “state of nature” before any government, all men, defined by reason and toleration rather than Hobbes’ brute selfishness, would be equal. In this sense, Locke is clearly a founding (philosophical) father of the United States, in the opening lines of whose famous constitution this philosophy is enshrined: ‘We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness.’ (Declaration of Independence, 1776)

But the possessive individualism at the heart of this “reason” and “toleration” meant that this equality gave, first and foremost, equal rights to acquire and own property, and to punish anyone – especially a monarch like James II of England - who tried to take it. Famously, in the US constitution, as the Second Amendment reads: ‘A well-regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed’ (U.S. Constitution amend. II, 1787, ratified 1791). Quite apart from how the understanding of this clause has evolved from the common-law right to resist oppression into a fetish for battlezone weaponry, it is the owning of property, and protection of that property, that is at the heart of this sentiment – as confirmed in 2008 by the US Supreme Court (Denniston, 2008).

The right to private property, over which the free individual is sovereign, and a rational approach to life, for Locke, pre-exist the state. Selfish Man has here become Rational (Property Owning) Man. Up until this time, moreover, one’s identity was largely defined in relation to one’s place within the hierarchy – one’s proximity to the sovereign (King, 2004, pp. 3-4). Thus, place, and the subjections and dominations that

accompany it, and especially one's relation to the (Judeo-Christian (White, 1967)) stewardship of land, formed the boundaries and definitions of the self. After Locke, especially through the writings of Scottish Enlightenment philosopher, Adam Smith, increasingly, one's property – in coin just as much in land – and a notion of individual self *before* government, grow inexorably in importance as definers of identity.

So, the question of what was “just” in matters of commerce was of great interest to Locke. When a man comes across a resource that can be turned to his gain, when is it “just” that he should “appropriate” it? Or, to put it in more contemporary terms, how can self-indulgence at the expense of the collective good be justified for hegemonic masculinities wanting a “rational” excuse? For Locke, that which is “unowned” can become “owned” when mixed with the honest labour of the individual. As well as being a founding (philosophical) father of the US, he was also, like most gentlemen of the time, a slave owner with shares in that trade (Farr, 2007). However, Locke qualifies all this appropriation with a proviso: that there is enough and as good left in common for others. ‘No body could think himself injured by the drinking of another man,’ he says, ‘though he took a good draught, who had a whole river of the same water left him to quench his thirst: and the case of land and water, where there is enough of both, is perfectly the same’ (Locke, 1689 p.208). Put simply, if there's plenty for everyone (and that means people, not animals or plants), then take what you want. In the colonial expansion, if one can set the ethnic cleansing of North American First Nations people aside (Mann, 2006; Tully, 2007, p.128), then the appropriation of land by English colonists in the Americas is “just” if they till the land with their own labour (or that of the African slaves that they ‘own’). The land is “unowned” – *terra nullius* - because the natives have no “title” to it, and there is, of course, plenty of land for all - once the natives have been ‘exterminated’ as Jefferson later put it (Mann, 2006, p.ix), - so long as the new continent is not “claimed” by a monarch (much more important to Locke) who is, after all, not tilling the land with his own hand. Locke's notions of ownership, therefore, of both self and property, boil down ultimately to the hyper-masculinist reasoning behind the violent and selfish creation of settler colonies by English entrepreneurs, (i) without monarchical interference, (ii) with the use of slave labour imported from Africa, and (iii) once the indigenous natives had been cleared out of the way. Pick any colonised land and the rivers run red with the blood of the colonised (Said, 1978; Hughes, 2003; Zinn, 2003).

Fast forward to the 20th century, and American philosopher Robert Nozick takes this appropriation of the unowned, and says it is “just”, with the proviso that others are not thereby made worse off. Now, this is not quite the same. One might point out that indigenous people in colonised lands were certainly made worse off, but Nozick is writing in the 1970s, not the 1680s, and it is in the abstract that we must now imagine such appropriation takes place. To tease out the difference between the two, we can turn to another famous proviso in Western philosophy – Emmanuel Kant’s categorical imperative. Kant was one of the greatest philosophers of the Western philosophical tradition. All other philosophers can, arguably, be divided into those before Kant, and those after Kant. Locke’s “Selfish, Property Owning, Rational Man” became, through Kant’s work, the moral, rational human subject who should be dedicated to the practice of good will. He believed that peace could come about through democracy and cooperation, and that a moral philosophy based upon practical reason and good will could bring about social harmony. His “categorical imperative” states that persons should always, ‘Act in such a way that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never merely as a means to an end, but always at the same time as an end.’ (Kant, 1785/1993, p.36). This is seen today as the central philosophical concept in Kant’s deontological moral philosophy.

Now, for Nozick, any infringement (without consent) of one’s rights is tantamount to slavery – treating people merely as means. (By people, of course, as Susan Moller Okin (1989) stresses, libertarian theorists such as Nozick actually mean Men, and Men of a certain kind, at that.) But Kant’s prohibition here acknowledges that people *do* use other people as means – as is the case when the better-off are taxed for the benefit of the poor. For Nozick the rights of the individual are inviolable: taxation is theft, it is slavery. Kant enjoins us to remember, as we do use others, that they are also ends in themselves, just as we are, and so fairness is paramount: everyone who is better off should be taxed equally and the redistribution should be seen to go to the most needy first (Cohen, 1995, p.237). Nozick’s principle, by contrast, suggests we are only ends, and should never be means without expressly giving consent. This is very different – for if, say, some consent to taxation, and some do not, fairness is lost, and who then would consent to be taxed? Thus, Locke’s version – ensuring there is ‘enough and as good’ for others - is weakened in Nozick’s version – ensuring no-one is left worse off. In the latter those who undertake the appropriation of the unowned may do so even if there is then none left over for

anyone else – so long as anyone else left over is compensated in such a way that they are no worse off. For Nozick, then, Selfish Property Owning Rational Man is back, and can take all the land – if he is competitive enough and can “grab” it before anyone else - and employ those left over: they are now no worse off, but they have no land, and Rational Man has it all.

As Macpherson describes it, the ‘possessive quality’ (MacPherson, 2011) of the individualism put forward by Locke – and remodelled by Nozick - not only conceives the individual in terms of property, but as the proprietor of his own person and capacities, *and that he owes nothing to society for them*. Indeed, it is to MacPherson, and his 1962 classic, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism*, that the clearest understanding specifically of John Locke’s philosophy is owed. Alison Jaggar references this seminal work in her *Feminist Politics and Human Nature* (1983), and it is Jaggar’s arguments against “abstract individualism” upon which Karen Warren builds her ecofeminist ethic (2000). MacPherson makes it clear that the primary underlying assumption in all of Locke’s political thought is the concept of self-ownership, in which the individual himself is seen as a property, and as neither a moral whole nor a part of a larger social whole. In practice, then, Locke’s proviso granted rights and freedoms to English capitalists to displace North American First Nations people and appropriate tracts of land in the New World, to be worked by African slaves. In practice, too, Nozick’s proviso grants today’s American capitalists rights and freedoms to monopolise the means of production, so long as wages are paid that make others better off than if they had no wages at all. What writers such as Jaggar and Warren and others have, of course, since emphasised, is that at all times, for Hobbes, Locke, and all the English capitalists, all these individuals have been exclusively *men*, and women and children merely their property. For their descendants, the American capitalists, in the early 21st century, of course, this rampant individualism, now disdainful of class and background and interested only in acquisition, have finally torn up the loyalties that held the old aristocratic elites together, leaving our societies to be run by a rabble of Machiavellian Princes with no care for any but themselves.

Methodological individualism

This individualism in the political and economic sphere, moreover, is reflected, too, in the social scientific sphere. Methodological individualism, as defined by Lukes, ‘is a

doctrine about explanation which asserts that all attempts to explain social (or individual) phenomena are to be rejected... unless they are couched wholly in terms of facts about individuals.’ (Lukes, 1973, p.110). Functional explanations, by contrast, posit ‘collective phenomena’ as having ‘priority over individuals’. But as Lukes elucidates, definitions of individuals must be very narrow, restricted only to descriptions of the most material type, (I - genetic make-up, brain-states, sex, etc), or of the most personal type, (II - aggression, gratification, etc) if individuals are to be understood in absence of any wider considerations. Individualistic interpretations, such as those of Hobbes, Locke, Nozick and others described above, then, must be focussed almost myopically on an understanding of the individual separated and divided from her/his social and environmental context. Individuals understood in terms of Type I and II descriptions – Rational (Property Owning) Man – are individuals seen only through a very restrictive filter. There is, of course, in reality, so much more to individuals. We are not islands, and, indeed, cannot live alone. As Lukes continues, the moment any minimal social references enter descriptions of individuals, (type III – gender, co-operation, power, esteem, ecological niche, etc), then functional explanations, including collective phenomena, begin to have meaning, and with descriptions that are maximally social (type IV – drawing cash from an ATM, saluting, voting, recycling) propositions about groups and institutions are presupposed, or even directly entailed. Individuals about whom there are descriptions of type III or IV (all of us, of course) are immediately not only more complex than those described by the methodological individualists, but in ways that contradict many of the individualists’ assumptions. We are – as any good ecologist knows – embedded within relational frameworks in ways that render treating us exclusively as discrete units almost meaningless.

But methodological individualism has run deeper than just these social explanations couched in terms of individuals. For centuries it pervaded the (logical, masculinist) scientific consensus of reductionism, the analytic method by which empiricism’s true wings are clipped (Kreps, 2018). Adam Smith, in the late 18th century, gave the most credence to the economic ideas of his era concerning “market forces”, describing an “invisible hand” that would ensure all things were as they should be in the world, if only individuals were allowed to pursue their own interests unhindered by the state. Let Locke’s Rational Man calculate his self-interest without

the interference of Hobbes' restraining government, Smith argued, and in this "state of nature" perfection would be reached.

Reading his work, against his better judgement, Charles Darwin determined that the units of his evolutionary theory should not be species – as the evidence suggested, and as contemporary complex evolutionary biologists believe – but individual beasts, going about their business (Schweber, 1977, p.240; Gould, 2002, p.20). As the great evolutionary biologist Stephen Jay Gould describes it, 'Darwin transferred the paradoxical argument of Adam Smith's economics into biology (best organisation for the general polity arising as a side consequence of permitting individuals to struggle for themselves alone) in order to devise his mechanism of natural selection.' (Gould, 2002, p.59) As Schweber tells us, moreover, 'It is his study of ... Adam Smith which reinforced [Darwin's] focus on the individual as the central element and unit in his theory and led him to adopt the Scottish view of trying to understand the whole in terms of the individual parts and their interactions,' (Schweber, 1977, p.240) – the classic methodological individualist (and masculinist) approach. Contemporary evolutionary theory, as Gould stated in 2002, 'must be construed as basically different from the canonical theory of natural selection, rather than simply extended,' (Gould, 2002, p.3). So, the origins of evolutionary biology include heavy influence from individualist philosophy.

But the intertwining threads of these approaches reveal a further twist. Polymath Herbert Spencer produced, in 1860, whilst Darwin's *Origin of Species* was still hot off the press, an extremely influential paper titled *The Social Organism* (Spencer, 1860) that brought many of Darwin's ideas into the burgeoning field of social science. Spencer, a classical liberal political theorist, epitome of Victorian masculinity and true scion of the British Empire, was one of the most powerful voices in 19th century British academia, and it is from his 1864 *Principles of Biology* that the oft-quoted phrase 'survival of the fittest,' stems. (Spencer, 1864/1964). Thus, Spencer invented Social Darwinism, where Darwin had invented Smithian evolutionary biology (Kreps, 2015). This early strain of academic interest in the biological roots of anthropology led to some of the worst excesses of self-justification for the creation European industrial Empires. Theories of gender, sexuality, race, and the field of eugenics, all stemmed from this time, from Spencer, and from the work of Darwin's cousin, Francis Galton (1869). The "fittest", according to these Victorians, were upper-class Englishmen, and social policy should be focussed upon supporting their innovation

and creativity, and not wasted upon the poor, the female, and the non-European White. Cultural anthropology as a university discipline retreated to the exclusively social for many decades after such preposterous ideas were exposed for what they were and has only very recently – with complexity theory – begun to re-consider how biological evolution must – inevitably – have helped to shape us as a species. These new approaches, such as Cronk’s (2019) are keen to recognise the ecological, the collective, and contingent influences of a Nature understood through newer eyes.

For, against the approach of masculinist methodological individualism there are, after all, many arguments. Perhaps the clearest – staying with biology – lies in the wisdom in the old adage that one can “miss the wood for the trees”. If the evidence of the senses – the experiential basis of positive science and rational understanding of the universe – is truly to be embraced, as empiricism surely demands, then a meticulous scientific examination of individual trees must surely be balanced with an appreciation of the interconnected totality of the forest. There are “collective phenomena,” in other words, in the natural world. Indeed, modern complex evolutionary theory is a very different animal from that of Darwin’s natural selection. Alongside the work on complexity of Botkin (1992), Goodwin (1994) and Kauffman (1995), an entire field of enquiry has opened up, with its own journal, *Ecological Complexity*, building on foundational books such as by May (1973), Allen and Starr (1982), and Maurer (1999). Recent work by Oyama, Griffiths and Gray (2001), Juarrero (2002), Jablonka and Lamb (2005), Thompson (2007), Pigliucci and Muller (2010) and Cronk (2019), all push these ideas further than there is space to devote to them in this, necessarily short chapter. All, over the past thirty years, have made very clear that ecological systems are the prototypical “complex adaptive systems” (Levin, 1988). All such systems display “collective phenomena” – phenomena that cannot be isolated or predicted through a focus upon individual elements. This is the breakthrough understanding that has – perhaps more than any other – crowned the end of the 20th century’s otherwise more reductionist scientific achievements. It has become clear, in the last few decades, that to derive the totality of a forest solely from aggregating all the trees, is to miss that which emerges from their interconnection, their interdependence, their complex combination (Clayton & Davies 2006). Emergent phenomena that are only possible through such interdependent and complex combinations are in fact observable throughout the living world and, arguably, the very nature of life itself. This understanding is the basis, indeed, of the systems

thinking that, through the 20th century, evolved from bio-ecological understandings into complex adaptive systems theory and today gives us both climate models and, perhaps more ominously, artificial intelligence (Kreps, 2015; 2017).

Yet our political-economic systems remain chained to the methodological individualism of the 18th and 19th centuries, leaving the management of our economies to Spencer's Darwinistic/Smithian "invisible hand," of "market forces" so that "Rational Man," exercising reason and toleration, can keep his own selfishness in check. It is as if we have heard this story for so long, that we take these abstractions as reality. Despite all the empirical evidence to the contrary, of ever-worsening inequality, the ravages of poverty side-by-side with the ugly distortions of great wealth, the terrible consequences of consumerism for the health of our planet, we cling on to our abstractions, despite their awful consequences. But why? Is it because, in all these stories, despite all the tales of individualism, one group – privileged white men - is privileged over all others, and that group is loath to let go the entitlements these stories grant?

Individualism and Masculinity

In our more enlightened times, it has become commonplace for us to include women and girls and boys in our understanding of the nature of the self, but this was not always the case. The 2018 UK celebrations of the centenary of (some) women's enfranchisement into that nation's male dominated political processes served to highlight how recent even partial equality in liberal societies actually is. Indeed, as late as the 1970s it was common for much legal and practical definition of identity to be restricted to men. Boys, who are not men, were a special case, because they would become so, and must be trained in the ways of manhood – the social construction of hyper-masculinity built into the institutions of education, the expectations of social 'norms', the family unit, the literature in the library. Women and girls were, in this respect, irrelevant: to most they were merely property just like coin, or land (Merchant, 1990). So, again, the above discussion of individualism must be understood in these terms: that the individuals talked of by Hobbes, Locke, and Nozick, whom Descartes ascribed subjectivity to, and whom Smith felt should be allowed to pursue their own self-interest without interference, were, *in practice*, all men.

Now, *in theory*, Hobbes in fact counted women as persons when devising his social contract. He insisted on the equality of all people, explicitly including women (Hobbes, 1909, p.155). Yet thereafter he barely mentions them, excusing this by the fact that men have created the “commonwealth” through their social contract with one another, and run the world, and not women. Locke, too, argues explicitly that women are not property and still retain power over their children when the father is absent (Locke, 1689, p.215), and indeed are capable of leaving the ‘compact’ of marriage. Women, indeed, for Locke, should be honoured and respected by children. Nonetheless, these ‘female rights’ he then specifically sets limits upon, stating that if there ever be an argument within the family, the man’s will should prevail over the woman’s (Locke, 1689, p.224). As Katrine Marçal (2015) describes so eloquently in her book, *Who cooked Adam Smith’s Dinner* it was his mother who kept house, and made meals for him, throughout his life. He never married, wrote at home, and never mentioned this silent, crucial part of the economy that kept food upon his table, the daily labour - and unswerving love – that provided him with comfort, warmth, and a home where he could put his feet up at the end of the day (Marçal, 2015). For Smith, remember, it was only self-interest that motivated the butcher, the brewer, the baker, in their efforts to cut meat, make beer, bake bread. His mother – and the entire “household” / domestic labour aspect of the economy – make no appearance in his market economics: they are not a ‘market force’ (Raworth, 2017, p.72). This unpaid labour results, in the arguments of many feminist philosophers, such as Okin (1989), in the disparity of power between the sexes so prevalent in both historic and modern societies. Women are either unpaid, or paid less, and so end up with less power. It is salutary, indeed, to note that in April 2019, when all eligible UK companies had to report, by law, on their gender pay gap, that the figures revealed that men are paid more than women in 7,795 out of 10,016 companies and public bodies in Britain (Kommenda, Barr & Holdser 2019).

The creation of ‘Man’ reflected by Hobbes, Locke and Smith – the “natural group” to which those who cling on to individualism today by and large belong – is a phenomenon of the 17th and 18th centuries. Until then, the medieval consensus had imparted “identity” directly in relation to one’s proximity to the sovereign, to one’s place, between subjections and dominations, within the hierarchy of divine order. That the mere fact of maleness conveyed upon one any identity, any rights within society, was a radical disturbance of this consensus (King, 2004, p.19). In the 21st

century, this individualist understanding of masculinity, and of identity, must change. In this author's view, gender, like sexuality, needs to be seen as fluid, multiple, a spectrum of possibilities allowing each individual to flow and grow through a kaleidoscope of exploration as a life unfolds. All of us should be non-binary and never conflate any sexual behaviour with our identities. Our proximity to each other, and the cohesion of community - without the constraint of enforced "norms", but within the embrace of mutual respect - should define us, enrich us, and help us continually to evolve and grow, as individuals, and as members of the collectives of which we are a part.

The impact of process philosophy

So, what does the process philosophy of Henri Bergson and Alfred North Whitehead have to say that might shed new light upon this state of affairs? Both philosophers propose an "event-ontology" (Lowe, 2009) in contrast to the "thing-ontology" of reductionist science. They both believe in fact that "things" may be reduced, ultimately, to "events", rather than seeking, like the methodological individualists, not only to reduce, but to eliminate "events" in favour of "things." Key to this ontology is a new understanding of time and a breaking down of old abstractions.

The divide between subject and object – key to the separation of self and other in the hyper-masculine individualist project – is, for Whitehead, a product of (masculinist) abstract thought that has become reified. This divide has, like the sciences it lauds, become mistaken for reality itself. Whitehead reminds us that our mental pictures of the world are just that. As Kant had already made clear, practical reason must rest upon the fact that one can, all too often, neither prove that a thing *is*, nor that it is *not*. We fall back, therefore, on reasonable assumptions, based upon experience. But these 'reasonable assumptions' are not proofs, and the abstract models of the world that we build from them are not the world as it really is. Our abstractions, by definition, moreover, take a small part of our experience as means by which to understand it, and leave out the rest. Our abstractions are not – are never – the whole story. To act as if they are, has consequences. The story, moreover, is constantly on the move, and so our abstractions, whilst useful, must continually be updated.

One fundamental abstraction, for Whitehead, that we have misled ourselves with, in our understanding of the world, is that the universe is made up of discrete

things, rather than a series of interrelated events. To grasp this, one must let go the reductionist scientific consensus upon which Hobbes based his understanding and begin to see the universe in a new light. In his introduction to Whitehead's work, *Process-Relational Philosophy*, Robert Mesle summed up rather beautifully the basic distinction between the Western philosophy we have touched upon above, and the message of process philosophy. As Mesle puts it: *the future does not exist* (Mesle, 2008, pp. 4-5). Between 1881 and 1883 Henri Bergson, 'saw, to my great astonishment,' as he told American philosopher William James in a letter of 1908, 'that scientific time does not *endure*, that it would involve no change in our scientific knowledge if the totality of the real were unfolded all at once, instantaneously.' (Perry, 1935 pp. 622–623). Bergson, too, saw that *the future does not exist*. Together, then, these two process philosophers stand as voices at the beginning of the 20th century, whose message was heard – and acknowledged – both by quantum theorists, and complexity theorists, and whose philosophical stance chimes with the more relational, cooperative, collectivist approaches of a post-hyper-masculinist and ecological understanding of the world coming together in the 21st century.

For Bergson scientific "time" is simply a collection of "instants" laid out side by side in space. Yet, the *durée réelle* as he calls it, or "real duration," is something that each and every one of us understands immediately, because we live it, and in living it we perceive its inter-relational nature. In his book, *Matter and Memory*, Bergson argues that 'The duration lived by our consciousness is a duration with its own determined rhythm, a duration very different from the time of the physicist' (Bergson, 1896/2004 p.272). Scientific time, for Bergson, determines the existence of things in the universe from beginning to end; existence becomes the unchanging story of fixed, mechanical, inescapable, predetermined, isolated things; the picture of the universe, indeed, that we have seen outlined above, that arose through the practice of methodological individualism. But the lived time of Bergson's real duration is like a wave that unfolds at the crest of the now, amidst the interplay of a myriad ripples and undulations, faced with many potential futures, and it is conscious choice which often decides which way the waves will flow. Our personal experience, and our ability to choose, in other words, are a fundamental part of the existence of the universe. Whitehead, acknowledging his debt to Bergson (Whitehead, 1920/2007, p.54), saw this too. 'Decisions must be made; the future must be created. The creatures of the present must decide between many possibilities for what may

happen, and their collective decisions bring the new moment into being' (Mesle, 2008, p.7). The Enlightenment "subject", in this way, is re-embedded back into the "objective" world which reductionist science had banished it from. The subject/object divide is healed. The separation of self from the world, from the other, is exposed as fundamentally false.

The difference between this process-relational understanding of the nature of time, and scientific time, then, is in the reification of abstractions. Reality is by nature impermanent and change the only constant. Process philosophy offers a means 'to think clearly and deeply about the obvious truth that our world and our lives are dynamic, interrelated processes, and to challenge the apparently obvious, but fundamentally mistaken, idea that the world (including ourselves) is made of *things* that exist independently of such relationships (Mesle, 2008, p.8). *Things* that can "belong" to one individual – or group – and not another. *Things* that can be a focus for power, and through ownership, bestow that power upon a privileged male group such as that lauded by Spencer and Galton. *Things* that can, in isolation, be regarded as property extracted from an environment that is there to be appropriated and turned into profit, regardless of the consequences for the delicate ecological webs from which they are ripped. Process philosophy – focussing upon events rather than things - enables us to see more clearly how these supposedly fixed, isolated things all around us thus blend into a web of multiple interrelationships that is constantly on the move, shifting, changing, becoming, at every moment poised to go in a range of potential directions, depending on our choices.

So, with process philosophy, we see that *the future does not exist*, and that everything is interrelated. The most important – for the purposes of this chapter – impacts that this realisation has upon our understanding of the world is that, as pointed out in the introduction (i) there is clear ontological support for the ecological understanding that not only are we not isolated as individuals, but the "natural group" – men – cannot be isolated from women, girls, and boys in the manner that our socio-economic philosophies and politics have persisted in asserting, and (ii) our place - as individuals, as humanity - within the ecological totality of this planet, cannot be isolated as the living subject to which all else is but inert object, to do with, in isolation, as we please.

Conclusion

The hangover from the medieval hierarchy of the divine order preserved in the new world of Rational Man was to place that “Man” at the pinnacle of the world, all “things” at his disposal, as if – in a newly “modern” double-think - he were now the God that once guaranteed the power of the sovereign (Foucault, 1970, p.319). This supremacy of the modern individual “Man” – in each and every instance of the gender, and as a group - over women, girls and boys, and all the inert objective world at his feet, is both the cut-throat competition that has given us contemporary capitalism, and the source of the environmental degradation that is eating up the planet. The contemporary “crisis of masculinity”, then, of which this book is both a symptom and a response, concerns the knowledge amongst all men that this historic privilege must be relinquished if we are to halt the destruction of the home in which we live.

Quite how we address this issue and find ‘a way forward for ecologically conscious and profeminist men,’ (Pease, 2019) there are, I’m sure, a range of opinions in this collection, and in the editors’ fine monograph (Hultman & Pulé, 2019), for the reader to peruse. My own humble contribution has come from the field of philosophy of information systems and began with the paper I delivered in 2010 on EcoMasculinites (Kreps, 2010), which Pulé generously described as ‘formative in my PhD research that led to the emergence of a new discourse on masculine ecologisation.’ Thus, that paper also led to this chapter in Pulé’s collection, which I hope the reader has found interesting. Though there are almost certainly chapters alongside this from authors far better qualified than I to comment, my own conclusion is that it is with collective and relational approaches – inspired by process philosophy - and not with methodological individualism, that progress will be made.

Epilogue

Future Modern Human, c2100CE, Europe: an unselfish, refined person quick to love, slow to hate, governed by the restraint of conscience and the playfulness of joy in life. Wandering amongst the tree-filled scented gardens roofing the urban world, they carry a fresh fruit for their closest friend. It is the beginning of Edenism: imputing a context value, weighed in the emotions of the new processual science, upon all events, ensuring sanctity and sensitivity govern all human interactions with each other and with the natural world of which they are an integral part. Maintaining an engaged interest that enables them to intuit meaning in all around them, future modern human

focuses their mind upon the connection of everything to everything else. They reify unity in diversity, all in the pursuit of peace.

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