

Philosophy Ripped From The Headlines!



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Compiled & Edited by *Philosophy Without Borders*

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1. “Sessions Says to Courts: Go Ahead, Jail People Because They’re Poor”

By Chiraag Bainsdec

The New York Times, 28 DECEMBER 2017

URL = <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/28/opinion/sessions-says-to-courts-go-ahead-jail-people-because-theyre-poor.html>



Attorney General Jeff Sessions last week abandoned the Justice Department’s effort to end debtors’ prisons. Credit Al Drago for The New York Times

Last week, Attorney General Jeff Sessions [retracted an Obama-era guidance](#) to state courts that was meant to end debtors’ prisons, where people who are too poor to pay fines are sent. This practice is blatantly unconstitutional, and the guidance had helped jump-start reform around the country. Its withdrawal is the latest sign that the federal government is retreating from protecting civil rights for the most vulnerable among us.

The Justice Department helped shine a light on the harms of fine and fees when it investigated Ferguson, Mo., three years ago after the killing of the teenager Michael Brown by a police officer. As one of the lawyers on that case, I saw firsthand the damage that the city had wrought on its black community.

Ferguson used its criminal justice system as a for-profit enterprise, extracting millions from its poorest citizens. Internal emails revealed the head of finance directing policing strategy to maximize revenue rather than ensure public safety. Officers told us they were pressured to issue as many tickets as possible.

Even the local judge was in on it, imposing penalties of \$302 for jaywalking and \$531 for allowing weeds to grow in one's yard. He issued arrest warrants for residents who fell behind on payments — including a 67-year-old woman who had been fined for a trash-removal violation — without inquiring whether they even had the ability to pay the exorbitant amounts. The arrests resulted in new charges, more fees and the suspension of driver's licenses. These burdens fell disproportionately on African-Americans.

At the time of our investigation, over 16,000 people had outstanding arrest warrants from Ferguson, a city of 21,000. Untold numbers found themselves perpetually in debt to the city and periodically confined to its jail.

In 2015, the Justice Department convened judges, legislators, advocates and affected people to discuss this problem and devise solutions. Participants repeatedly asked the Justice Department to clarify the legal rules that govern the enforcement of financial penalties and to support widespread reform.

And so we did. Relying on Supreme Court precedent from over 30 years ago, the 2016 guidance set out basic constitutional requirements: Do not imprison a person for nonpayment without first asking whether he or she can pay. Consider alternatives like community service. Do not condition access to a court hearing on payment of all outstanding debt.

The Justice Department also provided financial resources to the field. It invested in the efforts of a [national task force of judges and court administrators](#) to develop best practices. And it created a \$3 million grant program to support innovative, homegrown reforms in five states.

Along with private litigation and advocacy, these efforts have helped drive change around the country. Missouri limited the percent of city revenue that can come from fines and fees and announced court rules to guard against unlawful incarceration. California [abolished fees for juveniles](#) and [stopped suspending the driver's licenses](#) of people with court debt. Louisiana [passed a law](#) requiring that judges consider a person's financial circumstances before imposing fines and fees. Texas, where the court system's administrative director said the guidance "was very helpful and very well received by the judges across the state," issued [new rules](#) to prevent people from being jailed for their poverty. The American Bar Association [endorsed](#) the Justice Department's guidance, and the Conference of State Court Administrators cited it in a [policy paper](#) on ending debtors' prisons.

To justify reversing guidance that has had so much positive impact, Mr. Sessions [asserts](#) that such documents circumvent the executive branch's rule-making process and impose novel legal obligations by fiat. Nonsense. The fines and fees guidance created no new legal rules. It discussed existing law and cited model approaches from local jurisdictions. The document also

put state-level actors on notice that the department would take action to protect individual rights, whether by partnership or litigation.

Viewed in that light, the true intent of Mr. Sessions's decision comes into focus. Sessions pulled 25 guidance documents last week. Sixteen of those involved civil rights protections — including 10 related to the Americans With Disabilities Act and one on the special harms that unlawful fine and fee practices can have for young people. Withdrawing these documents is consistent with the Trump administration's hostility to civil rights in a host of other areas: abandoning oversight of police departments, reinterpreting anti-discrimination statutes to deny protection to L.G.B.T. individuals and switching sides in key voting rights cases.

The push to abolish debtors' prisons will continue, as community advocates and local officials press on. It would be preferable, of course, for the federal government to fulfill its role as a leading protector of basic constitutional rights. Unfortunately, Mr. Sessions has made clear that under his leadership it will not.

2. “The U.S. Can No Longer Hide From Its Deep Poverty Problem”

By Angus Deaton

The New York Times, 24 JANUARY 2018

URL = <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/24/opinion/poverty-united-states.html>



Credit Matt Rota

You might think that the kind of extreme poverty that would concern a global organization like the United Nations has long vanished in this country. Yet the special rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, Philip Alston, recently made and [reported on](#) an investigative tour of the United States.

Surely no one in the United States today is as poor as a poor person in Ethiopia or Nepal? As it happens, making such comparisons has recently become much easier. The World Bank decided in October to include high-income countries in its global estimates of people living in poverty. We can now make direct comparisons between the United States and poor countries.

Properly interpreted, the numbers suggest that the United Nations has a point — and the United States has an urgent problem. They also suggest that we might rethink how we assist the poor through our own giving.

According to the World Bank, 769 million people lived on less than \$1.90 a day in 2013; they are the world's very poorest. Of these, 3.2 million live in the United States, and 3.3 million in other high-income countries (most in Italy, Japan and Spain).

As striking as these numbers are, they miss a very important fact. There are necessities of life in rich, cold, urban and individualistic countries that are less needed in poor countries. The World Bank adjusts its poverty estimates for differences in prices across countries, but it ignores differences in needs.

An Indian villager spends little or nothing on housing, heat or child care, and a poor agricultural laborer in the tropics can get by with little clothing or transportation. Even in the United States, it is no accident that there are [more homeless people sleeping on the streets](#) in Los Angeles, with its warmer climate, than in New York.

The Oxford economist Robert Allen recently estimated needs-based absolute poverty lines for rich countries that are designed to match more accurately the \$1.90 line for poor countries, and \$4 a day is around the middle of his estimates. When we compare absolute poverty in the United States with absolute poverty in India, or other poor countries, we should be using \$4 in the United States and \$1.90 in India.

Once we do this, there are 5.3 million Americans who are absolutely poor by global standards. This is a small number compared with the one for India, for example, but it is more than in Sierra Leone (3.2 million) or Nepal (2.5 million), about the same as in Senegal (5.3 million) and only one-third less than in Angola (7.4 million). Pakistan (12.7 million) has twice as many poor people as the United States, and Ethiopia about four times as many.

This evidence supports on-the-ground observation in the United States. Kathryn Edin and Luke Shaefer have [documented](#) the daily horrors of life for the several million people in the United States who actually do live on \$2 a day, in both urban and rural America. Matthew Desmond's [ethnography](#) of Milwaukee explores the nightmare of finding urban shelter among the American poor.

It is hard to imagine poverty that is worse than this, anywhere in the world. Indeed, it is precisely the cost and difficulty of housing that makes for so much misery for so many Americans, and it is precisely these costs that are missed in the World Bank's global counts.

Of course, people live longer and have healthier lives in rich countries. With only a few (and usually scandalous) exceptions, water is safe to drink, food is safe to eat, sanitation is universal, and some sort of medical care is available to everyone. Yet all these essentials of health are more likely to be lacking for poorer Americans. Even for the whole population, life expectancy in the United States is lower than we would expect given its national income, and there are places — the Mississippi Delta and much of Appalachia — where life expectancy is lower than in Bangladesh and Vietnam.

Beyond that, many Americans, especially whites with no more than a high school education, have seen worsening health: As [my research with my wife, the Princeton economist Anne Case](#),

has demonstrated, for this group life expectancy is falling; mortality rates from drugs, alcohol and suicide are rising; and the long historical decline in mortality from heart disease has come to a halt.

I believe, as do most people, that we have an obligation to assist the truly destitute. For those who believe that aid is effective, this is reflected in their own giving, or by supporting national and international organizations like the United States Agency for International Development, the World Bank or Oxfam.

For years, in determining this spending, the needs of poor Americans (or poor Europeans) have received little priority relative to the needs of Africans or Asians. As an economist concerned with global poverty, I have long accepted this practical and ethical framework. In my own giving, I have prioritized the faraway poor over the poor at home.

Recently, and especially with these insightful new data, I have come to doubt both the reasoning and the empirical support. There are millions of Americans whose suffering, through material poverty and poor health, is as bad or worse than that of the people in Africa or in Asia.

Practical considerations reinforce the argument for recognizing America's poor in the global context. There is a better chance of monitoring the effects of domestic spending than of foreign spending. Money spent by and for fellow citizens, either individually or collectively, is subject to democratic evaluation by both donors and recipients, who can see the effects and who can show their approval or disapproval in the voting booth. Those who donate for projects in Africa often find it difficult to know what good their gifts are doing, let alone to discover whether the intended beneficiaries actually receive or appreciate them.

Official aid from the United States is mostly set by geopolitics — the leading recipients are Afghanistan, Israel and Iraq. Yet the United States is committed to eliminating \$1.90-a-day poverty in the world, a target that is not contingent on poverty at home. Britain insists on spending 0.7 percent of its gross domestic product on foreign aid, in spite of occasional difficulties in finding suitable projects and in spite of domestic suffering caused by austerity at home.

None of this means that we should close out “others” and look after only our own. International cooperation is vital to keeping our globe safe, commerce flowing and our planet habitable.

But it is time to stop thinking that only non-Americans are truly poor. Trade, migration and modern communications have given us networks of friends and associates in other countries. We owe them much, but the social contract with our fellow citizens at home brings unique rights and responsibilities that must sometimes take precedence, especially when they are as destitute as the world's poorest people.

TWO Follow-Ups:

1. Is the following argument sound? If so, why? If not, why not?

1. Poverty is not a crime.
2. Even if it's not true that *all* criminals should be imprisoned, nevertheless *only* criminals should be imprisoned.
3. If someone is too poor to pay back their debts, then even if the non-payment of debts is generally a crime, they're not criminals.
4. Therefore, no one should ever be imprisoned for being too poor to pay back their debts.

2. Is the following argument sound? If so, why? If not, why not?

1. Everyone has basic human needs, including adequate food, adequate housing, adequate health, adequate education, and adequate safety.
2. Anyone who lacks sufficient resources to satisfy their basic human needs is truly poor.
3. All those who are comparatively well-off have a moral obligation to (try to) help those who are truly poor, no matter where they live.
4. If you are a comparatively well-off person, your moral obligation to (try to) help the truly poor *is stronger in direct proportion to the closeness of the truly poor people to you, when this closeness is taken together with your ability to help them.*
5. There are at least 5.3 million truly poor people in the USA.
6. Therefore, all comparatively well-off Americans have an especially strong moral obligation to help those 5.3 million truly poor Americans, in addition to their general moral obligation to (try to) help those who are truly poor, no matter where they live.

TWO Links:

1. “Ending Modern Day Debtors’ Prisons”:

URL = <https://www.aclu.org/issues/criminal-law-reform/sentencing/ending-modern-day-debtors-prisons>

2. “Global Extreme Poverty”:

URL = <https://ourworldindata.org/extreme-poverty>

3. “Who is Marx Now, and What Can He Say to the 21st Century?”

By Terrell Carver

Aeon, 3 JANUARY 2018

URL = <https://aeon.co/essays/who-is-marx-now-and-what-can-he-say-to-the-21st-century>



The 21st century has already welcomed back Karl Marx (1818-1883), rather on the assumption that he had faded away and has now returned to haunt us. After the financial crashes of 2008, his leonine face appeared on international news magazine covers, feature articles in quality broadsheets, TV documentaries and blogposts. The questions *Why now?* and *Why Marx?* are easily answered: capitalism suddenly appeared unstable, unmanageable, dangerously fragile and anxiously threatening. It was possibly in an unstoppable downward spiral, pushing individuals, families, whole nations into penury and subsistence. It also appeared hugely unfair and internally contradictory in very dramatic ways: banks ‘too big to fail’ would get taxpayer bail-outs, recklessness and fraud would go unpunished, the super-rich beneficiaries of oligarchical stitch-

ups would maintain their ‘high net worth’. Invocations of risk, competition, ‘free’ markets and rising living standards for all no longer seemed credible. So what were we all to think?

As the most stringently systematic critic to date of capitalism, author of a weighty treatise on the subject, and iconic revolutionary intellectual and ‘grand old man’, Marx seemed a likely candidate to enlighten readers of the *Financial Times*, *Der Spiegel*, even *Time* and *Newsweek*. As an established figure in the liberal arts curriculum, and way more colourful than any number of drily theoretical economists (even including the very charming John Maynard Keynes), the very familiar bushy-bearded communist would guarantee us an alternative view, and secure a lively public debate.

Dim and distant echoes of the Cold War, West vs East, freedom-loving peoples vs enslaved subjects of Iron Curtain tyrannies, etc – all this mid-20th-century fame actually did Marx some good, having made him indelibly historical without (perhaps surprisingly) totally demonising his thought or discrediting his intellect. Any number of biographies, commentaries, philosophical critiques and political polemics attempted to do him down, particularly from the early 1950s through later decades and well into the 1980s, right up to the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. But a counter-movement had also swelled up in the 1960s, and eventually it overtook the ‘Stalinist Terror’ anti-communist, anti-Soviet, anti-‘Red China’, anti-Marx bluster.

Two short books of the later 1930s had already laid the groundwork: Sidney Hook’s *From Hegel to Marx* (1936), written and published in the United States, and Isaiah Berlin’s *Karl Marx* (1939), written and published in the United Kingdom. While not uncritical of Marx, and not disconnected from the authors’ own political views, these two books established an important genre: in these works Marx was elevated for the first time to the highest ranks of European philosophy by academic writers who – though writing then as quite young men – soon became notable scholars of repute and made their careers at the highest levels of academia (New York University, and All Souls College, Oxford, respectively). Though writing in English, both were fluent in German and – at least by the standards of the time – well-informed researchers using primary sources. Whatever the vicissitudes of their personal opinions and political positions over the years, these tomes survived, unblemished by anything other than scholarly controversy.

That scholarly and loosely philosophical approach was widely taken up when a ‘humanist Marx’ hit the headlines in the 1960s and caught a wave of student protest, religious activism, ‘Third World’ rebellion and wars of national liberation. The Stalin or Mao version of Marx, and the hermetic East-facing debates that they engendered, looked decidedly stale in Latin America, at the Second Vatican Council, on the anti-war student barricades in the US and France, and anywhere else that the arrogant practice of Great Power politics had caused offence or disaster.

The ‘humanist Marx’ was a world-class intellectual up for debate, rather than a communist icon to be adored or defamed. He was youthful – just in his mid-20s, his texts were hitherto little-known, and moreover they were sketchy, puzzling and *sympatico*. His editorially titled ‘economic and philosophical manuscripts of 1844’, though published in 1932 for German scholars, were circulating among French intellectuals only from the later 1940s, and hit the Anglophone world in translation at the very end of the 1950s. Several bestselling English versions appeared, but neither communist nor anti-communist Cold Warriors had much to say

about them, since the concepts therein – famously ‘alienation’ and ‘species-being’ – had featured nowhere in the orthodoxies through which Marxists and anti-Marxists alike had operated ideologically. Most people could spot Marx’s image and register him as a big-browed intellectual. Many would assume – given the Cold Warrior echoes – that he was Russian (which he wasn’t), but then on discovering that he was German, many Anglophones found him just about as alien, yet still appealing.

Both Stalin and Mao had helpfully provided ‘official’ accounts of Marx’s thought – with due acknowledgement to his very influential friend Friedrich Engels – and there were committed intellectuals on both sides who were more than fluent in the relevant arcana of ‘dialectical’ and ‘historical’ materialism. However, the new ‘humanist Marx’ was quite insulated from all this, since his 1844 manuscript thoughts were ‘Hegelian’ (without anyone’s ‘dialectics’) and ‘historical’ (without anyone’s ‘materialism’). In their own way, they appeared to be quite original, so the youthful Marx could be taken on his own terms, predating any Marxisms at all, and thus any Cold War battlelines, whether intellectual or geographical. One of David McLellan’s first and most influential and successful paperback books was simply titled *Marx Before Marxism* (1970).

Significantly, the ‘humanist Marx’ had raised the question of economics, though not in the way that 20th-century economists had made familiar, whether they were conventional micro- or macro-economists, or Marxist economists in Moscow or Cambridge. The former ‘mainstream’ economists overwhelmingly ignored Marx and dismissed Marxist economics as politically biased and lacking in rigour; meanwhile, scholars and apparatchiks well-versed in Marxist economics despised ‘mainstream’ economists as uncritical proponents of capitalism. But both sides shared many presumptions and concepts nonetheless in theorising capitalism.

Refreshingly, the ‘humanist Marx’ had set the stage for an examination of capitalist society in ways that bypassed all these efforts in economics, of whichever opposing camp. ‘Alienation’ was neither economics nor Marxist, so it suited the New Left of the 1960s. It functioned as a political critique that required relatively little study, given the brevity of Marx’s early manuscript notes-to-self. In particular, the ‘humanist Marx’ needed no study at all in conventional economics textbooks, based as they were (and still are) on rather abstractly asocial and ahistorical presumptions, and on evidential reasoning that is easily converted to mathematics.

The early Marx’s theory of alienation, however, was rather less vague than it sounds, given that the word refers to feelings of ‘otherness’ or ‘separation’ or ‘estrangement’. In these manuscripts – now canonical as a widely translated text and ubiquitously excerpted for university reading lists – Marx was talking about capitalism as workers experience it, though in terms that were rather more psychological than sociological, but still historically specific, referring to mechanised production, wage-labour employment, and real or metaphorical assembly-line conditions.

The new ‘humanist Marx’ was on-side with visionary intellectuals, uncontaminated with Stalinist political terror

The ‘alienations’ detailed in Marx’s ruminations were of workers from products, workers from processes, workers from each other, and workers from their ‘species-being’. The first three could be easily visualised (even without, as was true of many student readers, much experience of such grinding conditions), whereas the last term was intriguingly philosophical and pointed towards something systemically ‘out of whack’ with ‘the human condition’ – quoting the title of another widely read and self-evidently Germanic book of the times by Hannah Arendt, published in 1958. Any number of deeply felt, loosely organised and generally inchoate critiques of industrial modernity could then adopt Marx, extending even to the Catholic liberation theology and Latin American peasant-farmer activisms.

Thus the ‘humanist Marx’ could evidently stretch way beyond the author’s self-declared and relentlessly argued atheism, and triumph over the still-extant anti-religious persecutions conducted by communist militants in self-styled Marxist regimes. Philosophers, such as John Plamenatz, István Mészáros, Allen W Wood, Bertell Ollman, Kostas Axelos and David Leopold, forgave the rather simple moralising about factory or factory-like working conditions, which had overtones of industrial sociology and ‘pop’ psychology, since ‘species-being’ offered a suitable puzzle that connected with a familiar concern: what is it to be human? And to be ‘realised’ as such, ‘as a species’? What makes humans different from (other) animals exactly? And how should society be organised so as to fulfil this ‘essence’?

Marx’s sketches provided some interesting if incomplete answers, unburdened with references and footnotes (which scholars in philosophy very ably provided over the years). He wrote that humans raise ideas creatively and therefore make history, as opposed to animals whose nature is repetitiously instinctive and narrowly species-delimited. His view was that humans can produce their social lives in the manner of any species, and can indeed remake themselves – even physically and sensuously, as well as morally and culturally – as they do so. If modern industrial production could be redeemed from the everyday numbness (or worse) of this four-fold crisis of alienation, then ultimately humans could flourish in a wholly transformed social setting. Such decidedly non-capitalistic relations of production, distribution, consumption and exchange would then permit individual fulfilment within a community worthy of the species potential.

Thus, the new ‘humanist Marx’ was on-side with visionary, even religious intellectuals, and evidently uncontaminated with Stalinist political terror and Maoist cultural revolution. He was compatible with the quotidian miseries and angst of both factory work and chronic unemployment, with both the commodified sterility of bourgeois consumerism and the banality of mass-produced commercial culture. *One-Dimensional Man* (1964) by Herbert Marcuse was an update and re-visioning of Marx’s youthful manuscripts, which its author had been reading in the 1930s in Germany. As the ebullience of the 1960s faded into defeat, co-optation, disillusionment and ‘burn out’, so the ‘humanist Marx’ faded into the kind of manageable disputation that excites undergraduates in coursework essays and seminar debates. The end point of this process was a popular, prize-winning biography by the journalist Francis Wheen, *Karl Marx: A Life* (1999), reducing ‘humanism’ to the ‘humane’ in a highly readable character study.

After the financial crashes of the 21st century, Marx would have to be renewed again to become relevant. What would do the trick?

Marx's *magnum opus*, the famously unreadable and unread *Das Kapital* (1867), was clearly waiting for rediscovery. Again, the ground had been well-prepared, in the usual posthumous way, by further 'unknown' manuscripts (this time from Marx's middle age). This much larger compilation of (yet more) notebook materials had the editorially given and highly Germanic title *Grundrisse*, or 'Foundations' of a critique of political economy. Originally published in two volumes (1939 to 1941), it surfaced in a post-War German paperback reprint, followed by translations in the early 1970s.

In popular excerpts and academic discussion, the *Grundrisse* was very much stage-two for students of the 'humanist Marx'. Here was something intriguingly rough-draft, quite rambling, good discussion material, and often quite historical. But it was clearly focused on capitalism as a unique historical phenomenon and systematic social formation. While evidently less philosophical, and far more economic, than the earlier thinking, the writing was nonetheless pleasing for its lack of rigour, compared with the more closely argued opening chapters of *Capital*, volume 1 (which was often as far as many readers got before deciding they'd had enough).

In short, the first volume of *Capital* was a predictable stage-three in regenerating Marx (perhaps somewhat in the manner of Doctor Who). It had long ago been dismissed by 'mainstream' economists, and its leaden and arcane ruminations on value – beloved by many Marxist study groups up until the 1960s – had had little contact with, or relevance to, the Soviet, Chinese, Cuban and Vietnamese communist regimes and headline Great Power issues. However, the new interest in *Capital*, sparked by financial op-eds in the 2000s, wasn't a case of back to the future, reviving interest in the orthodoxies of the 'labour theory of value', 'theory of surplus value', 'organic composition of capital', or even 'the falling rate of profit'. Rather, the humanist-philosophising Marx became the sit-in Marx of economics-minded anti-globalisation activists and Occupy Wall Street protesters.

Protest movements, like revolutions, are often summed into history as failures since hopes and dreams are never fully realised. The fiery leaders of today often disappear into regression and obscurity, or suffer the recriminations due to those who take power and thus make concessions or engineer reversals. It is important to remember now that the spontaneously generated Occupy movement was actually quite large in terms of numbers and quite wide in terms of geographical spread: estimates suggest nearly 1,000 cities in approximately 80 countries, with many hundreds of thousands of people involved, starting in late 2011 and running strong for about a year. The globalised interlocking activities of mega-rich corporations, financial institutions and governmental agencies (including defence and security establishments) were pilloried in manifestos, statements and press releases as exploitative, anti-democratic and unjust.

Generally, 'neo-liberalism' performed a signifying function in these critiques, referencing the winding down of welfare states and the ratcheting up of inequalities, between nations and economies, as well as between individuals and income-groups. Any number of striking statistical representations would tell you that a tiny group of people (overwhelmingly male) owned as much as the poorest 50 per cent of humanity, or that any one mega-billionaire was worth more than so-many national economies put together. Many politicians, business people, governmental regulators and 'Lefty' celebrities hastened to get on-side, or at least to make sympathetic noises.

Das Kapital is now the book that portrays capitalists as vampires, sucking the blood of child labourers

Marx was certainly present in this, though as a spectral *éminence grise* rather than a banner-high icon (too reminiscent of former, Cold War scenarios). But then the ideas of his activist days – particularly in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (1848) – have worked their way through CliffsNotes and similar ‘cheat sheets’ into popular consciousness to the point where citational reference isn’t needed, and wouldn’t be helpful anyway. The *Manifesto* had been published anonymously, and Marx – though publicity-seeking for the socialist movement – didn’t construct himself then or later as a guru-author or cult leader (quite the opposite). The Communist Party, of the *Manifesto*’s title, was an aspiration generated by a tiny international committee, and even in the revolutions of 1848 it disbanded such organisation as it had, merging with the anti-authoritarian fray of broadly democratic crowds and political groups. By 2011, Marx and Engels’s ideas were freely circulating [online](#) in the animation compilation *Communist Manifestoon* (which is excellent, and a must-watch, by the way).

The Marx-of-the-moment, though, isn’t exclusively the property of Occupy, but readily appears in thoughtful reporting and comment with rather more specific points of reference. Here a Marx-of-the-metaphor arises from *Capital*, vol 1, where reporters and commentators, in tune with the times, are looking for catchy critical ‘takes’ on capitalism. Style triumphs over content, and trope over proposition, making Marx’s very divergence from the dry logics of econometrics an advantage. *Capital* is now the book in which Marx portrays capitalists as vampires, sucking the blood of child labourers; as werewolves, howling and hungry for worker-prey; of ‘magic caps’ worn by economists to make the realities of capitalist exploitation disappear.

The sarcastic Marx of the ‘send-up’ gets a look-in here, too, portraying economists as the bumbling numbskulls Seacole and Dogberry (from William Shakespeare’s *Much Ado About Nothing*), and then scoffing at their very evident yet hypocritical self-satisfactions. In sum, Marx’s critical edge, sharpened in successive reworkings of his one truly major published book, has come to the fore in presenting a critical yet readable ‘take’ on capitalism. Underlying this ‘take’ is a notion that capitalism is in fact a system, with essential properties that can, in principle, be specified. Marx is arguing passionately that ‘mainstream’ economists, contrary to the self-serving claims that there is no alternative, have simply got the wrong principles. Or at least his writing is helping to generate economic principles that offer a more realistic ethics, a more developed commitment to democracy, and a more thorough exploration of the relationship between markets and freedoms.

This is not to say that Marx provides all this, in *Capital*, vol 1, or elsewhere. He doesn’t. But then we don’t solve our problems ‘by the book’, anyway. Metaphors are potent in conveying meaning, indeed metaphors *are* meanings as we make them. They don’t have to be a substitute for, or a ‘way in’, to more rigorous theories of proposition, syllogism and conclusion. They actually make Marx’s argument for his readers, alongside, and just as much as, his formal explication. This must be so, otherwise they wouldn’t be there. Essentially, Marx is saying (albeit in my own words here):

Dear Reader, just as you don't believe in witches, goblins and fairies, or in vampires, werewolves and magic, you should have as little faith in the concepts and theories of an economics that takes capitalism for granted, and constructs an 'economic man' in its image. Our social experience of capitalism is a historical product, a human construct, not a necessary or eternal truth following from human nature, God's will, or the progress of history. You know that social systems have been radically otherwise in the past, that money is a relatively recent historical invention, and that the ever-expanding spiral of capitalist aggrandisement benefiting a tiny minority (and concomitant 'austerities' for the 99 per cent, as in the Occupy slogan) is a product of the past few decades. If the institutions of democracy and the laws of property are more than ever on the side of the 1 per cent (or lately, the 0.01 per cent, in some comments), then it's time to struggle and 'take back control'!

Marx also warned that those with advantages will fight (or more usually hire poorer people to fight for them) to maintain the system from which they benefit. He also counselled that neither he nor anyone else can reasonably pretend that social change in opposition to it is all very simple and easy to implement.

One of Marx's powerful and ubiquitous metaphors from *Capital*, vol 1, is 'the fetishism of commodities', most often wrongly taken in a neo-Freudian sense to refer to an undue preoccupation with consumer products and advertisers' values. That's not what he meant. 'Social relations between things, and *thingly* relations between people' is rather more like it, as a summary of what's really wrong. Or in other words, we have created a world of markets and prices ('social relations between things') that we experience as an everyday and often brutal reality ('*thingly* relations between people'). Indeed, many of us become the kind of people who merge with economic realities and thus become inured to, or unconscious of, any brutality in the normality at all. Marx's 'take' on capitalism is that the social world could be otherwise, less brutal and less destructive, if we organise to make it otherwise. But it won't, if we don't.

ONE Follow-Up:

1. Is the following argument sound? If so, why? If not, why not?

1. Marx's political philosophy is importantly distinct from the real-world political *uses* that have been made of this philosophy since the 19th century by many individuals, institutions, and states, at least some or even many of which are rationally unjustified and immoral, e.g., Stalinist and Maoist communism.

2. The core of Marx's critique of capitalism is that, other things being equal, large-scale capitalism is alienating, exploitative, oppressive, brutal, and

destructive for a great many people worldwide, especially for workers and for those living in poverty, and their families.

3. This is as true in the 21st century as it was in the 19th and 20th centuries.

4. Therefore, as Marx argued, we all ought to (try to) radically transform contemporary large-scale capitalism into social institutions and patterns of everyday living that are non-alienating, non-oppressive, non-brutal, and non-destructive, especially for the sake of those who have been most harmed by it.

ONE Link:

“Karl Marx”:

URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/marx/>

4. “The New Science of Animal Cognition Is Forcing Countries To Overhaul Their Laws”

By Ephrat Livni

Quartz, 24 JANUARY 2018

URL = <https://qz.com/1181881/proof-of-animal-cognition-is-recognized-by-new-laws-in-europe/>



AP Photo/Robert F. Bukaty

Hath *not* the lobster claws, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions; warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer as humans? If we boil it, [*does it not feel?*](#)

Swiss lawmakers, taking a cue from William Shakespeare and David Foster Wallace, have considered the lobster, and its ability to feel pain—and answered in the affirmative. As of March 1, it will be illegal to boil lobsters alive, [Swiss Info reported on Jan. 10](#). “Live crustaceans, including the lobster, may no longer be transported on ice or in ice water. Aquatic species must always be kept in their natural environment. Crustaceans must now be stunned before they are killed,” the new law provides.

The change is part of a broader set of Swiss rules grappling with the reality of animal consciousness. The new rules crack down on puppy farming, outlaw automatic devices that punish dogs for barking, and protect small, shy animals like guinea pigs by barring certain practices at pop-up, or temporary, petting zoos. Labs that use animals in scientific testing will also have to appoint animal welfare officers to ensure practices aren’t cruel.

The country has a history of being progressive on animal welfare issues. In 2008, Switzerland began requiring all prospective dog owners take a course in [canine care](#) before acquiring such a pet, and made it illegal to own just one guinea pig (they get lonely). Cats, horses, fish, goats and sheep each had a chapter devoted to them in 2005 Swiss animal protection legislation, which recognized that [animals aren't quite like other things](#) we humans and our laws consider to be property.

But even as Switzerland provides animals with increasing legal protections, some animal advocates say the rights currently afforded to animals don't go far enough. [People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals](#) in the UK issued a statement on the new Swiss lobster decision, saying it "is a small but powerful step" in the right direction, but that "killing lobsters by any method in order to eat them is cruel and unnecessary." And Lauren Choplin of the non-profit [Nonhuman Rights Project](#), which litigates for animals' fundamental rights, told Quartz on Jan. 17, "in our view, the law hasn't caught up to what we know about animal cognition, and it needs to."

Indeed, our evolving understanding of animal consciousness suggests that we have some uncomfortable philosophical and legal work ahead.

Consciousness and conscience

The more we learn about animals, the more their consciousness weighs on the human conscience. On July 7, 2012, cognitive scientists, neuropharmacologists, neurophysiologists, neuroanatomists, and computational neuroscientists attending a [conference on consciousness "in human and non-human animals"](#) signed the [Cambridge Declaration of Consciousness](#) (pdf). It recognizes that, despite having very different brains and body structures, other species think, feel, and experience life in much the same way humans do. The evolutionary bases for sensation and emotions appear to have arisen in early insects and crustaceans, the scientists said. They declared the following:

The weight of evidence indicates that humans are not unique in possessing the neurological substrates that generate consciousness. Nonhuman animals, including all mammals and birds, and many other creatures, including octopuses, also possess these neurological substrates.

The scientific evidence of [animal cognition](#) puts humans in an awkward position. If nonhumans can think and feel and suffer pain, we ought to reconsider how we treat other creatures because the treatment reflects on us.

Perhaps because of the manner in which we kill and consume them, the lobster is a frequent subject of ethical debates about animal consciousness. When writer David Foster Wallace [attended the Maine Lobster Festival back in 2004](#) (pdf), he found the matter of how we treat the giant sea insects impossible to ignore.

The lobster, after all, is our evolutionary elder. Lobster-like crustaceans have existed about [360 million years](#). That a lobster feels pain is evidenced by the fact that it won't relax when boiled alive. Even in death, its carcass yields no flesh without a fight.

The anecdotal evidence is also backed by science. In 2013, a study published in the [Journal of Experimental Biology](#) electrically shocked crabs that entered two darkened rooms in a lit lab. The crabs, related to lobsters, avoided the dark rooms in subsequent tests—an indication that they had felt pain and preferred to not feel it again.

But what does it mean to be in pain—or just to be—when you are an ancient crustacean, with claws and a shell and a totally different kind of brain? Animal rights activists, scientists, writers, lawmakers, and philosophers are all trying to figure this out.

Species equality

To change the way we treat animals, we may first have to change the entire way we conceive of humans' position in the world. The term “speciesism” was coined by writer and animal rights activist Richard Ryder in the 1970s. He argued in [The Guardian](#) in 2005 that the only moral position a human can hold is belief in equality of all species. Any being that feels pain, which is every live being he says, deserves humane treatment. Ryder wrote:

[Speciesism is] like racism or sexism, a prejudice based upon morally irrelevant physical differences. Since Darwin we have known we are human animals related to all the other animals through evolution; how, then, can we justify our almost total oppression of all the other species? All animal species can suffer pain and distress. Animals scream and writhe like us; their nervous systems are similar and contain the same biochemicals that we know are associated with the experience of pain in ourselves.

Humans, then, need to stop thinking the world revolves around them and consider the scientific evidence that people, [here 300,000 years](#), are new to the Earth. Life has existed [3.5 billion years at least](#). What's more, we're not even necessarily the most advanced creatures on the planet—just the most powerful.

Diver, philosopher, and octopus researcher Peter Godfrey-Smith, of the City University of New York, explored octopus consciousness in his 2016 book [Other Minds](#). He posits that octopuses evolved before humans. They seem to have been on Earth 1,000 times longer than us. Godfrey-Smith believes their intelligence is incomprehensible to us because it's so different from our own, but not lesser. It's as if evolution created (at least) [two versions of the mind](#).

“An octopus is as different from a person physically as creatures can get,” naturalist Sy Montgomery, author of the 2015 book [The Soul of an Octopus](#), told Quartz [in October](#). “They have no bones, three hearts, blue blood, a beak like a parrot, venom like a snake's. They can pour their baggy bodies through small openings; they can change color and shape; they can taste with their skin.” Yet, she says, she became “close friends” with a few wise cephalopods and has no doubt that they are conscious, perhaps much more so than humans.

Octopuses and [cuttlefish](#) in aquariums and oceans have shown wit and cleverness. They recognize, and distinguish between, friendly researchers and those that are mean. They're curious and make jokes, coaxing humans to play and protesting human actions by spraying them with ink. They [build cities](#). They hear infrasound. They are super skilled. They're darlings.

But they're also delicious. Which puts us in a pickle.

Moral quandary

Even those of us who claim to love other creatures—people like me—eat and wear and use animals. This hypocrisy reveals something disturbing about the nature of humanity: We will accommodate cruelty for our convenience.

The 18th-century philosopher Immanuel Kant recognized the way that our treatment of animals reflects upon us, despite his own belief that animals were mere things. He explains in his 1784 *Lectures on Ethics*:

If a man shoots his dog because the animal is no longer capable of service, he does not fail in his duty to the dog, for the dog cannot judge, but his act is inhuman and damages in himself that humanity which it is his duty to show towards mankind. If he is not to stifle his human feelings, he must practice kindness towards animals, for he who is cruel to animals becomes hard also in his dealings with men.

For those who see animals as equal to people, the stakes of our behavior are even higher. What does it say about us if we're willing to imprison or hurt our companions and friends? How can I simultaneously adore my cat and pup and two dwarf goats, as well as my leather jacket and hamburgers? Accepting this distasteful ethical compromise because it's aesthetically and gustatorily convenient to me is just one of many moral shortcuts I take every day.

That said, we all make moral calculations. The entry on [The Moral Status of Animals](#) in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, written by feminist philosopher Lori Gruen, points out that absolutists demand we treat animals like humans. But that's not the only moral choice, especially since foisting vegetarianism on people is also morally problematic. It prioritizes one set of values over another and limits the freedom of others.

Utilitarians take a more nuanced approach, arguing that meat-eating involves weighing competing interests. The moral significance of animal suffering in meat production, for example, is not necessarily an argument for vegetarianism. For a utilitarian thinker, if an animal lives well, dies painlessly, and is eaten by people who require the nourishment, eating it is morally justified. Similarly, in situations where economic, cultural, or climate conditions make vegetarianism impossible or inconceivable, killing and eating animals is justified. "The utilitarian position can thus avoid certain charges of cultural chauvinism and moralism, charges that the animal rights position apparently cannot avoid," Gruen writes.

Legal lines

Laws too hobble along, making compromises and drawing strange, not-totally-morally-tenable distinctions. Legislation on animal rights won't change fast, because status quo is actually what the law is always designed to maintain.

And so some courts draw fine lines over how much cruelty we can get away with: Eating animals is fine, say, but freezing them before they die, not so much. In Italy, the nation's highest court ruled in July 2017 that keeping [lobsters on ice](#) before cooking them was cruel, even if they are boiled alive after and that's arguably cruel too. "While [boiling] can be considered legal by recognizing that it is commonly used, the suffering caused by detaining the animals while they wait to be cooked cannot be justified in that way," the judges wrote.

Lobster was altogether barred from menus in [2004 in the Italian town of Reggio Emilia](#). The town council revised a 1913 law updating how humans relate to animals. As a result, residents who kept birds were also required to ensure that the cages would be at least five times their wingspan—which is particularly notable because the town's the capital of amateur bird-breeding in Italy. The dissenting member of the 22-person council, Marco Marziani, was offended. He said, "The idea of comparing the rights of an animal to that of human beings completely casts into the shadows the sacred role of human life."

Fur fox sake

Most of the world may be on Marziani's side for now. But change is undeniably afoot. Norway, for example, once the world's premiere mink and fox fur producer, is getting out of the business. Lawmakers on Jan. 15 decided to phase out farming such pelts [completely by 2025](#).

The country currently produces a million pelts a year and the industry employs about 400 people, generating around \$46 million annually. "We're shocked, shaken to the core," Guri Wormdahl of the Norwegian Fur Breeders Association told [The Guardian](#), noting that the nation's 200 fur farms follow strict animal welfare rules.

"It's not a very lucrative business in Norway," countered Sveinung Fjose, a fur farming expert. "[Its loss] wouldn't harm the Norwegian economy severely." In 1939, there were 20,000 fur farms in Norway and the country was the world's greatest fox and mink pelt producer. Now, China dominates the market, and in 2013 the Scandinavian country contributed only 1% of the world's mink pelts and 3% of total global fox furs, according to a Norwegian government report.

Norway is following a trend. The [Fur Free Alliance](#), an international coalition of 40 animal protection organizations, says that since 2004, bans on farming some species were introduced in the UK and Northern Ireland, Austria, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Republic of Macedonia, the regions of Wallonia and Brussels in Belgium, and the Brazilian state of Sao Paulo. Meanwhile, Switzerland, Germany, Italy, Denmark and Sweden are phasing out breeding all or some species for fur.

The coalition cites Fernand Etgen, Luxembourg's Minister of Agriculture, who said in 2016, "Animal welfare legislation requires profound reform because of what scientific advances had revealed about animals, and because of changes in how animals are viewed by human society." It notes, too, that great fake fur is available today.

In a similar vein, big fashion designers, like Gucci and Michael Kors, are giving up on fur this year, opting for luxury faux. But as Marc Bain reported in [Quartz in December](#), the dead animal

clothing industry is still alive and doing alright. In 2015, China generated nearly \$17 billion with pelt sales, possibly because so much of its population lives in brutally cold regions. In warmer climates last year, fur-lined shoes, mules and flip-flops, were produced by everyone from [Birkenstock](#) to [Gucci](#).

In another's exoskeleton

Some philosophers believe the key to a truly cruelty-free world is more empathy for all creatures—whether or not they're conscious or particularly brainy.

Gruen, for example, challenges the individualism central to most arguments for the moral status of animals. "Rather than identifying intrinsic or innate properties that non-humans share with humans, some feminists have argued instead that we ought to understand moral status in relational terms given that moral recognition is invariably a social practice," she writes. In other words, because we are related to animals in an interdependent ecosystem, morality demands we recognize their status, regardless of an animal's intelligence or the extent to which its skills are similar to, or different from, our own. She argues for "refining our empathetic imagination in order to improve our relationships with each other and other animals."

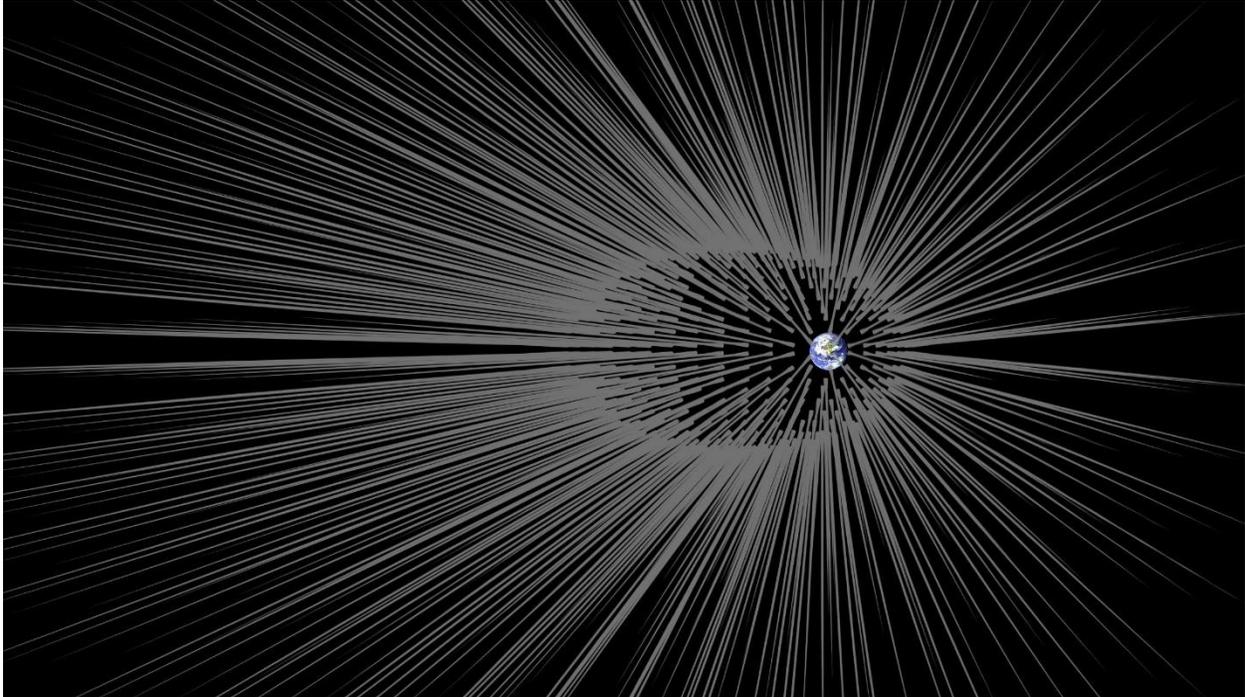
Generating a sense of "entangled empathy" will set the human moral compass straight, and it doesn't even require direct contact with animals. All it asks is that we try sometimes to sit in a cuttlefish's shape-shifting skin or a lobster's shell, to see that we need other creatures and act accordingly, as a family, if only distantly related to each other. "Even though it is challenging to understand what it is like to be another, and even though we are limited by our inevitable anthropocentric perspectives," she writes, "being in respectful ethical relation involves attempting to understand and respond to another's needs, interests, desires, vulnerabilities, hopes, and perspectives."

5. “The Idea That Everything From Spoons To Stones Are Conscious Is Gaining Academic Credibility”

By Olivia Goldhill

Quartz, 27 JANUARY 2018

URL = <https://qz.com/1184574/the-idea-that-everything-from-spoons-to-stones-are-conscious-is-gaining-academic-credibility/>



Consciousness permeates reality. Rather than being just a unique feature of human subjective experience, it's the foundation of the universe, present in every particle and all physical matter.

This sounds like easily-dismissible bunkum, but as traditional attempts to explain consciousness continue to fail, the “panpsychist” view is increasingly being taken seriously by credible philosophers, neuroscientists, and physicists, including figures such as neuroscientist Christof Koch and physicist Roger Penrose.

“Why should we think common sense is a good guide to what the universe is like?” says Philip Goff, a philosophy professor at Central European University in Budapest, Hungary. “Einstein tells us weird things about the nature of time that counters common sense; quantum mechanics runs counter to common sense. Our intuitive reaction isn't necessarily a good guide to the nature of reality.”

David Chalmers, a philosophy of mind professor at New York University, laid out the “[hard problem of consciousness](#)” in 1995, demonstrating that there was still no answer to the question

of what causes consciousness. Traditionally, two dominant perspectives, materialism and dualism, have provided a framework for solving this problem. Both lead to seemingly intractable complications.

“Physics is just structure. It can explain biology, but there’s a gap: Consciousness.” The materialist viewpoint states that consciousness is derived entirely from physical matter. It’s unclear, though, exactly how this could work. “It’s very hard to get consciousness out of non-consciousness,” says Chalmers. “Physics is just structure. It can explain biology, but there’s a gap: Consciousness.” Dualism holds that consciousness is separate and distinct from physical matter—but that then raises the question of how consciousness interacts and has an effect on the physical world.

Panpsychism offers an attractive alternative solution: Consciousness is a fundamental feature of physical matter; every single particle in existence has an “unimaginably simple” form of consciousness, says Goff. These particles then come together to form more complex forms of consciousness, such as humans’ subjective experiences. This isn’t meant to imply that particles have a coherent worldview or actively think, merely that there’s some inherent subjective experience of consciousness in even the tiniest particle.

Panpsychism doesn’t necessarily imply that every inanimate object is conscious. “Panpsychists usually don’t take tables and other artifacts to be conscious as a whole,” writes Hedda Hassel Mørch, a philosophy researcher at New York University’s Center for Mind, Brain, and Consciousness, in an email. “Rather, the table could be understood as a collection of particles that each have their own very simple form of consciousness.”

But, then again, panpsychism could very well imply that conscious tables exist: One interpretation of the theory holds that “any system is conscious,” says Chalmers. “Rocks will be conscious, spoons will be conscious, the Earth will be conscious. Any kind of aggregation gives you consciousness.”

Interest in panpsychism has grown in part thanks to the increased academic focus on consciousness itself following on from Chalmers’ “hard problem” paper. Philosophers at NYU, home to one of the leading philosophy-of-mind departments, have made panpsychism a [feature](#) of serious study. There have been [several](#) credible academic [books](#) on the [subject](#) in recent years, and [popular articles](#) taking panpsychism seriously.

One of the most popular and credible contemporary neuroscience theories on consciousness, Giulio Tononi’s [Integrated Information Theory](#), further lends [credence to panpsychism](#). Tononi argues that something will have a form of “consciousness” if the information contained within the structure is sufficiently “integrated,” or unified, and so the whole is more than the sum of its parts. Because it applies to all structures—not just the human brain—Integrated Information Theory shares [the panpsychist view](#) that physical matter has innate conscious experience.

Goff, who has written [an academic book](#) on consciousness and is working on another that approaches the subject from a more popular-science perspective, notes that there were credible theories on the subject dating back to the 1920s. Thinkers including philosopher Bertrand Russell

and physicist Arthur Eddington made a serious case for panpsychism, but the field lost momentum after World War II, when philosophy became largely focused on analytic philosophical questions of language and logic. Interest picked up again in the 2000s, thanks both to recognition of the “hard problem” and to increased adoption of the structural-realist approach in physics, explains Chalmers. This approach views physics as describing structure, and not the underlying nonstructural elements.

“Physical science tells us a lot less about the nature of matter than we tend to assume,” says Goff. “Eddington”—the English scientist who experimentally confirmed Einstein’s theory of general relativity in the early 20th century—“argued there’s a gap in our picture of the universe. We know what matter *does* but not what it *is*. We can put consciousness into this gap.”

“What is it that breathes fire into the equations and makes a universe for them to describe?” In Eddington’s view, Goff writes in an email, it’s “silly” to suppose that that underlying nature has nothing to do with consciousness and then to wonder where consciousness comes from.” Stephen Hawking has [previously asked](#): “What is it that breathes fire into the equations and makes a universe for them to describe?” Goff adds: “The Russell-Eddington proposal is that it is consciousness that breathes fire into the equations.”

The biggest problem caused by panpsychism is known as the “combination problem”: Precisely how do small particles of consciousness collectively form more complex consciousness? Consciousness may exist in all particles, but that doesn’t answer the question of how these tiny fragments of physical consciousness come together to create the more complex experience of human consciousness.

Any theory that attempts to answer that question, would effectively determine which complex systems—from inanimate objects to plants to ants—count as conscious.

An alternative panpsychist perspective holds that, rather than individual particles holding consciousness and coming together, the universe as a whole is conscious. This, says Goff, isn’t the same as believing the universe is a unified divine being; it’s more like seeing it as a “cosmic mess.” Nevertheless, it does reflect a perspective that the world is a top-down creation, where every individual thing is derived from the universe, rather than a bottom-up version where objects are built from the smallest particles. Goff believes quantum entanglement—the finding that certain particles behave as a single unified system even when they’re separated by such immense distances there can’t be a causal signal between them—suggests the universe functions as a fundamental whole rather than a collection of discrete parts.

Such theories sound incredible, and perhaps they are. But then again, so is every other possible theory that explains consciousness. “The more I think about [any theory], the less plausible it becomes,” says Chalmers. “One starts as a materialist, then turns into a dualist, then a panpsychist, then an idealist,” he adds, echoing [his paper](#) on the subject. Idealism holds that conscious experience is the only thing that truly exists. From that perspective, panpsychism is quite moderate.

Chalmers quotes his colleague, the philosopher John Perry, who says: “If you think about consciousness long enough, you either become a panpsychist or you go into administration.”

TWO Follow-Ups:

1. Is the following argument sound? If so, why? If not, why not?

1. Consciousness is subjective experience.
2. Not only human animals, but also many other kinds of animals, are capable of consciousness.
3. Not all conscious animals, whether human or non-human, are also *rational* conscious animals like us, the actual and possible readers of these words.
4. Any animal that possesses a capacity for consciousness, no matter what species it belongs to, is itself morally valuable and should be taken into moral consideration by rational conscious animals like us.
5. Rational conscious animals like us have certain moral obligations towards all rational conscious animals, including ourselves.
6. Therefore, rational conscious animals like us have *the very same* moral obligations towards all conscious animals of any other species, including, e.g., insects and marine animals like octopuses, that we have towards all rational conscious animals.

2. Is the following argument sound? If so, why? If not, why not?

1. Consciousness is subjective experience.
2. In order to explain the existence and nature of consciousness, we must defend the doctrine of panpsychism, which says that *everything in the world, whether natural or artificial, is actually conscious to some degree and extent.*

3. Not all conscious worldly beings, whether human or non-human, or whether natural or artificial, are also *rational* conscious worldly beings like us, the actual and possible readers of these words.
4. Any worldly being that is actually conscious, no matter what kind of a being it is, is itself morally valuable and should be taken into moral consideration by rational conscious worldly beings like us.
5. Rational conscious worldly beings like us have certain moral obligations towards all rational conscious worldly beings, including ourselves.
6. Therefore, rational conscious worldly beings like us have *the very same* moral obligations towards all conscious beings, including, e.g., plants, spoons, and stones, that we have towards all rational conscious worldly beings.

TWO Links:

1. “Panpsychism”:

URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/panpsychism/>

2. “The Minds of Plants”:

URL = <https://aeon.co/essays/beyond-the-animal-brain-plants-have-cognitive-capacities-too>
