<u>Power and Responsibility: A Reconsideration</u>[*]

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It is not always easy to see as we all go about our daily business, but ours could fairly be called a time of crisis. For one thing, much of the world faces a serious economic and financial crisis. For another, global warming—a problem famously neglected by the Bush Administration—is once again being taken seriously as a threat to human and non-human forms of life. What these problems share is their connection to the everyday activities of ordinary people all over the world: Making and accepting loans that are beyond our means, for example; or producing and purchasing environmentally unfriendly products, failing to recycle, and so on. This state of affairs urges upon us a conception of shared political responsibility that is based upon the connections between our everyday activities and global political problems. In one of her last published works, Iris Young developed such a conception—the "social connection model of responsibility"[1]—although with a different kind of concrete problem in mind. Young developed the social connection model in order to overcome the limitations of what she calls a "liability model of responsibility", which connects particular, wrongful actions to specific harmful outcomes. She claims, rightly, that such a model is inadequate to the task of confronting problems to which individual contributions are less direct and traceable. In particular, Young developed the social connection model to address problems of structural injustice. According to Young, we bear responsibility for such injustice when we contribute to the processes that sustain it; and the appropriate response is to resist, protest and subvert such processes. Her example is sweatshop labor, but I will argue that her model is useful precisely because it encourages us to see global warming and financial crises *as* problems of injustice.

While affirming the value of Young's model for thinking about and responding to global problems of injustice[2], I think that the spirit of shared responsibility which she seeks to cultivate is undermined by something that the social connection model surprisingly *shares* with the liability model: Both implicitly rely upon an instrumental conception of power as a resource that is possessed and used (or not). On this view, "having" power of some sort brings with it a corresponding responsibility; those who lack power cannot be responsible. On one hand, this view is intuitively appealing: We would not want to say that the well-off and the worse-off bear equal responsibility for engaging in more environmentally friendly or economically sound practices, which often come with their own costs that are harder for some to bear than others. On the other hand, one *reason* that the powerless cannot be responsible is that they are often deprived of the capacity to respond to their condition in productive ways. Moreover, positions of *privilege*, as much as positions of privation, may inhibit our capacity to respond because they become naturalized and misrecognized. If the problems that we face demand urgent, collective

[1] Young, 2006.
[2] Though see my sympathetic critique in Schiff, 2008.

responses, then we must ask a pressing question that notions of responsibility based on instrumental conceptions of power tend to obscure: How can the capacities of human beings to respond to their condition be enhanced? What transformations might enable us to be more response-able? Improving response-ability is crucial if the burdens of responsibility for global problems are to be more adequately shared. Transferring resources to the powerless cannot be the answer—or at least not the whole answer—because their situation is often such that it obscures opportunities to seize upon such resources in order to transform their condition. And in any case, the possession of greater resources is certainly no guarantee of more responsive activity

The purpose of this paper is to stake out the terrain upon which we might answer these questions about improving our capacities to respond. My wager is that thinking about responsibility in terms of instrumental power obscures questions about our capacities to respond; and that bringing such questions to light might require us to rethink the relationship between power and responsibility. Specifically, I want to explore what it would mean to think about political responsibility in terms, not of instrumental, but of *productive* and *symbolic* power— power that produces particular kinds of political subjects and enables (or forecloses) them from responding to their condition. Through a critical conversation with Hannah Arendt, Michel Foucault, and Pierre Bourdieu, I seek to develop a perspective on political responsibility within which the appropriate question is not "Who is responsible and who is not?" but, rather, "How can we enhance our capacities to respond?" This question has important resonances with a prominent approach to social justice, known as the "capabilities" approach. However, that approach—developed by Amartya Sen and extended most prominently by Martha Nussbaum— seems inadequate to our globalized condition because it is insufficiently relational. It emphasizes various dimensions of individual and group flourishing and well-being, but neglects the kinds of relationships *between* individuals and groups that are at the root of structural injustice. Turning our attention to our capacity to respond adds just such a relational dimension to the capabilities approach.

The paper will proceed as follows: In the first section, I argue that Young's social connection model of responsibility surprisingly shares with the liability model an implicit commitment to an instrumental conception of power, and that that commitment ultimately undermines the spirit of shared responsibility that admirably animates her work. In the second, I suggest that while Arendt's conception of emergent or potential power holds promise for a more widely shared political responsibility, she ultimately retains the problematic distinction between those who can be responsible and those who cannot, *and* she tends to overlook the problems of structural injustice that give rise to this problem of political responsibility in the first place. In the third, I show how a turn to Foucault's conception of disciplinary power sheds light upon the production of subjects, but I take that concept where Foucault does not in order to illustrate the production, not of docile, but of *responsible* subjects. What Foucault leaves out, I think, is a means for responsible subjects to apprehend their condition of responsibility—that is, their implication in structural injustice. Accordingly in the fourth section I argue that Pierre Bourdieu's conception of symbolic power (which is underwritten by misrecognition) helps both to explain Foucault's omission and to seek a way beyond it. Crises emerge as moments at which to acknowledge our responsibility for structural injustice, and so the current confluence of crises presents itself as a fruitful opportunity. In the final section, I suggest how this approach to political responsibility both criticizes and complements the capabilities approach to problems of justice.

Political Responsibility and the Limits of Instrumental Power

In this section I argue that an instrumental conception of power limits our thinking about shared political responsibility. When we think about questions of responsibility, we often have in mind some wrongful action (or omission) undertaken by an individual or group that harms another party and demands some sort of retrospective accounting. Both the wrong and the accounting can take different forms. If someone hits me without justification, I can take that person to court and try to prove that he or she hit me intentionally and wrongfully, and caused me some harm by doing so. If I am successful I might secure some compensation, or else the responsible party might be deprived of his or her liberty. The same basic structure of holding another responsible appears in relations between groups as well: Germany was held responsible for causing World War I and was made to be reparations, was forced to disarm, and so on. Both cases provide examples of standard account of causal responsibility[3], which Iris Marion Young recently called a "liability model of responsibility."[4]

Such accounts of responsibility work when the connection between a wrongful action and a harmful outcome is relatively direct. But what happens when the link between actions and harms are much *less* direct; and when the harm in question is the result of actions that are not obviously wrongful but that constitute our most ordinary activities—like our purchasing decisions, or our management of household waste? Young developed a model of responsibility that helps us think about those sorts of cases: The social connection model. She developed it in the context of what she calls "structural injustice." Young says that structural injustice "exists when social processes put large categories of persons under a systematic threat of domination or deprivation of the means to develop and exercise their capacities, at the same time as these processes enable others to dominate or have a wide range of opportunities for developing and exercising their capacities."[5] She uses the example of sweatshops, where exploitation and domination are rampant.[6] Structural injustice is not like a wrongful *individual* action. It "occurs as a consequence of many individuals and institutions" pursuing their interests "within given institutional rules and accepted norms." In her terms, "all the persons who participate…in the ongoing schemes of cooperation that constitute these structures are responsible for them" because "they are part of the process that causes them."[7]

Young claims that standard models of responsibility are inadequate for conceptualizing this sort of problem because they "require that we trace a direct relationship between the action of an identifiable person or group and a harm."[8] For that task, the "liability model of responsibility" is appropriate: We assign responsibility to an agent or agents whose faulty actions are causally connected to a harm, as long as those actions were undertaken voluntarily "and performed with adequate knowledge of the situation."[9] When structural processes produce

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[3] See, e.g., Feinberg, 1975.

[4] Young, 2006: 116.

[5] *Ibid*.

[6] This definition of structural injustice reflects its ancestry in Young's early critique of distributive theories of justice (Young 1990). In *Justice and The Politics of Difference*, Young argued that injustice ought to be understood not just in terms of uneven material distributions, but also in terms of "oppression" and "domination", both of which exceed material conditions in their scope and include "institutional processes" and "conditions" that prevent people from engaging in various forms of self-determination and self-development (Young 1990, 38).

[7] Young, 2006: 114.

[8] *Ibid*.

[9] *Ibid*, 116; see also Feinberg, 1975.

injustice, however, "in most cases [this] is not possible." Here, the social connection model is appropriate. In this model, "individuals bear responsibility for structural injustice because they contribute by their actions to the processes that produce unjust outcomes." Responsibility comes not from the nature and effects of our particular actions, but "from belonging together with others in a system of interdependent processes of cooperation and competition through which we seek benefits and aim to realize projects."[10] Unlike responsibility under the liability model, responsibility based on social connection can only be discharged collectively. Thus, responsibility for structural injustice is ultimately *political*.[11]

While Young develops her model around the example of sweatshop labor—which, because it is exploitative and oppressive, is readily recognizable as a problem of injustice—an important virtue of her model is that it encourages us to view *other* global problems as problems of injustice as well, even where this may be less obvious. For example, global warming is a problem that, in principle, affects everyone. But it affects different groups of people differently, because wealthier countries can more easily respond to the problem by "going green" than can poorer countries, for whom more radical changes in economic production and consumption come at a higher cost. So while environmentally unfriendly practices may ultimately affect everyone, they do seem to "put large categories of persons under a systematic threat of…. deprivation of the means to develop and exercise their capacities, at the same time as these processes enable others to…. have a [wider] range of opportunities for developing and exercising their capacities."[12] As for global financial crises, it needs hardly to be said that, not only are some people currently suffering *much* more than others; but others, like the so-called "predator lenders", have even *benefited* from the crisis while others have suffered terribly. Thus, Young's social connection model enables us to see a wider range of global problems as problems of structural injustice.

While thus enlarging our view of what counts as structural injustice, I think that a feature of Young's model undermines the laudable spirit that animates her thinking about responsibility: One purpose of the social connection model is to emphasize the *shared* nature of political responsibility for structural injustice. But the extent of that sharing is carefully, if quietly, circumscribed: Those who contribute to the processes that produce injustices "have responsibilities to work to remedy these injustices"[13]. The implication is that, in contrast, those who suffer injustice are not and cannot be responsible for the conditions that bring it about. This position has intuitive appeal in a case like sweatshop labor, where the oppression and domination are quite evident, and where we would certainly not want to say that the exploited are responsible for their own exploitation. It is perhaps less clear, but no less appealing, in cases like global warming and financial crises: While those who unduly bear the burdens of global warming and financial crises might also have contributed to the processes that sustain each of those phenomena, it is unreasonable, perhaps even cruel, to insist that they bear the same responsibilities for their condition as those for whom the burdens of sharing in the world are lighter. And yet, to the extent that we *do* share the world in common, there is something troubling in a conception of political responsibility that presumptively limits that sharing.

[10] Young, 2006: 119.
[11] Young, 2006: 119-23.
[12] *Ibid*.
[13] *Ibid*, 103.

What is troubling is exemplified by Hannah Arendt in her essay entitled "Collective Responsibility". Arguing that we are politically responsible for acts undertaken by our state—and therefore in our name—Arendt allows that there is "a category of men who [are] truly outcasts, belonging to no internationally recognizable community whatever, the refugees and stateless people, who indeed can not be held politically responsible for anything." "It is precisely this absolute innocence", Arendt observes, "that condemns them to a position outside, as it were, of mankind as a whole."[14] Now neither sweatshop workers, nor perhaps most of victims of structural injustice are stateless, *per se*—although their plight is sometimes overlooked in ways that suggest otherwise. And yet Young's thinking about political responsibility threatens to put them in a structurally similar position: They are not politically responsible, and to that extent are condemned to be outside of any potential, global community.

How does this result come about? How does a conception of political responsibility that emphasizes sharing and connection end up problematically limiting that sharing and reinforcing the dis-connection of large numbers of human beings from the conditions of their existence? I suggest that this troubling implication of Young's model grows out of something that it surprisingly *shares* with the liability model she so perceptively criticizes: Both rely upon an instrumental conception of power—that is, of power as a (not necessarily material) resource to be possessed and used. Thomas Hobbes immortalized this understanding of power: "The Power of a *Man*", he writes, "is his present means, to obtain some future apparent Good." Distinct from the "naturall powers" of mind and body, "*Instrumentall* are those Powers, which, acquired by these [natural powers], or by fortune, are means and Instruments to acquire more."[15] They include "Riches, Reputation, Friends, and the secret working of God, which men call Good Luck."[16] For Hobbes, the primary purpose of natural *and* instrumental power is to survive the struggle of all against all, at least until that power is ceded to the sovereign in a contract exchanging obedience for protection. And the way to do that is to accumulate ever more power.

Both the liability model of responsibility, and Young's social connection model seem implicitly to rely upon an instrumental conception of power—though not with Hobbesian ends (or means) in mind. In both, as the saying goes, with great power comes great responsibility. For example, the current preponderance of American power has reinforced for many notion that such power must be exercised responsibly—though interpretations of what means varies wildly—while irresponsible exercises of that power deserve some sort of censure. These kinds of claims loosely track a liability model of responsibility. In the context of structural injustice, on the other hand, the role of instrumental power is less to wield it for or against others than to accumulate it in order to insulate *oneself* from the vicissitudes of global social, political, and economic processes. It can also, of course, be used to exploit the vulnerabilities of others in the face of such processes—as we have seen to such great and calamitous effect in the US mortgage crisis. And so here too, with great power comes great responsibility: Those who contribute to the processes that produce injustice (and are often themselves insulated from it) have a responsibility to remedy the injustice done to those who lack the power to insulate themselves from or resist it. The implication, in both models, is this: Those who "have" power are responsible. Those who "lack" it cannot be. Such a distinction undermines the project of expanding the scope of our

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[14] Arendt, 1968/2003: 150.
[15] Hobbes, 1968: Book 1, ch. 10.
[16] *Ibid*.

shared responsibility for global problems by presumptively identifying who can be responsible and who cannot.

Now we *might* think that the problem here is that instrumental power in its various (mostly material) forms is too unevenly distributed. If we want responsibility to be distributed more evenly, then we need a correspondingly more egalitarian distribution of power—a dramatic restructuring of global resources that would put more power, and thus more responsibility, into more hands. But such a calculus ignores an important feature of structural injustice. As I have argued elsewhere, structural injustice is hard to respond to because it is a product of such ordinary activities, like buying clothes, disposing of waste, borrowing and lending, and so on. The ordinariness of these activities makes our connection to global problems difficult to notice. It is easy not to think about those connections (the problem of thoughtlessness), or to deceive ourselves about them (the problem of bad faith), *or* to not even see them at all: As our world takes on the trappings of a natural and taken-for-granted, rather than social, and therefore contingent, condition, we may no longer recognize the connections between our ordinary activities and the persistence of structural injustice (the problem of misrecognition).[17] These dispositions, which tend to conceal from us our connections to problems of structural injustice, likewise tend to conceal the discrepancies in instrumental power that make some vulnerable to such injustice while insulating others. Thus such discrepancies get reconceived and reconstituted, not as problems of power, but as matters of good versus ill fortune, of industry versus idleness; or, at the limit, simply as "the way things are." Such reconfigurations militate against a redistribution of resources on a global scale because they militate against seeing the problem of structural injustice *as* a problem of power to begin with.

In the rest of this paper, then, I propose a way forward: In order to promote a broader sharing of political responsibility, we ought to rethink the relationship between power and responsibility so as to enhance our ability to respond collectively to our condition. This rethinking changes the question of political responsibility from the familiar and divisive one of "Who is responsible for injustice and who is not?" to the less familiar, but no less urgent, and more inclusive question: "How can we enhance our capacities to respond to such injustice?"

Emergent Power and Political Responsibility: An Arendtian Interlude

I have argued that thinking about political responsibility for structural injustice in terms of instrumental power tends to undermine the prospect of sharing responsibility more widely because such thinking tends presumptively to limit the range of actors who can be thought "responsible". We need a different conception of power, then, and a corresponding, new relation between power and responsibility. We need a conception of power not as a resource to be used, but as the productive source of capacities to be cultivated—like the capacity to respond to one's condition in various ways. We can begin to trace the emergence of such a conception of power in conversation with Hannah Arendt. Writing against the backdrop of totalitarian domination, whose chief features were terror and isolation[18], Arendt argued that power is always potential, and is actualized in the public realm. "Power is always, as we would say, a power potential, and not an unchangeable, measureable, and reliable entity….[it] springs up between men when they act together and vanishes the moment they disperse."[19] Power, importantly, is never a means to

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[17] Schiff, 2008.
[18] Arendt, 1948: esp. part 3, "Totalitarianism."
[19] Arendt, 1998: 200

an end—such instrumentality is reserved for faculties like "strength" and "force", for which Arendt reserves the terms "possession" and "application."[20] In an incisive critique of Hobbes Arendt even suggests that totalitarian domination is the logical conclusion of an instrumental view of power—she notes that "for some three hundred years there was neither a sovereign who would 'convert this speculation [about the limitless acquisition of power] into the Utility of Practice', nor a bourgeoisie politically conscious and economically mature enough openly to adopt Hobbes' philosophy of power."[21] That philosophy, for Arendt, made totalitarianism possible. In order to reclaim power philosophically and politically *against* totalitarianism, then, power had to be something other than a resource to be accumulated and used. It is a capacity that appears when human beings act together. And, unlike instrumental power, power as Arendt understands it---call it "emergent power"---can never be a source of omnipotence, which would insulate its possessor from the vicissitudes of life amongst others. Its status as potentiality only occasionally actualized, its dependence upon the presence of others, makes it too fragile for that. Power, for Arendt, is nothing more—or less—than the fragile potentiality to act in concert.

If we listen to Arendt closely, there is something in her conception of power that resonates powerfully with my concern about a more expansive sharing in political responsibility. In her writing on totalitarianism, Arendt became preoccupied with the problem of isolation, and its attendant loneliness.[22] Power, for her, is a potentiality that can overcome isolation because it can *only* emerge when human beings are together and act in concert. The actualization of that potentiality *is* such being-together. And that is useful for us because such a conception of power gives us one resource to overcome that distinction between those who are responsible and those who are not that is so detrimental to the project of sharing responsibility. In Arendtian terms, power appears in those moments when we come together to acknowledge and confront global structural injustice. That appearance of power brings with it a capacity to respond in concert to our condition.

If Arendt's approach to power is initially encouraging, two dimensions of her approach to political responsibility seem to undermine my effort to conceptualize a more expansive notion of the latter. The first is that as we have already seen, Arendt's conception of responsibility is explicitly territorial in character. That is why stateless peoples are so problematic for her, and why they cannot be responsible for anything. Such a territorialized view of responsibility militates against a more globally shared responsibility for injustice. Elsewhere Arendt underscores this territorialization of responsibility. In her essay entitled "Collective Responsibility", her paradigmatic example of political responsibility is the responsibility that citizens bear for the actions undertaken in their name, by their state. Indeed, she asserts that "We can escape this political and strictly collective responsibility only by leaving the community, and since no man can live without belonging to some community, this would simply mean to exchange one community for another and hence one kind of responsibility for another."[23] The second problem with Arendt's conception of responsibility is closely related: When she insists that people are responsible for actions undertaken in their name, she is oddly indifferent to the structures of both privilege and exclusion that characterize political life[24], and

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[20] For a more detailed account of Arendt's distinction between strength, force, and power, see Arendt 1969.

[21] Arendt, 1948: 139-43.

[22] These preoccupations reemerged in her later work on thinking in *The Life of the Mind*. Arendt's intellectual concerns were more continuous than some have thought.

[23] Arendt, 1968/2003: 150.

[24] See, e.g., Young, 2000.

that are the very basis of claims about structural injustice. Such structures of privilege and exclusion make it very difficult to claim that a community's activity speaks for all of its members. The only options available then are either to ignore those structures—as Arendt mostly seems to—or to contest and resist them. Taking the latter course—working against structures of privilege and exclusion—helps to change the question of political responsibility to: How can we enhance our capacities to respond to our condition? In the remainder of this paper I frame this problem in terms of two questions about power: First, how are individuals produced as responsible subjects? And second, given the ordinariness of our contributions to global structural injustice, how can it become an object of response at all?

Power and the Production of Responsible Subjects

Let us start with the role of power in producing responsible subjects, and let us take our lead from Michel Foucault. Against the model of sovereign power--exemplified, for instance, in the virtual emblazoning of itself publicly upon the bodies of criminals through torture in the 18th century,[25] Foucault posits "another way to go further toward a new economy of power relations". Against sovereign power held by individuals (or groups) and applied through force, Foucault argues that the "exercise of power" is "a way in which certain actions modify others"[26]. Power, for Foucault, refers to the action *of* actions *upon* actions.[27] By disengaging a conception of power from questions of *who* holds it (which is precisely what I want to do with respect to questions of political responsibility), Foucault shifts the discussion toward *how* power works. It is through this shift that Foucault arrives at his famous conception of power as ubiquitous, hidden, capillary, and so on. Rather than being wielded, for Foucault, power *circulates* or *operates* (but, importantly, is *not* circulat*ed* or operat*ed*). And the upshot of such a conception is that, contrary to the sovereign, repressive model of power, for Foucault, power is *productive* in several respects: "This form of power applies itself to immediate everyday life, which categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him…It is a form of power that makes individuals subjects."[28] Subjects, in short, are *effects* of power.

One form of power through which subjects are produced is disciplinary power. Foucault connects the disciplines closely to regulation of the human body. Indeed, it is this regulation of the body in prisons that gradually replaced the spectacle of public torture that prevailed in 18th France and elsewhere.[29] With the development of prisons the body as such was no longer the locus of punishment--rather, that locus became the soul. And the technique visited upon the soul was that of regulation, correction and teaching, and no longer a technique of physical brutality. In its new mode, punishment becomes "a political technology of the body."[30] Its regulation is achieved through discipline, a set of practices enabled by the heightened visibility exemplified by Bentham's panopticon, a structure that was designed but never built. The panopticon, the all-seeing eye, enables the very close and intense regulation of bodies through "hierarchical observation," "normalizing judgment," and "examination."[31] The effect of discipline is the production of "docile bodies", bodies that are molded according to rules and then internalize

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[25] Foucault, 1995: 3-6
[26] Foucault, 1982: 219
[27] *Ibid*, 220.
[28] *Ibid*, 212.
[29] Foucault, 1995.
[30] *Ibid*, 30.
[31] *Ibid*, 170-92.

these rules and effectively become their own overseer.[32] In the carceral society, discipline becomes internalized: The panopticon, that only-conceived, and thus largely invisible, observatory, becomes a ubiquitous regulatory principle in society.[33]

All of this sounds very ominous, of course: Disciplinary power operates through specific institutionalized and internalized practices to produce docile, governable subjects. And indeed, one can tell a story about structural injustice that takes this shape: Trained in the disciplines of capitalism and "freedom", trained to view the less fortunate as lazy or unlucky, individuals come to participate in fairly regular, even regulated ways, in the maintenance of systems that promote structural injustice, whether in the area of global capitalism—such as the purchase of cheap sweatshop goods—or in the area of global environmental problems, such as environmentally unfriendly building practices, failure to recycle, and so on. What's more, insofar as giving short shrift to environmental concerns often serves the interests of global capitalism, these two disciplines are mutually reinforcing. The practices that constitute global capitalism thus discipline us to reproduce structural injustice on a global scale.

Such a view of disciplinary power is totalizing indeed, and Foucault has frequently been taken to task for leaving little room for creative resistance to the normalizing effects of discipline (even as he insists that they are both possible and ever-present). But why must discipline produce docility in the face of injustice? Might not a different discipline, a different constellation of regulated practices, give rise to a militant resistance to those practices that sustain global injustice? Such practices would, in Foucault's terms, produce responsible subjects. Both the anti-sweatshop and environmental movements offer preliminary examples of sites of power that produce, not docile, but militant and responsible subjects. By drawing upon and reproducing a discourse of structural injustice, such entities participate in the production, in the disciplining, of responsible subjects primed to respond in particular to conditions of structural injustice.

Symbolic Power and the Capacity to Respond

But disciplinary power, in its production of responsible subjects, leaves an important question unanswered: How does structural injustice become a problem *for me?* It is one thing for the exploitation and domination of human beings to present itself as a problem that demands a response, and for me to be a subject capable of responding to it. But what is it that makes *my* everyday activities a meaningful part of any response? Disciplinary power only prepares a subject capable of responding to global structural injustice. It does not yet make responding a practically meaningful part of her everyday experience. In order for that to happen, something needs to reveal the connection between our everyday activities and the persistence of structural injustice, which otherwise tends to go misrecognized. What gets misrecognized in this case is the operation of what Pierre Bourdieu calls "symbolic power." Such power is disrupted in moments of crisis, which reveal the dominative and exploitative foundations of political orders that tend to be taken for granted.

In the course of everyday life, according to Bourdieu, we make our way in the world mostly according to unreflective habit, or what Bourdieu calls *habitus*, which connects objective structures of social and political life to the dispositions that actualize and "tend to reproduce them".[34] A *habitus* is a "durably installed generative principle of regulated improvisation", an

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[32] *Ibid*, *135*-69
[33] *Ibid*, 293-308
[34] Bourdieu, 1977: 3

"immanent law…laid down in each agent by his earliest upbringing."[35] It is productive and reproductive because the practices it produces tend to reproduce the objective conditions of existence [36] It is essential for social life because it produces "a commonsense world endowed with the *objectivity* secured by consensus on the meaning…of practices and the world." Furthermore, the "homogeneity of habitus is what…causes practices and works to be immediately intelligible and foreseeable, and hence taken for granted." [37] Habitus makes the world make sense to us. It does so without explicit rules or coordination, "without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary to attain them." [38] Habitus operates unconsciously. And the unconscious, according to Bourdieu, is "never anything other than the forgetting of history which history itself produces by incorporating the objective structures it produces in the second nature of habitus."[39] Thus a habitus is "history turned into nature, i.e. denied as such."[40] To put this in more concrete terms, we might say that there is a habitus involved in being a political subject under the conditions of global capitalism, and that habitus makes us look much like Foucault's disciplined subjects. Just as Foucault recognizes the historicity of any particular discipline, Bourdieu is acutely aware of the historicity, the contingency of any particular habitus. And while Foucault identifies discipline as the mechanism that produces and normalizes the activities of political subjects, Bourdieu assigns that role to misrecognition. It is ultimately misrecognition that guarantees the taken-for-granted character of everyday life, the seeming naturalness of a global order in which some are systematically advantaged while others are disadvantaged. As the global order takes on the appearance of nature, it becomes increasingly difficult to see how we might respond to it— indeed, to see that there is anything to respond *to*.

  Bourdieu makes it clear that misrecognition is central to the maintenance of systems of domination and exploitation: "Every established order", Bourdieu insists, "tends to produce (to very different degrees and with very different means" the naturalization of its own arbitrariness." [41] It does so importantly through the reproduction of systems of classification—such as sex, age or class—which "[reproduce]…the power relations of which they are the product, by securing the misrecognition, and hence the recognition, of the arbitrariness upon which they are based."[42] Thus misrecognized, "the natural and social world appears as self-evident", an experience that Bourdieu calls *doxa*. Misrecognition naturalizes existing social and political orders so that we tend to take them for granted rather than to question them. Thus, rather than appearing to us as a problem to which we can respond, misrecognition makes structural injustice look like a more or less immutable, even natural, fact about the world, unconnected to any of our ordinary activities. It simply "is."

  This persistence of misrecognition, which underwrites the experience of ordinary life and renders unproblematic conditions of structural injustice is itself an effect of power. But rather than disciplinary power which produces and reproduces subjects, misrecognition is sustained by *symbolic power,* whose operation produces and reproduces naturalized social and political structures. Symbolic power is similar to disciplinary power, in that it is not instrumental but

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[35] *Ibid*: 78, 81.

[36] *Ibid*, 78.

[37] *Ibid*, 80. .

[38] *Ibid,* 72.

[39] *Ibid*, 78-9..

[40] *Ibid*, 78.

[41] Bourdieu, 1977: 164.

[42] *Ibid*.

productive. Further, like disciplinary power, symbolic power is more elusive and amorphous than instrumental power, which is always held *by* someone and used *for* some purpose. But there is a crucial difference between them that comes to light in Bourdieu's description of symbolic power. Whereas disciplinary power circulates anywhere and everywhere, yet is apparently wielded by no one, Bourdieu is explicitly critical of such a view. He might as well be writing about Foucault when he says that

> "in a state of the field in which power is visible everywhere, while in previous ages people refused to recognize it even when it was staring them in the face [an effect of misrecognition, perhaps?], it is perhaps useful to remember that, *without turning power into a 'circle whose centre is everywhere and nowhere*....we have to be able to discover it in places where it is *least visible,* where it is *most completely misrecognized*."[43]

Once can hear in this call a criticism of disciplinary power, which tends to be everywhere and nowhere and thus *appear* completely agentless. Indeed, Bourdieu suggests that to imagine power without an agent is to misrecognize the very idea and operation of power. Thus he claims that what sustains social and political structures is symbolic power. Taking the form primarily of ideological systems, such power "can be exercised only with the complicity of those who do not want to know that they are subject to it or even that they themselves exercise it."[44] Symbolic power operates effectively when and because it is misrecognized as the absence of power: Through the working of symbolic power—in which we are complicit, not because we "possess" it, but because we maintain the structures that support it--the social and political world appears unproblematic and self-evident. Symbolic power makes structural injustice into just a fact of life.

What, then, is to be done? What might disrupt both the subjectifying processes of disciplinary power, and the ideological misrecognition underwritten by symbolic power, so that subjects are capable of responding in practically meaningful ways to the problem of global structural injustice? Bourdieu, for one, assigns such a role to what he calls crises, moments of radical disruption in which our ordinary ways of being and doing cease to function. If the role of the *habitus* is to bring objective and subjective structures into accord, what Bourdieu calls an "objective crisis… [breaks] the immediate fit between the subjective structures and the objective structures"[45]—that is, it renders an existing habitus unworkable by disrupting the practical context it helped to navigate. In moments of crisis, our ordinary ways of getting along in the world suddenly seem not to work. In breaking the fit between subjective and objective structures, crises "destroy self-evidence practically. It is when the social world loses its character as a natural phenomenon that the question of the natural or conventional character…of social facts can be raised."[46] Crises bring the undiscussed, that which is typically taken for granted, into discussion. Indeed, "there is perhaps no better way of *making felt* the real function of classificatory systems"—like class systems, for instance, or more broadly the social, political, economic, and spatial organization of our world—"than to evoke as concretely as possible the abrupt and total transformation of daily life."[47]

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[43] Bourdieu, 1991: 163.
[44] Bourdieu, 1991: 164.
[45] Bourdieu, 1977: 168-9.
[46] *Ibid*, 169.
[47] *Ibid* 159.

Because they compel us to acknowledge what we ordinarily take for granted, crises provide occasion for overcoming misrecognition and the symbolic power that underwrites it. For Bourdieu, this happens most powerfully when the dominated "[reject] the definition of the real that is imposed upon them through logical structures reproducing the social structures" and "[lift] the (institutionalized or internalized) censorships which it implies." At this point, classificatory schemes hitherto taken for granted "become the object and instrument of class struggle." Once what has been tacit becomes speakable, "it becomes necessary to undertake the work of conscious systematization and express rationalization which marks the passage from doxa to orthodoxy."[48] Once the taken-for-granted, implicit rules that structure our relations to others become called into question, they must be defended. And the necessity of defense implies the existence of other possibilities, what Bourdieu calls the heterodox "existence of *competing possibles*." By calling the taken for granted into question, crises allow us to reimagine our relations to other people, to respond to them in the way that our condition demands, and that misrecognition tends to obstruct. What this means, from our point of view, is that the our contemporary moment, with its confluence of patent and latent crises, is also a moment of significant opportunity: While a misrecognized world often presents itself as a *fait accompli*, a world in crisis may open up possibilities not only *for* response, but for debate about and development of measures that might *improve* human beings' capacities to respond in the face of global structural injustice, and thus to share responsibility for the unjust suffering of others.

The Capacity to Respond and the "Capabilities Approach"

What measures we might use to improve our capacities to respond is an enormous question, and one that is beyond the scope of this paper. But the question itself calls to mind an important way of thinking about problems of justice known as the "capabilities approach." Young's own formulation of the problem of structural injustice—with its reference to people's "means to develop and exercise their capacities" carries echoes of this way of thinking Developed by Amartya Sen and extended by Martha Nussbaum and others, the capabilities approach rejects both utilitarian and Rawlsian ideals of human welfare in favor of an emphasis on human flourishing or well-being.[49] In one formulation, Sen puts it this way: "The capability approach to a person's advantage is concerned with evaluating it in terms of his or her actual ability to achieve various valuable functions as a part of living." Those individual level evaluations then become the basis for an "aggregative appraisal as well as for the choice of institutions and policy." This approach concerns, first, an individual's "functionings…the various things that he or she manages to do or be in leading a life. The *capability* of a person reflects the alternative combinations of functionings the person can achieve, and from which he or she can choose one collection."[50] The functionings from which a person can choose— assuming she is an environment in which she *can* choose—vary from "elementary" ones such as nourishment, to more "complex" ones, like "achieving self-respect or being socially integrated."[51] From this point of view, justice is a matter of ensuring that individuals are capable of being and doing as they will, of leading the life they choose. A capabilities approach is thus intimately connected with the achievement of some sort of positive freedom.

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[48] *Ibid*, 169.
[49] See, e.g., Alexander, 2007.
[50] Sen, 1993: 30-1.
[51] *Ibid*, 31.

What this picture of human capabilities seems to overlook, however, is the relationships *between* human capabilities that are manifest in problems of structural injustice: The problem is that some individual or group's capacity to "achieve various valuable functions" is often bought at the expense of others. That is the very *definition* of structural injustice. But while the capabilities approach emphasizes the capabilities of individuals or groups—and rightly seeks to enhance them--it neglects the *relationships* between individuals and groups as important sites for the development of a particular capacity—namely, the capacity to respond to our condition. The point here is not just to suggest, as many have before, that the range of relevant capabilities needs to be expanded to include the capacity to respond. Rather, the point is that the capacity to respond is central to the project of freedom that animates the capabilities approach. Without it, the capabilities approach is blind to the problem of structural injustice, which is a significant impediment to human freedom. Or, to put it differently, what the capabilities approach does not recognize is the intertwinement of human freedom with the development political responsibility.

Conclusion

The injustices engendered by the current confluence of global crises demand a widespread responded grounded in a notion of shared responsibility. In this paper I have argued that a notion of political responsibility grounded in an instrumental conception of power presumptively, and problematically, limits our capacities to share responsibility for structural injustice. This predicament calls for a rethinking of the relationship between power and responsibility, and a corresponding shift from the question: "Who is responsible and who is not?" to the question: "How can we enhance our capacities to respond?" The latter is a matter for both critical private reflection and vigorous public debate. I hope, though, to have made clear the need for such a question of political responsibility, and to have staked out some fertile terrain upon which to pose it.

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