**Identity, Markets and the Division of Labour**

1. **Hegel**

Hegel is a highly controversial figure.[[1]](#endnote-1) In his **The Open Society and Its Enemies**, my teacher Karl Popper denounced his views and argued that his influence was pernicious.[[2]](#endnote-2) Popper’s criticism, however, has itself been strongly criticized.[[3]](#endnote-3) Hegel was, obviously, an important influence on Marx, and several writers have argued that one can, legitimately, see a continuing dynamic leading from Hegel’s social philosophy towards Marxism.[[4]](#endnote-4) While he was also an important influence on some conservative and liberal thinkers in Britain at the end of the Nineteenth Century.

I am going to argue, here, that some aspects of a more conservative reading of Hegel’s social philosophy are worth re-visiting. He made some interesting points about the situation facing us in market-based societies.[[5]](#endnote-5) But I will also suggest that we may also learn from some of the failures of his ideas in this area. I will to discuss aspects of his relationship with Plato, and what Hegel called ‘Sittlichkeit’, which may be understood as concrete moral arrangements within a market-based society. (As we will see, he went on to suggest that this was transcended by a state built on foundations which had developed within such a society, but his ideas about this are – for reasons which I will explain – problematic.)

The key theme with which I think that we may usefully start, is his re-working of an important Platonic theme relating to the social division of labour. Plato, in his **Republic**, had argued that in a good society, each individual should play their appropriate social role. They should act on the basis of their capacities, in ways that make for the overall good of society. He made use, in this context, of the metaphor of society as an organism, in which things would only work properly, if each played their appropriate role.[[6]](#endnote-6)

Among the problems that have been raised about this, is that everything in Plato depended on the decisions of the people who would direct this society: his Guardians. Plato takes the view that these people will do the right thing in part because they have access to knowledge of what is good; in part, because arrangements would be designed (by whom?), which would stop the Guardians being exposed to temptations generated by self-interest.[[7]](#endnote-7) Critics – for example Josef Popper-Lynkeus – have been sceptical about the degree of altruism that guardians would display, and have argued that a key problem was who, in society, should be doing the hard physical work, and who playing the role of the stomach![[8]](#endnote-8)

Now Hegel was also interested in the destructive effects of the developing market-based society of his day upon older, more organic arrangements. People who took such a view in the early Nineteenth Century often looked back to an idealised picture of Medieval society as an alternative to these newer developments. But Hegel argued – against these romantic, backward-looking, critics of these developments – that within a market-based society, new institutions could be seen as already having emerged, which could offer ways in which these older roles could be fulfilled in such a way as in some ways to simulate an ‘organic’ society.

Let me give two examples.

First, Hegel argued that if one took an overview of a market-based society, people could be seen as playing different social roles in a way that echoed Plato’s ideas about an organic society. However, a crucial difference was that within the new kind of society in which he was living, people took up these different roles voluntarily: a key role was played by individuals’ subjective choice.[[9]](#endnote-9) This may be contrasted with the way in which, for Plato, what roles people were to take up was decided by the Guardians.[[10]](#endnote-10) (One might gloss this, in terms of the idea that people could be directed, by their own economic self-interest exercised in response to prices, towards those activities for which there was most economic demand within the society in which they were living.)

Second, Hegel noted the way in which, with the development of a market-based society, older social formations which had played an important role in providing people with welfare, were undermined. The extended family or the clan could no longer play the same sort of role as it had done in the past, once people became much more mobile. They became, in respect of their welfare, what Hegel described as ‘son[s] of civil society’.[[11]](#endnote-11) His **Philosophy of Right** contained an interesting discussion of the way in which, out of the division of labour in a market-based society, people occupying similar social positions could come to understand themselves as having common interests and a shared identity with others playing the same kind of social role as themselves. He suggested that they would naturally be inclined to form guild-like bodies (which he called ‘corporations’) to address their common interests,[[12]](#endnote-12) to set up procedures for the fair conduct of business, and which would also be an obvious vehicle for the provision of insurance and welfare to members.

I was struck, when I first moved to the United States, to be given, by a local real estate agent, a copy of a map of the local area, produced by an association of real estate agents. On the back, it had information about the real estate agents’ organization, and also details of a code of conduct that the members had all subscribed to.

1. **Morality, Roles and the Division of Labour**

One other important feature of Hegel’s discussion related to his ideas about morality. Here, in what seems to me an under-appreciated development in ethical theory, he set out ideas which he referred to as ‘Sittlichkeit’.[[13]](#endnote-13) These contrast in important ways with what can come over as the excessive individualism of the main current variants of ethical theory: utilitarianism, Kantian-style deontological ethical theories, and virtue ethics. By excessive individualism I mean not that individuals should not matter,[[14]](#endnote-14) but that ethics is seen as a matter for individual decisions: that, as it were, ethics is approached as if the ethical universe is to be re-invented by each individual. For one aspect of what Hegel stresses is a theme that the British Hegelian F. H. Bradley was to discuss in terms of ‘my station and its duties’.

Let me consider this in broadly contemporary terms. The idea, here, is that people get to choose their positions in the division of labour (as discussed above), but that their position in the division of labour then supplies them with a particular social role which has distinctive ethical obligations attached to it. The responsibilities (and the virtues) of, say, a teacher are different to those of a policeman, or of a professional sportsman, and so on. Those professional duties – which might be interpreted along lines similar to those which Max Weber considered in connection with the generalization, within Protestant Christianity, of ideas about a religious vocation to all of our activities[[15]](#endnote-15) – are things which we are morally obliged to undertake, and which other people can, in turn, expect us to undertake.

This does not mean that individual choice is absent. First, it is up to us whether or not we assume a particular social role, in the first place. (There may also be social roles which we think that no-one should undertake, such as gangsters; others we may believe to be valuable, but not things which are suitable for us.) Second, there is also the possibility of supererogation: we may feel that we should act in ways over and above what is reasonably expected of us. In addition, there may well be issues which we think need to be addressed which are not covered by any specific social role – such as providing assistance to those in need generated by unexpected effects, such as earthquakes, large-scale consequences of human actions, or simply ill luck. To these we may wish to donate by way of time, money or organizational efforts, in ways which do not grow out of our particular social roles. It is important, however, to bear in mind that what it is reasonable for us to do here, is something that is open to inter-subjective scrutiny (as, indeed, is our interpretation of what is required of us when we are in a particular social role[[16]](#endnote-16)).

It is also, obviously, the case that organizations set up to meet individuals’ interests – such as Hegel’s ‘corporations’ – may play a welfare role. Not only have such organizations provided insurance and welfare for their members, but they have often played a wider role within the community. In the United States, during that period when blood supplies were, in some areas, supplied to a family without further fee on the basis of insurance based on an annual donation of blood by a member of the family, trades unions would sometimes solicit blood donations in support, say, of a member, elsewhere in the country, whose son had an extensive need of blood donations because he had haemophilia. While trades unions, churches, and all kinds of voluntary organizations, were often found giving or collecting funds to meet needs which went well beyond the needs of their members.[[17]](#endnote-17)

Third, the issue of what social roles should look like, and of what else might be needed, is also something that is open to inter-subjective appraisal. We would typically now think that the sexual division of labour in both the household and the labour force which, say, was still widespread through much of the Twentieth Century is problematic. But as this very example shows, what is needed to address such problems is typically a systematic change in institutional arrangements, rather than just changes in private judgement by individuals or within families. Changes in private judgement are important, and may come to exercise wider social influence, there are limits to what can be done unless there are changes in social roles.[[18]](#endnote-18) (Further, there are important differences, here, between what can be changed simply by governmental or other institutional fiat, and how we change customary practises which, as it were, are not owned by anyone. But this is not an issue that I can pursue in the present piece.)

Another important problem, in the background, is the way in which the social division of labour itself depends on changing patterns of economic activity. At any one point, what is open to us faces constraints of a thing-like character, dictated by our history and by ongoing patterns of individual choices: consider – just what social roles are, today, open to someone entering the job market, and how these differed from what was available, say, fifty years ago. It is not that such things cannot be changed. But they typically cannot be changed just by individual action. While a particular problem here may be that what confronts us may be sustained by the actions and choices of other people who are socially distant from the effects in question, and appear as unintended consequences of their actions.

1. **The State**

In Hegel’s own work, ideas about ‘commercial society’ and the social division of labour led up to his views about the character of the state. Citizens, in their capacity as members of his ‘corporations’ had, in Hegel, a kind of collective representation in the state, which was envisaged as acting in the general interest. However, there are some fairly obvious problems about this, if taken as a model for today.[[19]](#endnote-19)

The first of these, is that Hegel’s approach would appear to assume that there is a relationship between the ‘organic’ features of the division of labour in commercial society, and specific political states. But, fairly obviously, commercial societies in fact participate in an **international** division of labour.[[20]](#endnote-20) This means that while one might look at them as having, in part, an organic character, bits of this ‘body’ will typically be located in very different political jurisdictions, and will not have any role in political deliberations.

Second, writers on Hegel who see his work as naturally leading to that of Marx have often stressed, a problem about the picture that Hegel offers, is that only some members of his society seem in a position to enjoy the full benefits of membership of the ‘corporations’ to which he refers. Day-labourers (i.e. people hired to perform perhaps different tasks on a daily basis), and a ‘rabble’ below them, seem to have no place, and Hegel, after surveying – and rejecting – the idea that they might be put to work by the government, is left with the highly problematic suggestion that the problem might be resolved by way of colonization.[[21]](#endnote-21)

Clearly, an alternative approach here might be to introduce some form of taxation-based welfare system. It might, on the face of it, seem attractive to administer this via organizations which – in a manner that parallels the ‘corporations’ – also serve to supply people with a distinct identity. But there are problems about this, as I will discuss below. However, if one does this, one faces the problem of who would be entitled to what, and on what basis. (It is one thing, say, for members of a profession to assist others who are out of work by way of some kind of insurance or charitable scheme, where what they are paid relates to levels of pay within the profession; quite another if this is a matter of their being supported in this comfortable manner by taxation levied on the population at large.) Also bear in mind, again here, the problems to which I alluded above, of parts of the economy, and thus of the social division of labour, standing outside the state as a political institution.

Another kind problem which can be raised, here, relates to the relationship between the state and other organizations of which people might be members. Historically, two kinds of literatures here in some ways overlapped. On the one side, there was a criticism, by socialists, of claims made in the Hegelian tradition that the state acts in the interests of everyone. (One might, here, contrast the way in which for Hegel, the public service was the ‘universal class’ acting in the general interest,[[22]](#endnote-22) and the way in which, for Marx, it was the proletariat which was understood in such terms.) On the other side, there were ‘pluralists’ who argued – often with respect to the claims of Churches – that other institutions could legitimately claim a status which put them alongside the state, rather than being subsidiary to it.[[23]](#endnote-23)

In Britain, it is interesting that two important socialist theorists in the early Twentieth Century, Harold Laski and G. D. H. Cole argued for versions of guild socialism, in ways that appealed to both traditions. However, a major problem – which it seemed to me was not resolved – was what the relationships might be between the different sectors of such a pluralistic society.

Not only was there no response to the problems of economic calculation under socialism.[[24]](#endnote-24) But, in political terms, should interactions between different groups determine the overall policies of government (except insofar as each group is accorded some sphere of freedom for the management of its own affairs). But if that is the case, crucial issues arise concerning how such groups might interact. E. g. is the political system to operate on the basis of corporatist systems of consultation, or of pluralistic-style lobbying? How are different interests to be evaluated (and by whom?)? and what is one to make of the well-known systematic inequalities of lobbying power between different kinds of social interests?

Historically, socialist interest in pluralist-style interpretations of guild socialism collapsed in part in the light of what were judged by its proponents to be theoretical difficulties, in part because of the influence of the very different model of socialism being tried out in the Soviet Union. In Britain, both Cole and Laski moved back to the older state-centred models of socialism that the Fabian socialists had developed.

1. **Further Problems about A Role-Based Ethical System**

One pressing issue, however, is that the ethic of ‘my station and its duties’ looks most plausible in respect of those who are relatively well-paid, and who are exercising particular professional or craft skills. One might here note Edmund Burke’s comment (which could be taken as the basis of an argument against the generalization of such an approach to all occupations): ‘The occupation of [a] hairdresser or of a working tallow-chandler cannot be a matter of honour to anyone’.[[25]](#endnote-25) There seems to me no reason why one should accept this. Burke’s view really just reflects his own snobbishness or the class prejudices of the era in which he was living.[[26]](#endnote-26) But one can, equally, note that if people are having to work very long hours in unpleasant work simply to make a living, it is not clear that their social roles can easily play the part that Hegel looks on roles to play.

More generally, there is a tendency to look down on people who assume what we take to be ‘unworthy’ social roles (although the ‘organic’ metaphor should encourage us to appreciate the way in which we all depend on what one another do). While, even worse, there is the tendency on the part of the more affluent to assume that those who occupy such positions are themselves unworthy, and that people who occupy such positions should not aspire to anything ‘above their station’.[[27]](#endnote-27)

To this, however, it might be responded that we can aspire to create a society in which anyone – regardless of their initial social position, their gender or their age – can take up any position for which they might be qualified. Further, it would seem to be desirable if everything can be done to give everyone a chance to contribute their ideas into processes of political and economic decision-taking. What would be involved in this, however, would take me beyond questions that I can usefully try to address here.[[28]](#endnote-28)

**5. A Key Issue**

A key issue, however, relates to the fact that the kind of picture that I discussed in connection with Hegel only looks plausible if one does not pay attention to the kinds of dynamic movement that take place within a market-based economy. (And this, after all, serves as the foundation of his account.) Consider innovation and its impact, and that there are also changes of tastes on the part of consumers.

Innovation is of key importance. It is striking that there is significant turnover over time, concerning which companies hold leading positions in the economy. Further, all kinds of ways in which people in the past earned their living have simply disappeared. In some cases, in recent times, this will be a consequence of the development of IT and robotics. In others, ways of producing things may be transformed completely, but in ways that impact in different ways upon different groups of people.[[29]](#endnote-29) The social division of labour has also changed significantly over time. If one ties people’s identity, their social roles and their obligations to their position in the social division of labour, what is to be made of such social and economic change?

These issues are difficult, not least because people may be reluctant to take up new kinds of employment, not least if it involves shifting from the locations in which they have lived previously, and a break with patterns of close relationships – including family relationships – that they have enjoyed in the past. And these – as has been argued in a recent, detailed, empirical study – may be among the things which people rate particularly highly in constituting a good life.[[30]](#endnote-30)

A poignant recent example of this was given in a recent reflective article in Britain’s **Financial Times**[[31]](#endnote-31)‘Lucy Kellaway’s lessons on life from moving to [Britain’s] North East’. In this piece, the author described her experience of having moved from teaching in a dynamic, multicultural area in London, to the much more traditionalistic culture of Newcastle-upon-Tyne in the North East of England. Newcastle’s economy had been built on heavy industry; but this has, for a long time, been in decline, with major industrial jobs which had been undertaken there either no longer existing, or having moved overseas.

What she reported on, however, was a community in which there was a high degree of stability across generations. Families typically had many relatives living in the same area, and a great affection for the place. In broad terms, people preferred to equip themselves for such jobs as were available in the area, while those who left – e.g. to pursue opportunities in higher education – often wished to return. There was, on her account, simply not the kind of dynamism – or the anguish, competitiveness and insecurity – which her students had experienced in London.

A difficulty, however, is that, over time, the earnings of people in such a setting are likely to diminish, not least relative to what is taking place in London, but also because of developments in the rest of the world. At one level one might say: well, people can simply make their choices. But at another level, there look to me to be some real problems here – not just about employment and wealth, but also about the role of one’s position in the social division of labour providing one with an identity.

At the level of public policy, there is a problem. One of the key concerns in Britain in recent years[[32]](#endnote-32) has been with developing inequalities between London and the South-East of Britain, and some of the older industrial areas in the North of England.[[33]](#endnote-33) Much has been made of differences in public spending between the different areas.[[34]](#endnote-34) One of the mantras of Boris Johnson’s government was the slogan of ‘levelling up’ (of North and South). While **The Economist** magazine has made much of the idea that economic growth could be fostered by way of granting increased funding, and autonomy with regard to expenditure, to regional cities.[[35]](#endnote-35) But to the degree to which underlying attitudes are as Kellaway depicts, issues might be more complex than **The Economist** seems to think.

1. **The Wider Significance of these Issues**

All this raises some issues for the wider problems with which I was concerned in the first parts of this piece. For Hegel’s ideas about ethics – and his voluntaristic response to Plato and to the romantic medievalists of his day – rested on a market-based conception of the division of labour. It was this which, in his view, when rightly understood, provided people with new identities, sources of support, and us with an attractive picture of our place in society in which the discharge of our economic and moral duties also served to assist others.

The material which we have surveyed gives rise to two kinds of problems.

The first, is that within a market economy, one cannot be sure that one’s identity, as determined within the division of labour, will be secure. How one had earned a living in the past might no longer continue to be viable, for a variety of reasons. Consumer tastes (or demand for one’s product from other sectors of the economy) might change. New ways of producing things might be developed (not least, because the skills which one used to exercise are superseded by developments in IT and robotics, which may, indeed, incorporate the very ‘tacit knowledge’ of which one was previously making use[[36]](#endnote-36)). While one may simply find that one is out-competed by other suppliers located elsewhere in the world. It is, here, worth those in the Western world considering the devastating impact of the export of British cotton goods (and the exports of others who followed in the same path) upon those who were previously producing cotton goods, and practising other crafts, in Indian villages.

The second, is that while an individual might, after the loss of some position, be able to obtain employment on a continuing basis, this might not carry with it the kind of social recognition (or support the wider kind of social structure) that was possessed by one’s previous employment. This, indeed, may lag in a striking manner. There was, for example, considerable nostalgia for an older craft-based form of life being displayed in the first part of the Twentieth Century, not just by conservatives.[[37]](#endnote-37) It is, however, striking that in Britain – in which there has been a marked decline in industrial production, with many people now being employed in different branches of the service economy (including the ‘gig economy) – there seems, now, to be broad social nostalgia for employment in industry of just the kind that the earlier devotees of craft-based production were deploring.

The situation, here, is complex. In part, it is a matter of there being no clear large-scale image of what is involved in new forms of service employment. They also range from the well-paid to employment in parts of the gig economy which is miserable.[[38]](#endnote-38) Industrial employment offered – in various ways – roles that individuals could identify with positively; and which, often, was relatively well-paid. It also offered a basis round which a way of life and associated institutions developed – and in which context, trades unions offered various kinds of important protections and welfare, but also many institutions through which people could obtain education and training in a wider range of administrative activities.

The issues here, on the one side of identity and its relation to both employment and ethics, and on the other, of the tensions between what makes for a satisfying life, and the kinds of accommodations that are needed if we are to generate wealth within market-based economies, look interesting and not matters that are open to a simple resolution.

1. Raymond Plant’s **Hegel: An Introduction**, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 1983, is a useful place to start. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. See Popper, **The Open Society and Its Enemies**, London: Routledge, 1945 etc. For a (limited) response to critics, and a restatement of what he took to be his key points, see his Addendum I ‘Facts, Standards and Truth’ (1961) to **The Open Society**, volume 1, fourth edition, London: Routledge, 1962, section 17. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. See for example Walter Kaufmann ‘The Hegel Myth and Its Method’ [1951], e.g. in his **From Shakespeare to Existentialism: Studies in Poetry, Religion, and Philosophy**, Boston: Beacon Press, pp. 88-119; available at: https://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/us/kaufmann.htm [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. See, for example, Herbert Marcuse, **Reason and Revolution**, second edition, London: Routledge, 1955, and Schlomo Avineri, **Hegel’s Theory of the Modern State**, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Particularly in contrast to what might be called the ‘subjectivist’ approaches to identity which are influential today. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. His concern was particularly that people – as in his critical view of democracy – should not take on social roles for which they were not fitted. But that is, emphatically, not here my concern. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. They would not own private property, or know who their children are. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. See, on this, the discussion in Karl Popper’s **The Open Society and Its Enemies**, chapter 10, note 7. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Obviously, subject to constraints. As an elderly, short, plump retired academic, I can’t choose to be a professional basket-ball player. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. See, on this, Hegel’s **Philosophy of Right**, §§185 and 206. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. See Hegel’s **Philosophy of Right** §238. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. Although an issue here might obviously be with anti-competitive practises. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. For a useful discussion, see Allen W. Wood, **Hegel’s Ethical Thought**, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010, and for a discussion of the particular theme with which I will be concerned, R. A. Stern, ‘“My station and its duties”: Social role accounts of obligation in Green and Bradley’, in K. Ameriks (ed.) **The Impact of Idealism: Volume 1, Philosophy and**

    **Natural Sciences**, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013, pp. 299-322. I think, however, that the philosophical difficulties about the basis of such an approach with which Stern is much concerned can be overcome by a form of critical, inter-subjective ethical intuitionism. But exploration of this would call for a more extended discussion than I can offer here. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. Although Hegel has been I think justly criticized for the priority that he gives to the well-being of the state over individuals. [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. See on this Weber’s **The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism** [1904-5] London: Allen & Unwin, 1930. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. Consider, say, the way in which some women may sacrifice their own interests to those of their children, in ways that impartial spectators would judge to be unreasonable. [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. On the background to this see, for example, Douglas Starr, **Blood: An Epic History of Medicine and Commerce**, New York: Knopf, 1998. [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. It is also interesting to note the degree to which some men and women during the Twentieth Century could be as productive as they were, just because servants (or in the case of some men, wives), undertook all domestic household work for them. In this context, it is well worth noting the lack of involvement with domestic affairs documented in Bruce Caldwell and Hansjoerg Klausinger, **Hayek: A Life, 1899-1950**, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2022. [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. I will be concerned, here, purely with this aspect of Hegel’s treatment of the state. [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. It is worth noting that Hegel was well-aware of this – see **Philosophy of Right** §246. [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. see **Philosophy of Right** §248. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. See, for documentation of this in Hegel and discussion Avineri, **Hegel’s Theory of the Modern State**, p. 107. Hegel changed his terminology in **Philosophy of Right**. For the idea in Marx, see the end of his ‘A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right: Introduction’, e.g. in L. Colletti (ed.) **Marx: Early Writings**, Harmondsworth: Penguin Book, 1975. [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. A useful overview of the British literature in this tradition is offered in David Nicholls, **Three Varieties of Pluralism**, London: Macmillan, 1975, and David Runciman, **Pluralism and the Personality of the State**, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997 [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. Here, once again, the issues that Hayek raised about any attempt to run a large-scale planned economy without prices and private property look to me much to the point (see, on this, Bruce Caldwell (ed.) F. A. Hayek, **Socialism and War**, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), but his **Road to Serfdom**, London: Routledge, 1944, raises important problems about the ‘planning’ of a market-based economy in peacetime. [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
25. See Kenan Malik, **Not So Black and White**, London: Hurst, 2023, p. 49, quoting Burke’s **Reflections on the Revolution in France**, 1790. [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
26. A possible qualification to this might be suggested by Ernst Badian’s correspondence with Popper about the status of those engaged in craft occupations in classical Greece. Badian suggests that the physical and economic situation of these people at the time in effect precluded any possibility of their being able to be involved in public affairs. See Popper, **After The Open Society**, London: Routledge, 2008, section 22. [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
27. Malik’s **Not So Black and White** discusses, in passing, the way in which some people came to be seen as intrinsically inferior, as a reaction to their having been enslaved. I.e. the fact that they were in this terrible condition was ‘explained’ by their supposed inferiority. [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
28. I hope to address this topic as posing problems for Hayek’s economic ideas, in a future essay. [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
29. Here, Heather Wood’s **Third-Class Ticket**, London: Routledge, 1980, is fascinating. It tells the story of a group of Bengali villagers who were left, in the will of the local landlord, resources to undertake a rail trip round India. During the course of the story, it is revealed that economic change is affecting different villagers in different ways, in some cases simply undermining the basis on which they had previously made a living; in others, opening new opportunities for them to make use of their existing skills in attractive ways. [↑](#endnote-ref-29)
30. See Robert J. Waldinger and Marc Schulz, **The Good Life: Lessons from the World's Longest Scientific Study of Happiness**, New York: Simon and Schuster, 2023.

    by Robert J. Waldinger (Author), Marc Schulz [↑](#endnote-ref-30)
31. **Financial Times** December 22, 2022. https://www.ft.com/content/55f6cd8f-a61b-425e-b3d8-069c6e8f37fb [↑](#endnote-ref-31)
32. Although, in fact, issues of this kind have been a feature of British political and economic life since the early days of the Twentieth Century, with endless proposals made – none effective – as to how the issue might be addressed. [↑](#endnote-ref-32)
33. It is interesting that during the early Nineteenth Century, there was a lot of concern about the discrepancies between the incomes of people living in rural areas in the South of England, and people experiencing the enhances economic opportunities on offer in growing industrial towns in the North. [↑](#endnote-ref-33)
34. Although defenders of existing arrangements might well argue that current patterns of expenditure give bigger returns to public investment than do alternatives. [↑](#endnote-ref-34)
35. They have also strongly advocated changes to planning regulations in more prosperous towns and cities, so as to allow for more mobility. [↑](#endnote-ref-35)
36. There is an interesting sub-literature on this within the field of ‘knowledge management’. [↑](#endnote-ref-36)
37. It is a significant theme in influential utopian socialist work, such as William Morris’s **News from Nowhere** (1890), and before him in John Ruskin. Consider also, for example, Robert Tressell (Robert Noonan), **The Ragged-Trousered Philanthropists**, London: Grant Richards, 1914, and F. R. Leavis and Denys Thompson, **Culture and Environment**, London: Chatto & Windus, 1937. [↑](#endnote-ref-37)
38. Indeed, aspects of what Tressell describes in the house decorating sector [↑](#endnote-ref-38)