Basic Income and the Concept of the Good Life

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The Ethics of Liberalism

- Enlightenment Values
  - Scientific Revolution, Objectivity, Neutrality

- Freedom
  - Kantian Ethics

- Modern Liberalism
  - Rawls
    - Justice as fairness
    - *Political Liberalism*
    - Reasonable Pluralism
  - Van Parijs and Vanderborght
    - “[T]he shaping of our social institutions should not be guided by a specific conception of the good life, but by a coherent and plausible conception of justice…” (2017, p.98).
Critique of Rationality

- Crisis of Enlightenment
  - Nietzsche
    - Birth of Tragedy
    - Untimely Meditations

“[Our] schools and teachers simply abstain from an education in morality or make do with mere formalities: and virtue is a word that no longer means anything...” (p.132).

- Horkheimer and Adorno
  - Dialectic of Enlightenment
An Alternative Ontology and Morality

Ethics and Emotions
- Hume
  - “Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions” (p. 415).

Social Embeddedness
- Heidegger
  - Befindlichkeit & Stimmung

Moral Psychology
- Emotions and other non-rational features situate in the decision-making process and ground our moral intuitions (cf. behavior economics).

Ethics of Care
- Nel Noddings (1984)
- Virginia Held (2006)
Conclusion

• If it is true that we are fundamentally constituted by social embeddedness, we cannot bound ourselves; that is, we cannot make an abstraction of the sort characteristic of the liberal tradition descending from the Enlightenment.

• A fortiori, scientific ideals of objectivity and neutrality are misguided, since they generate from our social ontology. i.e., the value of liberty is not neutral.

• The very same is the wellspring of our moral intuitions. Therefore, we cannot treat as confounds emotional and non-rational features of our experience.

• An impersonal, dispassionate ethic is one that will necessarily miss the most important parts of our experience. We do not discharge our moral obligations by adhering to a principle of liberty as a matter of priority or sufficiency. Therefore, we must admit of the formative influence of the emotions.

• An ethics of care or compassion can serve as a lacuna.
• Our concept of ‘the good life’ is not neutral, and so liberty (pretending to neutrality) cannot be the cardinal or orienting value or principle.

• The reason why we would endorse a policy of basic income is not because it would be in accord with a principle of liberty, but because it resonates with our intuitions as careful and compassionate beings.

Possible Problems
• Slide to tyranny
• Pro-sociality
• Decision-making procedure
• How to negotiate between non-discursive entities? That is, there is no way from within emotions to adjudicate between them.
• Objections to social ontology